

Education for Third Culture Kids, Children Who Have Come to Live in Japan: Consideration on their Development and Background

Background

◆ Definition of third culture kids (TCK):

Children who grew up in a culture different from their parents

The number of foreigners in Japan has been increasing yearly. Proper social welfare in accordance to the diversifying changes in society is needed. Currently, education for foreign nationals is not mandatory and there are many barriers for foreign nationals' schooling opportunities. Not just foreign nationals but also problems faced by all groups of TCKs, who are minorities in the mainstream education, are often overlooked. In the world of globalization, the number of TCKs is expected to grow and meeting their educational needs will be more important. (Okazaki, 2021)

Objective

Research focusing on TCKs' experience

- 1 What are the challenges TCKs face in Japanese schools?
- 2 What do TCKs want from schools to help their development?
- 3 How would enhancing TCKs' education be possible?

Research method

◆ Method: Survey and interview

➤ Survey:

- Target: TCKs
- Period: 2 months
- Language: Japanese (and English)
- Content:

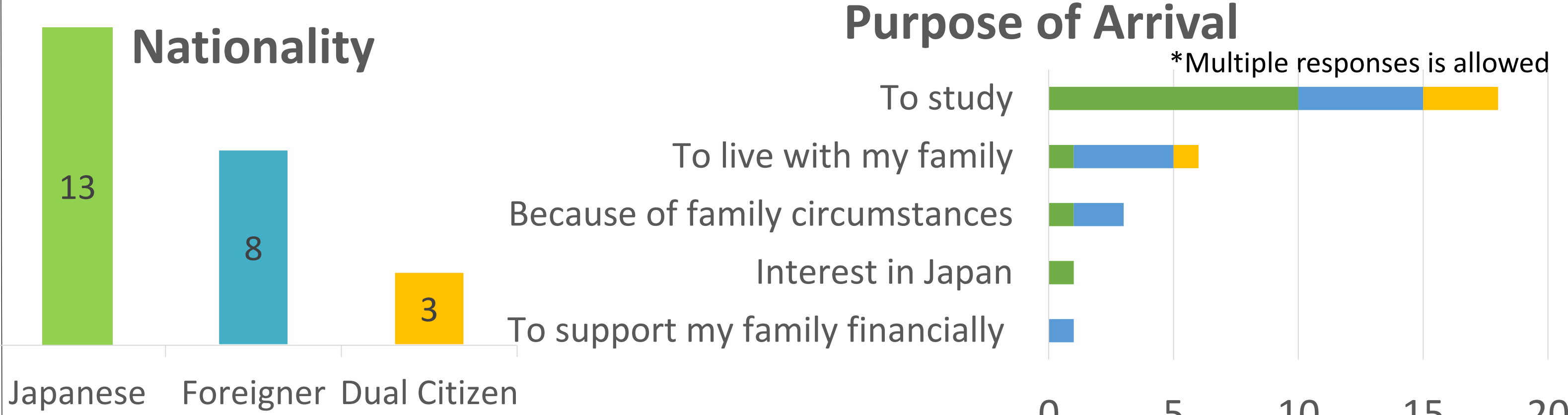
	Arrival in Japan	Junior high school days	Senior high school days	Other factors
-Gender -Nationality -Year of Birth -Area of residence -Parents' roots	-Purpose of arrival -Japanese language skills -Challenges you faced at schools -Support received at schools; and your satisfaction -Diversity of the classroom you're in			-Support given outside school -Support you needed -What you want to do in the future

➤ Interview:

- 3 interviewees (2 working adults, 1 university student)
- a 2-hour long session about their experience
- All of the interviewees have Philippine roots and went to a SHS promoting global education

Results

➤ Survey result:



- **Out of 35 answers, 11 were invalid leaving 24 valid answers.**
→Answers of people who weren't target of the survey and mistakes in the answers were frequently seen (one of the expected reasons is language barrier).
- **Most answerers were multi-cultural Japanese kids with almost no problems in Japanese language and education.**
→The survey was initially made for a different and limited group of TCKs, failing to address the issues the group of Japanese TCKs answerers face.
- **Overall result: Difficulties of taking a survey**
→The information given about language skills, learning environment and other factors weren't enough to find a connection on what their learning needs are.

➤ Interview result:

- In junior high school, the difference in their cultural background was viewed negatively. In contrast, at senior high schools where global education is being promoted, there were positive comments about their experience. The schools' policy to accommodate their educational needs helped ensure their psychological safety in schools.
- Rather than wanting something from schools, the interviewees felt that insufficient support from schools is inevitable.
→The researcher being a TCK with a similar background made the interviewees feel safe, helping them express their thoughts honestly.

Consideration

- It is important to consider the fact that different TCK groups and individuals face different problems and need different language, culture, career, and identity support.
- The formation of TCKs' cultural identity depends on the environment they are in. Schools should take into account the possibilities of them being suppressed and isolated during their cultural transition, as it is crucial on their development.
- It is necessary to strengthen the support system of the society as a whole. This includes local community and one's household. What educational institutions can do is to promote global education and most importantly understanding the lives and needs of minority groups.

Conclusion

- It is crucial for schools to recognize a TCK's ability and past experiences in the process of learning. Also, accommodating the individuals' learning needs is important for their development.
- Japan must acknowledge that it has to embrace diversity and inclusivity, and be a more flexible society. The Japanese society needs to recognize the existence of different groups of people and raise awareness of the problems minorities face.