

SHINZO ABE'S POLICY TOWARD AGING POPULATION ISSUE

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Abstract

This research has a purpose of analyzing Shinzo Abe's policy toward the aging population. In the case of the aging population issue. The aging population is a demographic issue which harms the economy of a country. Nowadays the country is facing an aging population with people aged 65 and an increase in birth rate. There are several factors of the aging population in Japan such as low birth rates and high mortality rates. As a result of the productive age and labor workers to support the economic, social welfare system. Shinzo Abe as the government makes a policy which is the third part of "Abenomics" namely growth strategy. The growth strategy includes domestic and foreign policies to overcome the aging population. Here the author wants to examine how the policy formulated by Shinzo to overcome the aging population by using the concept of the population and the concept of immigration. This research signified that the policy for overcoming the aging population: 1) through domestic policy consist of three womenomics policy, robot policy, and family policy. 2) Through foreign policy to open the massive labor shortage. The author uses the qualitative method to support this analysis through library research and electronic sources that are relevant to this research.

Keyword: Aging Population; Immigration policy; Womenomics; Robot policy; Family policy; Shinzo Abe

Background

Japan is interesting country as a research object for its unique community, diverse cultures and ancestral values that are still maintained over time up to present modern time. This is country located in East Asia, beside the Pacific Ocean and neighboring Korea, China and Russia. This country is an archipelago consisting of 6,852 islands (Japan Information & Culture Center, Embassy of Japan, 2018). Its main islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. Honshu Island is the largest island and in this island Tokyo, the capital city of Japan, is located. Japan government was constitutional monarchy where Emperor's power limited and degraded especially for ceremonial tasks. This constitution was applied in 1947 which replaced the Meiji Constitution in 1889. The constitution was stipulated by three branches as its legislative which was designated the National Diet, executive vested by the Cabinet, and judicial vested by Supreme Court.

Since the 1870s, under Meiji Restoration Japan was began to become an Industry country. There are Hiroshima and Nagasaki as two essential cities in Japan as the base of the industry. Hiroshima is a famous city in terms of industry and military which are several military units are based near Hiroshima, including the General Army headquarters (Giangreco, 2009). Nagasaki city is one of the biggest ports in southern Japan and became a famous city during the war because it had many industrial activities including artillery production, ships, military equipment, and other war material. The four most significant companies in the city are Mitsubishi Shipyards, Mitsubishi Electric Shipyards, Mitsubishi Weapons, and Mitsubishi Steel and Weapons. These four companies employ around 90% of the workforce in Nagasaki and cover 90% of the industry in this city (Truman, 1946).

Unfortunately, World War II the city of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan was bombed by United State America. World War II had led to the crushed military, destroyed cities, a broken economy, low agricultural production, and an extremely high birth rate. Japan experienced this high birth rate, called "Baby Boom" for three years from 1947 to 1949. Baby Boom was happened because in the many post-war ex-soldiers returned to civilian life, got married and had children with 2.6 million birth a year between 1947 and 1949, with the culmination in 1949 at 2,697,000, resulting in a total of 8 million children born (Kazuo Y. , 2005). Japanese government officials were concerned that the population growth would hurt the economy's ability to recover. Because in post-war, Japan begins to develop its economy after the

phenomena of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Thus, this Baby Boom was ended after Japan's government released abortion law and promoted the planning and birth in family control which had the purpose of preventing overpopulation. After the Baby Boom, the birth rate begins to decrease in the long run to and at the beginning of the 21st century remains around 1.3. It was then followed by the number of births that dropped from about 2.75 million in 1947 to a little over a million in 2007 (Robert L. Clark, 2009) (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, 2007). The decrease in birth is also followed by a high percentage in mortality, the high life expectancy of women and men aged 65. Then this demographic trend, along with the immigration policies which shut Japan into net inflowing migration, also caused population growth to decline during the 1980 and 1990. As a result of this demographic, dramatic aging population emerged.

According to the United Nations Population Division in 2011 Japan is in the first position with the highest shares of the 60 age population from 2011 until 2050. This demography issue is known as the aging population. Population aging is a condition in which the average 60 age increases in a country's population due to decreased birth rate and increased life expectancy. According to the World Bank, there has been an increase in dependency ratio in Japan in 2010 which was 56,189 and in 2015 increased by 64,467. The age dependency ratio has two types, Dependency ratio of the sum of the young aged population which has aged 0-14 and the old population which has 65 above aged. Thus the productive age of people is between 15 – 64 ages. Then the old age ratio in 2010 amounted to 22,449 to 2015 to 26,015. There was an increase of about 10% in 5 years period. It means if the dependency ratio increases, a burden that will be borne by the state to provide facilities for the elderly such as health benefits, pensions and others will increase (The World Bank, 2017). Hence, the decrease o population make an unbalance demographic condition continues, it will affect several sectors such as the economic growth and the labor sector.

There are several factors of aging population, i.e., longest life expectancy, low birth rates, high mortality rate, and the workaholic. First, Japan has the longest life expectancy in the world, with 83.7 years. Compare with other countries such as Singapore, Switzerland, Spain, and Australia with averages start from 82.8 to 83.4 years, then the U.S at 79.3 years and China at 76.1 (Otake, 2017). Japan becomes a country with the longest life expectancy because as a developed country, the government can provide a living standard and proper health facilities for

the retirement age, so the population has a long life. Second, the low birth rates resulted from how the Japanese tend to regard marriage as something that is not too important or lack of desire to get married.

Moreover, Japan also applies the law of legal abortion, so people are free to have an abortion, so people are free to have an abortion. Third, the high mortality rate was caused by a large number of people committing suicide due to pressure in the work environment. The last is the workaholic. Workaholic is people who are very interested in work or can be called a working driver who is ready to work long hours.

“About 22% of Japanese work more than 49 hours a week, compared with 16% of US workers and 11% in France and Germany, according to data by the Japanese government” (McCury, 2015)

This workaholic habit tends to make the Japanese did not have time to think about marriage life and have a child.

Have known, although this aging population issue had happened since a long time ago Shinzo Abe's administration is to be the culmination of an aging with the data in 2012 23, 881 and increased in 2017 27,049, this data show how the significant growth of aging population in Shinzo Abe administration (The World Bank, 2017). This aging population culmination becomes one of the economic problems because aging population emerges leads to several impacts such as labor shortage, pension expenditure increase, pension expenditure which health all of those will make the revenue of the state to decline and result to the unstable economy. Thus, to respond to the aging population, Shinzo Abe makes policy to overcome the aging population issue.

Method of Research

In this thesis, the research method that the writer uses is qualitative research. The qualitative research is used to explain the problem and to verify the hypothesis based on empirical reality. The sources of information and references are collected in the form of books. In addition, various data from the internet that related to the topic will also be used such as journals, e-news, articles, e-book, and other literary sources. Therefore, the research is not

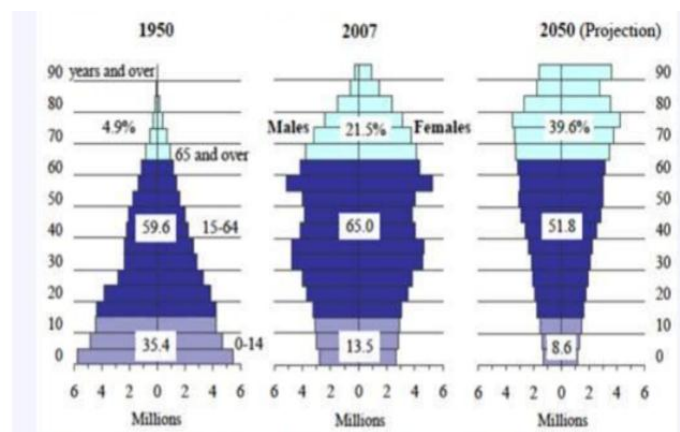
implemented in the field but the research is based on the data that has been available in library research and media. The level of analysis in this research is state.

Result and Discussion

A. Domestic Policy

In the second administration of Shinzo Abe in 2012 had a domestic policy that focused on the Japanese economy. Shinzo Abe's domestic policy known as "Abenomics" was designed to end deflation, overcome public debt, stimulate private investment and consumer spending, and rekindle economic growth (Tsuchiya, 2013). Abenomics policy consists three arrows: (i) fiscal consolidation, (ii) more aggressive monetary easing by the Bank of Japan, and (iii) structural reforms to boost Japan's competitiveness and economic growth. The third arrow "structural reforms to boost Japan's competitiveness and economic growth" is a policy that focuses on Japan economic growth, which will overcome all the problems that hinder the growth of the Japan economy. The aging population is one of the problems that hinder Japanese economic growth. Because aging of the population causes a decline in the productivity of the country. In a country, there are three determinants for economic growth: labor, capital, and productivity. So that the severe aging population will run the risk of experiencing long-term economic stagnation.

Figure 1 Changes in Pyramid Population 1950-2050



Source: Statistic Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare

Based on the Japanese's population pyramid can be seen (figure 1) population changes that occur in Japan, in 1950 the pyramid population shaped expansive model, illustrates that a country has a high birth rate with 35.4 percent and the productive age is more than the older.

Whereas in 2007 the Japanese pyramid began to form a constructive model, illustrates that the population of productive age and birth will begin to decrease, and the age of the elderly begins to increase, then it is predicted that in 2050 the birth rate and productive age will decline drastically and the elderly will also increase dramatically (Weeks, 2008). If the constrictive population model continues to create a breakdown due to the imbalance of young age to sustain old age , this will significantly affect Japan's economic growth. According to Morgenthau, the population is one of the essential elements for a country. Morgenthau believes that the country will have a higher power. Without a large population, a country will find it difficult to establish and maintain an industry, where the industry in this era becomes very important for a country in the face of modern technology market competition (Morgenthau, 1985). In overcoming the aging issue, Shinzo Abe's population needs two long-term and short term policies. The internal policy is a domestic policy that will act as a long-term policy to overcome the aging population. In Abenomics structural reforms there are three policies for Womenomics, Robot policy, and Family policy, which are domestic policies to deal with the aging population and low birth rates. These policies have their concerns for overcoming an aging population and low birth rates.

Womenomics (women's economic opportunities) are part of the third arrow of Abenomics Growth Strategy. Womenomics policy is a policy that is focused on encouraging women to participate in employment and to overcome low birth rates and increasing population aging. So that this policy aims to support work-life balance, to encourage decisive action for women empowerment, and to encourage women's entrepreneurship (Sakamoto, 2013). With the hope that women who will work can fill the employment gap and support male workforce to produce GDP growth. Shinzo Abe has promised to increase the participation of women between the ages of 25 and 44 in the workforce to 73% in 2020, increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions from 10% to 30%. % by 2020, and increase the percentage of women returning to work after their first child from 38% in 201 to 50% by 2020. The government has proposed to recruit and promote more women in government, and support women because they balance their careers and family life. The government has promoted female public officials to top-ranking national positions. In 2013, a woman was appointed Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare for the first time in 16 years. For the first time, a woman was appointed as Executive Secretary of the Prime Minister (Emma Chanlett-Avery, 2014). In achieving the target of

womenomics, Shinzo Abe has made several key performance indicators from womenomics (Kathy Matsui, 2014):

- 1) Improve child care facilities and nursing
- 2) Extending the benefits of childcare leave.
- 3) Encourage the private sector to promote more women and provide data on women's progress.

Since the implementation of Womenomics, more than 1 million women have returned to the workforce. Then since 2014, the level of women's participation in employment in Japan has been higher than in the US. Based on data from the World Bank since 2012 the ratio of Japanese female workers experienced rapid growth from 63.64% in 2012 to 68.13% in 2016 (The World Bank Group, 2018). However, social norms still state that women are the primary caregivers of children in the family, so working mothers tend not to be offered a client-faced role or career promotion given the culture of long working hours.

In his administration, Shinzo Abe proposed in "the Japan Revitalization Strategy was revised in 2014" and updated in 2015 which was called the Robot Revolution and was formed as the "Realization Council of the Robot Revolution." Robot revolution is a policy to increase productivity by utilizing robotic technology to overcome the issue of aging population and declining birth rates which have an impact on the decline in the workforce. In Shinzo Abe speech in the opening of Japan's Robot Revolution Initiative Council on May 15, He urged companies to "spread the use of robotics from large-scale factories to every corner of our economy and society." (Bremner, 2015). So far, robots have only been used by large companies in the car, electricity and electronic industries. In the future robots are expected to be used for the needs of larger manufacturing fields such as the main food, cosmetics, medical and pharmaceutical industries, service industries. Where robots can serve the needs of small and medium enterprises designed for specialized tasks such as welding or coating and can perform multipurpose tasks while ensuring cost-effectiveness in operating conditions. Based on the revolutionary concept this robot has three pillars (Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, 2015):

- 1) The global base for robot innovation and strengthening of robot creativity
- 2) The community maximizes the use of robot capacity in everyday life
- 3) The world's primary strategy for the new robot era

The government has set a 5-year target for implementing this policy in the community. The achievement target is divided into five sectors such as the management sector, services, Nursing and Medical, Infrastructure, Disaster and construction, and Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Food Industry (Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, 2015).

In overcoming the low birth rate and the long aging of the Japanese population the Japanese government also made family policies formulated by the Gender Equality Bureau of the Office of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare or Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry. This policy includes several points regarding child support and health services (Katsumata, 2014).

1) Universal Child Support

Under a strong political initiative, the Child Benefit Act was enacted in 2012. Amended child benefits are paid to households with children up to 15 years, with the threshold of income. The amount varies from 5,000 yen to 15,000 yen according to the age of the children and the level of household income.

Table 3.1 Income Threshold for Child Allowance

Number of Dependents	Household income threshold (in, 10,00yen) after tax deduction (A)	Household Income threshold (in 10,000 yen) before tax deduction (B)
None	662	833.3
1 person	660	875.6
2 persons	698	917.8
3 persons	736	960.0
4 persons	774	1,002.1
5 persons	812	1,042.1
More than 6 persons	+38.0/person	

Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

2) Child Care Allowance (for single-parent households)

Childcare benefits are given to single parents with limited income raising children 18 years or younger. Monthly allowances are ¥ 41,430 for one child, 5,000 yen for the second child, and an additional 3,000 yen for each child including the third and subsequent children.

3) Special Child Care Allowance (for parents of children with disabilities)

Special Child Care Benefits are given to parents who care for their disabled children at home. The monthly allowance of children under the age of 20 is 50,400 yen for the first level and 33,570 yen for the second level disability. Besides, welfare benefits for severely disabled children are given to parents who care for them at home. The monthly allowance is ¥ 14,280.

On the other hand, the monthly allowance is 26,260 yen for children over the age of 20 years. Children over 20 years receive the right to a national disability pension according to the level of disability

4) Child care center for children

5) Public health actions for mothers and children

The local government provides health checks and counseling to expectant mothers from the 23rd week of pregnancy and up to free three-year-olds. The Mother and Child Health Record Book, called "Boshitecho" in Japanese, is given to all pregnant women.

B. Foreign Policy: Immigration Policy

Foreign policy is a set of goals sought, values, decisions made and actions were taken by states and national governments acting on their behalf, in the context of external relations of societies (Razak, 2014). Foreign policy within a state is a set of decisions that explain how a country interacts to pursue its national interests with other countries or the international arena in terms of the economic, political, social and military fields, so the foreign policy process is a process of decision making. The aspects that underlie foreign policy making are based on aspects that exist within the country. The domestic situation of a country has a significant influence on the formation of domestic and foreign policy. Here Japan is facing the aging population as a

domestic issue which was caused by a massive labor shortage. This massive labor shortage cannot overcome only by domestic policy. Hence Shinzo Abe is taking action to overcome the aging population by making foreign policy to pursue the national interest toward immigration as a short term solution to overcome the aging population impact.

The cabinet approved this policy of Revitalization Strategy on June 24, 2014, which included the use of foreign workers as one of the main points (Ministry of Justice Japan, 2015). This policy aims to strengthen the competitiveness of human resources for the growth of the Japanese economy by providing a good environment for immigrant high skilled workers and the second is to revise the fundamentals of the training program (Kodama, 2015). Even though Japan is experiencing an aging population crisis, it remains selective in choosing immigrants who will be accepted to enter Japan. The Japanese government did not accept or not recognize the unskilled worker to work in Japan. So that the Japanese government formulated many policies in accepting immigrants' work with several selection principles. According to Eytan Meyer, there are two parts to explain how a State formulates immigration policy. These two parts are the Immigration control policy and immigration policy.

In accepting the immigration Japan government already sets up the rules and procedures in accepting immigrant that attached to the Japan Immigration Control Act 2016 which has three main categories of immigrants (Masaki, 2017):

- 1) Promotion of the Acceptance of Highly-Skilled Foreign Nationals

In 2014, it was stipulated in the immigration law that the status of new high-skilled residence for the poor had been determined. The government supports an increase in the number of foreign residents, especially skilled workers or professionals. More revenue from highly skilled professionals is expected to contribute to the growth of the Japanese financial industry. In accepting high skill three categories of: (a) Advanced academic research engaging activities in the fields of natural sciences or humanities based on a contract entered into a public or private organization in Japan; (b) Advanced specialized/technical activities engaging in the fields of natural sciences or humanities based on a contract entered into a public or private organization in Japan; (c) Advanced business management activities are engaging in the operation of business operations in Japan.

In the category of high skilled workers, the Japanese Government provided some facilities as benefits. The facilities provided are high standard health facilities at a low cost, immigrant's children will get free education facilities for the elementary school to junior high school, and get free educational facilities to support their careers. Then high-skilled spouse got permission to work and was permitted for their parents to enter Japan under certain conditions. Then the period of stay required in applying for a highly skilled permanent residence or green card is reduced from the previous five years to three years

2) Technical Intern Training program

The technical intern training system is the certification of pre-employment training for developing countries which aims to contribute internationally through the transfer of skills that can be obtained in Japan, then bring these skills back to their home countries to be utilized. The period of technical intern training is a maximum of three years and, in principle, further training is not permitted. However, there are calls for an extension of the training period because three years are not enough to acquire more advanced skills. In the revision, a more detailed category is made and set the quota of trainees to be accepted according to that category. The technical intern training system was introduced in 1993 based on the fact that the training system has become the norm, and although there were initially 17 subject jobs, it has now increased to 71 work activities such as in agriculture, fishery, construction, textile, machinery and metal, nursing, etc. (JITCO, 2010). Technical Intern Training has facilities such as accommodation, health insurance, and employment insurance. Increased strict protection systems to prevent the technical intern training system are not used as a means for simple labor or low-paid labor and to protect technical interns. Then prohibitions and penalties for actions for implementing organizations or supervisory organizations such as those confiscating passports or cards for residency of technical interns

3) Response to the International society and international situation through the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

In strengthening the Japan partnership in economic activities based on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Japan has been accepting foreign workers from these countries (Masahiko, 2010). As a result of a rapidly aging population, and high demand for care for childcare. So EPA is an economic collaboration devoted to accepting foreign citizens through a formal framework from the perspective of strengthening bilateral cooperation in economic activities. While Nurse and Care worker will get education facilities such as scholarship systems and budget allocation for nursing educational institutions. Both of Nurse and care worker will receive a Japanese language training including 40 hours training on caregiving (Japan Foundation, 2016).

Shinzo Abe's statement in the June 24, 2014 speech can be concluded that the statement stressed that the condition of Japan facing a shrinking population would recruit qualified human resources to revitalize the economy and increase competitiveness. This states if the government fully supports the recruitment of foreign workers with highly skilled workers and easing the terms of stay. Acceptance of high skill workers is significant for economic growth, in order to always compete globally in the commercial industry. Since May 7, 2012, the government has given special immigration treatment to workers' high skills, such as academic background, professional career, and annual salary. As a result, the number of foreign nationals recognized as highly skilled professionals has increased 2012 313 people increased to 1,608 in 2014.

Technical Intern Training program aimed explicitly at transferring skills for developing countries, in reality, this program is one way to overcome labor shortages due to an aging population. At first, there were 17 subject jobs, and now it has increased to 71 jobs and 123 work activities in the Technical Intern Training program. The Technical Intern Training program has contributed a lot in overcoming labor shortages and in the Japanese economy. Currently based on data on immigrants with Technical Intern Training status numbering 67,000 in 2013 and increasing to 82,516 in 2014.

Then in overcoming the shortage of nurse and care workers, Shinzo Abe has collaborated through an Economic Program Agreement (EPA) with Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Nurse and Care workers are sectors that have a high demand for labor. Because Japan not only has an aging population but also as a population with the highest life expectancy result, the aging population will continue to grow but not much reduced. Then in domestic policy womenomics,

one of the measures to balance women's lives between careers and domestic affairs is by increasing childcare facilities. So that in the nurse and care worker two parts must be fulfilled to care for the elderly and children. Based on data The number of nurses and certified care workers accepted until 2016 pursuant from EPA was 1,792 from Indonesia, 1,633 from the Philippines, and 470 from Vietnam"(Masaki, 2017). Through cooperation based on strengthening these bilateral relations, many have contributed to a shortage of nurse and care workers.

Conclusion

The aging population is a demographic issue experienced by Japan, which is increasing number of aging populations and low birth rates. Japan began experiencing an aging population in the 1980s after the baby boom. However, the Shinzo Abe period is the peak of an aging population which shows Japan is in the highest position for ages 65 and above. The aging population and low birth rates occur due to several factors such as high life expectancy, high mortality rates, low marriages, and workaholic culture. This has harmed the Japanese economy. Because of the imbalance of productive age and the age of the elderly, there are several impacts, such as increased retirement and health funds, and labor shortage. The impact of this lack of labor can cause economic growth to be unstable or in a stable position.

Shinzo Abe in his government has sought various ways to overcome the effects of the aging population listed in the third part of "Abenomics" namely growth strategy. The "growth strategy" policy includes several policies on population aging. In the face of an aging population, Shinzo Abe made two policies, namely domestic and foreign policies. In domestic policy, Shinzo Abe implemented three policies, namely womenomics, robot policy, and family policy. The Womenomics policy is to encourage women's participation by up to 30% in the employment sector by balancing career and household life. In balancing women's lives between careers and households, the government made several efforts such as improving childcare facilities, providing career promotion levels and providing flexible working hours. This aims to encourage the birth of children as well as to fill the vacancy of the workforce. The two robots policy is a policy to encourage productivity by using robots. Because as a state of the advanced technology industry, Japan must be able to utilize existing technology to encourage Japanese economic growth. Robots will be used in various labor sectors. However, the government prioritizes the use of robots in the construction and health care sectors. The use of robots in the health sector is

to maintain or care for the elderly population that continues to increase. Then Family policy is a policy to encourage birth rates by providing several benefits for those who have children. This domestic policy is a long-term policy in overcoming aging population.

Because of the severe shortage of labor, Japan needs a foreign policy as a short-term policy. In overcoming the aging population of external Shinzo Abe made a policy to open the door for immigrants. This policy is a short-term policy in overcoming labor shortages. As is known before, Japan once used immigrant labor as a solution to get cheap labor. However, in the era of Shinzo Abe, immigrant labor was used to fill the various sectors of employment caused by population aging. The use of immigrant labor to encourage Japanese economic growth is included in Revitalization strategy. Despite being in a labor crisis, the government remains selective in choosing immigrant workers.

In opening up large-scale labor for immigrants, Japan offers several benefits for immigrants such as high-skill workers who get the privilege of their partners working and getting to bring parents under certain conditions. Technical internal training is given full protection so that it is not used as a low-cost worker. Whereas for nurse and care workers, scholarships will be given for their education. By providing several benefits for immigrant workers, the government hopes that there will be many immigrant workers who will enter Japan.

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