

# The Impact of Immigration Policies on Foreign Employees' Career: Former Nepalese Students Working in Japanese Company as a Case Study

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates the impact of Japanese immigration policies on the careers of former Nepalese students working in Japanese companies. Japan's falling birth rate and the aging population are causing concern and impacting the labor market. To address the problem, the government is announcing different policies to attract foreigners. Through qualitative interviews and a web survey, this research explores the experiences and challenges these Nepalese workers face under Japanese - style management and immigration policies. The findings aim to inform policymakers to address the issues encountered by foreign workers in Japan.*

**Keywords:** Nepalese Students in Japan, Foreign Employee, Japanese Style Management, Immigration Policy, Career Development, Labor Market

## 1. Introduction

According to the International Organization for Migration (IMO, 2022), more than 280 million foreign migrants live globally, representing 3.6 percent of the total population. Many Nepalese are now immigrants, and this number continues to grow each year. Nepal has a long history of Nepalese youth going abroad to work and sending money back to their families, commonly known as "foreign employment" in Nepal. Colonization by the British Empire in India triggered the Nepalese to start their foreign job as an army. According to Kunwar (2015), the history of formal labor migration began in 1814–1816, after the Nepal–British–India war. The British Indian East Company was the first place Nepalese youth started their foreign job in an army known as "Lahore" (Kharel, 2016; Kunwar, 2015).

The new social culture in Nepalese communities is to be international migrants for jobs. After earning foreign experience and money, they migrate to the towns and cities of their own country (Kunwar, 2015). Nepalese are facing various challenges and opportunities in foreign countries. Despite these challenges, they try to make a career and help their family and country with foreign experiences and remittances. Nepal has a significant population of international migrants who work abroad and send money as remittances.

According to the Census<sup>1</sup> of Nepal 2021, 2, 169, 478 Nepalese are international immigrants. For various purposes, They send remittances abroad for various purposes, which is essential for Nepal's GDP. According to World Bank data, international remittances contributed to Nepal's GDP by 22.7% in 2021 (The World Bank, Personal Remittances,

Received (% of GDP, Nepal). It was 24% in 2020 (IMO, 2022).

Until recently, Nepalese were supposed to go abroad as workers, but in recent decades, many Nepalese youth have gone abroad for higher education. Australia and Japan have been the leading countries where Nepalese youth select educational destinations (ICEF Monitor, 2023). In this research, I would like to focus on Nepalese in Japan and the current situation of foreign workers in Japan.

### 1.1 Nepalese in Japan

A large number of young Nepalese come to Japan to pursue higher education and to grab job opportunities. Japan is famous for Nepalese for higher study, skilled labor<sup>2</sup>, Specified Skilled Workers<sup>3</sup> (SSW), and many more. Nepalese started to come to Japan more than a century ago. According to the Embassy of Japan in Nepal and Nepal in Japan, "Eight Nepalese youths came to Japan in 1902 A. D. for higher studies in different disciplines such as mining, mechanical engineering, agriculture, etc." Nepalese mainly come to Japan as students, cooks (skilled labor), dependents (spouses, children or parents), etc. According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of 2022, there were 3.08 million foreign residents, more than 11.4% more than the previous year.

<sup>1</sup>2021 Nepal Census

<sup>2</sup>Skilled Labor visa for Cook

<sup>3</sup>Specified Skilled Workers (SSW) known as Tokutei Ginou

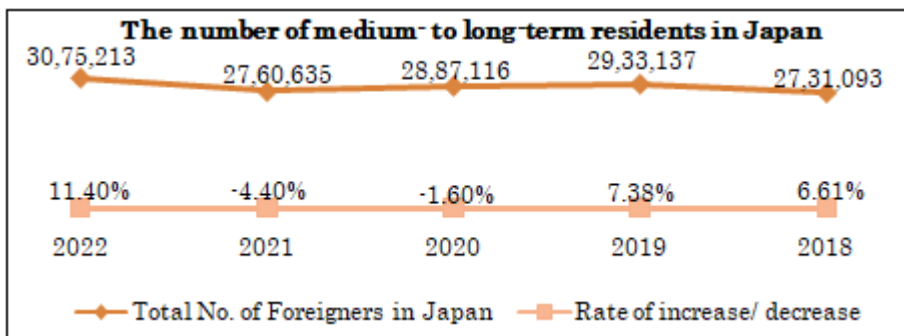


Figure 1: Immigrants in Japan from 2018 to 2022

Sources: Created by the author based on the number of foreign residents (2018 to 2022), Ministry of Justice.

Figure 1 shows, besides 2020 and 2021, the number of foreigners entering Japan increased significantly. The COVID - 19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 is the reason for the decrease. The number of foreign resident population crossed 3 million by 2022.

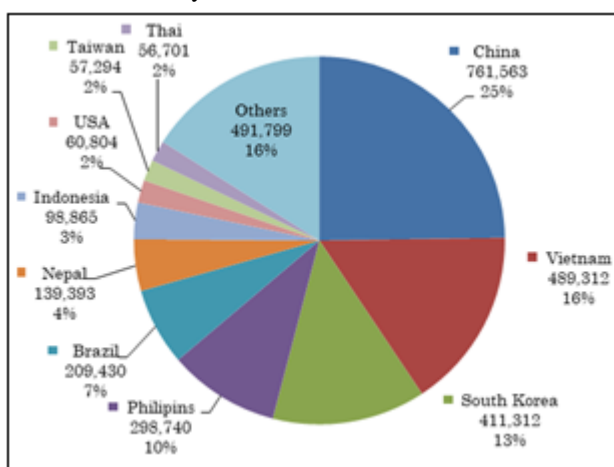


Figure 2: Number of foreign nationals residing by significant nationality

Sources: Created by the author based on the number of foreign residents (end of 2022), Ministry of Justice.

The data shows that Japan is a top - rated destination for Nepalese and takes the sixth position for living in Japan as a foreign resident, however the population of Nepal is only 29.19 million.

The push and pull models explain the factors that influence students from developing countries as home countries to developed countries as host countries. The home country's economic condition, political situation, and education condition push the youth to study overseas, and the host country's political interest and country situation attract them to select it as an educational destination (Mazzarol&Soutar, 2002). The pushing and pulling factors behind migration reasons for Nepalese are almost the same (Kunwar, 2015). The country's political instability, economic opportunities, influence from friends who already live in the host country, and foreign degrees motivate Nepalese students to study abroad (Tamang & Shrestha, 2021).

According to Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of 2022, there were 139, 393 Nepalese immigrants residing in Japan.

Table 1: Nepali Immigrants in Japan from the end of 2018 to the end of June 2022

Year	International students	Engineer / Specialist in Humanities / International Services	Business Manager	Dependent (Family Stay)
End of June 2022	32, 336	24, 127	2, 159	37, 882
End of 2021	16, 858	19, 406	1, 981	32, 229
End of 2020	23, 116	15, 581	1, 708	31, 334
End of 2019	29, 417	12, 203	1, 588	29, 992
End of 2018	28, 987	8, 541	1, 531	26, 017

Sources: Created by the author based on the number of Nepalese residents by visa status (2018 to 2022), Ministry of Justice.

Table No.1 indicates that Nepalese international students try to change their visa status after graduating on a working visa as an Engineer/ Specialist in Humanities/ International Services to work (Syusyoku<sup>4</sup>) for a Japanese company. Similarly, the number of entrepreneurs (business managers) and dependent visa status (family stays visa) increases annually. Mr. Giri (The Kathmandu Post, March 20, 2017) writes, Nepalese are increasing among many reasons, that there are ten - fold higher salaries and easier visa processing in Japan than in other countries. After the earthquakes in

Japan in 2011, international students from China and Korea decreased, and to fill the gap, it was suggested that agreements be made with local language schools in Nepal and student recruitment institutes for Nepalese students (Morita, 2017). While Nepalese studying they don't call to their family but they call their families after they settle in Japan (after getting working visa). The substantial evidence is the number of dependent (family stays) visas from Table 1. This indicates that Nepalese love to live with family and plan to be in Japan for a long time.

<sup>4</sup>Syusyoku: Join a new company after graduation.

## 1.2. Social Reasons for Bringing Family to Japan

Nepalese society is known for emotional relationships with "AfnoManchhe" (one's people). AfnoManche has both positive and negative meanings, depending on the situation. Subedi (2014) states, "The people in everyday life try to develop AfnoManchhe relationships strategically to achieve something." There is an unethical meaning to AfnoManchhe in terms of political and bureaucratic areas. At the bureaucratic and political levels, if there is AfnoManchhe, it is easier to take benefits when needed. Ghimire & Ashraf (2016) describe how "AfnoManchhe often characterizes the Nepalese bureaucracy." AfnoManchhe categories by family, business, politics, and bureaucracy (Subedi, 2014). The family AfnoManchhe by blood (children) or marriage (spouse) In Nepalese society, there is a saying, "MardaPardaAfnoManchheChahincha," which means "We need social help to live in society while facing challenges and even at the time of death." Here, AfnoManchhe indicates the people of society or friends.

Regarding immigrants, AfnoManchhe refers to family members in a foreign land. Nepalese, after settling in Japan, bring their families to live together. This kind of specific character in Nepalese loves to live with family, and they always need AfnoManchhe near them, which is rooted in their social culture.

**Table 2:** Foreign Immigrants in Japan in the end of 2022

Country	Total Population in Japan	Dependent (Family Stay) 2022	Ration of foreigners living with family
China	761, 563	67, 735	8.9%
Vietnam	489, 312	41, 758	8.5%
Korea	411, 312	9, 316	2.3%
Philippines	298, 740	4, 584	1.5%
Brazil	209, 430	545	0.3%
Nepal	139, 393	42, 317	30.4%

Sources: Created by the author based on the number of foreign residents and the number of foreigners with dependent visas (family visa) in the end of 2022, Ministry of Justice.

Table No.2 also shows the data for the most significant number (family stays visas) of Nepalese which is one of the highest ratios in Japan with 30.4.

## 1.3 Current situation of the Labor market in Japan.

Japan faces a decreasing birth rate and an increasing number of older adults (Ogawa, 2005; Yamada, 2010). Japan's birth rate fell to a new record low of 799, 728 in 2022, while deaths rose to 1.58 million. As a result, the country's rapidly aging society challenges Japan's economy (Matsuyama, 2023). The impact of Japan's declining birth rate and gaining society, not in a single sector. For example, it is influencing various sectors. It is a severe scenario for the railway business. A decline in the total population also impacts the railways in the same way as it affects society overall (Morichi, 2014). Most areas, such as the transportation

sector, hotels and resorts, delivery companies (Yamato, Sagawa, and Amazon Japan), manufacturing sectors, hospitals, and many more, have workforce problems in Japan.

According to Japan's government estimation, if the current situation cannot improve, by 2030, Japan may see 8.15 million fewer people in its workforce compared to 2015. However, as the conditions improve, fewer people could reach 2.07 million (Koon, 2018). That is why the Japanese government is announcing different policies to improve the situation by attracting foreigners in the form of international students, a technical intern trainee system, a specified skilled worker system, etc. As a result, the Japanese working - age population has been declining, significantly increasing foreign workers (Kitao & Yamada, 2021). Likewise, the Nepalese population is Japan's sixth - largest foreign community.

## 2. Objectives

- 1) To know how immigration bureau policy affects the motivation of Nepalese employees working in Japan while they are working under the Japanese company management style.
- 2) To compare the findings with previous research results.
- 3) To provide hints to the Nepalese youth planning to work in Japanese companies in the future and to introduce the relevant sectors and government of Japan that Nepalese employees commonly face issues and challenges while working in Japan.

## 3. Research Question

- 1) Former Student Nepalese, who work in Japanese companies: What do they think about Japanese companies, and what are the similarities and differences between other foreign employees?
- 2) How might the policies of the immigration bureau and the management style of Japanese companies influence the decisions of former Nepalese students to select and leave Japanese companies?

## 4. Research Gap

Several survey research studies have been conducted, such as the consciousness of Chinese employees at Japanese companies (Ouyang et al., 2008), a Conscious Survey Report on Chinese University Students' Interest in Working for Japanese Enterprises (Ouyang, 2009), a Conscious Survey Report on Chinese University Students' Interest in Working for Japanese Enterprises (Ouyang&Kitani, 2013), and Career Perspective: Motivation of Chinese Employees Graduating from Chinese Universities and Working for Japanese Companies (Liu & Takahashi, 2021). Several surveys have been conducted about the consciousness of foreign employees working in Japanese companies' perspectives, foreign employees' career perspectives, and so on. The Nepalese population holds the sixth position in Japan, but there is a considerable lack of research on factors such as

motivational factors for choosing Japanese companies, difficulties while working in companies, prospective resignation reasons, the image of Japanese companies, career expectations, and realities, etc.

## 5. Literature Review

Japan is globally famous for its 'Made in Japan' branding, high - quality products, management philosophy, and many more. Nevertheless, these days, Japan is facing a workforce problem. Concerning the workforce problem, the government of Japan announced different policies to attract foreigners, such as internships, international students, technical intern trainees, specific skills, etc. The Japanese government is trying to attract international students by making policies, but on the other side, working foreign employees face difficulties. According to the survey report of the Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training (2009), 73.3% of participants expressed limitations on career advancement, and the intercultural problem accounted for 61.9%. 39.6% were impacted by personal life, which was the primary reason. The survey was conducted among 902 international students working in Japanese companies.

While the government of Japan is making policies to promote and accept highly skilled foreign workers to innovate the Japanese industry and enhance the efficiency of the Japanese labor market, companies are facing challenges in hiring foreign workers because of communication skills (15.9%), cultural differences in thinking and values (15.3%), and misalignment in job roles (12.1%) (Keiko, 2020).

There are some challenges faced by Chinese employees working for Japanese companies in China, such as communication problems and low salaries. Still, they are positive in terms of learning new skills. From the point of view of Chinese employees working in Japanese companies operating in China (Ouyang et al., 2008) and the point of view of the participants from 16 countries working in Japanese companies (Chinese and Nepalese not included) (Ouyang&Kitani, 2014), the top four results were "good product," "honest," "normal salary," and "strong teamwork," which are identical.

As discussed above, various reasons exist to increase the number of foreigners in Japan. The number of foreign employees working in different sectors in Japan is not small and is increasing significantly. Moreover, the government is attracting skilled foreign workers because of Japan's workforce shortage. It started when Japan's government imported technology into Japan between 1868 and 1880 and invited more than 4000 foreign experts to facilitate installation, initiate operations, and provide on - the - job training for the Japanese. That was the first time the Japanese government welcomed a highly skilled workforce in Japan (Yoshio, 2003). Japan welcomes skilled labor and students. Japanese educational institutions began to lean toward countries such as Nepal. As a result, the number of Nepalese international students began to increase, which was one of the reasons (Takemitsu, 2017). This is the situational

demand to conduct research about former students working in Japan. Based on the above research, we need to conduct the survey and compare the results with previous research results.

To link the research purpose to the value of this research, we need to know the philosophy of Japanese - style management and Nepal. Every country has its own management style. Considered broadly, the Eastern and Western management styles are also different. Western management theory emphasizes efficiency, productivity, and personal profit, but Eastern management theory emphasizes humanity, harmony, social profit, and relationships. (Li, 2018). In this chapter, Nepalese employees work under the Japanese management system at a Japanese company. Therefore, here are some key points about the Japanese management system:

### 5.1 Japanese style management and Relation to Nepalese Culture

Japan is famous for its management system globally. Confucianism, Buddhism, Bushido philosophy, and pre - modern Japanese community activities all impact it (Sagi, 2015). Bejjani (2023) states, "The core principles of Japanese management include continuous improvement (kaizen), teamwork, customer focus, employee engagement, and quality control." Similarly, Pathmaranjan (2003) describes "teamwork" as a characteristic of Japanese management that enhances job satisfaction and production in the organization. In an overview of the Japanese Style of Management by Chapagain (2009) describes, "the features of Japanese management are teamwork and collective goals, which are similar to Nepalese community groupism as the "Guthi" system of many ethnic groups such as the "Newar," "Thakali," etc. To work in a group, respecting seniors is part of Nepal's cultural values, norms, and social structure. We highly respect the decisions of our senior members of the family, such as "Hajurbua" (grandfather), "Hajurama" (grandmother), "Bua" (father), etc. In Nepal to live two or generations together is also very common thing. There for it can be said, Nepal's social culture is joint family, where the family members work every task (housework, agriculture, family business) together, and junior members get education from elders in the form of on - the - job training (OJT).

#### 1) Hypothesis

H1. Nepalese workers' consciousness may be similar to foreign workers (Chinese workers and other 16 other countries)

H2. Nepalese former students may face language barriers while working in Japanese companies.

#### 2) Research Methodology

The primary data and secondary data sources are used for the study. To gather preliminary data, conducted field visits and used questionnaires with working Nepalese and those who previously worked in Japanese companies. Moreover, as secondary data has been collected from different journals, articles, and web sources, I designed two questionnaires: a

written version for face - to - face interviews and an online version with the same content.

**3) Research Area**

Former Nepalese students graduate from a Japanese university and work in a Japanese company or have working experience in the past. For the face - to - face interview, nine samples were taken from the Saitama and Tokyo prefecture of Japan.

**4) Research Samples**

A total of 134 respondents participated in this survey research. I sent questionnaires to 26 people by SNS and e - mail and received only 12 responses. Moreover, I used the Google survey form tool to collect 113 responses from Nepalese working in Japanese companies. Therefore, in total, 134 respondents participated in the survey. [

**5) Outline of the survey**

The survey is summarized below. Regarding the reasons for choosing a Japanese company, 47% of respondents chose the job for the visa (Relation between work content and studied subject, for visa purposes). Managers' instruction in the workplace is quite positive. 74% of respondents choose good instruction. 88% of Nepalese stated they have a good relationship with colleagues. Cooperative (22%), teamwork (22%), quite well (15%), opinion exchange (9%), motive (4%), good manners and behavior (3%), and global thinking (3%) indicate that Nepalese employees have positive perceptions of their colleagues. The top five respondents about the images of a Japanese company in the perception of Nepalese employees (multiple answers chosen from the questionnaire) were punctuality (72), responsibility (65), honesty (58), teamwork (53), and perfectionism (29). However, respondents said vacation is too short to visit the homeland and spend more time with families and relatives. Concerning job satisfaction, 32% of respondents were satisfied, 41% were somewhat satisfied, 17% were neutral, 5% were somewhere dissatisfied, 2% were dissatisfied, and 3% did not respond. According to the survey results for the difficulties of working in a Japanese company, the career path is 49% (no career path, no chance to show ability, no promotion chance), private life is 26% (worry about family, vacations are too short, visa problems, etc.), corporate culture is 17% (different corporate culture, human relations), and the remaining 8% are the result indicates that if employees worry about family, vacations being too short, visa problems, managers and government need to think about their problem and need to address them. The top three reasons to quit the company are career path 48% (no

promotion chance; to transfer to a new company; worry about a career path; no work evaluation), private life 17% (stability of family in Japan, to start own business), not decided yet is 13%. In their private lives, they worry about family life in Japan. Similarly, to the question about continuing their job in Japan, 34% of respondents want to continue their job until they obtain a permanent residence visa. Furthermore, many Nepalese are planning to start their own business in Japan. Nepalese who are willing to continue until they have permanent residence in Japan also plan to be entrepreneurs.

**6. Result and Discussion**

In the case of Nepalese, 40% of respondents selected the company according to their studied field and work content, which is necessary to achieve a working visa in Japan. The immigration bureau of Japan forced them to choose the job for a visa rather than their expertise and interest indirectly. But, Managers' instruction in the workplace is quite positive, with a 74% response. The relationship with colleagues is quite good. It may be the reflection of Nepalese cultural roots to live with a joint family and respect the senior member of the family.

The survey report about the image of Japanese companies in the perception of Nepalese. The survey result suggests Nepalese value responsibility, teamwork, and honesty on the job, highlighting their personalities as a group benefit rather than personal profit. Nepalese love family and wants to spend some time with family while they are going back to Nepal for vacation. Therefore they want a little bit longer vacation. Concerning job satisfaction, 17% were neutral. The neutral response of 17% indicates that if the company is concerned about the neutral percentage, it can be changed to somewhat satisfied or satisfied. Private life problem while working in a Japanese company as difficulty is remarkable, which is followed by 26% (worry about family, vacations are too short, visa problems, etc.) respondents. The response in terms of the reason for quitting the job and the private life of respondents should think. 17% of respondents thought to quit the job for their private reason (stability of family in Japan, to start their own business). And 34% of respondents want to continue their job until they obtain a permanent residence visa. Among the Nepalese who are willing to continue until they have permanent residence in Japan, they also plan to be entrepreneurs in Japan

Now, explain the hypothesized stated above by comparing the findings of the survey result with previous studies

**Table 3:** Consciousness of Nepalese employees who work in Japanese companies comparing with previous study finding

Item	Point of view Chinese employees (FeiOuyang • YousukeiNaitou • Weijiazhou (2008)	Point of view 16 Countries employees (Chinese and Nepalese not included) Ouyang Fei • Kitani Mayumi (2014)	Former Nepalese Students who work in Japanese companies
Top1	Good product	Good product	High responsibility
Top2	Honest	Honest	Honest
Top3	Normal Salary	Normal Salary	Strong teamwork

Sources: Created by the author based literature review and survey result

As explained in Table No.3, the finding of the survey from the perception of Nepalese is different from Chinese employees and other employees of 16 countries (not including Chinese). The data shows that Nepalese prioritize responsibility first.

Similarly, language barriers as difficulties while working in Japanese companies was the second hypothesis stated above.

**Table 4:** Difficulties of foreign workers while working in Japanese companies

Item	Chinese employees Only (Ouyang et al., 2008)	16 Countries employees (Ouyang & Kitani, 2014)	Nepalese Employees Only
Top1	Communication with Japanese is difficult	Corporate Culture	Career Path
Top2	Salary is low	Promotion/Pay raise is impossible	No chance to show ability
Top3	Other	Unique Japanese Culture	Corporate Culture
Top4	There is much overtime	Non - Linguistic communication	No Promotion Chance
Top5	Hierarchical relationship	High quality	Worry about Family

Sources: Created by the author based literature review and survey result

Moriya (2013) states, "human relations are built in Japanese companies on the basis of communication skills". The data from Table no.4 indicates that Chinese employees also facing communication problems, which is in the second position, and Non - Chinese employees (employees from 16 countries) face language problems, which is in the third position. But in the case of Nepalese, they don't have language problems, but they are worried about their family, which holds the fifth position, which is not in other foreign employees.

## 7. Conclusion

The study reveals that Japanese immigration policies and management styles challenge the career development of former Nepalese students working in Japanese companies. These findings highlight the importance of policy reforms to establish a supportive work environment for foreign employees in Japan. Further research is needed to explore the experiences of foreign workers from other nationalities and sectors.

The key findings indicate that Nepalese employees select the company based on their study field rather than their interests and expertise. Compared to the other countries' employees, Nepalese love to live with family, rooted in their social culture. Short vacations (insufficient time to visit Nepal and meet families and relatives in Nepal), visa problems, etc., are some of the causes affecting their careers. The migration is to achieve better quality life (Sitompu, 2023). If immigrants cannot feel better life and safe career they may start to migrate again for the third countries.

Based on the survey results, the following advice is given: increase the retention rate of foreign talent and attract new foreign talent to Japanese companies.

Japanese graduates can work anywhere, according to their interests, but due to the immigration bureau policy, international student graduates cannot choose the company according to their expertise and interests; however, they become graduates from the same university where Japanese graduates. It affects their career, causing job dissatisfaction and becoming a reason to move third country. According to

the Toranomom Language School in Japan, while international students are hunting for jobs, there must be a link between the student's primary subject and the nature of the work content to acquire a work visa.

By hiring a Visa document expert: Japanese companies do not understand the various procedures and applications related to the employment of foreigners, and they have no information on where to consult (Seki, 2019). Moriya (2013) states, "the visa procedure is complicated". As a result, foreigners are facing problems with visas in Japan.

By addressing the above problem, Japan can reduce the workforce problem, foreign employees feel safe in their careers, and new talents might enter Japan. International students are the key to saving Japan's secret labor shortage.

## 8. Further Research

Depending on the purpose of this research, there was a limitation to conducting the research according to purpose. From the research, we learned that, because of the visa problem and unstable careers, Nepalese employees are planning to migrate again to third countries for a better quality of life. Moreover, a remarkable number of former Nepalese students are thinking of starting businesses in Japan.

If there are opportunities in the future, I would like to explore these finding more deeply.

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