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◆◆◆PROGRAM◆◆◆

International Session Paper Presentations
Sunday, December 12, 2021, 10:00am-12:00 noon (JST)
Online Format

Chair and Moderator
Dr. David Green
Nagoya University

1. Chair: Opening Remarks and Introduction of the Presenters
2. Presentations: 25 mins.; Q&A: 5 mins.
3. Summary and General Discussion: 30 minutes or remaining time

Presenters

SIPRASEUTH Markane (Kyoto University), *Investigating the Communication Bridge Between Japanese Management and Foreign Trainees in International Human Resources*

Keywords

Japanese management, foreign trainees, communication, bridge, IHRM

Abstract

How does Japanese management communicate with foreign trainees in the in the Japan's Technical Intern Training Program (TITP)? A majority of Japanese companies who hire foreign trainees have little International Human Resource Management (IHRM) experience and don't have a Japanese employee who speaks foreign trainees' language such as Chinese, Vietnamese, or Tagalog. A look at literature shows an abundance of language research in international business on white-collar multinational corporations (MNC) growing exponentially (Tenzer et al., 2017), however there is little research on small to medium sized companies with blue-collar workers around language research (Tenzer et al., 2021). This research is the beginning of an investigation into language and culture within Japanese firms aimed at bilingual trainees in contrast to Japanese bilinguals that act as a vital communication bridge between management and trainees. A trainee acting as a non-professional translator has numerous knowledge processing challenges ranging from grammar, vocabulary, and culture.

To understand more about bilingual bridge trainees, I conducted two observations and an online interview. The observations at a construction site found the reliance on bilingual bridge trainees and not AI, Google, or drawings. Furthermore, the absences of the bridge translator led to a communication void between trainees with lower Japanese skills. The interview with a Japanese factory managers showed the reliance on the bridge trainee to confirm and elaborate instructions from managers to ensure understanding and productivity. In addition, management's openness to any questions showed emotional (Edmondson, 1999) and cultural understanding (Deardorff, 2006) that was helpful in trainees talking with management (MacIntyre et al. 1998).

The results from the observation and interview are a small sample however it begins to show us the important role bridge trainees play between trainees and Japanese management. Understanding can help Japanese firms increase productivity, create a better environment for trainees, as well as open new ideas into policies that help support trainees and firms.

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KIM, Sungwon (University of Bristol), *Portrait of Japan. Rethinking cultural plurality. Ethnographic interviews for transnational youth in Japan.*

Keywords

Japan, cultural plurality, cultural identity, identity formation, transnational identity

Abstract

This paper rethinks the cultural plurality in Japan. The literature review contextualises the current circumstances of Japan's migration issues compared to the global and European landscape, referring to vital discourse supporting the arguments on plurality by Arendt, Deleuze and Bhaba. Qualitative interviews for Japan's generation Z, who own mixed cultural backgrounds, analyse the crucial factors in their cultural identity formation. Also, it investigates what elements contribute to society in maintaining cultural complexities. This research adopts a unique ethnographic methodology combining action research and Photovoice, attempting hybrid audio and visual form data collection. The research results in two primary analyses. 1) Four folds categorisation of impact factor for cultural identity formation 2) Relationship between identity crises and identity formation. This paper argues for changing Japan's legal design, particularly plural citizenship, to make Japan a better place for migrants.

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