

EDITORIAL NOTE

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The current volume includes interesting themes that are informative and insightful as well as multidisciplinary, notably significant for academics, policymakers and students alike who are interested in East Asian affairs. This is in line with the aim of the renamed journal in providing a platform for exchanges of ideas related to the East Asian region, with particular emphasis on Japan, China and Korea. This volume contains five articles focusing on Japan and on China. The first three articles are the result of the output from the JSA-ASEAN Conference which was held in 15 – 17 December 2021. Meanwhile the rest were contributed by scholars from various countries.

The first article in this volume entitled *Diversity Management in Some Japanese Companies – A New Way to Strengthen Japanese Enterprises' Competitiveness* written by Thuy Linh Tong and Thi Thuy Cao from Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. According to the authors, diversity management is an enterprises strategy in using human resources to build competitiveness in a market environment and technological structure. The concept of diversity in human resources in Japanese companies is notably diverse. It basically revolves around four main aspects namely gender, age, disability and citizenship. In terms of employee diversity, Japanese enterprises focus on the following priorities namely women, disabled, elderly and foreign workers. This is reflected in the number of programs promoted for each type of employee segment as well as creating a conducive working environment for them. Furthermore, increased diversity in human resources not only changes the corporate culture but also enhances the company's image both domestically and globally. Therefore, the authors argue that diversity management is the new way to strengthen the competitiveness of Japanese enterprises in and outside of Japan.

The second article is entitled *Vietnam–Japan Higher-Education Cooperation in the First Two Decades of the 21st Century* written by Nguyen Thi Thanh Tu. This article examines the achievements and proposals in enhancing educational cooperation between Vietnam and Japan. Both the Japanese and Vietnamese governments promote collaborative projects such as student and lecturer exchanges as well as offering scholarships annually to Vietnamese students to study and research in Japan. Such activities have contributed to improving the quality of higher education and helping in shaping high-quality human resources for Vietnam's industrialization and modernization. Although the author emphasized that higher education cooperation between the two countries is growing, yet, there is a need for Vietnam and Japan to improve the quality of human resources by more quality training and collaborations for Vietnamese students that can be applied in real life work situations. In addition, Japanese language proficiency among Vietnamese students' needs to be improved. Vietnamese universities should also frequently organize academic competitions and research on all things Japan. Field trips and exchanges with Japanese companies, inviting alumni, business owners or foreign lecturers should be encouraged. The author believes this will help students to have practical knowledge and give them a realistic ide of their work in the future.

The third article is written by Irwin A Cruz who explores the new ASEAN countries' export to Japan. His article is entitled *New ASEAN Member Countries' Exports to Japan: An Assessment of the New Goods Margin*. His research findings suggests that that there was export growth by large margins during the period of Japan-ASEAN trade liberalization. The increase in new goods margins is important for developing countries as this is a sign of increased productivity of local firms. This study also assessed the changes in the share of total value of

least traded export goods from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) to Japan before and after the ratification of the ASEAN-Japan FTA. The analysis shows that by 2018 the share of the least traded goods to Japan had increased almost 69% of the total export value for Cambodia, 57% for Myanmar and 55% for Laos. For Vietnam, the increase was a modest 29%. The results were important for especially countries such as Cambodia and Laos, which rely heavily on exports. Reliance on exports as a source of foreign revenue however exposes to risks of fluctuation of demand and supply of goods.

The article entitled *South Korean Diaspora in Japan: Suffrage and Covid-19 Issues* by Rizqi Wisnu Mauludino and Kurniawaty Iskandar found that the Korean diaspora in Japan is one of the largest groups that continues to exist after the Second World War. The majority of the diaspora are members of a South Korea organisation known as *Mindan*. *Mindan* and other Korean-related organizations such as *Seinenkai* (Korean Youth Association) and the Korean Chamber of Commerce in Japan (KCCJ), support advocacy for the rights of the South Korean diaspora in economy, culture, politics, and several other fields. But Rizqi and Kurniawaty found that *Mindan* is the most prominent Korean organization in Japan fighting for the rights of the South Korean diaspora, more so in creating a better standard of living especially in facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fifth article entitled *Legalization of Hemp and the Contribution to Japanese Economy* examines some aspects of the use of hemp in Japanese society as well as its potential to the Japanese economy. The article written by Maszeli Mohammad Wee, Asmadi Hassan and Alias Abdullah found that hemp has great potential due to various uses in food preparation, medicine, textile and others. If it is fully legalized, hemp will be able to contribute to Japan's economy. While demand for hemp products is increasing around the world, unfortunately Japan is unable to optimize its hemp usage. This is due to Japanese hemp being subjected to the *Taima Torishimari Hou 1948* (Cannabis Control Act) which stipulates that the plant must be strictly controlled as it is classified as being part of the cannabis family. The study found that the country's revenue would increase if the Japanese government fully legalized and removed hemp from the *Taima Torishimari Hou*.

The sixth article by Yosuke Uchiyama et al. examines the labour union actions against the employers and related bodies of the online food delivery platform Uber Eats Union to determine the current status and potential for bargaining. Due to ambiguity of the legal position on app-based on-demand gig workers has led to inequalities in labour relations. However, the recognition of the worker status of delivery workers is a significant step towards collective bargaining with firms. Therefore, the active work of the Uber Eats Union could lead to the formation of new labour unions on other platforms and the empowerment of platform workers. Based on Japan's experience, this paper also draws some lessons for Malaysia's gig economy such as to elevate the low remuneration and poor social protection.

The last article is written by Esin Yurdagul entitled *Towards Multidimensional Sino-Turkish Relations from the Pre-Modern Era to the Present*. Yurdagul chose this topic due to lack of research conducted on the relationship between China and the Turkey. Therefore, the author work has given a comprehensive introduction related to Sino-Turkish relations from pre-modern times to the present. She has explored contemporary China-Turkey relations in depth covering the official, diplomatic, strategic, economic, cultural, political and religious sectors.

Overall, the current volume displays the developments of China and Japan in various dimensions. We hope that this volume would be useful in further understanding and creating awareness of the East Asian region, not only to academics but also to the public at large.