

13.1.2025

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**Title**

Higher education from massification to universal access : a perspective from Japan

**Publication year**

2012

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 63 (2012) 2, S. 257 - 270

**Inventory number**

31782

**Keywords**

Ausland : Japan : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Ausland : Japan : Hochschulwesen allgemein

**Abstract**

Though Japan has established one the largest higher education systems in Asia much earlier than most of the other Asian countries and some European countries, including the UK, Germany and France, except for a very few Japanese books and articles, little research has been published in Japan on this topic. This article will address the research question: how did Japan's higher education shift from massification, through to post-massification and, now, to near universal access? By examining the changes in the enrollment in Japan's higher education based on quantitative analysis, the article will provide an example of how an Asian country had experienced different stages of the growth in enrollments in higher education. Moreover, it is also argued that the major findings from Japan's case study are not necessarily consistent with the definition of the three-stage linear changes in higher education enrollment by Martin Trow. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) ^Huang, Futao, E-Mail: futao@hiroshima-u.ac.jp