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THE ROLE OF JAPANESE GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN COOPERATION IN EDUCATION: THE CASE OF KAZAKHSTAN

Cooperation in education with high income countries is becoming more essential than ever. However, Kazakhstan is still falling short in development of educational cooperation with some of the high-income countries in the world as Japan. This paper aims to clarify the role of Japanese governmental organizations in development of bilateral in Kazakh-Japan relationship as well as educational cooperation between the two states. A historical and systematic analysis was used, for a better understanding the policy of Japanese educational organizations in Kazakhstan. Along with official information of embassies, the annual reports of a Kazakhstani university were used to conduct the research. In general, the Japanese governmental organizations play a crucial role as actors that foster cultural integration, political relations and peace-building. However, promotion of Japanese traditions and Japanese language education can have an aim of strengthening its influence and prestige in Kazakhstan. Yet, especially in the case of Japan and Kazakhstan, it is far from being a hegemony tool of a dominant country. The results of this study may be useful for everyone who is interested in cooperation in education, Kazakhstan-Japan relations, internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan and the role of governmental bodies in these processes.

Key words: cooperation in education, internationalization, Japan, Kazakhstan, governmental organizations.

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Жапондық үкіметтік ұйымдардың білім берудегі ынтымақтастықтағы рөлі: Қазақстан мысалында

Қазіргі таңда дамыған елдермен білім беру саласындағы ынтымақтастықтың маңыздылығы арта түсуде. Алайда, Қазақстан Жапония сияқты әлемнің кейбір дамыған елдерімен білім беру саласындағы ынтымақтастықты дамытуда әлі де болса артта қалып отыр. Бұл жұмыс Жапония үкіметтік ұйымдарының екіжақты қазақстан-жапон қатынастарын дамытудағы, сондай-ақ екі ел арасындағы білім беру саласындағы ынтымақтастықты талқылауға бағытталған. Мақалада тарихи-жүйелік талдауды қолдану нәтижесінде жапондық білім беру ұйымдарының Қазақстандағы саясаты зерделенді. Зерттеу барысында елшіліктердің ресми ақпараттарымен қатар қазақстандық университеттің жылдық есептері пайдаланылды. Жалпы, жапондық үкіметтік ұйымдар мәдени интеграцияны, саяси қатынастарды және бейбітшілікті ілгерілететін субъектілер ретінде маңызды рөл атқарады. Алайда, екінші жағынан, жапон дәстүрлерін насихаттау және жапон тілін оқыту Жапонияның Қазақстандағы ықпалы мен беделін нығайтуға бағытталуы да мүмкін. Дегенмен, Жапония мен Қазақстанның қарым-қатынасы жағдайы доминантты елдің гегемония құралына айналуынан алыс. Зерттеудің нәтижелері білім беру саласындағы ынтымақтастыққа, қазақ-жапон қатынастарына, Қазақстандағы жоғары білімнің интернационалдануына және осы процестердегі мемлекеттік органдардың рөліне қызығушылық танытатындар үшін пайдалы бола алады.

Түйін сөздер: білім беру саласындағы ынтымақтастық, интернационалдандыру, Жапония, Қазақстан, үкіметтік ұйымдар.

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Роль японских правительственных организаций в сотрудничестве в сфере образования на примере Казахстана

Сотрудничество в сфере образования со странами с высоким уровнем дохода становится как никогда важным. Тем не менее, Казахстан все еще отстает в развитии сотрудничества в области образования с некоторыми странами с высокими доходами в мире, такими как Япония. Данная работа направлена на обсуждение роли японских правительственных организаций в развитии двусторонних казахстанско-японских отношений, а также в образовательном сотрудничестве между двумя странами. В результате применения историко-системного анализа была изучена политика японских образовательных организаций в Казахстане. Наряду с официальной информацией посольств, для проведения исследования использовались годовые отчеты казахстанского вуза. В целом японские правительственные организации играют решающую роль в качестве акторов, способствующих культурной интеграции, политическим отношениям и миро строительству. Однако, с другой стороны, продвижение японских традиций и обучение японскому языку может иметь целью укрепление влияния и престижа Японии в Казахстане. Тем не менее, в случае Японии и Казахстана, ситуация далека от перехода к инструменту гегемонии доминирующей страны. Результаты данного исследования могут быть полезны всем, кто заинтересован в сотрудничестве в сфере образования, казахстанско-японских отношениях, интернационализации высшего образования в Казахстане и роли государственных органов в этих процессах.

Ключевые слова: сотрудничество в сфере образования, интернационализация, Япония, Казахстан, государственные организации.

Introduction

In 2015 all member states of UNESCO adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and renewed their commitment to education (United Nations, 2015). There are 17 sustainable development goals (SDG's) listed in the agenda, that include "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." In a sense, the SDG's become as the basis for the adoption of the State Program 2030, in which education is defined as one of the key aspects in development of Kazakhstan and joining top 30 countries in the world.

Moreover the President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in his recent statement stressed the role of education to develop human capital as well as economy in the Republic of Kazakhstan (Official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2020). Thus, the role of cooperation in education with high income countries becomes more essential than ever. However, Kazakhstan is still falling short in development of educational cooperation with some of the high-income countries in the world as Japan. This paper aims to clarify the role of Japanese governmental organizations in development of bilateral in Kazakh-Japan relationship as well as educational cooperation between the two states.

Bilateral relationship between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Japan has been studied by do-

mestic and foreign scholars in terms of political and economic cooperation (Dissyukov, 2019; Len, 2008; Takeshi, 2008; Uyama, 2008). As Kazakhstan and Japan has common history of atomic bombing and nuclear tests, many studies on health issues of bombed regions have been conducted by Japanese and Kazakh researchers (Akanov и др., 2009; Meirmanov и др., 2003). However, there are only few works to discuss educational cooperation between the countries.

The aim of this work is to show the role of Japanese governmental organization in the educational cooperation as well as bilateral relations.

Materials and methods

This paper focuses on activities of Japanese governmental organizations; it is a descriptive study that aims for a better understanding of the role of the organizations in educational cooperation between the countries. To collect existing works on international cooperation in education, bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Japan a literature review was used. Policy documents of Kazakhstan as State Program 2030 and The State of the Nation Address were analyzed for identifying the importance of education in policy of the country.

To conduct the research along with official information of embassies, the annual reports of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University were used.

Literature review

Cooperation in the field of education has deep connection with social development cooperation and economic cooperation. As education refers to human capacity development, technology transfer, and skills training (King, 2020), it plays crucial role in foreign policy. The core of social welfare and social infrastructure are formed by educational and medical industries, thus educational cooperation can contribute to the local economy and society.

Internationalization of higher education is enhancing cooperation between countries. Many scholars support the idea of internationalization as a compelling and logical approach to increasing harmonization at the intra-regional and interregional levels (Jinachai & Anantachoti, 2014; Khalid и др., 2019), pointing out its goals of improving and standardizing the academic experience worldwide, encouraging cultural and political relations and balancing processes of cultural integration, economic and social development, peace-building, strategic partnership by producing academic outcomes and human resources (Chapman и др., 2014; Chung & Lee, 2019; Knight, 2014; Kuroda и др., 2014).

Another group of scholars claim contribution of internationalization of higher education to reinforcing dominant higher education domains than to integration (Feuer & Hornidge, 2015), argue how higher education has become strategically important for some dominant regions in creating 'minds' as well as 'markets' for its knowledge economy (Robertson & Keeling, 2008), and become as a hegemonic tool of normative power (Figueroa, 2010; Hartmann, 2008).

There are several levels of engagement depending on case as on government-to-government, institution-to-institution, international organization-to-government using universities as intermediaries (Wan & Sirat, 2017). However, in this work we will discuss initiatives of government or governmental organizations to institutions as in the case of Kazakhstan and Japan.

The cooperation between Kazakhstan and Japan in the field of higher education has been discussed only by few researchers (Rustemova и др., 2020).

Results and discussion

The principles of transparency in the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan have made it possible to establish contacts with the education systems of other countries in education and culture. Establishment of international relations and coop-

eration in education contributes to the development of human resources (Chung & Lee, 2019).

The visit of the former President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev to Japan on April 6-9, 1994 had a great impact on the foundation of Kazakh-Japanese relations. Following the visit, a Joint Statement was signed and notes on the recognition of treaties and agreements between the USSR and Japan were exchanged. In the political document, it has been noted that Japan supports Kazakhstan's ongoing reforms. As a result of the official visit of the President, the Government of Japan decided to provide technical and financial assistance through the Official Development Assistance Program to support the strengthening of Kazakhstan's independence.

The main actors in the cooperation between the two countries in the field of higher education are the ministries of education and government agencies, universities, academies and institutes. Depending on the type of these actors, the partnership between Kazakhstan and Japan in the field of education can be divided into several levels:

1. Cooperation at the state level
2. Development of cooperation through government organizations
3. Inter-university partnership, including public and private universities
4. Education support projects at the individual level, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations.

The first group includes interstate agreements in higher education, joint universities of the two countries. However, cooperation between Kazakhstan and Japan in higher education at the state level and approval by official documents is still lagging behind. Therefore, the partnership at this level is often one-sided. For example, students can join academic mobility and full degree programs provided by Japanese government. For example, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) annually offers a scholarship program that allows talented youth to study in Japan. The program, supported by the Embassy of Japan in Kazakhstan, offers scholarships for bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees, and a one-year Japanese language course. From the Kazakh side, the Bolashak program provides opportunities for Kazakhstani youth to study for master's and doctoral degrees.

The second group includes projects to develop cooperation and establish partnerships through Japanese government agencies such as the Japan Foundation, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan Student Services Organization (JAS-

SO). The Japan Foundation is a Japanese government organization dedicated to the implementation of comprehensive programs of cultural exchange around the world. The Foundation works to organize various events, provide information services, and facilitate people-to-people contacts in order to deepen mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries. The Japan Foundation mainly offers various programs in four areas: 1) Exchange in the field of art and culture; 2) Teaching Japanese abroad; 3) Japanese studies and intellectual exchange, as well as 4) Strengthening cultural exchange in Asia. The latest program is aimed at citizens and organizations of ten ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states (The Japan Foundation, 2020). There are programs offered by the Foundation in each of these areas, and individuals and organizations can participate in them. In the field of communications with Kazakhstan, the first two of the above areas are being implemented on a regular basis.

The Exchanges in the field of art and culture are divided into several areas, for example: 1) providing financial assistance to Japanese artists and organizations to participate in foreign events; 2) support of foreign art and cultural organizations in the promotion or introduction of Japanese traditions. The latter is divided into four categories:

- financial assistance to theaters;
- support museums and other organizations in organizing Japanese exhibitions;
- assistance to the infrastructure of foreign museums in order to promote Japanese art and collections;
- financial assistance to foreign publications and translators for the translation and publication of works written in Japanese.

A lot of work is being done in art and culture, specifically the regular organization of exhibitions of Japanese art. For example, in 2019, the Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan, organized a traveling exhibition of modern wooden nets (在カザフスタン共和国日本大使館, 2019). The exhibition was held in Almaty and Nur-Sultan. In Japanese culture, Netsuke dates back to the Edo period. Originally, it was a utility item for men's kimonos, a small hook for medicine or cigarette packs. Over time, the Netsuke became an object of independent artistic values and collections, reaching the level of true art. Such exhibitions include a traveling exhibition "100 Modern Japanese Designs" in 2017, consisting of 100 exhibits organized by the Japan Foundation (在カザフスタン共和国日本大使館, 2017). The exhibits include furniture, household appliances,

stationery, tableware, clothing, vehicles, etc.. Since the design of such everyday objects is a reflection of Japanese aesthetic beauty and lifestyles, visitors of the exhibition had the opportunity to get acquainted with the latest trends and features of Japanese culture. In 2016, the Japan Foundation, the Embassy of Japan and the National Museum of Kazakhstan organized an exhibition of contemporary Japanese artists «The main artist – the five phenomena: traditions and innovation.» The exhibition presents works of metal, calligraphy, traditional lacquer art, traditional Japanese painting «Nihonga».

Teaching Japanese abroad program covers the following activities: 1) allocation of grants to foreign educational centers that teach Japanese; 2) training of Japanese language teachers among foreign specialists (at the institute in Saitama prefecture); 3) online training of Japanese language teachers; 4) training of foreign teachers and specialists in the cultural and academic spheres (at the Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai, Osaka city). These programs are often attended by Kazakh specialists that major in Japanese studies and Kazakh universities that has the department of Japanese studies. Among them are joint projects and grants of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU), which is the largest center of Japanese studies in Kazakhstan. For example, in 2017, the Japan Foundation provided assistance to KazNU teachers for four projects. This accounted for 8% of international projects and grants in which the university participated during that year (*Otchet o nauchno-issledovatel'skoi i innovacionnoi deyatelnosti KazNU im.al-Farabo za 2016 god*, 2017, p. 97). In terms of share, this is less than the Erasmus + projects implemented at KazNU. Such achievements reflect the close relationship between the Foundation and the KazNU. Among the projects is the project 'Nihongo Projects – Tour of Japanese Class in Kazakhstan' led by senior lecturer of the Far East Department of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. The project was implemented in 2015-2017, and the amount of financial assistance allocated in 2017 amounted to 452.4 thousand tenge (*Otchet o nauchno-issledovatel'skoi i innovacionnoi deyatelnosti KazNU im.al-Farabo za 2015 god*, 2016) (*Otchet o nauchno-issledovatel'skoi i innovacionnoi deyatelnosti KazNU im.al-Farabo za 2016 god*, 2017, p. 103). In 2016, with the support of the Japan Foundation, KazNU staff implemented four projects. Among them projects as 'Short Term Training Program for Foreign Teacher of the Japanese Language' and 'Development of the Japanese language in Kazakhstan' can be used as an example.

Japan Foundation annually invites Kazakhstani Japanese language specialists to training courses at the The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Urawa, in Saitama Prefecture. The courses offered by the institute are divided into several groups and mainly include lectures on the methodology of teaching the Japanese language, as well as introductions to Japanese culture and society. Teachers of KazNU and Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages take part in these courses every year for 6 weeks to 6 months.

From the early 1990s to the mid-2010s, the Japan Foundation sent its specialists to leading Kazakh universities that have a department of Japanese studies. Its purpose was to contribute to the training of professionals who major in Japanese language and culture in Kazakhstan and the formation of a school of Japanese studies. Due to the fact that the Kazakh school of Japanese studies, which has a history of almost twenty years, has been established and developed to a certain level, now the Japan Foundation have stopped sending the Japanese language specialists to Kazakhstan. Instead, professionals from partner Japanese universities join Kazakhstani academic society.

Training programs for foreign teachers and specialists in the cultural and academic fields offer Japanese language courses for those who need to master the Japanese language to conduct research or work. There are also fall and spring courses for Japanese language students that last from two to six weeks. Students from Kazakhstan are mostly recommended for two week courses by the Kazakh-Japan Center, while the six week program is offered by the Faculty of Oriental Studies of KazNU.

One Asia Foundation is another Japanese organization that supports projects aimed at the development of Japanese language and culture in Kazakhstan. From 2012 to 2016 by two projects were supported by this fund, there are the project "Asian Community" organized by a lecturer of the Faculty of Oriental Studies and the project implemented by the staff of the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Science at KazNU (*Otchet o nauchno-issledovatel'skoi i innovacionnoi deyatelnosti KazNU im.al-Farabo za 2013 god*, 2014; *Otchet o nauchno-issledovatel'skoi i innovacionnoi deyatelnosti KazNU im.al-Farabo za 2011-2012 god*, 2012).

JICA is one of the organizations that continuously contribute to the strengthening of educational ties between the two countries. JICA is the only government agency in Japan that provides Official Development Assistance (ODA). The agency was established to promote economic and social growth

and the development of international cooperation in developing countries. JICA has a solid legal basis for its activities in the country, which is the Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Japan, signed in 2004. This agreement was ratified by the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated June 20, 2005 №61-III. Japan's assistance to Kazakhstan in the field of infrastructure, energy and other areas under the ODA has been provided through this agency. According to the official data of Japan, the main policy of the ODA in Kazakhstan is to support the economic and social development of the country, in particular:

1. Strengthen the country's ability to receive assistance through further promotion of the market economy, support for economic development and macroeconomic stability and public sector efficiency.

2. Provide support to boost the local economy in order to support their own efforts to improve the well-being of the population through sustainable economic growth.

3. Pay special attention to the development of human resources in the country, continuing to support the property of Kazakhstan and the economic situation in the country.

4. Efforts to promote the Japanese ODA program in Kazakhstan through the effective use of Kusanone Grant Assistance for small social projects to ensure human security, which is expected to be highly effective, albeit with little support (Rustemova, 2020). As stated in the purpose of the program, ODA was provided mainly in the areas of production, infrastructure, agriculture, health, and the environment. This is evidenced by the fact that out of about 40 activities implemented since the early 1990s, the project is the only one aimed at training and human resources.

It has been widely discussed by researchers that the foreign policy of the state includes political, humanitarian, cultural and educational assistance, as well as the pursuit of peace, establishing its influence and prestige in the region and the world (Gromoglasova, 2018; Kirecci, 2015). In addition to promoting Kazakhstan's economic development and protection of human rights and promoting democracy through ODA, Japan aims to strengthen its image by ensuring friendly economic and energy security, deepening friendly ties through training and culture.

A significant event in the field of education within the ODA was the establishment of the Kazakh-Japanese Center for Human Resource Development (KJC) in partnership with JICA and Narxoz university (former the Kazakh Economic University named

after T. Ryskulov). The protocol on the opening of the center was signed in 2000 (Kazakhstan-Japan Center, б. д.). The main purpose of KJC is to deepen mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries through the preparation of human resources and the exchange of information on the transition to a market economy. The center organizes special courses on business management, Japanese language courses. Along with students, teachers and entrepreneurs also can get a variety of information about Japan and cultural and educational relationship between the two countries. Since 2002, the center has been conducting a training program for small and medium businesses. Since 2010, these programs have been followed by Kaizen courses based on the Japanese experience, consisting of short, modular seminars taught by highly qualified specialists. As part of the “Practical Business Courses in Japan” organized by JICA, participants in kaizen trainings also have the opportunity to visit Japanese factories in Japan. There students can learn optimization of the production process, management, marketing, staff training, etc., attend lectures on various topics and meet with specialists. Since its inception, the center has conducted more than 200 kaizen courses, which were attended by more than 4,000 people. More than 20 consultants and trainers took part in trainings in Japan (JICA Alumni Association in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2012, c. 18).

One of the most important events organized by the KJC together with the Japan Foundation is the Nihongo Nouryokushiken exam, which determines the level of the Japanese language proficiency. The exam is held twice a year and a certificate is issued. In cooperation with private and public Japanese universities and Japanese language schools the center organizes an exhibition “Study in Japan.”

The Kazakh-Japanese center regularly organizes various cultural events, such as the Day of Japanese Culture, ikebana, origami, kimono, tea ceremony, calligraphy, Yosakoi dances. KJC was opened in Almaty, and the development project lasted for almost ten years. In order to ensure sustainable development in the local area, in 2012 the center became a part of Narxoz university and currently is one of the linking organizations between the two countries in education, culture and other areas.

JICA has also provided direct assistance to Kazakhstani universities that train Japanese major students, such as the organization of language classrooms, the provision of the necessary equipments and teaching materials, etc.

Types of JICA cooperation include research on development projects (development of master plans,

etc.), implementation of technical development projects, sending Japanese experts and inviting experts from developing countries to Japan for internships. According to the latter, JICA invites engineers and administrators to Japan to train young leaders in the latest technologies and skills in various fields. This program, aimed at contributing to the development of Kazakhstan using the knowledge and technology acquired in Japan, gives a great impetus to the deepening of friendship between the two countries. Since its inception in Kazakhstan, JICA has trained more than 1,100 civil servants, representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations in Japan in the fields of economics, finance, water quality control, agriculture, health and others. In the past. In March 2010, the graduates of these training courses formed the JICA Alumni Association in Kazakhstan. The main purpose of the Association is to contribute to the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan, the strengthening of friendly relations between the two countries through the sharing of knowledge and technology acquired in Japan. The Association has more than 200 members, and it is planned to further increase the number of future members. Among the activities of the Alumni Association are the organization of seminars on Japanese technologies with JICA, the organization of events to introduce the culture of Japan, the publication of a bulletin “Japan – Kazakhstan: Bridges of Friendship”, etc. can be noted (JICA Alumni Association in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2012, c. 14).

JASSO is an independent administrative agency established on April 1, 2004 by reorganizing and integrating scholarship programs offered by the Japan Scholarship Foundation. The main purpose of the organization is to promote international understanding and support in the education of creative human resources that will contribute to future generations, to create a favorable environment for students studying in universities. The Agency’s programs can be divided into three main groups: 1) scholarships and loans for Japanese students; 2) scholarships for foreign students; 3) student assistance programs, including programs for students with special needs, such as career support, students with disabilities (Japan Student Service Organization, 2020). As JASSO does not have an official office in Kazakhstan, documents can be submitted through the Embassy of Japan in Kazakhstan. However, JASSO scholarships can be obtained by Kazakhstani students through Japanese partner universities of Kazakh higher education institutions. This is the most common way of studying in Japan among Kazakh youth.

Conclusion

The relations between Kazakhstan and Japan in the education and culture began with the establishment of diplomatic relations and have now reached a new level. As a result of concerned efforts of the universities and the government agencies, a lot of work has been done. However, comparing with the outcomes of diplomatic and economic cooperation mentioned in previous work, outputs of educational cooperation is still encountering difficulties. One of the main reasons is the absence of a special legal framework for cooperation in education, and perhaps in science and culture. Singing a legal base on governmental level will certainly give a big impetus to these relations and lay the foundation for realization of different activities and projects. Furthermore, the creation of special programs for Kazakhstani or Japanese students and teaching staff would be possible. Currently, most activities implemented by Japanese governmental organizations are aimed not

specifically to Kazakhstani society, but are being accomplished as part of the general programs.

At present only KazNU is getting financial assistance from Japan Foundation and carrying out projects. However, there are other universities that have Departments of Japanese studies too. If they also be more proactive, cooperation would broaden.

In general, the Japanese governmental organizations play a crucial role as actors that foster cultural integration, political relations and peace-building. Many cultural and educational activities are aimed to encourage mutual understanding between the two countries, to develop human resources that would be bridges between Japan and Kazakhstan. However, promotion of Japanese traditions and Japanese language education can have an aim of strengthening its influence and prestige in Kazakhstan. Yet, especially in the case of Japan and Kazakhstan, it is far from being a hegemony tool of a dominant countries, as have discussed by some scholars.

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