

**A Qualitative Study of Higher Education Policy and Practice in Fostering Global  
Human Resources in Japanese Higher Education Institutions**

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**by Marian Wang**

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## **Abstract**

This study examined and interpreted the lived experiences of Japanese and international university students with respect to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology's (MEXT) Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource Development. Since fiscal year 2013, MEXT has been implementing top-down policies to transform Japanese youth into global human resources (GHRs) who have foreign language skills, communication skills, an understanding of cultures based on a Japanese identity, and the drive to become global leaders (MEXT, 2015). MEXT's goals are economically driven as Japan has been in a recession for the last few decades (Yonezawa, 2014). GHRs who can contribute to a knowledge-based economy are needed to raise the global reputation of Japanese higher education institutions (HEIs) and the political and economic importance of Japan in regional and global contexts (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to investigate possibilities for further alignment of government (macro) ethos on institutional (meso) activities and processes that impact the development of competencies on the student (micro) level (Knight, 1997). Given that much of the top-down policies have been targeted at improving the quantitative outcomes of student flows to and from Japan (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009; Yamada & Yamada, 2014), this study forges a new qualitative perspective on the micro level using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the methodological framework. Twelve Japanese students were engaged in focus group discussions and 10 international students were interviewed in accordance with the epistemological, ontological, and humanistic principles of IPA. Knight's (1997) categories of ethos, processes, activities, and competencies framed the research questions and analyses of results.


The lived experiences of Japanese and non-Japanese university students were contextualized and interpreted using a double hermeneutics process of interpretation where students and the researcher co-interpreted (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007) the phenomenon of GHR development within a Japanese university. As Japanese and non-Japanese students were trying to make meaning of MEXT's policies, they found themselves embracing a definition of GHR as individuals who exuded characteristics of ethnorelativist cosmopolites – individuals who had the capacity to accept pluralistic cultural realities as citizens of the world (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001).

This study illustrates how stakeholders at various levels impact upon the internationalization of higher education strategies such as GHR development. Although MEXT's top-down policies have been trickling down to the grassroots level, the results of this study show that policies of GHR development have not been inclusive of international students who lacked familiarity with the policies and had limited interaction with Japanese students. Moreover, Japanese students felt that the policies privileged Japanese students who were predestined to become GHRs. Thus, for MEXT's policies to have a greater impact upon university students, the study suggests that further interaction between Japanese and international students be instigated. In short, cross-cultural opportunities within programs and curricula must be increased so that more Japanese and international students at the micro level could be motivated to pursue a lifelong journey that could result in them epitomizing their ideal GHR.

### **Statement of Original Authorship**

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for any other award or credit at this or any institution of higher education. To the best of my knowledge, the thesis is wholly original and all material or writing published or written by others and contained herein has been duly referenced and credited.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Date: April 30, 2017

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction to Practitioner Research**

### **1.1 Globalization Trends and Internationalization Policies and Practices of Higher Education around the World**

Globalization trends that influence internationalization policies and practices in higher education around the world can impact upon government and institutional strategies towards raising global standards in higher education (Hazelkorn, 2015). Globalization trends in higher education can be separated into international student mobility, size and growth of domestic tertiary education systems, transnational education, and academic and business research collaboration, all of which may act as catalysts for short and long-term international responses among higher education institutions (HEIs) (British Council, 2012).

Although words such as globalization and internationalization may be used interchangeably, scholars such as Altbach and Knight (2007) distinguish between globalization and internationalization of higher education. According to Altbach and Knight (2007), globalization refers to the political, social, and cultural contexts as well as the academic trends, whereas internationalization coincides with the reactive elements – the policies and practices implemented by academic systems and institutions that may have been impacted by external forces. Despite globalization possibly implying a larger role for market or global forces to commercialize higher education (Altbach, 2001), in some nations the state continues to drive policies and practices in higher education that affect teaching and research practices on the institutional level. Nevertheless, globalization or the perceived global reality in which tertiary learning occurs (Bourn, 2011) infers that borders are becoming increasingly fluid as human resources, information, and services are traded and exchanged between countries.

When countries and HEIs implement policies and programs to attract some of the brightest global scholars to study, teach, and conduct research at their leading institutions, higher education becomes an internationally tradable good. If borders stay open in higher education despite the reality that higher education policies still remain dominated by national forces (Marginson, 2008), globalization could result in dialogue, cooperation, and partnerships across countries and institutions and a leveling of the playing field so that more players can join the global competition towards creating world-renowned HEIs. By pooling resources together, under ideal circumstances globalization in higher education could prompt nations and HEIs to negotiate and aspire towards tertiary education policies and practices that may lead to optimal solutions for HEIs competing in a higher education market.

Finding win-win solutions for HEIs is not always feasible when the playing field of the international higher education market remains uneven while knowledge wars are being fought (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2013; Brown, Lauder, & Ashton, 2008; Marginson, 2008). As globalization forces impact upon countries differently, internationalization policies and practices do not automatically imply democratization of higher education for nations that are marginalized or excluded from the global competition of attracting the best scholars from around the world. Higher education is dominated by major countries such as China, India, Russia, and the United States that account for 45 percent of the world's tertiary enrolment in the global higher education market (British Council, 2012). According to the British Council, projections for transnational study flows for 2020 appear to favor China and India as the strongest exporters of students abroad, while the United States and the United Kingdom will be the biggest importers of international students. This is not surprising given China and India having experienced significant economic growth within the last few decades and having a high youth population enrolled in tertiary education while countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom with some of the most globally-recognized HEIs are at the helm of the tertiary education market. Although international students are not necessarily the sole indicators of how successful HEIs are around the world (Knight, 2011), they are becoming integral in demonstrating how effective universities can be in attracting the best talent locally and internationally to become more globally competitive.

Ultimately, higher education is noticeably market-driven, with many push and pull factors moving students and researchers within countries and overseas (González, Mesanza, & Mariel, 2011). Countries, recognizing the detriments of losing some of their best human resources who decide to study, teach, or conduct research elsewhere, are putting policies in place that may help them retain some of the best local talent as well as attract talent from a global pool of human resources (Li & Lowe, 2016). In the end, nations are competing to procure the best human resources around the world so that they can create world-class institutions, defined as institutions striving to be perceived by others as being globally effective (Marginson, Kaur, & Sawir, 2011).

## **1.2 Effects of Globalization Trends and Internationalization Policies and Practices on Japanese Higher Education**

When analyzing overall trends in Japanese higher education policy making, the ideology of *kokusaika* (internationalization) popular in the 1980s seems to have preceded the spread of *gurobaruka* (globalization) that began since the 2010s. Globalization became more popular as a term used in Japanese media than internationalization around 2006 (Burgess, Gibson, Klaphake, & Selzer, 2010). Burgess, et al. (2010) claim that globalization of education has only become omnipresent in government debates of Japanese educational policy since 2009. This may be because while internationalization is optional, globalization is something that cannot be ignored (Marginson, 2007). In Japanese higher education contexts, the words globalization and internationalization are used interchangeably (Burgess et al., 2010; Rivers, 2010), suggesting that the boundaries that Altbach and Knight (2007) presume exist between globalization and internationalization may be blurred in a Japanese context. Goodman (2007) argues that buzzwords such as internationalization can have multiple meanings, values, and interpretations that may allow a myriad of stakeholders with different or even contradictory aims and goals to co-exist. For those investigating policy, he recommends a proper analysis of the context while examining who, how, and why rhetoric such as internationalization and globalization are being used.

On the whole, it appears that the boundaries between internationalization and globalization in a Japanese context can be simplified as follows: internationalization policies are being used to manage Japanese identity with Japan playing an active role to promote Japanese ideals, whereas globalization policies are reactive – for the purposes of interconnectedness and a “passive compliance” to external forces that are beyond Japan’s control (Burgess et al., 2010, p. 464). Within Japanese higher education contexts, policy analysts surmise that Japan’s shrinking economic presence in the global economy might have a significant impact on the balancing act of globalization (reactive and outward) and internationalization (active and inward) policies in higher education.

Japan’s dwindling economy since the end of its economic miracle in the 1990s has impacted upon the global reputation of Japanese universities. With respect to global academic trends and Japanese higher education (Altbach & Knight, 2007), the global ranking of Japanese universities has been falling over time (Askew, 2011; Yamada & Yamada, 2014; Yonezawa, 2007). Raising the world ranking of Japanese universities is indispensable for Japan’s national development founded on a knowledge economy (Yamada & Yamada, 2014), especially if Japan would like to remain an integral player in the global economy. In 2014, the top 10 universities were located in the United States or the United Kingdom, and for Japan, its highest ranking university – the University of Tokyo – was tied at 31<sup>st</sup> place with Seoul National University in Korea (“Top 100 world universities,” 2014). Neighboring countries such as Korea and China, which began implementing internationalization of higher education policies emphasizing the establishment of world-class research institutions in the mid to late 1990s, have already surpassed Japan’s global ranking (see IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2012; as cited in Yamada & Yamada, 2014).

Yonezawa (2013) attributes the negative global standing of Japanese universities to a diminishing youth population, dropping academic achievement of secondary school students, increased cost of higher education, the economic recession in Japan, a lack of growth in postgraduate education, and the detrimental effects of the March 11, 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster in Northern Japan on foreign student enrollment at Japanese universities. To this list, Yamada and Yamada (2014) add the massification of higher education as a key factor in lowering the overall quality of higher education in Japan.

When looking at Japan's past internationalization efforts in higher education, including globalized curricula as a measure to raise Japanese HEIs' global standing, this has been overshadowed by an emphasis on research in an international market of higher education where the branding of world-class HEIs is often attributed to research and publications, usually in science and technology (Yamada & Yamada, 2014). However, as competition among Japanese HEIs has increased complemented by the pressure to improve their global rankings, Yamada (2014b) and Yonezawa (2003) explain that accountability in the form of providing quality not only in research but also in teaching at Japanese universities have been demanded by Japanese business leaders and the general public. Learning outcomes within curriculum design, which have been shown to impact upon the quality of education and overall student experience, have become a teaching concern for Japanese HEIs (Yamada, 2014a).

Japanese HEIs are increasingly channeling resources to education, especially for students who need to hone skills (e.g., foreign language and intercultural competencies) to compete in a global economy. The shift from research to teaching (learning) contrasts with how many nations have responded to internationalization of higher education (Yamada, 2014b). Consequently, Japan's internationalization of higher education policies are beginning to resemble what Knight (2008) describes as "a process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, research, and service), and delivery of higher education at the institutional and national level" (p. xi.).

### **1.3 Global Human Resources: Policies and Programs**

The term “global human resources” has become frequently used in Japanese higher education and business sectors. MEXT defines GHRs as individuals who have “linguistic and communication skills, self-direction, a spirit of challenge, cooperativeness and flexibility, a sense of responsibility and mission, and an understanding of other cultures coupled with a sense of Japanese identity” (Yamada & Yamada, 2014, p. 42; Yonezawa, 2014). MEXT sees GHRs as ordinary Japanese citizens who can flourish in global environments to benefit Japan’s economic positioning. To become GHRs, MEXT envisions that various skills must be honed, the most obvious being proficiency in English (A. Yonezawa, personal communication, January 19, 2016).

For Japanese students to become GHRs, MEXT has instructed Japanese HEIs to create programs that allow students to take courses at Japanese universities that will help them develop their English skills so that they will be able to go abroad to build their global competence. The overarching mission is for students to become GHRs who will eventually work for Japanese businesses that have been struggling to be globally competitive since the 2008 financial crisis (Yonezawa, 2016).

Over the last few years, MEXT has prioritized raising GHRs to enhance Japan’s competitiveness in a global knowledge-based society through its Go Global Japan Program (“Go global Japan to wa,” n.d.), a subsidy program for 42 universities to expand and create programs that are intended to foster the capability of students to be able to work actively in international settings while taking on global challenges. Within the Go Global Japan Program lies MEXT’s Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource Development which aims to “improve the inward-looking nature of the younger generation in Japan, while also promoting their globalized talent – thereby creating a base from which Japan can improve its global competitiveness and enhance its ties with other countries” (Yamada & Yamada, 2014, p. 42).

Due to the broadness of MEXT's definition of GHRs (Yamada & Yamada, 2014; Yonezawa, 2014), many Japanese HEIs have devised their interpretation of how to achieve this government-driven agenda, with some targeting an increase in international student enrollment and Japanese university students' participation in short or long-term study abroad programs (Yonezawa, 2010). In addition to specific quantifiable changes in the international student body population and the international experience of Japanese university students, some universities have made qualitative changes in departments, particularly those departments with a focus on teaching foreign languages through global content, resulting in modified programs, curricula, and courses aimed at inspiring students to become more globally-minded, linguistically competent, and more interested in participating in study abroad programs (Asaoka & Yano, 2009).

#### **1.4 Setting the Scene: Global Human Resource Development at South Central Japan University**

South Central Japan University (pseudonym) is a national (government-founded) university located in the Keihanshin region which consists of Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe. In terms of population density, the Keihanshin region is the second most populated region after Tokyo and its outskirts. This population density is advantageous for HEIs in the vicinity that can attract some of the best students although there are many universities in the area that are competing for the same talent. This university, similar to many national universities located in Japan, has been under the scrutiny of the Japanese government for becoming a key player in implementing MEXT's top-down policies. Within the last three years, this university has begun to tout global excellence as its primary aim, not only on its websites written in Japanese and English as well as other languages, but also within its departments and programs. Global excellence coincides with the government's desire to make Japanese HEIs global leaders in management, research, and teaching according to global standards, determined by the quality and quantity of research being done, the quality of students studying at universities and graduating to work as leaders in Japan and overseas, and the sustainability of university programs in continuing to raise standards in teaching and learning according to global targets.



In line with its mission of global excellence, South Central Japan University (SCJU), similar to other flagship universities in Japan that have received government funding for global programs, has been promoting study abroad to Japanese students who are expected to become GHRs. As a result, study abroad programs have become diversified in duration, destination, and objectives to accommodate the needs of a larger pool of Japanese students. Moreover, various departments have begun to include preparatory and reflective courses for Japanese students who are interested in studying abroad, thereby tapping into the possibilities of connecting study abroad with institutional and departmental initiatives of fostering GHRs. SCJU has also been trying to attract global talent by creating an International Student Center that provides Japanese language instruction to international students who consist of six percent of the student population. International students can spend from several weeks to several years taking Japanese language culture courses with students from around the world. International students are also required to take mainstream courses taught in Japanese and/or English in their academic discipline with Japanese students. SCJU has been trying to increase its global profile and align itself with MEXT's policies by sending more Japanese students abroad and recruiting more international students.

### **1.5 My Place within the Research**

I have been working at Japanese HEIs for over seven years of which the last four years have been at SCJU's foreign language and intercultural studies department as Associate Professor. When my department received global funding from MEXT, I was placed within a team to create a new global curriculum for Japanese students who had above average standardized test scores in English proficiency. Our team organized a curriculum that would give students an opportunity to raise their critical thinking skills by researching cross-cultural issues in Japan and overseas, presenting on their research results while overseas, and reflecting on their study abroad experience in post-study abroad courses to reflect a more fluid notion of intercultural development (Giovanangeli & Oguro, 2016). The overarching aim of this program was to encourage students to think about their study abroad experience before, during, and after studying abroad, as opposed to only when they were abroad.

My interest in GHR development stems from my desire to create learning environments where students could be exposed to the possibility of accepting pluralistic cultural realities as citizens of the world (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Having lived in America, Canada, France, Japan, Macedonia, Switzerland, and Taiwan, I have first-hand experience of challenging my ethnocentric beliefs or stereotypes to become closer to my ideal GHR. In fact, the journey towards becoming an ethnorelativist cosmopolite who has subscribed to pluralistic cultural realities rather than ethnocentric realities (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001) has been an uncomfortable journey full of self-doubt and reflection.

I was raised in Los Angeles in a bilingual household where Japanese was spoken at home by my Japanese mother and Taiwanese father. My mother ensured that her children grew up with a strong understanding of Japanese culture and language by enforcing a Japanese-only policy at home and enrolling her children in a Japanese heritage school run by MEXT. It is therefore no surprise that Japan remains a country that has a special place in my heart because it is where my mother comes from, a country where I can speak the language fluently, and a culture that has always been a part of me. Even so, I find myself struggling in a country where ethnic exclusivism pervades (Morita, 2015) and ethnic diversity remains limited (Chiba & Nakayama, 2016) despite claims that the rise in the number of foreign visitors and residents may impact Japan's homogeneous social fabric (Takeshita, 2016). Yonezawa (2016) questions if Japan is ready to open its borders to cultivate Japanese and non-Japanese GHRs for the long term or if it will continue to pursue nationalistic policies that are exclusive to Japanese citizens. My research does not intend to answer Yonezawa's question as I do not have the ability to generalize my results to Japanese society. However, what my research does aim to do is to open up opportunities for dialogue and reflection (House & Howe, 1999; Moore, 2005) from the bottom up – to allow for university students at the grassroots level to be encouraged to reflect on what it means to be GHRs within the context of their own lifeworlds (Shinebourne, 2011).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This literature review illustrates how the discussion on GHRs in Japanese HEIs is situated within academic research on the internationalization of higher education. The internationalization of higher education is analyzed through macro, meso, and micro levels regarding higher education policy by examining gaps between ethos, process, activity, and competency perspectives (Knight, 1997). This analysis highlights the paucity of qualitative research that investigates Japanese students and international students' attitudes towards government policies on raising GHRs.

### **2.2 Analyzing Government and HEI Policies: Theory of Ethos, Processes, Activities, and Competencies**

Japan's internationalization of higher education strategies can be analyzed using Knight's (1997) categories of ethos, processes, activities, and competencies. The ethos of intercultural perspectives is not as apparent in MEXT's policies (processes) because Japan's economic and academic rankings have been prioritized over building a nation that supports international perspectives (Yonezawa, 2016). In contrast, the ethos of Japanese flagship universities that are to lead Japan's knowledge-based economy (Yonezawa, 2007) tends to mirror the globally-minded ethos of supporting intercultural perspectives through the implementation of top-down policies or processes. The activities correspond to Japan's traditional internationalization strategies (Altbach & Knight, 2007) of increasing the number of international students studying at HEIs in Japan, creating global programs, sending more Japanese students overseas to raise their linguistic and intercultural competencies, and hiring more international staff.

### **2.2.1 Macro-level Dynamics: Clashes between Ethos and Processes**

Japan's ongoing challenges of internationalizing higher education demonstrate how tensions between policy and practice complicate the implementation of government-driven policies of raising GHRs. Burgess (2015) and Burgess et al. (2010) argue that Japan is currently struggling with balancing opposing forces of nationalistic closing in or cosmopolitan opening up because Japan has historically prioritized nationalistic policies in higher education to further its global positioning. Hashimoto's (2013) critical discourse analysis of MEXT's foreign language policies argues that the government's dualistic values differentiating Japan through "us" versus "them" references will hinder Japan from becoming part of the international community. Contradictory ethos between values of convergence towards cosmopolitan international standards of higher education in contrast to those espousing Japanese uniqueness do not bode well for Japanese universities that have been selected to modify their programs and curricula as well as their student population in favor of globalized Japanese citizens, international students, and staff (Rivers, 2010).

#### **2.2.1.a Past Models of Nationalistic Ethos and Processes**

Up until the end of the economic miracle in the early 1990s, the ethos of Japanese superiority prevailed because Japan was viewed as an economy and society to be emulated by other countries. The aim of recruiting international students and scholars was for them to learn Japanese and about the culture and society, turning them into "healthy international persons" who could disseminate the greatness of Japanese culture (Yonezawa, 2016), which contrasts with the current movement of neighboring countries like South Korea of trying to raise Korean students' intercultural competence through interaction with international students (Jon, 2013). The strong economy also ensured that Japanese human resources were kept within Japan or within Japanese companies with overseas branches. For many Japanese citizens, going overseas to seek employment with foreign companies did not appear to be an attractive option given that their economy was growing and nationalism was prevailing (Yonezawa, 2016).

In the past, Japanese graduates from top Japanese universities were able to secure lifetime employment at globally-recognized companies that would invest in their human resource development. Moriguchi (2014) identified, through a comparative analysis between Japan and the US, that the Japanese-style human resource model emphasized human capital investment, secure employment, and specialized training programs whereas the US-style human resource model provided specific incentives and little training because workers were expected to come equipped with the necessary skills to fit rigid job requirements. The Japanese-style investment in human capital was for lifetime workers, usually men, who could work long hours and benefit from on-the-job training (Moriguchi, 2014). When Japan was envied by other nations for its economic miracle, policies promoting nationalistic principles of a greater Japan were suitable and sustainable. However, Japan can no longer remain complacent as it had been in the 1980s when surrounding nations such as Korea and China, which began implementing internationalization of higher education policies for the establishment of world-class research institutions, have surpassed Japan's global ranking (see IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2012; as cited in Yamada & Yamada, 2014). Due to Japan's loss in global standing both economically and academically, MEXT has been confronted with the decision of how it should implement policies or processes that reflect a cosmopolitan opening up (Burgess et al., 2010).

#### **2.2.1.b Current Models of Nationalistic Ethos and Processes of Creating Global Human Resources**

Within the framework of GHRs for Japanese society as a whole, higher education policies in the 2010s began to reflect government aspirations to create GHRs within Japanese higher education to raise the world status of Japanese universities. Once the definition for GHRs as citizens with English and communication skills complemented by a Japanese identity was in place, there has been ongoing discussion about how best Japanese universities can compete within the global market of higher education.

As long as nationalism aligns with higher education policies, a universal model of the internationalization of higher education will not emerge (Huang, 2007). However, a universal model may not be necessary or even desirable given the dynamic processes of change of internationalization (Tsuruta, 2013). The processes required for Japanese HEIs to become more competitive is what Joris, Otten, Nilsson, Teekens, and Wächter (2000) allude to as internationalization at home via program and curricular changes and recruitment of international students at the institutional level and what Knight (2004b) specifies as internationalization abroad by sending Japanese university students to study abroad. Similarly, Huang (2007) classifies Japan's strategy as import and export-oriented, commonly found in developed non-English speaking countries that must eventually deal with ongoing conflicts between foreign imports and national characteristics. Yonezawa (2016) and Yonezawa and Shimmi (2015) frame Japan's ongoing struggle with the internationalization of higher education as due to gaps between policy and practice – clashes between nationalist and patriotic aims for MEXT and HEIs that are trying to become cosmopolitan by attracting the best scholars within Japan and from abroad. Resolving these tensions may not be easy for Japan as long as it adheres to policies that prioritize Japaneseness instead of the development of GHRs (Rivers, 2010) and the emergence of a multidimensional discourse community (Nascimento, 2013).

Japanese youth are seen as human resources who can close the gaps between the nationalistic ethos and cosmopolitan opening up of HEIs. Recently, Japanese youth have been criticized for not going abroad (Burgess, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Imoto, 2013). Consequently, MEXT has begun an outbound campaign for youth who, after going abroad, could contribute to Japan's economy. Some scholars state that youth are being used as scapegoats (Burgess, 2015; Lassegard, 2013; Sugimura, 2015) when structural hurdles are making it difficult for Japanese students to go abroad.

Lassegard's (2013) descriptive study surveying non-foreign language major students (n=328) at one Japanese university about their views in studying abroad revealed higher costs of studying abroad and rigid job hunting schedules as substantial obstacles for university students to go abroad. Without a pilot study and an appendix displaying the actual questionnaire, it is difficult to identify if socially desirable response tendencies (Steenkamp, De Jong, & Baumgartner, 2010) may have influenced how participants responded to questions. Nonetheless, financial concerns were cited as the greatest insurmountable impediment. Although Lassegard (2013) maintains that Japanese universities must promote study abroad, the attitudes of employers could have also been investigated because they have been known to lack a positive attitude towards international experiences when employing university graduates (Asaoka & Yano, 2009).

#### **2.2.1.c Nationalistic Ethos and Recruiting Global Talent**

Japan is at a crossroads of choosing how to become a more powerful player in Asia and globally, particularly in the area of the knowledge economy that is founded on attracting the best global talent. Ishikawa (2009) and Deem, Mok, and Lucas (2008) warn policy makers that simply adopting global standards without considering the pitfalls of becoming enslaved by convergence towards standardized norms could be detrimental in the long-run. Japan's universities leading the globalization movement are also at a crossroads (Kudo & Hashimoto, 2011; Yonezawa, 2007) as they are responsible for implementing policies that reflect contradictory agendas. Japan is finding itself caught between managing globalization forces and internationalization of higher education policies that are nationally focused (Burgess et al., 2010; Yonezawa, 2016).

A question that must be asked is how best Japanese HEIs can recruit global talent. Finn and Darmody (2016) suggest that international students prioritized satisfaction with the institution and then their social networks without specifying an internationally-minded student body. Finn and Darmody's (2016) exploratory study investigated the experiences of full-time undergraduate international students (n=607), many who come from countries represented among international students in Japan, using secondary data. The variables identified in the multivariate approach were intended to predict the satisfaction level of international students. Although it was found that satisfaction with the institution and friendships influenced the students' positive feelings as an international student, using satisfaction to assess international student satisfaction could be based on circuitous logic. The variables for satisfaction and friendships are not explained or defined in detail to support the conclusions. Furthermore, it is not clear why the author did not use primary data to support their findings. It would have also been beneficial if the ethnic background of international students were specified to see if this would impact findings.

Looking at the variables that favorably impact the international student experience can help institutions match their goals with the expectations of international students whereas negative reviews from international students could highlight the gaps between macro-level ethos and processes at the institutional level. Moon's (2016) qualitative study of interactions across Korean (n=30) and foreign (n=50) university students underscores the drawbacks of internationalization following national interests if changes do not infiltrate into the micro levels of an ethos of embracing diversity. Even when South Korean universities championed internationalization principles at the structural level, on the practical level international students and Korean students reported low levels of interaction because of language, culture, and exclusivity issues (Moon, 2016). Ethnic nationalism may be a barrier (Moon, 2016) but there may have also been personality traits within each group – South Korean and international students – that can explain the lack of interaction among the two groups. The experience of international students could have been investigated over a longer period to see if changes in intercultural competence would impact their relationships (Brown, 2009) and adjustment period (Wang, Heppner, Wang, & Zhu, 2015).



The problems that countries such as South Korea that are ahead of Japan in achieving global goals may be indicators of the predicaments that lie ahead for MEXT, Japanese HEIs, and students. Simply inviting international students to Japanese universities may be counterproductive if macro-level structural changes are not complemented by micro-level tolerance for educational diversity. Williams and Johnson (2011) note that US university students who were more open-minded and less apprehensive towards other cultures reported more friendships with international students. Clearly, open-mindedness is not a trait that can be easily taught or evaluated. Whether or not internationalization is to be considered a success in the eyes of major stakeholders including international students, policy changes at the national level must impact upon changes in programs and courses at the local level through activities that enhance intercultural competence among Japanese students and international students (Howe, 2009).

### **2.2.2 Micro-level Dynamics: Developing Global Activities and Competencies**

Research on the internationalization of higher education is positively biased towards examining the effects of macro-level policies on meso-level institutional reactions and adaptations (Enders, 2004). Research on the internationalization of Japanese higher education is no exception as indicated by an abundance of policy studies on a macro level of MEXT's policies and institutional strategies (Burgess, 2015; Burgess et al., 2010; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Huang, 2007; Ishikawa, 2009; Kudo & Hashimoto, 2011; Rivers, 2010; Sugimura, 2015; Tsuneyoshi, 2005; Yamada & Yamada, 2014; Yonezawa, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2014; Yonezawa & Meerman, 2012; Yonezawa & Shimmi, 2015). Discussions about GHRs are exclusive to MEXT, flagship universities, and businesses that wish to hire GHRs (Yonezawa, 2016). However, these discussions have yet to penetrate into the micro level – to university students who are to become Japan's future GHRs by studying abroad and developing their foreign language (English) and intercultural competencies.

### **2.2.2.a Expanding Englishnization (English Only) Policies**

To ensure that HEIs are able to survive in a competitive global higher education market, many Asian governments including MEXT have reacted to globalization trends in higher education controlled by Western countries by using English, the language of power (Huang, 2016; Wang, 2008), as the driving force behind their higher education strategies. MEXT insists that various skills must be honed, the most obvious being language proficiency in major languages used in business and diplomacy such as English (Yonezawa, 2016). However, critics such as Straker (2016) advocate policies beyond improving linguistic competence in foreign languages such as English – towards building sociolinguistic and intercultural competence. MEXT believes that sociolinguistic and intercultural competence can be developed through the promotion of short and long-term study abroad programs to Japanese university students.

On the grassroots level, Englishnization policies have not been successfully implemented. In Japan, English has historically been used to teach about English through teacher-led grammar-translation lessons for students to pass high-stakes college entrance examinations (Humphries & Burns, 2015). The current movement blames the grammar-translation method for the inability of Japanese language learners to be able to communicate in English after six years of learning English (Hosoki, 2011). Consequently, there has been a growing emphasis on teaching communicative English skills in an English-only environment – an environment that may be helpful for learners who intend to use English with others who may not be able to converse in Japanese.

Typically, Japanese students have had limited exposure to contexts where they have had to imagine, construct, or negotiate their identities of themselves using a foreign language (Yashima, 2009). In a mixed method thematic study of Japanese university students (n=217) at a top national university, Morita (2014) surveyed their attitudes towards their imagined selves in international settings. Quotes from open-ended questions in the survey revealed the limitations of curricular changes towards internationalization when Japanese students tend to disengage from globalization.

Given that Morita (2014) was teaching English to those students who were being surveyed, conflict of interest may have been a problem of this study even if they were told in advance that their responses would not affect their grades, and participation was voluntary. If the author had surveyed the students thrice over a course of three semesters, there is no mentioning of why the author had decided to present the results in three different papers (Morita, 2013a, 2013b, 2014) instead of illustrating the dynamic changes, if any, of student attitudes over time in this paper. A final critique of the study is that the terms internationalization and globalization, often used interchangeably in Japanese higher education contexts (Altbach & Knight, 2007), were not defined by the researcher or the participants. Participants may have been disengaged from globalization because they may have felt that they did not have much control over top-down policies. If students were asked to give international contexts where they could see themselves as primary stakeholders, they may have responded differently.

In principle, Japanese students understand the significance of globalization. In practice, they are removed from the realities of having to engage in a global environment. Moreover, even if students have had some exposure to non-Japanese speakers of English, McKenzie and Gilmore's (2015) mixed method study of using recorded samples of various speakers of English shows a predisposed preference among Japanese university students (n=158) studying at six different universities towards American and British varieties of English and for non-native varieties towards Japanese speakers of English. Analyzing the implicit and explicit attitudes of the Japanese participants (McKenzie & Gilmore, 2015) may have assisted in interpreting attitudes in a culture that is said to have two sides – *honne* (the private face) and *tatemae* (the public face) (Takanashi, 2004). However, offering choices as predetermined categories could be problematic for participants. For example, restricting the choices to pleasant, clear, confident, modest, honest, clever, gentle, or fluent and their antonyms may have reinforced stereotypes that may be associated with language – as correct or incorrect or good or bad. It may have been better for participants to be given the option of not ranking the speech if they felt that these categories were not suitable or even coming up with their own adjectives that might encapsulate how they would rate the speakers.

McKenzie and Gilmore's (2105) study demonstrates the need for university students in Japan to examine the hegemonies of varieties of English among global speakers of English. The study does not take into account that even within American and British varieties of English, there is diversity across native speakers of English, not to mention the varieties of English spoken among non-native speakers of English. Moreover, it may be crucial for Japanese students to explore diverse varieties of Japanese to recognize how diversity rather than similarity may be the norm even for Japanese. When students go abroad, they may be surprised to find that within their idealized native speaker countries they will need to become accustomed to a variety of Englishes spoken by world English speakers. Even those students who stay in Japan may have to confront their social desirability bias against certain Englishes when they enroll in courses with non-native Asian speakers of English, who represent the majority of international students at Japanese universities (Burgess et al., 2010).

To complicate matters further, even if more courses are taught in English, the difficulty of finding and retaining teachers who are bicultural and bilingual will be a problem for Japanese universities that aspire to become world-renowned HEIs (Ishikawa, 2011). In the past, Japan has focused on training of Japanese to exchange students who were expected to take courses in Japanese. However, now with the focus being Englishnization, Japanese HEIs must provide quality English skills courses to not only Japanese learners of English but also non-Japanese learners of English who may not be accustomed to the traditional ways of teaching English to Japanese learners (Ishikawa, 2011). Hence, HEIs may need to offer more training programs on transformative learning experiences where teachers can analyze and share their perceptions of how curricula can be internationalized (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015; Duong & Chua, 2016; Kumagai & Lypson, 2009).

### **2.3 Gaps in Knowledge and Research Focus**

This literature review has elucidated the challenges that MEXT, HEIs, and students would encounter if nationalism over cosmopolitanism remains prioritized. Due to the top-down nature of policy implementation and conflicting nationalistic policies on the government (macro) level and cosmopolitan policies on the institutional (meso) level, Japanese HEIs have been struggling with fostering global human resources, a word that seems to be defined by competencies rather than processes or activities. In other words, MEXT appears to have left Japanese HEIs up to their own devices of developing processes and activities that match the nationalistic ethos and cosmopolitan policies.

Japanese HEIs, particularly flagship universities (Yonezawa, 2007), have made reactionary changes along program and curricular levels that align with MEXT's objectives by promoting English skills courses, setting up study abroad programs with overseas HEIs, recruiting international students, and hiring foreign staff to teach courses to both Japanese and international students. Yonezawa (2016) believes that Japanese HEIs must become more proactive in implementing policies that can facilitate the creation of Japanese cosmopolites who can work alongside global citizens.

How can Japanese HEIs be more active implementers of GHR development policies? First, if as Hashimoto (2013) posits Japan is fixated on promoting itself to the international community rather than becoming part of the international community, having students go overseas and students from overseas come to Japan to study and work will not contribute to cosmopolitanism that should be Japan's long-term goal (Burgess, 2015; Yonezawa, 2016). Japanese HEIs must examine how they can become a more significant part of the international academic community. Input from other stakeholders not only on the program level but on the grassroots level from students who might be interested in becoming members of an international community must be investigated. Morita's (2014) and Lassegard's (2013) study could be expanded to include students' attitudes and opinions about how they might envision themselves as becoming Japan's GHRs – towards realizing rather than simply imagining their identities in an international community as GHRs.

There must also be more research on international students – their attitudes about MEXT’s policies towards creating world-class institutions that can attract the best students from abroad. Currently, much of the research in academic settings is concerned with integrating exchange students into local university settings (Estacio & Karic, 2015; Finn & Darmody, 2016; Moon, 2016; Simic-Yamashita & Tanaka, 2010). However, having an integrated community within universities, albeit ideal, will not contribute to the long-term goal of having international students contribute to Japan’s GHRs if international students find working in Japan less than appealing (Breaden, 2014). Therefore, international students must be included in the dialogue about raising GHRs as well as working for Japanese corporations that have traditionally valued loyalty and conformity from recent university graduates (Nagano, 2014).

The clash between nationalism and cosmopolitanism is certainly not unique to Japan as evidenced from China’s conflicting higher education policies (Cai, 2014). However, because Japan has jumped on this bandwagon of the internationalization of higher education later compared to its competitors such as South Korea and China, it may be important for Japan to continue to watch how contradictory policies unravel themselves at the grassroots level after students’ perspectives on GHR development can be identified, interpreted, and incorporated from the bottom up. These gaps informed the development of my research aim and questions which are presented in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods**

### **Practitioner Research Questions**

#### **3.1 Research Rationale and Significance**

The aim of this research was to examine and compare Japanese and non-Japanese university students' perceptions and experiences at SCJU within the Japanese government's policies of the internationalization of higher education. Although internationalization of higher education can be analyzed from many angles, in terms of Japanese HEIs and internationalization, special attention was paid to traditional internationalization strategies (Altbach & Knight, 2007) such as expanding study abroad programs for university students and human resource development. Understanding the perspectives of students might bring rhetoric closer to reality through a reflective cycle of policy intent of top-down government policies, policy implementation of HEI programs and curricular changes, and feedback from students about government policies and institutional programs (Knight, 2004a). Accountability as evidenced from student experiences and perspectives on policy directives is needed in light of policy-making and implementation that require consensus and capacity building and information sharing (Tsuruta, 2013). Accordingly, this research aimed to understand student attitudes towards internationalization of higher education policies and HEI programs.

Student attitudes within a globally-integrated higher education market should be investigated, especially if students have shown ambivalence towards how they can become key players in the government's policies towards creating global citizens (Bourn, 2010). Kahn (2014) argues that students' learning experiences should enable co-reflective individuals who can go beyond technical reasoning and delve into exploring issues of social relations. Taking Kahn's (2014) argument one step further, bringing policy level concerns into the learning experience might enhance student engagement and foster relationships that can emerge between stakeholders.

### **3.1.1 Research Questions**

My research questions arose from the gaps in literature on grassroots developments and were placed within Knight's (2004a) top-down (national/sector) and bottom-up (institutional) approach of analyzing higher education policies. The literature review illustrated how clashes at the macro, meso, and micro level can be identified through Knight's (1997) theory of ethos, processes, activities, and competencies. Student perceptions were explored and interpreted within Knight's (1997) four categories which framed the research questions and analyses of results. Ethos within this context was specified as value claims that students believed upon reflection and dialogue, which according to House and Howe (1999) are fundamental to social science research on the policy level. Processes were applied to how students analyzed and reflected on top-down policies and activities related to study abroad courses and programs at SCJU. Lastly, competencies addressed how skills such as foreign language or intercultural competence could be developed within study abroad courses and programs.

My research addressed the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of GHRs to students? (ethos)
2. How do students make sense of government policy and institutional responses with respect to GHR development? (processes)
3. What are the factors that motivate students to enroll in courses and programs designed to create GHRs? (activities)
4. What changes would students make (if any) to existing programs/curricula to help prepare them for becoming GHRs? (competencies)



### **3.1.2 Operational Definition of Global Human Resources**

Developing GHRs is central to MEXT's strategy of the internationalization of higher education in Japan. MEXT posits it is vital to "develop global human resources who will drive growth in Japan and be active in various fields on the world stage, to equip them with rich language and communication skills, independence and assertiveness, and a mindset that can understand other cultures premised on in-depth understanding of Japanese culture and their own identity as Japanese" (MEXT, 2015, para. 1). This definition invites a multitude of clarification questions. Which fields is MEXT referring to? What are rich language and communication skills? How does MEXT define independence and assertiveness? What is an in-depth understanding of the Japanese culture and does identity have to be restricted to Japanese citizens?

The operational definition of GHRs for the purpose of this study will be limited to university students who have intentions of going overseas for study or work, have English skills for language and communication, and have opportunities to interact with foreign students in Japan so that they can reflect on their identity as an individual residing in Japan.

### **3.2 Introduction to Study Design and Researcher Positionality**

In qualitative or interpretive research, participants and researchers must bring their own perspectives into light to give meaning to various social issues at stake (Gray, 2014). As an individual who has always advocated that stakeholders' voices in all echelons of society be heard, I have a penchant towards conducting research with a critical stance that could effectively empower those who have not been asked their opinions about issues in higher education.

Recently with the top-down directives from MEXT, I have felt the effects of policies affecting my practice and have begun to question whether stakeholders, including teachers like myself, were acting in the best interest of the students. I wondered if Japanese HEIs were responding to government-driven policies without sufficient input from those who were operating at the meso (faculty) or micro (student) level.

Even if policies have not infiltrated all levels, I believe that in Japanese universities where “global” has become a buzzword (Lassegard, 2016), students have their own perspectives about MEXT’s recent higher education reform policies. Given the marginalized status of students at the receiving end of policy implementation, individuals at the meso level who act as implementers of government policy (i.e., practitioners in higher education) are instrumental in fostering internal integration among all stakeholders (Cho & Palmer, 2013; Jiang & Carpenter, 2014). Without understanding the attitudes of university students, MEXT’s policies may continue to be criticized as having conflicting aims and goals (Burgess et al., 2010; Rivers, 2010).

Quantitative researchers, in contrast to qualitative researchers who emphasize individual stories, are seeking general patterns and generalizability in society. Thus, individual voices may not be prioritized as this will obstruct the process of developing patterns based on pre-identified variables. Quantitative research, as Toloie-Eshlaghy, Chitsaz, Karimian, and Charkhchi (2011) suggest, assumes that in addition to researchers and participants being able to inhabit separate worlds, the phenomena being observed can be isolated, examined, and explained through cause and effect relationships. The quantitative researcher is assumed to have no biases, limitations should be controlled, and the researcher should not have any effect on how the phenomenon is being interpreted (Toloie-Eshlaghy et al., 2011).

This qualitative research project was centered on studying the individuals with whom I co-constructed multiple realities of the phenomenon of GHR development in Japanese HEIs through colored lens based on my subjective values. These research objectives have motivated me to explain student perspectives through Knight’s (1997) categories founded on ethos, processes, activities, and competencies that should explain the phenomenological experience of students who might become MEXT’s GHRs (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007). Phenomenological research is not intended to be generalizable to all situations (Denzin & Ryan, 2007) and as such is qualitative in nature.

Phenomenological research has been divided into experiential, historical/archival, attitude/reflective, and observational/intentional research (Garza, 2007). As previously mentioned, I wanted to identify how students were experiencing MEXT's policies through Knight's (1997) categories. Initially, I had thought that my research would fall under attitude/reflective research. However, after careful consideration, I have placed my research within Garza's (2007) classification of experiential phenomenological research where the purpose is for understanding a phenomenon as it is rather than have students challenge or question the phenomenon as is required in attitude/reflective phenomenological research.

The philosophical underpinnings of Interpretive (Hermeneutic) Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) were chosen because they focus on the lived experience, delving deeply into the stories of each individual being interviewed (Allen, Baker, & Rootes, 2014; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2013). I was guided by the tenets of IPA, founded upon phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012), to ascertain how a group of Japanese university students and non-Japanese students were experiencing changes in the internationalization of higher education in Japan as it relates to MEXT's GHR development policies.

### **3.2.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis**

IPA is not only a research method but also a philosophy that must be embraced by the researcher (Dowling, 2007). The philosophy behind phenomenological research is premised on naturalist paradigms that investigate changeable and subjective realities through inductive qualitative research methods (Reiners, 2012). Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a German mathematician developed descriptive phenomenology that focuses on explaining everyday experiences where the researchers' preconceived ideas were bracketed or set aside. Later, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Husserl's student who developed interpretive phenomenology, expanded Husserl's epistemological (study of knowing) underpinnings of descriptive phenomenology by adding ontology (the study of being) and hermeneutics (the study of interpretation) to interpreting individual stories and experiences (Reiners, 2012).

IPA assumes that interpretation occurs on two levels – first at the participant level and subsequently at the researcher level. The aim of IPA is for researchers to be able to understand the uniqueness of a phenomenon by placing themselves within the participants' world, act as mediators between the participants' mindsets and interpretations, and translate their world in ways that highlight the elements that underscore the uniqueness of the phenomenon under investigation (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

### **3.2.1.a Epistemological Principles of IPA: Contextual Constructivism**

The epistemological principles of IPA were founded on contextual constructivism (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Pietersma (2000), who has paraphrased the ideas in Husserl's writings, gives researchers a better grasp of how Husserl's epistemology influenced IPA. Pietersma (2000) insists that our actions, morals, and values must be examined within specific contexts. Moreover, even if individuals see the same object or phenomenon – for example GHR development – depending on the context, their intentions may lead to various interpretations that have the capacity of building upon each other. Pietersma (2000) summarizes Husserl's intentionality as the following: "No intentional act is an isolated act; no object can be simply identified with one mode of givenness" where "givenness" implies the appearance of being or interpretation (p. 39).

If individuals are capable of knowing about a phenomenon within diverse contexts, how do they move from simply knowing about a phenomenon to believing or being able to interpret a phenomenon? Husserl argued that beliefs can be inferred as being true, as evident to believers who have within themselves an arsenal of experiences that have guided them towards a certain belief (Pietersma, 2000). Beliefs may be perceptions that may or may not be correct; however, what is important here is not the accuracy of the inference but how individuals can move along the path of constructing this knowledge to believing and being capable of interpreting this phenomenon in multiple real and even imagined contexts.

Knowledge can be obtained by rejecting certain “epistemically inferior beliefs” (Pietersma, 2000, p. 40) by justifying epistemically superior beliefs premised on individuals’ experiences and motivations. Husserl bestows upon individuals the ability to be reflective individuals who can take what is a linguistic phenomenon to cognitive and transcendental levels of reasoning, justification, and intuition. In summary, the epistemological framework of Husserl is that individuals can observe a phenomenon, reason with the phenomenon, and justify how they believe the phenomenon exists by analyzing competing epistemically superior or inferior beliefs to construct the phenomenon within various contexts.

### **3.2.1.b Ontological Principles of IPA: Hermeneutics**

Examining ontological (What is the meaning of being?) perspectives, Heidegger devised a forestructure of understanding, which consists of *fore-having* (all individuals have sociocultural backgrounds that help them make interpretations); *fore-sight* (sociocultural backgrounds enable interpretations); and *fore-conception* (sociocultural backgrounds facilitate anticipation of results of interpretations) (Benner, 1994). Thus, epistemologies (How do people know what they know?) are connected within sociocultural backgrounds that are integral to understanding how individuals can interpret a phenomenon. Unlike descriptive phenomenological analysis that presumes that researchers can achieve interpretation free of bias through bracketing (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007), IPA assumes that they cannot be neutral when analyzing an individual’s experiences (Reiners, 2012) and are part of the being (Converse, 2012).

IPA expects researchers to possess their own lived experiences and can be pre-reflective so they can “actively co-create interpretations of phenomena” (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 176) with the participants through a double hermeneutics process where participants’ and then researchers’ interpretations are co-constructed. Pre-reflective activities require researchers to confront their own positionality of the phenomenon through epistemological reflexivity (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Moreover, researchers should look at how they believe stories should be told – through patterns, paradigms, or outliers and must also confront their own preconceptions through reflexivity and reflection throughout the process of data analysis (Flood, 2010).

### **3.2.1.c Humanist Principles of IPA: Idiography**

The holism of the person within real social contexts rather than the person in laboratory experiments mirrors the development of IPA as a reaction against positivist research methods (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Most IPA studies consist of a small sample of about five to 10 participants because idiography or priority is given to the individual who must be studied to a point of saturation for the researcher to be able to move on to the next individual (Smith, 2004). In fact, Smith (2004) claims that IPA studies can be based on a case study of one individual, provided that transcripts are rich in data and are conducive to deep analyses. Smith (2004) warns that IPA researchers should not rush from one transcript to another without thoroughly analyzing the myriad of possibilities in which the individual's story can be told. As a novice researcher, I believe a case study of one student would not be optimal given that the term GHRs has been loosely defined and is a term that must be co-constructed among students who are a part of Japan's GHR strategy.

Focus groups offer opportunities that can allow for individuals' parts to become wholes through negotiation of identities and sharing of experiences. Tomkins and Eatough (2010) caution against using focus groups for IPA research because the individual may be marginalized in focus groups where the group can be privileged at the expense of the individual, which runs counter to the humanistic principles of idiography in IPA. The unit of analysis, even in focus groups should be the individual even if group dynamics and the particular setting could certainly influence the interpretations of the individual. When texts are analyzed and given themes, if individuals are not clearly identified and their positions clarified, a false sense of consensus, for example, may be given for the entire group when in reality some individuals, given specific contexts, were not feeling empowered to voice their concerns in a group discussion setting (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010). Smith (2004) also cautions researchers of the temptation to mask focus group discussions in IPA research as individual perspectives when group dynamics are not carefully examined. Therefore, analyzing the individual in a group setting may have the potential of ignoring the individual voice that is the hallmark of the IPA research method (Smith, 2004). As such, IPA researchers should be more sensitive to the need to exhume the individual voice in focus groups.

### **3.2.2 Justification of IPA as a Methodology**

I chose IPA as the methodology most suitable for my research on how Japanese university students and non-Japanese students at SCJU are experiencing the internationalization of higher education policies in Japan. Global human resources is a phrase that I have operationally defined for the purpose of this research project in section 3.1.2, but it is also a phenomenon that requires individuals to make sense or make meaning of the phrase by investigating their multiple interpretations in real and imagined contexts. As participants under investigation were university students in Japan, it was understandable that the contexts they examined were their current learning environments including formal or informal settings as well as imagined settings (Yashima, 2002, 2009) regarding their future professional and personal lives. For non-Japanese students as well as Japanese students who have already experienced working, living, and/or studying overseas, there were non-Japanese contexts that allowed for opportunities to compare and contrast various contexts. The participants in this study were presumed to have experiences that have equipped them with the capacity to interpret their experiences and construct meaning in multiple contexts.

Educational settings where learning and acquisition of knowledge occur are conducive to phenomenological studies. Selvi (2012) argues for the relevance of phenomenology in education because “learning is the way of knowing the phenomenon that occurs during the search for meaning, which is an individualistic process” (p. 167). Although Selvi (2012) concentrates on student-teacher relationships in constructing and re-constructing knowledge, her underlying principle of phenomenology in education is that learning has two purposes – to know about something (social reproduction) and to know about oneself (personality formation). Selvi (2012) believes that education should give students the confidence to be competent individuals in their outer world based on social reproduction and their inner world of self-actualization. My research on GHRs in Japanese HEIs reflected the principles of radical constructivism of individualistic creation and knowledge construction to highlight the unique experiences of participants who can access their inner and outer worlds to interpret a phenomenon.

### **3.3 My Epistemological and Ontological Positioning**

Applying Packer and Goicoechea's concepts (2000) to learning in a university context in Japan or elsewhere, I believe that learning and the acquisition of knowledge cannot be isolated from the socio-cultural context in which students are participating in learning communities, negotiating their identities, and taking a stand within that community about what they believe as their role and purpose in the community. When students go abroad, they presumably continue on this journey of self-exploration, by expanding their participation in communities and re-establishing their identities within these new communities of practice where missions, functions, and capabilities are jointly defined by members (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) observes that the collective process of learning allows communities of practice to thrive while providing a haven for identities to form. Learning and knowledge acquisition are inherently relative and contextual, and students are trying to make sense of this knowledge while managing their past, present, and future identities.

My overall research approach was qualitative within a constructivist paradigm, founded on my epistemological and ontological beliefs of socio-constructivism. I hoped to gain a deep understanding of human behavior and existence including the gaps that may exist among people's perceptions and beliefs of the world. I intended to analyze patterns and themes of narratives from participants using an inductive approach in natural and real settings. Richards (2009) defines qualitative research as locally situated in authentic settings instead of laboratory settings, participant-oriented in that perceptions and beliefs of the participants' world are being investigated, holistic because variables are not isolated, and inductive. The authentic setting of my research project was at SCJU, and perspectives were explored with SCJU students.



### **3.4 Piloting the Project**

Researchers are ethically obliged to report how projects were piloted because pilot projects show how problems in the project were resolved over time (Gray, 2014; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Pilot projects may point to problems in research design method, instruments, research aims, and research questions, all of which can contribute to improvements in the actual implementation of the project (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). This project was piloted twice with six Japanese university students at SCJU before commencing with the actual data collection process. Focus group discussions were thought to be suitable for Japanese students who were accustomed to operating in a collective culture (Phuong-Mai, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2005), where the individual is expected to adapt to various social contexts (Matsuoka, 2008).

Piloting focus group questions to individuals who are representative of the intended sample is imperative to observe how they might respond to questions and how the facilitator can engage them in discussion (Gray, 2014). The Japanese students, all from the intercultural studies department, were enrolled in a course I taught to them – Advanced Conversation. As they were non-native English speakers and many had already studied abroad or were interested in studying abroad, they were deemed comparable to the students that would be recruited in the actual study.

After the focus group discussions, the Japanese students who participated in the pilot submitted their feedback in Japanese or English. Many students indicated that the discussion in Japanese was more beneficial than in English, given the complexity of the topic. They also felt that they could not express their opinions freely in English due to gaps in their vocabulary or concerns with making grammar mistakes. Spontaneous conversation in English may be difficult for second language learners such as those in Japan who have been taught to prioritize accuracy and translation over fluency (Sawir, 2005). Finally, many students stated that their lack of awareness of government policy made them unable to engage in a fruitful dialogue about their perceptions of MEXT's policy of GHRs and that they would benefit from having time to brainstorm some ideas before beginning the discussion. For the focus group discussions in my actual study, I decided to give students time to create mind maps on GHRs before I began the focus group discussions.

The project was also piloted with an international student. She was representative of the students whom I interviewed because she had non-Japanese citizenship, was proficient in English, and had been living in Japan for more than six months. The interview lasted approximately one hour, which included a brainstorming session of creating a mind map, question and answer period, and feedback session. In her feedback, she told me that the topic was difficult for her to discuss in English and that if she had been in focus groups, she would have more time to translate. Nonetheless, one-on-one interviews with exchange students were thought to be more suitable than focus group discussions because the exchange students – unlike the Japanese students who shared a common Japanese background as well as most being enrolled in World English Courses (WEC) – were more heterogeneous in the world Englishes (Bolton, 2006) they spoke, cultural background, field of study, the amount of financial assistance they received, and their year of study. Finally, I felt that by specifying proficient English skills as an inclusion criteria and the personal interview format, I could screen out students who needed time to translate from their native language to English.

### **3.5 Participant Recruitment**

To prevent unintended coercion for participation, an SCJU administrative staff member emailed 159 out of the 250 Japanese students on a mailing list for WEC. The 91 students excluded from the study were enrolled in my classes. With the email, she attached the information sheet (see Appendix 1) and the consent form (see Appendix 2), both translated by a professional translator from English to Japanese. I contacted each student individually and scheduled three focus group discussions on the same day according to their availability. Even though I knew that focus group discussions in Japanese were most suitable to ensure open communication and overall comprehension in a local context (Gray, 2014), I asked the Japanese students to state their language preference. As nine out of the 12 students specified that Japanese would be preferred for discussions with other Japanese students, I made the decision of having the one-hour focus group discussions in Japanese. Finally, they were informed that the conversation would be recorded and later transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

The international students were contacted indirectly via a Japanese postgraduate student who had access to international students studying at SCJU. She forwarded the email, with the information sheet (see Appendix 3) and the consent form (see Appendix 2), asking for international students to participate in this study on GHR development. After the first interview was completed, I asked the international student who had volunteered to refer one or two international students who might be interested in participating. This kind of snowball sampling or chain-referral sampling is best utilized in research where there is close-knit familiarity within the group (Penrod, Preston, Cain, & Starks, 2003). The disadvantage of relying on snowball sampling is that unlike random sampling there is a selection bias, implying that participants may not be representative of the actual international student population of the university (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). To offset this selection bias, the international student who was first to be interviewed volunteered to forward my email to a mailing list of international students and contacted me when he received replies from any of the international students. The chain-referral system and the mass mailing to international students contributed to the recruitment of 10 international students from various countries, departments, and year of study.

### **3.6 The Participants**

Participants were purposely selected from two relatively homogeneous groups (Smith et al., 2013) – Japanese university students who were interested in studying abroad and international students who were currently studying at SCJU. Table 3.1 shows the department, number, and gender of Japanese students recruited. All Japanese students recruited were undergraduates excluding one Master's student from the Humanities department. Ten out of the 12 students were enrolled in WEC offered to undergraduate students with a high proficiency in English and a willingness to study abroad. The two students who were not enrolled in WEC were invited to participate in this study because they had studied abroad or were interested in studying abroad.

Department	Number of participants, gender
Business	2 (F), 2 (M)
Engineering	1 (M)
Human Development	1 (F), 1 (M)
Humanities	3 (F)
Intercultural Studies	1 (F)
Law	1 (F)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 (F), 4 (M)</b>

**Table 3.1. Department, number, and gender of Japanese students recruited**

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the department, region, number, and gender of international students recruited. Six students among the 10 international students recruited were undergraduate students and four were postgraduate students.

Undergraduate		
Department	Region	Number of participants, gender
Economics	Eastern Europe	1 (F)
Japanese Studies	Europe	1 (M)
Japanese Studies	Eastern Europe	1 (M), 1 (F)
Japanese Studies & Economics	Eastern Europe	1 (M)
Japanese Studies	Southeast Asia	1 (F)
<b>Total</b>		<b>3 (F), 3 (M)</b>

**Table 3.2. Department, region, number, and gender of undergraduate international students recruited**

Postgraduate		
Department	Region	Number of participants, gender
Economics	Asia (not Japan)	1 (F)
East Asian Art History	Europe	1 (M)
Political Science/Law	Asia (not Japan)	1 (F)
Art History	Eastern Europe	1 (F)
<b>Total</b>		<b>3 (F), 1 (M)</b>

**Table 3.3. Department, region, number, and gender of postgraduate international students recruited**

To offer an array of perspectives as well as in depth analysis for each participant, attempts were made to incorporate students from among the existing 11 departments. For international students, the criteria that needed to be fulfilled was proficiency in English, being an exchange student or student from overseas, and residence in Japan for longer than six months to ensure that they had an opportunity to reflect on their time in Japan. Proficiency in English tended to restrict the number of exchange students who volunteered. Some Chinese students who represent a large proportion of the exchange students studying at the university were reluctant to participate because they felt anxious about expressing their views in English.

Although IPA does not claim generalizability of results, the sample was not restricted to the extent that transferability to other areas or groups would be made impossible (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, & Hendry, 2011). Twelve Japanese students and 10 international students were thought to be sufficient to produce data that would enable descriptive and interpretative analyses (Smith, 2011). With more than the recommended five to 10 participants I was concerned with what Smith (2011) refers to as relying on descriptions more than interpretations that are most vital in the double hermeneutics process of making sense of the participants and their experiences.

In the data analysis, special attention was paid to seeking deep interpretations that privileged the individuals' life stories (Pringle et al., 2011), often to the point of saturation. In addition, to meet the standards of a robust analysis, individual life stories as well as patterns of similarity and differences, or convergence and divergence across participants (Smith, 2011) in terms of gender, department, year of study, and country of origin ensured that multiple perspectives from stakeholders at the grassroots levels were investigated. Homogeneity and diversity of the sample were calibrated so that a relatively homogeneous sample (Smith et al., 2013) for IPA research was obtained.

### 3.7 Data Collection Method

#### 3.7.1 Focus Group Discussions

The focus group method is a relatively new research approach within qualitative research methods such as interviewing or surveying (Denzin & Ryan, 2007). In contrast to interviews where the individual is at the center, in interactive focus group discussions, collective views are prioritized over individual views (Cyr, 2016). However, idiographic considerations of IPA were taken into consideration given that in focus groups individuals may be marginalized (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010).

Focus group number	Pseudonym	Department World English Courses = WEC U = Undergraduate PG = Postgraduate	Gender
Group 1	Hiroko	Business (WEC) (U)	F
	Naoya	Business (WEC) (U)	M
	Shoichi	Business (WEC) (U)	M
Group 2	Ken	Engineering (U)	M
	Shiho	Humanities (PG)	F
	Kayo	Humanities (WEC) (U)	F
	Minami	Humanities (WEC) (U)	F
	Nana	Business (WEC) (U)	F
	Chise	Intercultural Studies (WEC) (U)	F
Group 3	Aoi	Law (WEC) (U)	F
	Hiyori	Human Development (WEC) (U)	F
	Daisuke	Human Development (WEC) (U)	M

**Table 3.4. Focus group discussion participants' pseudonym, department, program, and gender**

Table 3.4 shows the three separate focus group meetings held with Japanese students in Japanese, each with three to six participants and all given pseudonyms. Although the second focus group was comprised of the optimal number of six participants (Gray, 2014), the other groups were limited to three participants due to the challenges of recruiting Japanese university students for this study. The students were divided up into the optimal number of three relatively homogeneous focus groups (Rabiee, 2004), with students of the same majors when possible.

Group dynamics, an integral component of focus groups (Rabiee, 2004) was considered with reference to Japanese culture. For instance, difference in age or years of studying English could upset group dynamics in a culture like Japan that expects deference to those who are older or more experienced (Aspinall, 2006). Where there was a postgraduate student, I arranged the focus group so that it was larger than the others as to offset her potentially larger presence. Finally, I tried to organize each focus group with at least one male student present. The predominance of females in this study may reflect the tendency among female Japanese university learners of English to show more interest in studying abroad due to their openness and desire to learn about other cultures (Mori & Gobel, 2006). More female than male students in each group may have allowed the women to be more active rather than the stereotypical passive roles of women in Japanese society (Phuong-Mai, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2005).

As moderator of the focus group discussions, I realized that the success of the discussions would depend on my skills and experience of acting as moderator (Gray, 2014). Unfortunately, my sole experience in moderating focus group discussions was in the piloting of this project, which demonstrated that I needed to refrain from controlling the flow of conversation because doing so would nullify the purpose of having participants tell their life stories (Gray, 2014). Although Wong (2008) recommends that two facilitators be present during focus group discussions, I conducted the focus group sessions as the main moderator and note taker, tried to remain unbiased and neutral by retaining a non-judgmental stance, and summarized key points before moving on from one question to another (Wong, 2008). When the focus group discussions were completed, I asked the translators I had hired to translate the information and consent forms as well as the questions in the discussions, to transcribe the audio recordings from the focus groups in Japanese. Upon completion, I listened to the recordings and checked for any discrepancies between my notes and those of the transcribers. If there were discrepancies, I highlighted those sections and asked the transcribers to revisit their transcriptions. When I felt that I needed further assistance to verify the details of what had been discussed, I asked students and the professional translators to verify what was said to check the accuracy in the transcription as well as the students' intended meaning (Forbat & Henderson, 2005).

### **3.7.2 Semi-structured Individual Interviews**

In this phenomenological study, it was vital to find out the meanings that individuals ascribed to GHR development within the confines of Japanese higher education. Interviews are best utilized when exploring how individuals interpret a phenomenon, by asking about their feelings, attitudes, and their lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation (Gray, 2014). The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that researchers can “probe” (Gray, 2014, p. 382) or clarify what has been said by the participant in order to prevent misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the participants’ lived experiences. The international students who were interviewed were aware of my insider role at SCJU as well as my outsider role completing a doctorate for the University of Liverpool. Establishing rapport with them was not difficult because being a foreigner in Japan myself led to immediate camaraderie in a society that often places foreigners in the “outside” category (Whitsed & Volet, 2011). Moreover, investigating how Japanese universities could be more globalized had indirect implications on them as I was representing the meso-level advocate who was intent on bringing micro-level attitudes and opinions to the attention of higher level officials in Japan’s tertiary education sector.

After each interview, I wrote a reflection on the experience and transcribed the interview the following day. Each reflection made me aware of some of the difficulties I experienced when conducting the interviews. For instance, the Asian students tended to have lower English ability than the European students, so I had to adjust my rate of speech and vocabulary according to the proficiency of the participant. I also made deliberate attempts not to impose my own opinions or judgments by following the same protocol for each interview (Gray, 2014) but at the same time tried to remain positive and understanding so that the international students would feel comfortable enough in sharing their attitudes and experiences.



I was sensitive to the fact that being in Japan for some time, international students may be hesitant to be critical of Japan, as foreigners are often portrayed as criticizing Japan on popular television shows to further incite divisions between foreigners residing in Japan and Japanese people (Iwabuchi, 2005). In addition, I ascertained that some students who had been in Japan for longer than six months, the longest being the student from Eastern Europe who had been in Japan for six years, may have adopted Japanese norms such as accepting social conventions and norms over being able to be true to one's own feelings, attitudes, and opinions (Dunn, 2016). In other words, for international students who had been in Japan for longer periods of time, there may have been the tendency for them to be less critical of Japan because they were vacillating between the outsider foreigner who could criticize Japan and the insider who should accept Japan as is to be considered a mature adult in Japanese society (Dunn, 2016).

The 10 international students were given pseudonyms that would not reveal their country of origin to ensure anonymity and confidentiality as shown in Table 3.5. Most students had been residing in Japan for approximately six months to a year. Some of the students, particularly the postgraduate students, had been in Japan prior to their current stay in Japan. All of them were receiving scholarships from the Japanese government and/or their home institution to study in Japan.

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Department</b> <b>U = Undergraduate</b> <b>PG = Postgraduate</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>Jane</b>	Asia (not Japan)	Business (PG)	F
<b>John</b>	Europe	Japanese Studies (U)	M
<b>David</b>	Eastern Europe	Japanese Studies (U)	M
<b>Anna</b>	Eastern Europe	Japanese Studies (U)	F
<b>Michelle</b>	Europe	East Asian Art History (PG)	F
<b>Anthony</b>	Eastern Europe	Economics (U)	M
<b>Sally</b>	Asia (not Japan)	Political Science/Law (PG)	F
<b>Claire</b>	Southeast Asia	Japanese Studies (U)	F
<b>Lisa</b>	Eastern Europe	Art History (PG)	F
<b>Eva</b>	Eastern Europe	Economics (U)	F

**Table 3.5. International students' pseudonym, region, department, and gender**

### **3.8 Data Analysis: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis**

Data analysis through the interpretive methodology of IPA gave me access to the cognitive inner worlds of participants in the focus groups and interviews (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). Data analysis was cyclical and iterative, using the steps outlined by Biggerstaff & Thompson (2008) and Smith (2004): reading and re-reading transcripts and jotting notes, identifying emergent themes, grouping emergent themes as clusters of subordinate themes, and tabulating subordinate themes into a summary table with master themes. The questions asked in the focus group discussion with Japanese university students and in the interviews with international students were similar as I had intended to compare and contrast the two relatively homogenous lived experiences and life stories (Smith et al., 2013). The exception to this was when the international students were asked to reflect on their experience abroad as opposed to some of the Japanese students who did not have overseas experience and could only imagine how they would develop as a result of going abroad. The questions for the focus group discussion and personal interviews (see Appendix 4) were developed to correspond with the overall research questions.

#### **3.8.1 Reading and Re-reading Transcripts**

I listened to the recordings twice, read the transcripts at least four times in order to familiarize myself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and began jotting notes along the margins of the transcripts after I listened to the recordings at least once. Having conducted the focus groups and interviews, I noticed that I could easily slip back in time to when I was in the room with the participants and listening to their lived experiences. Despite feeling that my ability to recall the content of the discussions and interviews would wane over time, I allotted two weeks for the initial step of reading and re-reading transcripts because I believed that the double hermeneutics process of participant interpretation and my interpretation could not be achieved if I felt rushed into locating emergent, subordinate, and master themes within the text (Smith, 2004). Moreover, I knew that interpretation needed to be suspended (Gray, 2014) until I had fully immersed myself within the data.

Listening to the recordings several times was beneficial in that I could also analyze the intonation and stress patterns as well as the pauses that occurred in the discussions and interviews. I contemplated the use of computer software such as NVivo or CAQDAS to aid in the analysis the qualitative data but decided against using software in favor of mind maps because IPA tends to be unlike other qualitative research that can be neatly coded using software (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Gray, 2014; VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015).

When reading the texts, I framed them within the overall research questions. Knight's (1997) categories founded on ethos, processes, activities, and competencies assisted me in imagining how students interpreted the phenomenon of GHR development. I kept an open mind when reading texts, recognizing that my preconceptions might affect how I interpreted the text (Kuckartz, 2014). In the end, I realized that my efforts to examine my personal, epistemological, and ontological positionality prior to data collection and analysis allowed me to face the texts without feeling the need to deny my own preconceived notions and attitudes.

### **3.8.2 Taking Notes and Explanatory Comments**

Although transcribing focus group discussions and interviews was done using Word and a transcription pedal, note taking and explanatory comments were handwritten. An example of my data analysis would resemble Table 3.6 for focus group discussions and Table 3.7 for individual interviews. When taking notes, I focused on two levels, descriptive comments and reflective questions. Descriptive comments were based on what was actually said without making many inferences. Descriptive comments facilitated my reflective and interpretive process because I also asked questions that allowed me to locate some of the key issues that had yet to be resolved regarding GHR development in HEIs in Japan. Possible themes were extracted from the transcripts and were connected to literature so that research on potential themes could be included when reporting results from this study. Data findings were included in my explanations below so that the data analysis steps could be explored sequentially and systematically.

[illegible]

**Table 3.6. Focus group example of taking notes and writing explanatory comments/questions**

Transcript 4 Anna (A), Interviewer (M) p. 9	Possible theme	Initial noting comments/questions
<p><b>M:</b> So, your experience here, what do you think you are contributing to you know you can take from Japan and plop it into (your country).</p> <p><b>A:</b> Well, I should take so many things from Japan. I would implement it in (country) but it is kind of impossible with our country but coming here I realized a country can run smoothly if the individual is a proper person. Because in Japan everybody seems to care about not so much about their own person but more about the community. So, there's like mutual respect, which in Europe basically doesn't really exist nowadays. In Europe everybody is so focused on themselves and on their evolution and their well-being that they don't really care who they have to step on in order to get there. Which I noticed is so different in Japan...</p>	Collective culture vs. individualistic culture	<p><u>Having a point of reference</u></p> <p><u>Noticing the positive elements of Japan and being able to see your own culture more objectively</u></p> <p><i>Is she in her final honeymoon phase because she is about to leave Japan? She wants to leave with positive memories?</i></p>

**Table 3.7. Interview example of taking notes and writing explanatory comments/questions**

Analysis on the idiographic level highlighted the inter-group dynamics that were apparent in the discussions. The dynamics in the second and third focus groups contrasted with the first group because students were unfamiliar with each other. When there was a domineering person in the group, others became passive, allowing the dominant individual to control the discussion. Fortunately, the outspoken students realized that they needed to give turns to others. Students who expressed disagreement were polite in how they presented opposing views, thereby staying within what is acceptable in Japanese communication styles. These subtle inter-group dynamics needed to be considered when analyzing the texts to unearth some of the hidden or intended meanings behind the texts. My knowledge of indirect communication style of Japanese speakers (Ramsey & Birk, 2013) along with my fluency in Japanese allowed me to analyze the subtleties in communication style among the Japanese students.

### **3.9 Ensuring Quality in IPA Research**

In qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, the aim is not generalizability for replicable purposes, finding absolute truths, or ensuring neutrality and objectivity of the researcher (Yardley, 2000). More specifically, for IPA, the goal is to “not seek to find one single answer or truth but rather a coherent and legitimate account that is attentive to the words of the participants” (Pringle et al., 2011, p. 23). In IPA, what is most significant is to be able to capture, describe, and interpret the phenomenon under investigation for each individual. Nevertheless, qualitative researchers are not exonerated from taking issues such as reliability and validity into consideration (Smith, 2011; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Instead, they must realize that within qualitative research methods, there are different benchmarks compared to quantitative research to ensure quality and trustworthiness in research (Pringle et al., 2011). Checklists that imply that there are universal standards for assessing reliability and validity are not suitable for assessing qualitative research including IPA (Smith, 2011; VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015).

To ensure quality in IPA for this study, I followed various IPA researchers' recommendations to novice and experienced IPA researchers. Smith (2011) advocates having a clear focus, robust data from interviews, support for themes extracted from each participant's transcript, elaboration of each theme, interpretation in addition to description, an analysis including patterns of similarity as well as uniqueness, and a carefully written paper. He recommends Yardley's (2000) criteria of sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and importance and impact. Sensitivity to context implies that researchers have a strong theoretical foundation, have placed their research within existing literature, and have considered the sociocultural contexts of participants. Commitment and rigor include comprehensive research of the topic and clear research methodology and analysis. Transparency and coherence imply following ethical procedures and having reflected on the theoretical and methodological underpinnings. Lastly, impact and understanding concern the researcher's social, practical, and theoretical contributions to the field. Yardley (2000) advises qualitative researchers to adapt the criteria as needed, in line with the philosophy of the flexibility omnipresent in qualitative research methodologies.

### **3.9.1 Sensitivity to Context**

To develop my sensitivity to context, I had to investigate my positionality as well as my epistemological and ontological underpinnings as explained in section 3.2 and 3.3. IPA researchers are part of a double hermeneutics process and as such, must be aware of how they may interpret the participants' lived experiences through their own lenses as well as their own lived experiences concerning the phenomenon (Clancy, 2013; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). I hoped to investigate the individual life stories of students who were intent on becoming GHRs because I saw value in the Japanese government's global policies that were trying to create GHRs. Evidently, I had my doubts as to how these policies were being implemented in practice, which is why I decided that understanding, describing, and interpreting students' stories using the contextual constructivist framework of IPA would facilitate my understanding of how government policies were or were not in line with students' attitudes and experiences.

The sociocultural contexts of my students were respected. For instance, I told the Japanese students that they could communicate with me in Japanese because I realized that even if they had proficiency in spoken and written English, they would worry about making grammatical mistakes with a native speaker of English (Sawir, 2005). I also reiterated to them that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and that they had the option of not speaking or contributing if they felt uncomfortable. For many Japanese students, active participation is not only speaking up but also listening attentively and respectfully (Rubrecht, 2004).

### **3.9.2 Commitment and Rigor**

I remained committed to deep research of the topic. First, my research for this topic began in module three and has continued to this day. In module three, I conducted an organizational analysis of SCJU and analyzed how global excellence was becoming the gold standard at HEIs across Japan. When writing assignments for modules three to nine, I focused on GHR development. I found it intriguing that Japanese HEIs were suddenly publicizing the benefits of globalization and the internationalization of higher education. Moreover, I noticed that the policies from above were having an effect on many of my English courses that were rapidly being transformed from teaching English towards creating GHRs through preparing students to study in English-speaking countries. The abrupt change in policy and curriculum design at my department at SCJU regarding English courses stimulated my interest in this topic.

I also received input from my Japanese and non-Japanese colleagues who are my critical friends (Fahey, 2011). My non-Japanese colleague who told me that interviewing managers on the meso level was equivalent to asking them to commit professional suicide made me aware of my naivety in thinking that in a culture that values saving face and hiding shame, expressing oneself through *honne* or one's real feelings may not be ideal in formal situations where individuals are expected to maintain a public identity to preserve and respect social conventions (Takanashi, 2004).

### **3.9.3 Transparency and Coherence**

Yardley (2000) places ethics within transparency. At the beginning of each session, a synopsis of the research purpose, aim, procedure, and ethics were explained, and students were asked if they had any questions and informed that pseudonyms would be used to preserve their anonymity although I gave little thought to which pseudonyms to use as is often the case (Lahman, Rodriguez, Moses, Griffin, Mendoza, & Yacoub, 2015). When I used country-specific pseudonyms for the international students, my primary supervisor suggested more general names instead of names that would highlight their country of origin because some countries may only be represented by a limited number of international students. Thus, I changed the names to western names and specified the region (e.g., Asia, Europe) where students came from instead of the country of origin.

Coherence was based on theories enlightened by Knight's (1997) four categories as explained in Chapter 2. These theories underscore the importance of critically analyzing how countries such as Japan are trying to balance cosmopolitan and nationalistic forces by focusing on raising globally-competitive human resources who can boost the nation's economy. They also demonstrate that GHR development policy requires balancing forces on the macro, meso, and micro levels so that HEIs would be able to retain the best human resources to create a more cosmopolitan Japan (Kudo & Hashimoto, 2011).

### **3.10 Role of the Insider and Outsider**

Being an insider or an outsider is not clearly defined within qualitative research and at times is situational (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Accordingly, qualitative researchers should be aware of how they can be both – insider and outsider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) along with the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider or an outsider within qualitative research (Unluer, 2012). Qualitative researchers including IPA researchers are insiders who are interpreting the participants' lives not from afar but from within as partners with privileged access to their participants' intimate life stories.



If membership is the criteria for being an outsider versus an insider, then it may be the case that higher education practitioner-researchers who are investigating issues within their institutions are by default insiders (Breen, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Unluer, 2012). Being an insider as a faculty member of SCJU, I had several advantages in conducting this research in terms of positionality, access, data collection, interpretation, or representation (Chavez, 2008). First, I had legitimacy in the eyes of the Japanese participants when asking questions to students because they were aware of my insider role of teaching WEC and may have been less inclined to fabricate information about their experiences. Second, I was able to gain access to participants by following the ethical procedures in place at the University of Liverpool and at SCJU as long as my participants' identities were not compromised and research methods, designs, and practices remained robust.

Being an insider was disadvantageous when my roles as researcher and teacher became blurred (Unluer, 2012) even if I would have liked to consider myself a practitioner-researcher. As a researcher, I was interested in bridging the divides that I thought might exist between higher education policies dictated from the Japanese government to program managers and/or teachers, and to students. As an instructor of WEC, I felt conflicted by my loyalty towards the Japanese government if I were to expose any of the weaknesses in current policies and practices. Nevertheless, I believed that policies, particularly when they are first being implemented, are meant to be modified as a result of feedback from stakeholders who are implementing policies into their practice.

Selective reporting (Chavez, 2008) was a challenge for insiders like me who was at times tempted to confirm their positive and negative biases through intentional or unintentional omission in reporting data. In addition, even if I were successful in reporting data comprehensively, having ties with students, the program, and the institution meant "difficulty with recognizing patterns due to familiarity with community" (Chavez, 2008, p. 479). These as well as other disadvantages mentioned by Chavez (2008) of being an insider were addressed by making sure that all data were fully transcribed and analyzed as objectively as possible through the use of IPA research methods for identifying trends and patterns in the data.

In the eyes of the international students, I was a hybrid outsider and insider. In terms of group membership, due to my limited contact with teaching or interacting with international students at SCJU, I was an outsider who was unfamiliar with the courses they were taking or the communities in which they belonged. Compared to the Japanese participants, I felt that selective reporting was less problematic because I had no qualms about revealing the authentic academic experiences of international students who were not enrolled in WEC where I was a faculty member. Moreover, although I had been an exchange student to Japan when I was a high school student as well as an exchange student in Europe, I lacked any personal experience being an exchange student in the context of Japanese higher education. Consequently, I found their stories refreshing and at times eye opening due to my ignorance of the lives of international students at SCJU. As stated previously in section 3.7.2, I was an outsider in Japanese society despite my background of being raised in a bilingual setting. In short, I shared the same identity as international students of being a “foreigner” in the eyes of Japanese people, having been raised outside of Japan and usually stigmatized in Japanese society (White, 2014; Whitsed & Volet, 2011). Moreover, in a society that has native speaker ideals of English teachers (white, aged 30-35) (Rivers & Ross, 2013), I was an insider to all but one international student who, even within the ranks of foreigners, ranked low in the foreigner hierarchy of desirability in Japan.

My insider status as foreigner in Japan proved to be useful at times when interviewing international students. Foreigners living in Japan have stories that are often exchanged among international students living in Japan and even outside Japan to personify the classic *gaijin* (outsider) experience in Japan (Scott, 2014). Telling such stories to Japanese people who often do not have the same lived experiences as non-Japanese people does not have the same impact as sharing them among outcasts in Japan who probably have their own stories to tell. Often times, such stories touch on elements of discrimination and prejudice. As a foreigner in Japan, I was privy to the stories of international students who were residing in Japan and studying at SCJU to improve their Japanese and learn about Japanese culture. These stories undoubtedly have elucidated the gaps between a more cosmopolitan Japan and the reality of non-Japanese students trying to adapt in a society that values ethnic homogeneity.

My hybrid insider/outsider role with exchange students was difficult to maintain at times. Having lived in Japan for over seven years, I noticed elements of myself “going native” where I was straddling multiple identities as a Japanese and a foreign citizen. For instance, when some international students said that Japanese students lacked social skills, I wanted to emphasize that in Japan where being shy, humble, and reserved are positive traits, perhaps “lacking” was not the best choice of words. When I found myself having these conversations with myself, I stopped myself from judging what the international students were saying, decided to ask more probing questions (Gray, 2014), and used my reflective skills rather than making premature conclusions about the lived experiences of the international students. Ultimately, I tried to remember that IPA expects researchers to be sympathetic and open-minded towards participants who have exposed their vulnerability by sharing some of their most intimate stories (Smith et al., 2013).

### **3.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have paved the journey I have made from being a novice qualitative researcher to a more experienced IPA researcher. The journey began by investigating my positionality and rationale for choosing IPA research as my research methodology. Then, I explained how I designed, conducted, and analyzed my study to ensure coherent and robust research practices. Finally, I concluded with how I negotiated outsider/insider roles. In the following chapter, I will explain my research findings, which have inspired me to continue on this journey of becoming a better qualitative researcher by exploring issues on the grassroots level in higher education.

## **Chapter 4: Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter compares and contrasts the perceptions and experiences of Japanese and international students at SCJU who shared their lived experiences of MEXT's policies of GHR development within the confines of studying abroad. Following the principles of IPA (Smith et al., 2013) possible themes were extracted from the transcripts and were later used to come up with emergent themes, subordinate themes, and a master table of themes. The discussion that resulted from the findings reveals how changes can be made to further align stakeholders at the macro, meso, and micro levels of GHR development.

### **4.2 Thematic Analysis: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis**

Thematic analysis is valuable for identifying and analyzing patterns in qualitative data within IPA research. It can be applied to a variety of research questions, data sets, data types, and research purposes (Clarke & Braun, 2013). IPA researchers, while recognizing the versatility of thematic analysis to address a wide range of research interests and theoretical perspectives, should be aware that thematic analysis requires an ongoing process of familiarizing themselves with the data, coding the data, searching for themes, rearranging themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the themes so that stories can be shared and contextualized through existing literature (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

### 4.2.1 Developing Emergent Themes and Clustering into Subordinate Themes

Prior to developing emerging themes and subordinate themes, I had difficulty envisioning how ideas connected within each discussion and interview. Therefore, I used what I had learned from various modules to create mind maps for each discussion and interview, showing how ideas were connected across different nodes. The mind maps helped me identify emergent themes, which were later grouped into subordinate themes as shown in Table 4.1.

Subordinate themes (n=8)	Emergent themes (n=26)	Qs	Explanatory notes
<b>Meshing the global and local forces</b>	Cross-cultural awareness	How?	Social interaction, studying interest, overseas experiences, global courses, conferences
	Comparative and contrastive analysis	Why?	Understand differences and similarities, build tolerance and acceptance, reduce ignorance and arrogance
	Identity, self-awareness	How?	Know own country (tradition, history), have interests and specialization, know one's strengths and weaknesses, challenge stereotypes
	Communicative competence in foreign languages	How?	Interaction, studying abroad, living abroad, early exposure to English, willingness to communicate/listen
		How many?	English for sure (necessity) and another language
	Contributing the global to the local	How?	Go overseas and bring best back to country, act as bridge, promote another country to own country
	Finding universal impact	How?	Fields such as art, technology, business, literature, science, United Nations

**Table 4.1. Creation of emergent themes and subordinate themes**

Occurrences of subordinate and emergent themes across both groups were tallied to ensure that the themes were represented in at least half of the participants' data for each group, even if according to Smith et al. (2013) all participants should be represented. This was done for all emergent themes (n=26) and subordinate themes (n=8) for Japanese students and international students (see Table 4.2 and Table 4.3).

Subordinate themes (n=8)	Emergent themes (n=26)	Hiroko	Naoya	Shoichi	Ken	Shiho (PG)	Kayo	Minami	Nana	Chise	Aoi	Hiyori	Daisuke
<b>Meshing the global and local forces</b>	Cross-cultural awareness	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X
	Comparative and contrastive analysis	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X
	Identity, self-awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
	Communicative competence in foreign languages	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Contributing the global to the local	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X
	Finding universal impact	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X

**Table 4.2. Occurrence of recurring themes across Japanese students (n=12)**

Subordinate themes (n=8)	Emergent themes (n=26)	Jane (PG)	John	David	Anna	Michelle (PG)	Anthony	Sally (PG)	Claire	Lisa (PG)	Eva
<b>Meshing the global and local forces</b>	Cross-cultural awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Comparative and contrastive analysis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Identity, self-awareness		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Communicative competence in foreign languages	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
	Contributing the global to the local	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Finding universal impact	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Table 4.3. Occurrence of recurring themes across international students (n=10)**

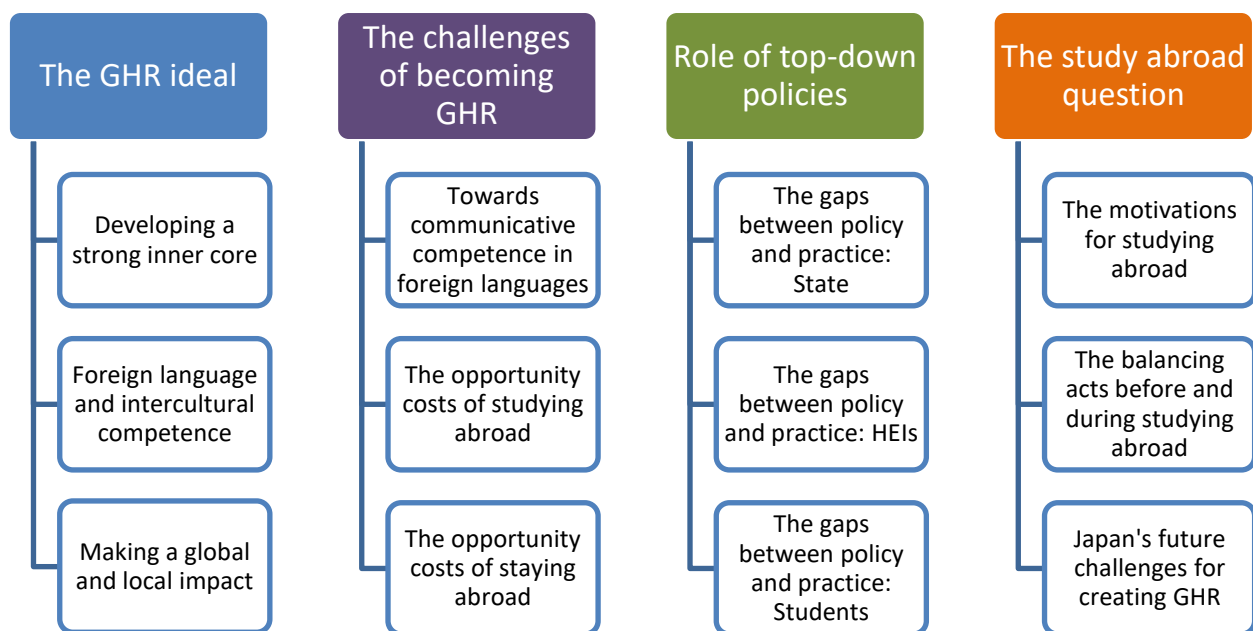
To ensure that individual voices were represented as is necessary in idiography (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010; VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015), summarized quotes from transcripts were noted within each of the emergent themes as in Table 4.4. The international students and the Japanese students were separated into different sections as shown in the table below to highlight the similarities and differences in their lived experiences. Page numbers from the transcripts assisted me in locating the original quotes from the participants. As I was summarizing quotes from participants, I went back to the emergent themes and subordinate themes and revised them accordingly.

Emergent themes (n=26)	Summarized quotes from participants (page number)
Cross-cultural awareness	<p><b>Hiroko:</b> Went overseas, did homestay, lived in dormitory, and participated in an international conference. (p. 1) When she came back people like her mother noticed that she changed. (p. 1) Through international conference, can see that people hold different values depending on different cultures and her own values became clear. (p. 2)</p> <p><b>Shoichi:</b> Once overseas, can come back and reflect on experience. (p. 12)</p> <p><b>Nana:</b> To be a real global human resource, must have cross-cultural understanding and basic understanding of politics, economics. First start with your own country. (p. 9) Went to China and wanted to challenge stereotype. Realized it was better to go overseas. (p. 10) She realized that people in other countries will speak their own language but also can speak Japanese, English, etc. (p. 11) Thinks not just language but also culture is important and in school she can learn language and culture and she can try to learn on her own. (p. 11)</p>
	<p><b>David:</b> Attended a conference on migration. (p. 14)</p> <p><b>Anna:</b> Can meet so many people with a different mindset when abroad, changes come step by step and when you go home, people start remarking. (p. 18) Learn that people are nations more than stereotypes. (p. 19)</p> <p><b>Michelle:</b> After six months abroad, she started to see the world differently. You have time to relax and review. But for languages, six months is not enough. (p. 18)</p> <p><b>Anthony:</b> Participated in creating a conference in Japan. (p. 16)</p> <p><b>Claire:</b> Global human resources are people who work abroad like in companies. (p. 1) Volunteer teachers in (country) teach for one or two years and go back to their country. (p. 3) After six months abroad, people can have relationships and have experience. Deepen to become global. (p. 21)</p> <p><b>Lisa:</b> Studying abroad has raised her awareness. Experience real Japanese culture, not like what she reads in books. (p. 10) Interact with others, aware of different cultural backgrounds. (p. 11)</p> <p><b>Eva:</b> Students need to study abroad and learn the language of that country. (p. 3) Did high school cultural exchange and enjoyed it. (p. 8)</p>

**Table 4.4. Emergent themes supported by summarized quotes**

### 4.2.2 Developing a Master Table of Themes

As the final step of IPA data analysis, a master table of themes was created. The 26 emergent themes were collapsed into 12 subordinate themes and four master themes. Some of the subordinate themes had to be expanded, modified, and refined, as IPA is an iterative process of revising themes based on data collected (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). The first and final master themes about the ideal GHR and study abroad were rearranged to illustrate expansion from inner to outer worlds (Selvi, 2012). Diagram 4.1 shows how emergent and subordinate themes from the transcripts were noted, modified, refined, and regrouped until the following master themes and subordinate themes materialized:



**Diagram 4.1. Final table of master themes (n=4) with subordinate themes (n=12)**



1. **The GHR ideal:** Corresponded to students' perceptions of how governments, HEIs, and students could be transformed from being local to GHRs as a result of changes in their mindset, attitudes, experiences, skills, and overall impact in global communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Students mentioned the desire to hone their critical thinking skills by challenging stereotypes.
2. **The challenges of becoming GHR:** Focused on how students saw the challenges of becoming GHRs given the realities faced by students in managing short and long-term priorities.
3. **Role of top-down policies:** Elucidated some of the perceived gaps at the government (macro) level, institutional (meso) level, and the student (micro) level to foster GHRs in Japanese HEIs from the perspective of university students.
4. **The study abroad question:** Delved into some of the structural issues (Lassegard, 2013) and concerns revolving around fostering GHRs through study abroad programs for Japanese and international students.

The findings for each master theme will be explained below theme by theme. The theoretical concepts included in the literature review (see Chapter 2) such as Knight's (1997) four categories (activities, competencies, ethos, and processes) of analyzing the internationalization of higher education will also be referenced when interpreting research results in subsequent sections.

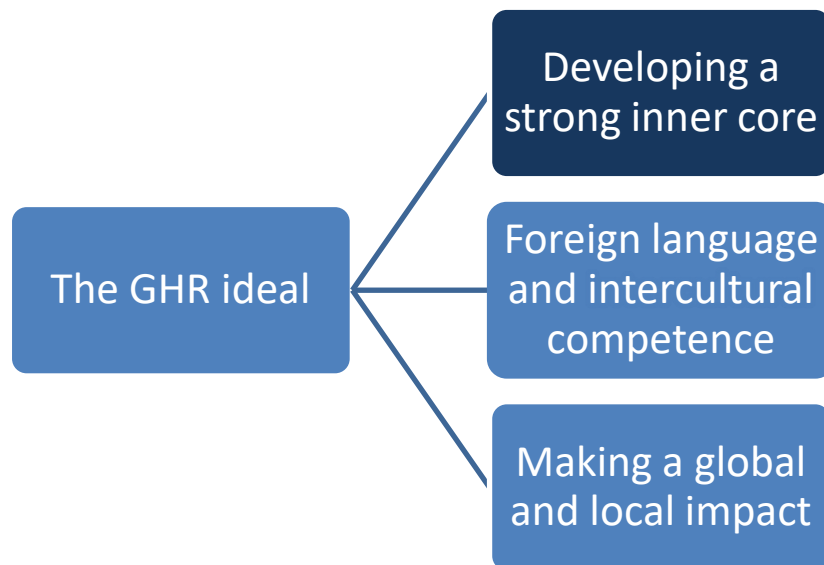
#### **4.3 Master Theme 1: The GHR Ideal**

Japanese university students and international students were asked to define and isolate the skills needed to become *gurobaru jinzai* (global human resources). Japanese students were familiar with this phrase as 10 out of 12 students were enrolled in the World English Courses (WEC) at SCJU where GHR development was one of the pillars of program and course design. International students, conversely, were not aware of the phrase and preferred substituting the term with "global person" or "global citizen" when referring to GHRs. West (2015) translates *gurobaru jinzai* as "globally competent human resources" or "global talent".

Despite the international students' lack of awareness of MEXT's nomenclature, they defined GHRs using similar constructs as the Japanese students by prioritizing an abundance model of self-actualization complemented by a resilient core (Murtaza, 2011) as an initial point of reference for defining GHRs.

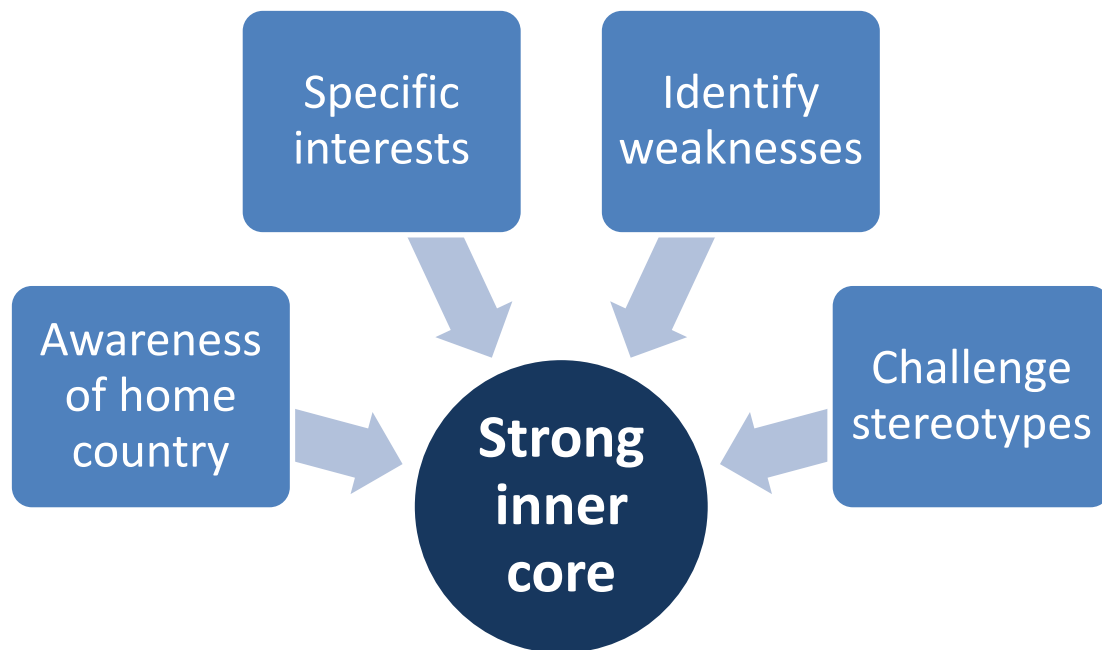
#### 4.3.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Developing a Strong Inner Core

Diagram 4.2 illustrates how developing an inner core was indispensable for becoming the ideal GHR.



**Diagram 4.2. Master theme 1 and subordinate theme 1**

Diagram 4.3 shows how students felt that GHRs who had a robust core were knowledgeable about their country's history, culture, and traditions; were intent on cultivating and exploring their specific interests; could identify their weaknesses in a global community; and were willing to challenge hidden stereotypes.



**Diagram 4.3. Components of subordinate theme 1 – developing a strong inner core**

#### **4.3.1.a Components of Developing a Strong Inner Core: Awareness of History, Culture, and Traditions of Home Country**

Many of the Japanese students, in tandem with MEXT's definition of GHRs, emphasized knowledge of their own country (Hooas, 2014) as Japanese citizens as the preliminary point of reference towards becoming GHRs. Several Japanese students repeated that the identity of being Japanese came first, followed by an identity of a GHR.

*“I found out that I didn’t know much about Japan, and that having an identity with respect to one’s own country is important. When asked about Japan’s side, I couldn’t say much. But I think that’s important, so recently I am trying to find out more about Japan and studying about Japan.”*

Hiroko, Focus Group (FG) 1, page 2, line 7.

*“...without forgetting our Japanese identity, it is important to understand foreign cultures and their uniqueness and to be able to communicate. English is important in communication so improving that and understanding your own country and others.”*

Kayo, FG2, page 12, line 7.

Differentiating Japan from other countries is often referred to as the “us” versus “them” syndrome, which Hashimoto (2013) argues isolates Japan from the international community. Although many Japanese students did specify their identity as being Japanese using references to “us” versus “them”, they had a more inclusive approach. They indicated that without knowledge of “us”, there could not be an understanding of “them”. When they go overseas, they may be perceived by others as representatives of Japan, and as such would be expected to be conversant in Japan’s history, culture, and traditions. Hiroko, who went to an international conference in high school to discuss the politics of World War II, discovered that she was not able to bring Japan’s perspective to the negotiating table, which made her miss an opportunity to critically analyze Japan’s role in a war that could be interpreted in multiple ways. Despite concepts of “us” against “them” that contribute to theories touting the superiority of Japanese culture (Kubota, 1999), the Japanese students thought of their Japanese identity as easing their exploration of global attitudes and perspectives.

Some international students criticized Japanese students' ignorance of Japanese culture including history. Japanese students learn about Japanese history and culture on a general level rather than addressing politically-sensitive issues (Allen, 2002). Allen (2002) blames MEXT's standardization of educational curriculum at the expense of learning about local culture and history as one of the reasons why Japanese students remain ignorant.

*"Because the Japanese have a problem with their own history during the second World War."*

Michelle, page 10, line 19.

*"I would say their (Japanese students') culture is limited to a bit of Asia and a bit of America and they are blissfully unaware of their own culture. And they are trying to actively forget about certain parts of their cultural heritage which should not really be left out."*

David, page 10, line 28.

For David to make such a statement about Japanese students, he clarified his definition of Japanese culture.

*"...Japanese people don't really know anything about what it is like to be educated in a traditional manner. The traditional arts are left aside, traditional musical instruments, painting and so on...I also realized that it is exactly the same case in (home country)...they are in a rush to be westernized and they do forget about their culture."*

David, page 10, line 32.

David, from Europe, may have what Vecco (2010) labels as a Eurocentric view of tangible cultural heritages. In Asian cultures, there is an emphasis on intangible cultural heritages that are not immediately apparent to those who may be observing the culture from afar and an appreciation of a cyclical culture that can be renewed materially but remain spiritually intact (Vecco, 2010). Nonetheless, it should be noted that David and Michelle remarked on elements of ignorance also commented on by Japanese students.

In contrast to the Japanese students who had an inner to outer approach towards becoming GHRs, Lisa had a reflective stance principled on self-awareness (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006), by assuming that citizens already came equipped with knowledge of culture and traditions of their country. Lisa said that respect of a home country's history and traditions should not be forgotten, dismissed, or ignored if people are to become GHRs. It was important for GHRs to have a local orientation – knowledge and respect of their own country's traditions and culture. In other words, developing GHRs through conflicting ethos of cosmopolitanism and nationalism can be complementary as observed by Japanese policy makers of higher education reform (Rivers, 2010). Lisa believed that GHRs could and should appreciate the history, culture, language, and traditions of multiple countries, in line with the self-actualization model of global citizenship (Murtaza, 2011).

*“A very important one is respecting tradition at the same time of opening to other cultures. If you want to think globally, if you want to be a global man, you can't forget about your own culture and language and traditions. You have to be aware of your own history at the same time. It's not like you forget about this and you throw away your own tradition just to become more global.”*

Lisa, page 3, line 27.

Maintaining both a local and global core may be difficult in a Japanese society that frequently expects foreigners to abide by Japanese standards while downplaying their cultural heritage (Breaden, 2014; Morita, 2015). However, the international students were reflecting on their experience not only in Japan but also on a global scale. When they described their idealized version of GHRs, they stipulated multiple global contexts including their current experience studying abroad at SCJU as well as past and future experiences abroad. Thus, exclusive nationalism in Japan (Morita, 2015) was not presented as an obstacle when they defined human resources in global contexts.

#### **4.3.1.b Components of Developing a Strong Inner Core: Cultivating and Exploring Specific Interests**

GHRs were expected to be specialists with interests that would give them a competitive edge in the world. This definition was aligned with how Hunter (2004) compares global citizenship and global competence programs. A global citizen has studied human rights, democracy, economics, religion, among other topics that are fruitful when analyzing global, national, and local forces (Marginson et al., 2011), whereas globally-competent individuals have competencies such as foreign language proficiency, cross-cultural communication, and open-mindedness that facilitate critical analysis of these topics (Hunter, 2004). Despite MEXT's definition that prioritizes global competence over global citizenship, students felt that cultivating and exploring their specific interests so that they could be specialists in a field of study was also vital to becoming GHRs.

*“To know the strengths and weaknesses of Japanese people, communication skills, foreign language proficiency, and also specialized knowledge that can give you a competitive edge over others, and cross-cultural understanding.”*

Shoichi, FG1, page 3, line 22.

*“You need to have some profession. You need to have another major...you can’t just be an international student with Japanese studies, you have to be Japanese plus intercultural studies.”*

Claire, page 14, line 23.

Having a specialization implied that students could pursue becoming GHRs and global specialists within a certain field (Meyer, 2006). Interestingly, many of the role models of GHRs that students mentioned had a research focus that placed them at the helm of GHRs. The role models of Japanese students were often Japanese people working overseas as specialists in various fields.

*“The person that comes to my mind is Tsutsumi Mika...she’s been writing about America’s current situation (health care)...she says that when you actually live in America and look at America, how America sees Japan or how America sees the world is quite different...”*

Aoi, FG3, page 6, line 11.

*“The person I see as a role model is Nishiyama Atsuhiko...he has specialized knowledge of his field including accounting...unless you have more knowledge or language ability, you can’t be better than people in other countries...he is probably about the only person who fits my ideals because he has comprehensive knowledge of his field, is also able to work with others, and has foreign language proficiency.”*

Shoichi, FG1, page 7, line 7.



An ongoing debate in the business world is whether or not the functional specialist is expendable in favor of the business generalist (Schelfhaudt & Crittenden, 2005). Shoichi, a business student, insisted that once overseas, Japanese people could not compete on a linguistic level with native speakers but could outshine them as functional specialists with a particular niche. Having specific interests and distinguishing which interest could be best utilized abroad was important for him.

*“You need to know which field you can have an impact and invest your time in that field. Being able to discern that is important.”*

Shoichi, FG1, page 8, line 28.

International students cited individuals who did not necessarily share their nationality but were specialists who were highly respected in a global academic community of practice as ideal GHRs (Wenger, 1998). Many international students gave examples of their professors or mentors who spoke multiple languages fluently, had lived in different countries, and were recognized for their contribution in academic circles. Their idealized GHRs were people whom they had personally met through their studies and had inspired them to continue their studies in similar fields in their home country and overseas.

*“She is from Korea but she also speaks Japanese, Chinese, German, and English. She has a really large knowledge about cultures, arts, music, and architecture...She has a large knowledge about languages, about cultures, she has a lot of research programs in this field, she is going to East Asia, to India, England, she has a lot connections.”*

Michelle, page 3, line 11.

*“My professor in (home country) can be a great example because he can speak 40 different languages...He’s able to overcome various differences between people and between cultures. In addition, he’s a researcher on Ainu’s culture.”*

Lisa, page 5, line 17.

The difference between the Japanese students’ role models and international students could be attributed to the frame of reference of Japanese students that began with thinking of themselves as a GHR as a Japanese person who was working overseas against all odds and recognized among Japanese as being globally successful instead of a global citizen whose specialization enabled them to connect with various cultures, live in many countries, and learn many languages. This difference may have also emerged because Shoichi and Aoi had never been abroad and were still in their first year of university as opposed to Michelle and Lisa who were studying abroad as postgraduate students and had connections with advisors who could guide them in their specific interests.

#### **4.3.1.c Components of Developing a Strong Inner Core: Identifying Weaknesses in a Global Community**

Some of the Japanese students felt that being aware of their individual and weaknesses as Japanese citizens would expedite the process towards becoming GHRs. Their weaknesses reflected the stereotypical characteristics of Japanese people observed by “them” as being shy or self-effacing in a hierarchical and status-conscious society (Hirai, 2000; King, 2013; Kowner, 2002). Often, such characteristics in political circles are hinted to as where “the Japanese Self imagines itself as ‘positively’ or ‘legitimately’ different, that is, unique or exceptional” (Hagström, 2015, p. 137). Japanese students in this study concluded that these traits could have negative repercussions in non-Japanese contexts where they may have to be more proactive. To survive in a global community or more specifically in a western community, the students thought that they should be aware of how positive traits in a Japanese context could be interpreted in diverse contexts.

*“What we (Japanese) think of as strengths can be interpreted differently. We are very polite but for them it just looks like we can’t say what we think. What we presume to be our strength can also be a weakness, so it’s important to understand that.”*

Shoichi, FG1, page 8, line 31.

*“Japanese people don’t have topics to discuss. The British people were eager to talk to us. To begin with, English is their native language but there was something else that caused this difference. We don’t have common topics to discuss with them.”*

Naoya, FG1, page 2, line 13.

Some of the Japanese students felt that being proactive, a trait that has been promoted by MEXT for becoming GHRs, was also a fundamental weakness among Japanese people.

*“It’s hard for Japanese people to go up and talk to people. There are, however, (Japanese) people who don’t have to use hard words and we can still understand that level of English and are willing to speak actively and can liven up the atmosphere...”*

Hiyori, FG3, page 3, line 9.

International students also felt that shyness of Japanese students reduced opportunities to interact with them and other Japanese people on a regular basis. International students’ network of friends was predominantly other non-Japanese students with whom they spoke in English at SCJU.

*“I don’t know many Japanese students here because they are too shy to communicate with foreign students. So I don’t think they have a tendency to study abroad.”*

Jane, page 5, line 5.

*“When I try to talk to them, I have a question to someone, they are like afraid and they don’t look at my face.”*

Michelle, page 6, line 7.

#### **4.3.1.d Components of Developing a Strong Inner Core: Challenging Ingrained Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are “category-based generalizations that link category members to typical attributes” (Correll, Judd, Park, & Wittenbrink, 2010, p. 45). They are often difficult to unearth as they are complicated and deeply ingrained (Hooas, 2014). In Japan where there is a narrow view of what it means to be Japanese and where immigrant communities have little interaction with the general public, stereotypes are frequently perpetuated by the media and accepted by the public (Tsuda, 2003). In Japan’s exclusive nationalist society, foreigners devoid of Japanese descent are expected to abide by Japanese norms to preserve the homogeneous social fabric (Morita, 2015). Tsuda’s (2003) study of Japanese perceptions of Japanese Brazilian immigrants illustrates how those who share Japanese ethnicity but have been raised overseas were expected to identify strongly with mainland Japanese people. Little consideration was given that they may have adopted the culture and language abroad.

Exclusive nationalism and ethnocentrism are interrelated because both rely on a mono-cultural and a mono-ethnic reality that do not tolerate differences across ethnic groups. By challenging ingrained stereotypes, students can move along the spectrum of ethnocentrism towards ethnorelativism. Ethnocentrists are threatened by differences and rely heavily on a mono-cultural reality, whereas ethnorelativists are aware of their perception of differences including stereotypes, are not afraid of differences, and are willing to create new categories that allow for pluralistic cultural realities (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001). To become GHRs, students admitted that stereotypical thinking was counterproductive. Thus, students wanted to gain intercultural sensitivity (Fatalaki, 2015) by confronting their stereotypes that may be preventing the emergence of a GHR.

*“Knowing about stereotypes and culture are important to have an overview of a country but if you are hung up on stereotypes, unconsciously, when you are interacting with people from that particular country, you might sound prejudiced and that could be dangerous.”*

Shiho, FG2, page 1, line 27.

*“If you don’t go overseas, you won’t know that you can’t judge people by stereotypes, so you definitely should go overseas.”*

Minami, FG2, page 10, line 7.

Some of the international students wanted to discredit the ingrained stereotypes of others who live in their country, particularly their Japanese stereotypes. By acting as a bridge between their country and Japan, they could improve the mutual understanding of cultures around the world.

*“When I went back to (home country)...I found my way of thinking about things was totally different from my friends...and for my friends they only know a little about Japan...AV (adult videos)...I don’t know but everyone knows about this...that’s why people think that Japan is very weird...”*

Sally, page 18, line 30.

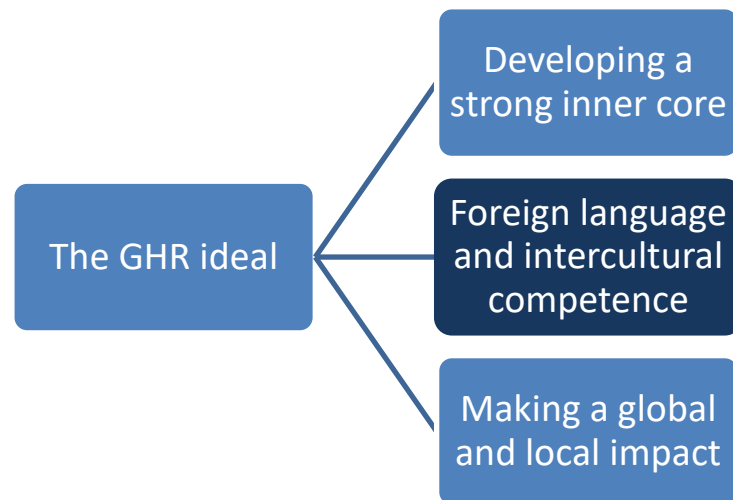
*“When you think about Japan, what immediately comes to your mind, it’s like geisha and samurai eating sushi three times a day. I just can’t stand this kind of point of view but it can’t be helped.”*

Lisa, page 18, line 33.

Worldmindedness, viewing nations as comprised of individuals, was possibly what Sally and Lisa were trying to promote within themselves and among others (Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001; Sokoya, 2012). The ideal GHR does not compartmentalize the world into categories. Instead, they embrace diversity while recognizing the detriments of relying on stereotypes in understanding global settings.

#### 4.3.2 Subordinate Theme 2: Foreign Language and Intercultural Competence

Macro level policies must be supported by micro-level dynamics and activities on the institutional level that can enhance intercultural competence among Japanese students and international students through communication (Howe, 2009). Students felt that the ideal GHR, in addition to possessing a strong inner core, also had competencies in foreign languages and intercultural understanding as depicted in Diagram 4.4 that would allow them to participate in a global community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Foreign language competence was not only limited to English for students who were non-native speakers of English although many felt that using a common language such as English to discuss various cultures would be necessary so that cultures, traditions, values, and customs could be compared, contrasted, and analyzed across various cultures.



**Diagram 4.4. Master theme 1 and subordinate theme 2**

#### 4.3.2.a Foreign Language Competence

GHRs were defined by students as individuals who had foreign language and intercultural competence (Hunter, 2004), skills that could be enhanced by studying abroad, working abroad, taking courses related to global issues, learning foreign languages, and participating in international conferences or internship programs. Many students indicated that foreign language and intercultural competence were complementary.

Foreign languages, for those who did not speak English as their first language, meant learning English out of necessity because it was used as a common language or lingua franca among English speakers around the world (Jenkins, 2009). In other words, by learning and using English with native and non-native English speakers, they had greater access to a larger community of World English speakers, could learn about cultures around the world, and would be less apprehensive about communicating with people from other countries.

*“To be a global human resource, English is important. To begin with, English.”*

Ken, FG2, page 1, line 4.

*“Some people absolutely love English. However, English is absolutely necessary. That cannot be denied...So, it is necessary to study at least one foreign language, at least two, one which should be an internationally used lingua franca...And then do study one language that you do enjoy studying.”*

David, page 2, line 9.

*“English...the language of gods.”*

Eva, page 5, line 33.

English, as evidenced by the multiple varieties of English spoken around the world, is a language unlike others that has achieved global status (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Seargeant & Tagg, 2011). Learning a dominant language such as English with a large following of native and non-native English speakers was vital for many of the students who were non-native speakers of English. Those who could speak English well were even elevated to divine status as reflected by Eva's comment about English belonging to the gods and being the language of power (Wang, 2008). The international students had an implicit ranking of foreign languages to learn with English at the apex. Instrumental motivation of English (Dörnyei, 2003), or the desire to learn English to reap external rewards, was apparent. Although English had the long-term merits of aiding in the upward mobility in their careers, the immediate effects of English on expanding their social network among native and non-native speakers of English heightened the international students' motivation to learn English. Nonetheless, depending on where the international students were from, European (e.g., French) or Asian languages (e.g., Chinese) were also selected as being important languages to learn based on their perception of the tangible benefits and/or the enjoyment of learning foreign languages.

Among Japanese students, some of the students felt that more than English, it was their willingness to communicate (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002) that would connect them with people from other countries. Willingness to communicate is a concept that has been interpreted via motivational theories (Dörnyei, 2003) of how language speakers' perception of their competence in the target language and their anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language would impact their output. Thus, higher perceived ability and lower anxiety would lead to greater willingness to communicate. In the end, it can be inferred that willingness to communicate encompasses principles of foreign language competence from the perspective of the language learner.



*“For discussions, English is necessary. But to connect people, I don’t think it’s all that necessary...That’s because of the soul...the kindness that pervades. When Japanese people speak, their kindness will come through.”*

Hiroko, FG1, page 3, line 4.

*“Japan is a high context environment, so when we are in Japan even if we don’t say things directly there are many incidents in which we can have mutual understanding through various shades of meaning, but if we become global human resources and talk to a lot of people, we need to put into words exactly how we feel and express ourselves. To be understood, we need to engage in communication.”*

Aoi, FG3, page 1, line 13.

International students also conveyed the need for GHRs to have the willingness to communicate. Learning foreign languages could spark cross-cultural communication as Anna explained.

*“...trying to somehow connect to the exterior to all the other nations and for example, in (home country) we start by learning English. That is the first step we take in becoming a global person because you can’t really start understanding other people unless you can communicate with them.”*

Anna, page 2, line 17.

Lisa added that GHRs must have a universal way of communicating through one's specialization such as art.

*“How to communicate with someone whose language you can’t speak and how to be understood by people who can’t speak your language...finding some kind of universal way of communicating with others...art is one of the very universal ways of communicating with the others.”*

Lisa, page 2, line 32.

Overall, there was the implicit understanding that willingness to communicate played a crucial role in connecting with a global community.

#### **4.3.2.b Intercultural Competence**

Can students learn foreign languages in the absence of learning about culture? In countries such as Japan where much of foreign language instruction prior to university has been based on grammatical accuracy and translation (Humphries & Burns, 2015), it may be argued that students are learning foreign languages without gaining much intercultural sensitivity or exposure to authentic contexts of foreign language use. In short, learning foreign languages does not guarantee intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Can university students learn about culture in the absence of foreign language acquisition? If international students' first language is English, then they can learn about Japanese culture in English at SCJU, which may not necessarily contribute to their Japanese ability. In other words, language and culture in academic settings can be bifurcated if students learn languages solely for the purpose of memorizing grammar rules or if culture is studied in their first language. In most learning settings, however, language and culture are said to be intertwined into a concept called linguaculture (Plough, 2016), with one reinforcing the learning of the other (Ho, 2009).

Contextualizing language fosters second language acquisition and cultural awareness (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2015) because it brings cultures and real contexts into the language learning classroom. Raising intercultural competence is not restricted to the foreign language classroom. There are multiple ways in which intercultural competence can be acquired – through other course work, studying abroad, social interaction with people from other countries, or working abroad. The path towards developing intercultural competence was disparate for international students. Nevertheless, they mentioned that intercultural competence can be acquired through comparative and contrastive analyses of cultures on a microscopic level.

*“In Japan everything is really fast...and the service is really expensive but it is worth it...but the quality I pay (for the same service) in (home country), will be the same as in Japan. But the quality of service cannot be better.”*

Claire, page 2, line 21.

*“Japan tries to be more open but at the same time it respects its own history and culture and I think that some of the European countries should do the same. It’s not like now hurray welcome everyone and just do whatever you like, but if you want to stay in my country you should obey some rules and please respect my country and I am going to respect your country and if you’re going to respect me I am going to respect you.”*

Lisa, page 22, line 6.

These quotes clarify how the international students were modifying their ethnocentric perspectives from their home country to the host country. Denigrating the home country culture as a result of intercultural experiences and cross-country comparisons is still ethnocentric (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001) because individuals have only shifted their allegiance from one country to another. This stage, however, was essential for students to be transformed from ethnocentric to ethnorelativist individuals.

Some students, including those who made negative comparisons between their home country and the host country, stressed acceptance and tolerance of diverse cultural realities by being open-minded, a quality that would move them away from ethnocentrism towards ethnorelativism (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Students mentioned that acknowledging one's lack of awareness of cultural differences (Bender, Negi, & Fowler, 2010; Dean, 2001) and having humility could build intercultural competence. They said that ignorance and presumptions must be acknowledged, reflected upon, and discussed with others so that they could become more flexible in thinking and attitude in a global community that should be more tolerant and open to creating collective harmony (Odag, Wallin, & Kedzior, 2016).

*"My image is that even if cultural differences exist, you need to accept them and also be able to promote your own culture while managing those two forces."*

Minami, FG2, page 1, line 6.

*"I became more open minded when I came here because I talk and I exchange, I discuss with people who come from a lot of countries in the world. So maybe we have some clashes that I do not totally agree or I totally agree with but through all of that I know the world is really wide and there are a lot of weird people, so I learn how to accept things. Not weird it's that there are a lot of ways of thinking."*

Claire, page 17, line 35.

*"A very bad thing is this kind of attitude when you always know better...even if you don't agree with the other person, you should be able to say and to explain your own opinions without imposing on the other people...and even if you don't understand something you should be aware of it and you should know how to admit your mistakes or your lack of knowledge."*

Lisa, page 7, line 1.

Noticing similarities across cultures in addition to differences were mentioned by both groups of students as closing the gaps between themselves and their idealized version of GHRs. Similarities across cultures should be observed after careful and critical analysis of cultural differences because assuming similarities preemptively may make individuals blinded to subtle differences across cultures (Shiraev & Levy, 2015). Differences should be respected, rather accepted and tolerated, and then once differences can be dismissed, similarities can be acknowledged (Quappe & Cantatore, 2005). Thus, similarities and differences have equal weighting in cross-cultural analyses.

*“If we talk about language, we are highlighting different languages but listening to what was being discussed, I thought about how we need to think of similarities as human beings.”*

Shiho, FG2, page 3, line 1.

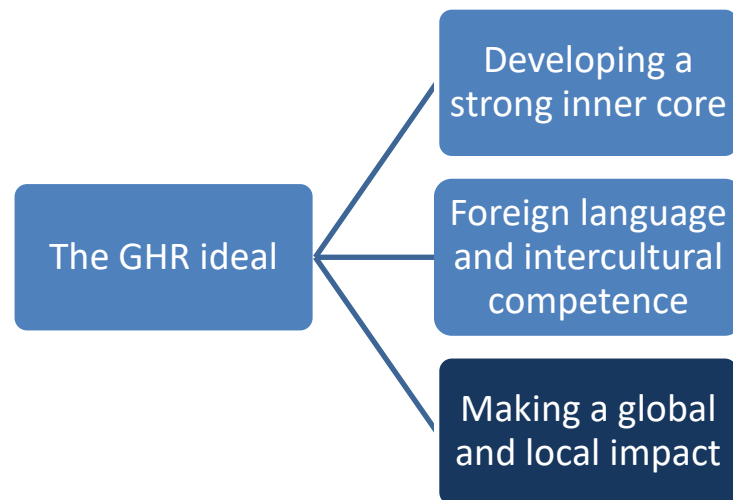
*“In this one we didn’t just do our culture. Cultures from around the world for example Greek mythology, other people talked about Egyptian and North Celtic and it’s just really interesting to think about why there are similarities between cultures.”*

John, page 15, line 26.

Four stages of cultural awareness have been classified by Quappe and Cantatore (2005) – a parochial stage (my way is the only way), an ethnocentric stage (I know their way, but my way is better), a synergistic stage (my way and their way), and participatory stage (our shared way). Cross-cultural comparisons of differences as well as similarities across cultures may have represented the synergistic stage that prepared students towards the participatory stage of cultural tolerance, acceptance, and negotiated perspectives.

### 4.3.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Making a Global and Local Impact

Human capital theories concentrate on the physical movement of human beings and the flow of know-how as a result of this movement. MEXT's rationale for GHR development is brain gain and brain circulation – brain gain from international students studying at Japanese HEIs and brain circulation when the Japanese students return to Japan with a fresh outlook on how to revive a faltering economy (Mok & Han, 2016; Yonezawa, 2016). Student perspectives of the impact GHRs could have were not limited to geographic movement although there were students such as Claire, who defined GHRs as foreigners living overseas. For other students, GHRs, regardless of them residing locally or globally, could have global and local impacts (see Diagram 4.5) if they were improving the economic, educational, social, cultural, and political fabric of countries including their own. Through one's interests, students agreed that GHRs could have a global and local impact.



**Diagram 4.5. Master theme 1 and subordinate theme 3**

*“But in my own way, even if I am going to be a local human resource, I plan on taking a global stance...in terms of knowledge even if I am a local science teacher I want to still be global in a small way.”*

Daisuke, FG3, page 15, line 10.

*“My father actually works here in Japan...he’s a pianist and through his work he’s been to different countries kind of spreading the classical music around.”*

Eva, page 2, line 30.

In theory, international students believed that having a global and local impact was feasible for people who had specific interests such as music, art, science, technology, or education. On a personal level, some of the international students felt that their contribution to their country would be how they could develop as a GHR.

*“I have to do something for my country and my home is there...They (GHRs) learn a lot and they go back to their country and do some cultivations...Language. And then the culture of Japan. And the way Japanese think about things.”*

Sally, page 2, line 29.

*“I want to get a Masters in Japan first and then go back to my university to work there. Because we are lacking teachers right now.”*

Claire, page 25, line 20.

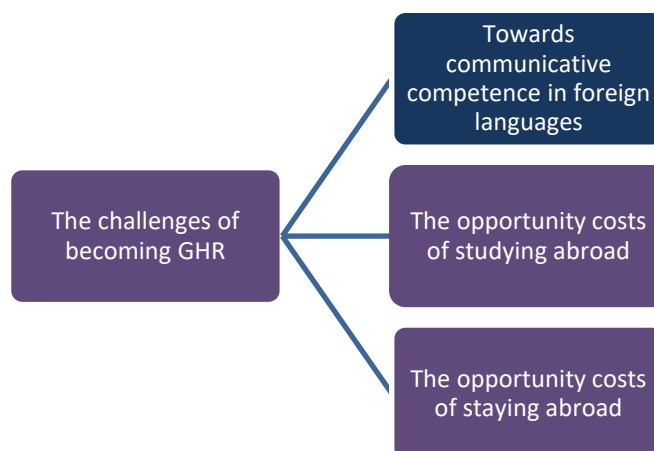
*“So that (translating and interpreting) would kind of be a bridge between the two cultures because I don’t think there is enough Japanese literature that is translated into English.”*

John, page 26, line 27.

Maps demarcate global and local boundaries as borders between countries. However, students had blurred boundaries between global and local forces as their mind maps were multi-dimensional and evolving. Global and local forces were defined within specific interests, sense of obligation to their country, and acting as a bridge between countries to contribute to the world. Global and local forces were indispensable for students who aspired for global citizenry to impact economic, political, cultural, and social conditions around the world (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015; Gacel-Ávila, 2005). The international students who were honing their specific interests in Japan were imagining how their study abroad experience could have an impact after they return home while negotiating their newfound identity. Most of the Japanese students with limited experience studying abroad may have been restricted in imagining how the blurring of global and local boundaries could have on global and local impacts of GHRs.

#### **4.4 Master Theme 2: The Challenges of Becoming Global Human Resources**

The macro and meso-level ethos, processes, and activities (Knight, 1997) of the internationalization of higher education policies have been trickling down to the micro level, to Japanese and international students who are interested in becoming GHRs. On their journey towards becoming GHRs, students were aware of challenges they would face when treading the rough waters from national to international borders – developing their communicative competence in foreign languages while weighing the opportunity costs of studying and staying abroad (see Diagram 4.6).



**Diagram 4.6. Master theme 2 and subordinate theme 1**



#### **4.4.1 Subordinate Theme 1: Towards Communicative Competence in Foreign Languages**

Students mentioned that communicative competence in foreign languages – starting with English – must be a priority. Communicative competence was coined by Hymes, who criticized foreign language learning in the 1970s that consisted primarily of repetition, drills, translation, and rote-memorization (Kramsch, 2006). Communicatively-competent second language learners are required to master the linguistic and sociolinguistic elements of foreign languages (Nazari, 2007). As mentioned in section 4.3.2, foreign language competence and intercultural competence were seen as requisite competencies of GHRs. Sociolinguistic competence and intercultural competence are intertwined – both rely on contextualized interpretations of language use within and across cultures (Han, 2013). Instead of reducing languages down to grammar rules, communicative competence expands foreign language learning beyond the classroom, to authentic settings in which the target language is used.

The grammar-translation method still lies at the heart of foreign language education in Japanese schools where English is taught through Japanese so that students can pass high-stakes university entrance exams (Humphries & Burns, 2015). The negative effect on student learning and motivation levels can be witnessed when students report that high scores on such tests are not correlated with productive English skills (Choi, 2008). Evidently, students' linguistic knowledge of English grammar rules and memorizing esoteric vocabulary words can be easily evaluated and ranked compared to testing students on communicative competence. However, after students enter university, their test scores are forgotten and their euphoria of having passed entrance exams may change to resentment towards a foreign language curriculum that has emphasized accuracy over fluency (Choi, 2008).

Many Japanese students advocated developing their communicative competence in foreign languages. Communicative competence must be developed to reach the higher order of a willingness to communicate (Yashima, 2002). With communicative competence in foreign languages, students felt that they could be motivated to speak and use these languages fluently, appropriately, and enthusiastically.

*“It’s good to start English in elementary school but if they are taught grammar from the very beginning, like me, they will think first about grammar and won’t be able to speak spontaneously.”*

Nana, FG2, page 4, line 27.

*“Well, consequently for reading, we are learning about how much we can understand English, how much difficult English we can understand. Difficult words, grammar. And even for entrance exams it is about how many complicated things we can understand and if we can’t understand it we get an X, which is easier for grading and is probably good. But it should not be about how much we can understand but how much we can actually use.”*

Aoi, FG3, page 22, line 15.

Foreign language skills are divided into four skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which ideally should be integrated and contextualized (Hinkel, 2006). The English curriculum of middle schools and high schools in Japan, even if all the four skills were mentioned, tended to rely more on grammar skills that could be developed by reading and writing in English.

International students who were non-native speakers of English also spoke about their foreign language learning experiences. Anna, having studied French and English, spoke about her experience learning foreign languages at her university in her home country and compared her experiences learning from a native speaker versus a non-native speaker of French and English.

*“Their (native speaker professors) approach to teaching was different...For example their focus was not so much on us knowing the grammar properly but more on how we use it and how we become natural and like sound more natural when we talk in either English or French whereas (home country) teachers, professors were focused on us using the proper grammar.”*

Anna, page 5, line 3.

Claire, who touched on policies to create GHRs, promoted compulsory English education that was not based on grammar to pass tests.

*“It must be like compulsory English...from about secondary school. And it must be effective English education...because in (home country) we have compulsory English education, too, but mostly we are into the grammar...and for tests so not many of us can speak.”*

Claire, page 11, line 8.

International students shared their experiences learning Japanese. Contrary to what the Japanese students described as their foreign language learning experience prior to university based on grammar rules and translation, the international students were learning Japanese using Japanese only for the most part and in an environment that was founded upon principles of communicative competence.

*“They were more focused on us developing and getting to know their culture and their language and knowing when and how to use the language, so they weren’t trying to force feed us anything. They were trying to make us understand and like become natural using language...everything was in Japanese.”*

Anna, page 10, line 1.

*“...during this class we were taught what Japanese expressions are no longer in use for example and how to communicate properly so I’ve learned a lot through these classes that they help me to understand some kind of cultural differences between European culture and Japanese culture actually. So it wasn’t mainly learning about language but it was like connecting the knowledge about Japanese language and Japanese culture, too.”*

Lisa, page 13, line 35.

It is important to note that the lived experiences of Japanese students after entering university were different from their reflection of past English learning experiences. When Japanese students shared their experiences at SCJU, some of them reported that they were learning English in a setting that was multicultural, communicative, interactive, and contextualized.

*“I took a cross-cultural course where international students were invited to visit. The Japanese students had to give a presentation (in English) about the international students’ country...but we made presentations diligently, for communication.”*

Hiyori, FG3, page 33, line 13.

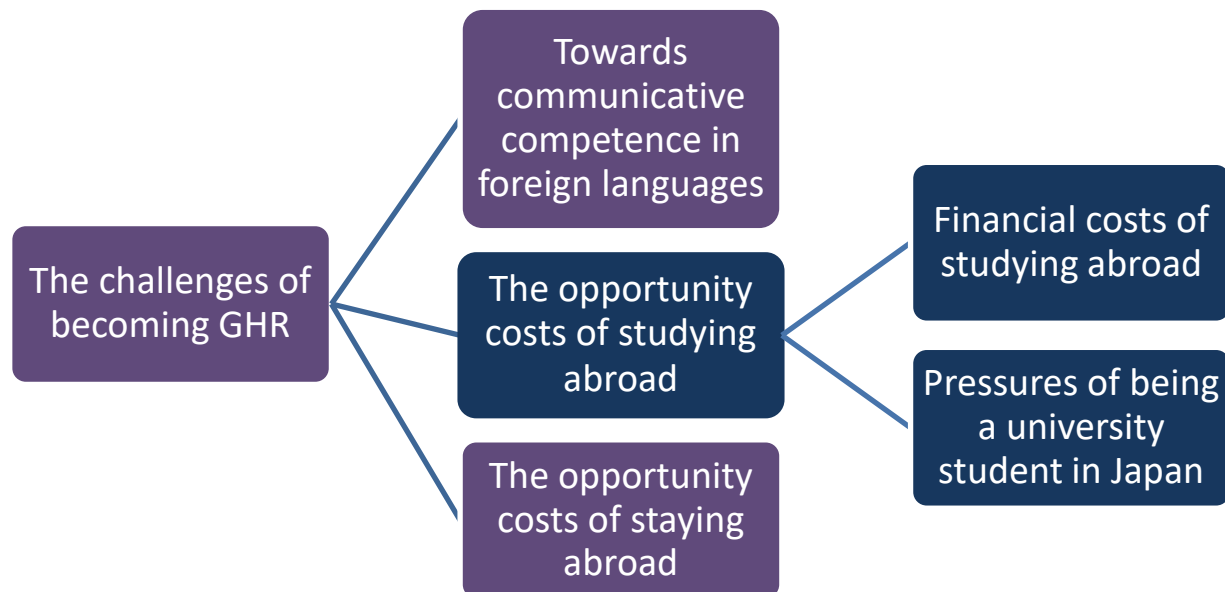
*“I am taking a class on Japanese culture and every week...we do a three-minute presentation to introduce the topic and after that we discuss and because there are international students, unlike when we are among only Japanese people when we make mistakes we can still understand each other, we have a chance to use English and communicate with students like international students, so I think this class has been very helpful.”*

Chise, FG2, page 8, line 27.

Communicative learning of English for Japanese students and in learning Japanese for foreign students is being practiced at SCJU. High-stakes entrance exams were cited by Japanese students as being the main obstacle for educational reform of foreign language learning prior to university. Once the onus of testing Japanese students' knowledge about English was lifted in higher education, processes were in place that allowed for communicative learning. Many students wondered if this was too little too late when students had already been conditioned to think first about accuracy rather than fluency in foreign languages. One of the weaknesses Japanese students mentioned in section 4.3.1.c was that they were shy, which may be related to the nature of teaching languages from a top-down approach based on prescriptive grammar rules.

#### **4.4.2 Subordinate Theme 2: The Opportunity Costs of Studying Abroad**

Japanese youth, criticized by MEXT as being inward-oriented, have been targeted as being strategic players in a study abroad campaign that would transform them into adventurous, risk-loving, and enthusiastic GHRs who could contribute to Japan's economy (Burgess, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2011). Running a campaign premised on Japanese youth being inward-looking is problematic (Lassegard, 2013) when in reality the structural barriers in place such as the high cost of studying abroad have not been adequately addressed by stakeholders on the macro level. Aubrey (2009) argues that Japanese university students are interested in learning English so that they can make friends with people from other countries, watch foreign movies, and have an opportunity to learn about other cultures. Unlike what has been presented in the media and promulgated by MEXT, many Japanese university students in this study were not reclusive members of society with little interest in global affairs. Instead, they were weighing the opportunity costs of studying abroad, just as the international students had done prior to coming to Japan (see Diagram 4.7).



**Diagram 4.7. Master theme 2 and subordinate theme 2**

#### **4.4.2.a Financial Costs of Studying Abroad**

The Japanese university students' desire to be GHRs did not always match the financial reality of studying abroad. Students were vocal about the cost of studying abroad as can be seen in the conversation below when they were discussing government policies to support Japanese university students to study abroad.

*Shoichi: "Study Abroad Japan Program, I know that there is a lot of support."*

*Hiroko: "Financial assistance..."*

*Shoichi: "Like some scholarship for studying abroad?"*

...

*Hiroko: "Studying abroad is expensive."*

*Shoichi: "In two months, students have to earn 300,000 yen."*

FG1, page 9, line 10.

Similarly, international students voiced their concerns about the cost of studying abroad. Although they were all receiving financial assistance from MEXT and/or from their home institution or government, they were aware that without such support, they might not have been able to take advantage of study abroad opportunities.

*“Just make it easier for Japanese students to go abroad because I know the international students in (home country) have a hard time studying because they have to pay so much more, I think it’s three times what we have to spend...given how many we actually have that’s actually way too much.”*

John, page 9, line 34.

*“If you are studying languages or cultural studies and so on it is very important to be able to go to that specific country and study there at least one year. But because tuition fees are very expensive, living costs are also quite high, it is often quite difficult for students to do that. Unless they get a scholarship it is basically impossible for them.”*

Anna, page 11, line 28.

Students’ decision to study abroad evolved over time and ended when they made the financial, emotional, and social investment to go overseas (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009). Japanese students and international students alike believed that without the financial means to study abroad, they would not be able to consider this possibility and may have to weigh other alternatives such as working abroad. Students had their ideals but were also grounded in a reality where financial issues played a significant role in their decision to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2009).

#### 4.4.2.b Pressures of Being a University Student in Japan

Japanese university students, in addition to being branded as lacking in worldly interests and motivation in going overseas, have also been characterized as exuding apathy in a higher education system that remains a complete sham (McVeigh, 2002). McVeigh's (2002) criticism may sound scathing to those of us who are trying to survive in Japan as practitioner-researchers in higher education. Rather than assuming that university students in Japan are apathetic towards learning or going overseas, it might be best to focus on some of the pressures that students faced at universities in Japan – or more specifically at SCJU – to ascertain why Japanese students were not able to make studying abroad a priority despite the growing pressure and financial support to study abroad from the macro level.

Most of the Japanese students in this study who were enrolled in WEC were interested in becoming GHRs to varying degrees. They also exuded traits of being high achievers who valued expanding their knowledge base and getting respectable grades so that they could graduate from SCJU, a national university ranked as one of the top of universities in Japan. Even with financial support from MEXT to study abroad, some students said they had other priorities that overruled their decision to go abroad, such as passing enough courses to graduate and becoming certified in their specialized fields. They also criticized SCJU's quarter system that has been implemented since April 2016 where what was previously a 16-week term was split into two quarters, each with eight weeks.

*“I have been thinking if the quarter system is really good for globalization. For example, if we look short term, what used to be a semester is now quarters, and now we have more exams. I am trying to get a teaching job, and if I want to be certified, I need to make sure that it doesn't overlap with tests...I need to choose between studying abroad and getting certified...I don't have much energy left to be interested in globalization.”*

Daisuke, FG3, page 12, line 6.



*“In the law faculty, most students do not study abroad. Everyone is trying to pass (Japan’s) national bar exam or they want to be a civil servant. There are a lot of students going to university and a specialized school. Studying abroad is for the limited few who are really curious, really want to do it, and really want to see the world.”*

Aoi, FG3, page 17, line 8.

*“When I hear about cross-cultural courses, I want to take those classes and from there I would like to move towards studying abroad but the cap system (a limit to how many courses students can take) is preventing me from taking such courses...Even if I had the luxury of time, with respect to studying abroad, I feel that I am held down by reality.”*

Daisuke, FG3, page 38, line 9.

International students did not share the same pressures as the Japanese students who seemed to be juggling various academic and vocational priorities. Most of the international students were taking language courses with other international students and one or two content courses (e.g., seminars) with Japanese students and found enough time to pursue their own interests.

*“Initially I took about 12 (courses)...but I honestly didn’t finish all of them...I passed maybe six.”*

Anthony, page 15, line 14.

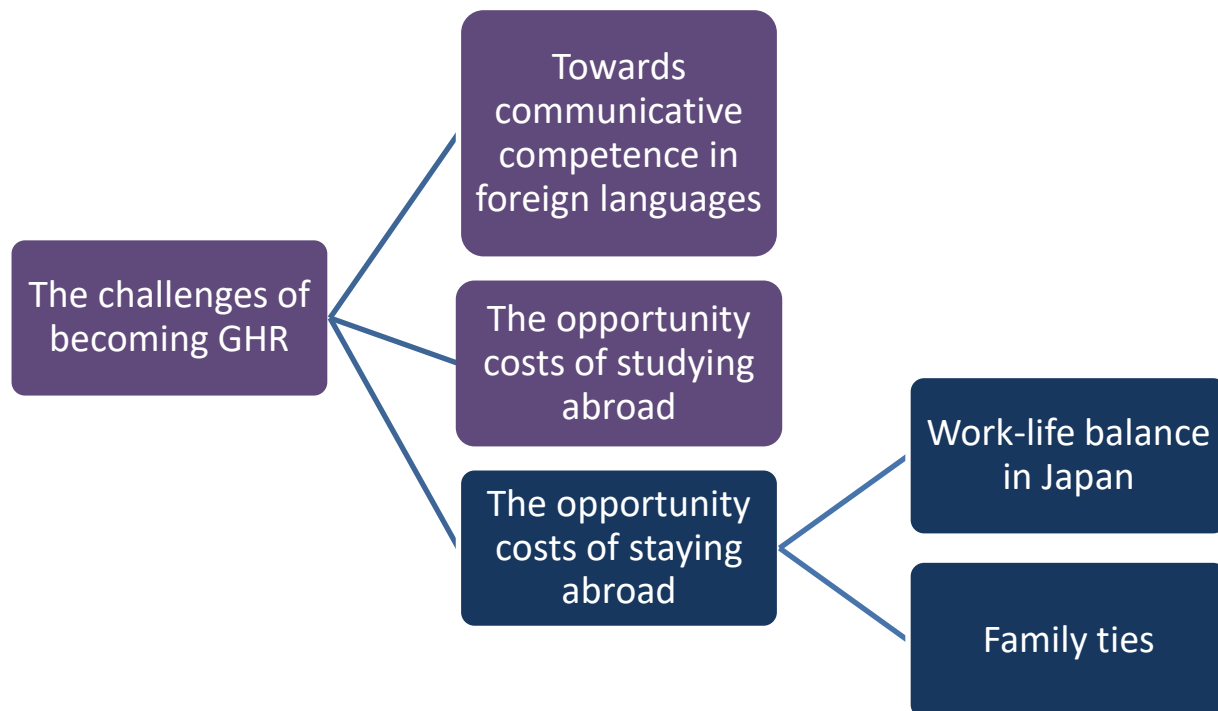
*“Ah, there was one culture class, Japanese culture but I didn’t really attend that. I did my own cultural studies.”*

David, page 9, line 32.

International students were enrolled in programs that were managed by a special division that caters to international students at SCJU. Thus, the pressure of not dropping courses was not as relevant to them because these regulations did not include international students who could drop classes and enroll in a variety of classes that matched their interests.

#### 4.4.3 Subordinate Theme 3: The Opportunity Costs of Staying Abroad

International students felt that staying in Japan had significant opportunity costs although many of the undergraduate students did mention that they would like to return to Japan to study as postgraduate students. As mentioned in Chapter 2.2.1.c, international students were fundamental in globalizing Japan not only as students who would bring diversity to Japanese HEIs but also as global talent who could boost Japan's economy. Nevertheless, even if international students had been targeted as potential GHRs, if international students are not willing to stay in Japan due to what they consider the work-life imbalance in Japan and family ties in their home country as shown in Diagram 4.8, the long-term effects of brain gain may not be realized.



**Diagram 4.8. Master theme 2 and subordinate theme 3**

#### 4.4.3.a Work-life Balance in Japan

The international students were positive about their life as a university student in Japan where they could take a variety of classes, meet students from all over the world, and narrow down their interests by enrolling in seminars and working on campus or elsewhere. In contrast, the reality of working in Japan for an extended period received less than stellar reviews due to their negative perception of the work-life imbalance in Japan.

*“I am not going to stay in Japan...studying and living is okay.*

*Working will make me very stressed. Because I can see the face of the salary man. They don’t look happy and work long hours.”*

Jane, page 10, line 6.

*“There is a limit to what a foreigner can do here in terms of climbing the social hierarchy. So, I would much rather live in a place that is not as limited in that aspect. Also, I want to have children and Japan is currently not a very good place to have children...it is exceedingly difficult to manage a job and have children.”*

David, page 15, line 24.

Work-life balance was presented as an impediment by international students, regardless of gender or country of origin. In Japan, female workers are labeled as “office ladies” and male workers as “salary men” (Connell, 2009). Neither constructs have encouraging images, especially to those who do not subscribe to a work ethic that is notorious for creating workaholics (Wong & Ko, 2009). With the end of Japan’s economic miracle, some Japanese companies have been replacing life-time employment based on seniority with part-time or contract-based employment based on outcomes. *Karoshi* (work to death), thought to be a problem of the past, has not disappeared because with an uncertain future, workers have had to work longer hours to prove their worth to their employers (Kanai, 2009).

Many international students did not see themselves as fitting in what they perceived as a culture that does not allow for life outside work. They did not want to be selfless workers (North, 2011) who sacrificed their time with family and their mental health for their employer. As a student in Japan, they were receiving financial assistance to study in an environment where they could learn about living in Japan and learn how to improve their Japanese skills as outsiders. As workers in Japanese companies, they would be expected to adapt to the Japanese work culture and lifestyle and relinquish their outsider status (Nagano, 2014).

#### **4.4.3.b Family Ties**

International students felt that staying in Japan for an extended period of time would be difficult because of their family ties back home. Sally, who hoped to work as a translator or interpreter, wanted to stay and work in Japan, possibly because such jobs were readily available to international students (Burgess, 2015). However, even her enthusiasm for staying in Japan was limited to 10 years.

*“I want to work in Japan for less than 10 years...and I will go back to (home country) I think. Because my parents are there.”*

Sally, page 20, line 29.

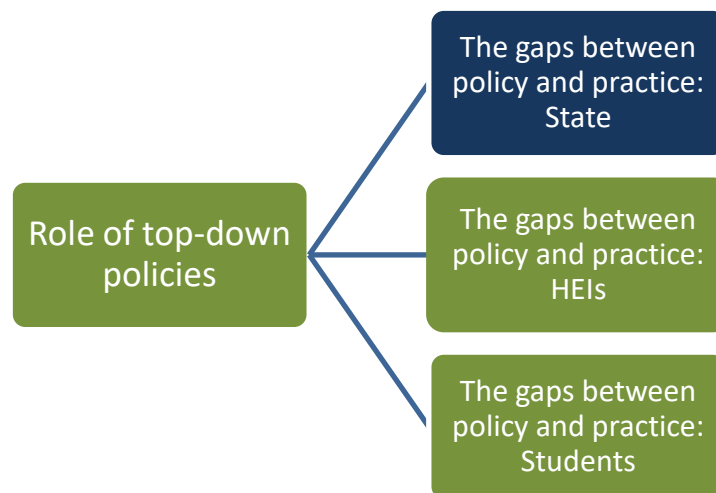
*“I would love to be able to live in Japan but the problem is my family is in (home country), so if I were to choose to return to Japan, live here, I would have to sacrifice my family and I am not sure I would want to do that.”*

Anna, page 24, line 36.

International students fit into the category of self-directed expatriates who were managing a multitude of push and pull factors that essentially determine where, when, and how long they would stay abroad. Baruch, Budhwar, and Khatri (2007) found that students with family in the host country would have a higher tendency to stay abroad whereas those with family ties in their home country would be pulled back to their home country. As none of the international students were married and most did not have family members in Japan, they did not consider the option of staying in Japan because of family ties. Some international students wanted to return to Japan for work or study in the future, but they felt that they could not stay forever because they would have to sacrifice their family back home in exchange for being Japan's GHR.

#### 4.5 Master Theme 3: Role of Top-down Policies

Top-down policies of GHR development had implications on the micro level. The Japanese students who were the main stakeholders at the grassroots level were mindful of the gaps that existed between policy and practice (see Diagram 4.9). International students were less critical of macro policies, possibly because many of them were being sponsored by the Japanese government. It could also be argued that the GHR movement is not inclusive of international students who could facilitate Japanese students towards becoming GHRs in a more cosmopolitan Japan (Yonezawa, 2016).



**Diagram 4.9. Master theme 3 and subordinate theme 1**

#### 4.5.1 Subordinate Theme 1: The Gaps between Policy and Practice – State

In general, Japanese students were ambivalent towards MEXT's policy for GHR development. They were not sure why this policy had emerged, how it was being implemented in HEIs in Japan, and what outcomes were expected from GHR development. They wondered about the effects of promoting GHRs to Japanese citizens who may or may not have their own reasons for aligning themselves with the government policy. Consequently, they questioned the rationale behind the GHR development policy as the panacea for improving Japan's economy.

*Hiroko: "Global human resource development, it is said that the country should create global human resources in large numbers but the reason why people would want to become global human resources would depend from person to person I would think."*

*Shoichi: "So you question why Japan is trying to foster global human resources? That makes sense."*

*Hiroko: "If you say it's for the world, it works, and if you say it's for Japan, it also works."*

*Shoichi: "So, it's like doubting the underlying premise."*

FG1, page 4, line 16.

Some students also contemplated whether or not GHRs were even needed to improve Japan's economy, given that Japan's post-war development founded on nationalistic principles had contributed to Japan's economic miracle of the 1980s (Yonezawa, 2016). Japan's rapid success in modernization has left it with an ambiguous identity, a lack of self-awareness, and an obsession with comparing its progress with the West (Tamamoto, 2003). Some students, similar to stakeholders on the macro level, felt that the ethos of nationalism and cosmopolitanism were at opposite extremes, with one hindering the development of the other. To them, cosmopolitanism came at a cost – losing Japan's unique culture and traditions in exchange for the promise of another economic miracle that was not guaranteed.

*“Being global means aggressively pursuing having a global impact but there might also be the option of carrying out being isolated from the world. I am not sure. But at least things like culture are preserved.”*

Hiroko, FG1, page 4, line 29.

*“During Japan’s post-war boom, we didn’t need to understand foreign cultures or speak languages other than Japanese but Japan developed a lot. Despite that, a part of me is wondering why now, we need to question this I think. Is it really necessary?”*

Shoichi, FG1, page 4, line 25.

Students also questioned the sustainability of policies that resembled those in other countries. They wondered if MEXT was merely replicating policies to conform to global standards in higher education, without considering the role of local standards (Deem et al., 2008; Ishikawa, 2009). Again, the uniqueness of Japan was broached by Japanese students who felt torn between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. Moreover, they felt that Japan has become eminently dependent on using global benchmarks as local standards, leaving the government bereft of more creative policy options.

*“I thought about how the university entrance exam system is going to shift from rote-learning memorization toward thinking ability, and my impression when I heard this was that they are copying foreign countries...Just copying (other countries), we would lose the uniqueness of Japan.”*

Hiroko, FG1, page 14, line 29.

*“There is a lot to be said about copying. Actually, all that has been done has been is copying up to now. Post war, there were some examples we could follow, so we were able to develop rapidly...we have always had examples to follow in education and other areas, but eventually if we don’t get out of this habit, it could be quite risky.”*

Naoya, FG1, page 15, line 13.

Some students discussed the limitations of using Englishnization (English only) (see Chapter 2.2.2.a) policies that have been adopted in companies such as *Rakuten*, which has been renowned for its top-down English-only policies in the workplace (Neeley, 2011). GHRs and English policies, whether it be in HEIs or in business sectors, have been controversial because English-only policies in Japanese contexts suggest the superiority of western cultures and languages in global contexts, and even locally within Japanese contexts. Despite the controversies that surround the role of English in various sectors, Englishnization policies remain the driving force of globalization and subsequent power, not only in Japan but also in other Asian countries (Wang, 2008). Globalization is a reality that businesses in countries like Japan must face in order to survive in the global marketplace, whereas internationalization is an international mindset of human resources that can add to the success of businesses and economies (Cavaliere, Glasscock, & Sen, 2014). How the international mindset emerges is left up to the companies, and for companies such as *Rakuten*, Englishnization has been the strategy for globalization and internationalization.



*Shiho: “Among Japanese people I would think it would be better to use Japanese in terms of effectiveness in business operations. But the government keeps saying English...not thinking about how the private sector has changed, not thinking about efficiency, just pushing English...”*

*Minami: “It’s true that the government’s policy is all about the English education, but they are not looking at tolerance of multiculturalism or increasing our knowledge of Japanese culture.”*

FG2, page 6, line 4.

Students in the third focus group debated the use of non-Japanese terms like “global” because they felt such terms were outwardly impressive but inwardly vapid. In Japan, foreign words are collocated with Japanese words in the form of Japanese public English (Hyde, 2002) to attract Japanese people’s attention without having them critically examine the meaning behind the collocations that have limited communicative purpose and real meaning. In response, they suggested other terms such as “international human resources” that might fit MEXT’s image of their ideal GHR and used only Japanese words. The more they thought about the word “global”, the more they felt flummoxed about how it should be used with GHR development. They concluded that グローバル (global) in GHRs was being used by the government because such loan words sounded catchy when they are combined with Japanese words (グローバル人材).

*Hiyori: "Is it (why the government wants GHRs) to look beyond Japan and promote Japan, human resources that can demonstrate Japan's strength?"*

...

*Hiyori: "Being able to compete with the world for the benefit of Japan..."*

*Daisuke and Aoi: "To be able to return something, yes."*

...

*Aoi: "Then, if that's the case then maybe instead of saying international human resources, they are using "global" because it sounds better, so they are like let's just use it for the time being."*

...

*Aoi: "Kind of like they are trying to showing off."*

*Hiyori: "So, that gap makes me think what exactly is a global human resource?"*

FG3, page 42, line 17.

In addition, some students felt that they were far removed from MEXT's GHR development policy that had little relevance to their daily life as noted in Chapter 2.2.2.a (Mohrman, Ma, & Baker, 2008; Morita, 2014). Even if the Japanese students had a global mindset, they were not sure how to approach the official definition of GHRs because of the underlying obscurity surrounding the policy and the steps students must take to align with GHR development.

*"Even people who are not exactly benefiting from the government's strategy can get closer to the definition on their own by finding out things on their own, for example. If there isn't a public definition, even if we have the mindset (to become GHRs), we won't know how to get closer to it. What is possible will depend on individual effort."*

Shoichi, FG1, page 11, line 11.

There were, however, students like Aoi, who seemed to match the government's definition of GHRs but felt that that was a matter of coincidence than choice. She happened to be self-motivated to learn English, wanted to learn about other cultures, intended to go overseas to study international law, and hoped to work for an international organization as a Japanese representative. Ultimately, GHRs may just be a catch-all phrase for individuals like Aoi who had a predilection towards being a global citizen for her own self-fulfillment rather than some nationalistic goal of moving Japan's sluggish economy towards recovery.

*"Even if I did what I wanted, I would naturally fit with what the government is striving for...I am going to work for an international organization...If you look at the United Nations, the ratio of how much financial assistance Japan is giving compared to how many Japanese representatives there are in the UN is low, so they want to increase that number (of representatives)."*

Aoi, FG3, page 41, line 29.

International students speculated about the rationale and the effectiveness of the government's policies regarding the internationalization of higher education. There was a consensus among international students that fostering of GHRs was about global experiences and ideas having positive local influences.

*"I guess they (government) want to expand their horizons so to speak not to be so 'Japanese'... and how the typical Japanese way of working you go into one company you stay there all your life and so on...they've realized that maybe that's not the best way of doing things and that's how global companies are bringing in new ideas, younger people are foreigners, they're embracing foreign ideas because they want to make themselves better."*

Eva, page 6, line 18.

*“The main goal would be for the Japanese to study abroad and kind of come back with better and renewed ideas for what a good future would be. That is how I see it because I think everybody tries to steal whatever is good in other cultures.”*

Anna, page 8, line 31.

Michelle went beyond the confines of higher education and economics by criticizing the Japanese government’s policies in other areas such as immigration and gender equality, issues that are not entirely unrelated to the overall aim of balancing nationalistic and cosmopolitan government policies (Yonezawa, 2016).

*“Abe Shinzo (Prime Minister of Japan) was like he wants to open the economy more for women so that more women can work and be managers in proper positions. It’s like only blah blah blah...the country is not opening up to foreigners and when you have problems with workers why are you not opening up a little bit to let people come in from South Asia or from I don’t know where. There are a lot of people who want to work.”*

Michelle, page 8, line 5.

Japanese students’ perceptions of the gaps between policy and practice on the macro level were that MEXT was targeting them to be GHRs preemptively, without clearly paving the path for them to become GHRs while leaving them to their own defenses. International students, who were not quite aware of MEXT’s policy, reflected more about the merits of implementing a GHR policy on a holistic level.

Japanese students had been impacted by the policy but as the discussion below illustrates, they have yet to buy into a policy that is more rhetoric than reality (Howe, 2009).

*Aoi: "I have this feeling that I can't stop thinking about what global really is."*

...

*Daisuke: "Maybe the word is taking on a life of its own."*

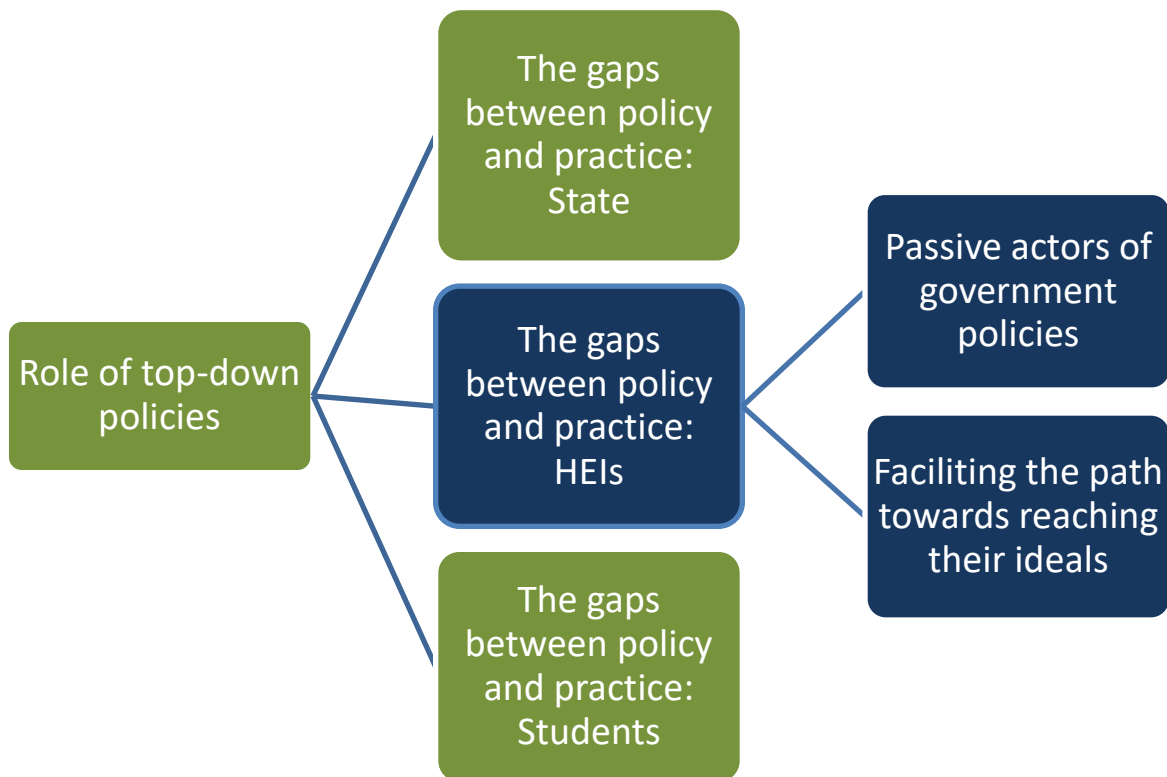
*Aoi: "Yeah, it's taking on a life of its own."*

FG3, page 33, line 6.

To begin with, MEXT needs to justify using the term "global" with human resources – a collocation that is controversial to Japanese students and unfamiliar to international students. After having defined the term, it might then proceed with having clear aims and procedures that students can understand, articulate, and embody.

#### **4.5.2 Subordinate Theme 2: The Gaps between Policy and Practice – HEIs**

The gaps between policy and practice on the meso level would have been best investigated by asking study abroad program managers working at SCJU. Managers of WEC admitted that because anonymity could not be guaranteed in this study, they could not be critical of WEC within an academic community that hinges on academic inbreeding (Horta, Sato, & Yonezawa, 2011). In lieu of WEC managers, student perceptions of SCJU's role in implementing MEXT's GHR development policies were explored and interpreted. Students concluded that the university needed to be more active in developing activities and competencies on the micro level that would enable them to reach their ideals of becoming GHRs (see Diagram 4.10).



**Diagram 4.10. Master theme 3 and subordinate theme 2**

#### **4.5.2.a Passive Actors of Government Policies**

Japanese students viewed universities such as SCJU as reacting to national forces that outweighed global forces (Yonezawa, 2011). Universities were enslaved to whatever policies MEXT decided to implement, whether it be global or not. With “global” being the buzzword in higher education (Goodman, 2007), Japanese HEIs that promote their global edge within MEXT’s definition of GHRs were believed to gain preferential treatment to government coffers.

*Aoi: “So also from the side of the university...it seems like the university is strategically and increasingly using the word global so that it can get money from the government.”*

*...*

*Hiyori: “Yeah, by showing that they can change their structure.”*

*...*

*Aoi: “...funding to the university is being reduced and it seems they are protesting it...I don’t want to say it’s because of the money but the government wants to promote globalization, so the university says okay we will be global. Can you give us money?”*

FG3, page 13, line 16.

Japanese universities including the most prestigious institutions have been facing a less competitive pool of applicants over the years due to the universalization of higher education (Mori, 2002; Yonezawa, 2010). To raise the overall global ranking of Japanese universities, MEXT has chosen an elite group of HEIs to be Global and Super Global Universities – universities that are to be world-class universities that can attract the best and the brightest within and outside of Japan (Brown, 2014; Chapple, 2014). SCJU received “seed money” (Yonezawa, 2016) from MEXT to create global courses such as WEC as a Global University that could promote its global excellence. Its application to become a Super Global University was rejected, despite its attempt to align itself with MEXT’s policies of sending more Japanese students abroad and inviting more international students and faculty to study or work. On the whole, the Japanese students noticed that universities such as SCJU were passive agents of change, not proactive agents of change. When global change was demanded from above, SCJU was forced to change its programs and structure because of its dependence on government funding.

#### 4.5.2.b Facilitating the Path towards Reaching Their Ideals

Japanese and international students felt that the role of HEIs was to narrow the gap between the challenges of becoming GHRs (section 4.4) and the reality of reaching their ideals (section 4.3). Both groups of students wanted SCJU to inspire fledgling GHRs by providing more opportunities that would raise their communicative competence in foreign languages including the willingness to communicate (Yashima, 2002), intercultural competence, and global awareness in their specific areas of interest. Such opportunities were not restricted to the classroom setting although there were students who gave examples of courses that were or could be helpful in reaching their ideals.

*“There are WEC, which provides (financial) support for students to study abroad. In other Oral courses, the teachers tend to be Japanese but for WEC there are always foreign teachers teaching it. I am now taking this course, which is unlike other courses because we are divided up in small groups, we are given a topic, and in English we have to teach something to the class. It’s a class where we have to conduct our own research and it helps us raise our ability to speak in English.”*

Nana, FG2, page 9, line 8.

*“The class of creating this conference was really close to ideal for creating global human resources...good for both exercising one’s skills and understanding people from other countries better. And basically getting used to working with foreigners.”*

Anthony, page 13, line 11.



Many students felt that SCJU should hire more foreign teachers who could teach foreign languages and content courses. There seemed to be an underlying presumption that foreign teachers would be able to bring different perspectives, have a better command of English, and provide more opportunities for them to exercise their critical thinking skills in student-centered learning contexts (Chapple, 2014). The native speaker role model was examined by students in the third focus group and by international students such as Sally and Eva. Although they realized it was politically incorrect to suggest native speakers over non-native to teach courses in higher education, they still felt that there were tangible benefits in having more foreign teachers at SCJU.

*Daisuke: "My proposal would be to have more foreign professors...Because I have some reservations with Japanese teachers teaching English...We will just be held back by Japanese English...If we are aiming for practical English, with respect to English being a requirement, it's definitely better to learn from people who are from there. So, if I could come up with a policy, I would increase the amount of foreigners in various areas."*

...

*Aoi: "...I also believe that it's good to increase the number of foreigners. Not because Japanese shouldn't teach English but because it's true that there are some differences between them and native speakers who use practical English and create a friendly environment, which probably cannot be found in any elementary, middle, or high school."*

FG3, page 19, line 18.

*“Courses that help you to understand other country’s cultures. Help students find their interest. For the first one you can have professors from abroad... You can learn a lot from their country and their culture and their way of thinking.”*

Sally, page 12, line 14.

*“If you take one course you make a Japanese teacher and a foreigner teach, they would do it in different ways...maybe they have different ideas and different ways of teaching. And then obviously if you can do the course about different cultures even different languages as well it’s okay. I think that would be a start.”*

Eva, page 13, line 35.

Some of the Japanese students who were taking courses with a global focus noticed a gap between what they expected to be taught in global courses and the actual content of the courses taught by foreign teachers. Despite the macro layer touting globalization through English-mediated instruction (Chapple, 2014), the meso layer was just as confused about how “global” should be defined and taught to students. Although the Japanese students showed an overwhelming support in hiring more foreign faculty, some students such as Daisuke felt that some faculty members were lacking in awareness of how global classes should be taught to raise GHRs.

*“Now that I am a university student I thought, finally, I could take courses that are globally oriented, so I took this course but the teacher kept on talking about soccer. I wondered, teacher, what part of this class is global? So, everyone was pretty disappointed...for a course to be called global, I don’t think the teacher knew much about it.”*

Daisuke, FG3, page 30, line 5.

In addition to foreign faculty, many of the Japanese students felt that SCJU should invite more international students to study at the university so that there would be more opportunities for Japanese students to interact with international students. Without addressing language, culture, and exclusivism issues between international students and Japanese students on the grassroots level, the internationalization of higher education will remain exclusive to stakeholders at the macro layer (Moon, 2016). Moreover, developing a strong inner core by overcoming shyness among Japanese students as explained in section 4.3.1.c would have to be resolved if cross-cultural communication were to ensue from such interactions that might enhance Japanese students' interest in going abroad.

*Shiho: "It's true that accepting more and more and more international students will make foreigners more accessible and will make us more outspoken but I don't think that there will be much of a willingness to go abroad. It certainly is important to communicate with foreigners but there needs to be the willingness to communicate so I think that this policy is quite a sloppy policy."*

*Ken: "But I think that by speaking with exchange students, there will be some people who would want to go overseas."*

...

*Nana: "And at that point they might develop an interest."*

FG2, page 5, line 15.

The Japanese students were aware of their weaknesses and some decided to take it upon themselves to seek out cross-cultural opportunities on their own. The presence of international students motivated students like Hiroko to take advantage of extracurricular opportunities to interact with international students who could be located at the university's International Student Center.

*“The other day I raided the International Student Center in an attempt to make friends. There were people from Rwanda and Tanzania. The person from Tanzania who was top of the class was able to come here. That is an example of countries being connected, like creating partnerships.”*

Hiroko, FG1, page 11, line 2.

The international students were conscious that they were part of the university's attempt to globalize by welcoming more international students. Once they arrived, they were pleasantly surprised by the support they were given by the administrative staff at the International Student Center and felt encouraged by the willingness of some of the Japanese students to interact with them in and outside of class. They noticed that foreign languages other than English were taught, reflecting a more inclusive nature of catering to the “them” group as consisting of groups of individuals rather than equating “foreign” exclusively with English.

*“I feel like they are doing a lot. Because the enthusiasm for international students is much more than I was expecting...They have groups like (group name) who have an incredible interest in international students and really make an effort to make you feel welcome...They also have the student tutor system...They assign an individual person to everyone. And we just talk about things because we sort of met on the idea that we are from different cultures and he was going to help me integrate into his culture. I think that is what is important when looking at another side of human resources. We sort of are immediately comparing cultures from the get go.”*

John, page 18, line 35.

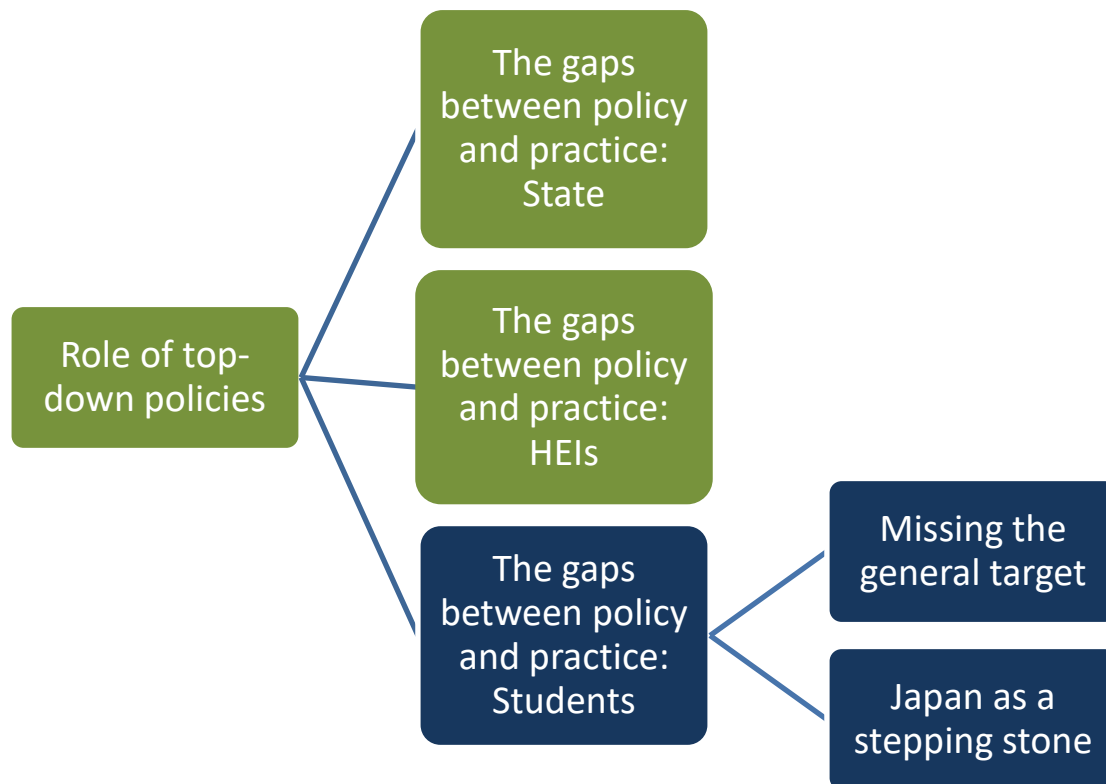
*“I noticed that students studying at South Central Japan University like Japanese students are more open to international people than other Japanese people I met so far. So I think South Central Japan University does a really good job with being a global university. They offer many courses in English as well and from what I know from other students in other languages as well...”*

Anna, page 14, line 7.

Japanese students and international students saw top-down higher education policies as working in favor of student and faculty mobility, particularly for international students who received funding to study at SCJU. On the whole, Japanese students and international students were enthusiastic about higher education policies that would make it easier for global migration of human capital to benefit universities, governments, nations, and finally, the world.

#### **4.5.3 Subordinate Theme 2: The Gaps between Policy and Practice – Students**

Gaps between policy and practice on the grassroots level were identified by Japanese students and international students. The Japanese students were critical of a GHR policy that promoted studying abroad as benefiting Japan’s economy instead of inspiring them towards self-actualization for global citizenry (Murtaza, 2011). The international students, as indicated in section 4.4.3.a were not enthusiastic about working in Japan to contribute to MEXT’s aim of brain gain from international students. They had future plans that were not aligned with MEXT’s goal of having them work for Japanese companies as Japan’s GHRs. In short, the Japanese students felt that MEXT needed to expand its target of GHRs to a wider audience of Japanese university students, whereas the international students were keen on using their experience in Japan to pursue other global adventures outside of Japan (see Diagram 4.11).



**Diagram 4.11. Master theme 3 and subordinate theme 3**

#### **4.5.3.a Missing the General Target**

The Japanese students who were intended to be the beneficiaries of GHR development noted several problems with the government's policy. They perceived it as being redundant because it was only targeting Japanese university students who, even without such a policy, would have been motivated to take global courses, interact with international students, and study abroad. Although they may have been selected to enroll in WEC and become Japan's GHR, they believed that the effects of the policy were negligible for the typical university student at SCJU. Instead of promoting the policy unilaterally to improve Japan's economy, they indicated that the merits of becoming a GHR needed to be clearly outlined so that students could be inspired to be stakeholders.

*“The policy now is really effective for people who have a desire to be global human resources but it’s not effective for everyone...For the limited few who are interested in going overseas, Tobitate (fly away) Japan is good but not for people who are like, no thanks. Even if exchange students come, there will be people like Hiyori who will go (to meet them) but most people won’t go.”*

Naoya, FG1, page 11, line 27.

*“First, maybe people need to feel the need. I don’t keep exchange students at a distance but they are not exactly easily accessible. It’s important to keep them within our reach. Before saying let’s become global human resources, they need to show us how fun and wonderful it is...Now it’s like why don’t other people do that (become GHR). It’s not for me.”*

Hiyori, FG3, page 12, line 1.

International students such as Michelle also noted that Japanese university students who went overseas were already predisposed to becoming GHRs due to their interest in foreign languages and cultures. She felt that GHR policies needed to infiltrate beyond departments such as the Faculty of Intercultural Studies.

*“I don’t know how many Japanese students are really going out of the country because of my knowledge it’s only those who are interested in Europe or foreign cultures.”*

Michelle, page 9, line 25.

However, Anthony noticed that compared to his first time studying in Japan, there was a shift in students from other faculties showing an interest in going abroad.

*“Speaking of people right now even from faculties other than the Intercultural Studies, so people not really related to learning languages, many of them mention studying abroad.”*

Anthony, page 9, line 17.

Thus, it may be that Anthony was able to compare attitudes and willingness to study abroad among Japanese students because he had a point of comparison, unlike Michelle, who had come to Japan for the first time.

#### **4.5.3.b Japan as a Stepping Stone**

It is problematic to assume that international students have already internalized what it means to be global, and thus are capable of internationalizing Japanese universities from the bottom up. Studying abroad does not necessarily contribute to raising global competence if opportunities are not given to students to engage in critical thinking and intercultural training prior to going overseas (Trede, Bowles, & Bridges, 2013). If anything, the international students may have been more closely aligned with MEXT’s approach in the 1980s of promoting Japanese culture (Huang, 2006). Section 4.3.1.d highlighted how international students wanted to act as bridges between their home country and Japan by dispelling ingrained stereotypes of Japanese society among people in their home country. With respect to Japanese identity, the international students may have been able to expand on what it means to be Japanese from their “them” viewpoint, thereby adding to the exclusive “us” definition of being Japanese (Tsuda, 2003). International students came to Japan because they were interested in Japan, and their experiences in Japan will certainly influence how they will or will not promote Japan to the world.



International students have not yet emerged as fully-fledged GHRs who can automatically contribute to MEXT's top-down policies. For most international students, their stay in Japan was the beginning of their lifelong global discovery. They were looking forward to exploring other countries so that they could come closer to becoming what they had outlined as their ideal GHR (see section 4.3).

*"After my graduation I am going to Germany...because I have only been living in Asian countries. I want to see more of Europe or America but if you go to America you have to pay a high tuition fee. And if you go to Europe you don't have to pay that."*

Jane, page 10, line 10.

*"I would like to apply for a Master's program in Great Britain. Because they have good Japanese study programs...And it's in Europe and they also have a government loan policy."*

Anna, page 25, line 18.

*"I want to challenge myself in another country...I have a friend in Finland and he said the people who are learning Japanese are increasing there. If I can have the certificate in the method of teaching (Japanese) in English."*

Claire, page 24, line 32.

International students' role models were not individuals who had developed cultural and foreign language competence in one or two foreign languages, after having lived in one or two foreign countries. Their role models were ethnorelativists who had subscribed to pluralistic cultural realities (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001) by dedicating years to living abroad, embodied the essence of various cultures and languages overseas, and developed a strong enough core to remain loyal to their own culture. For them, Japan was a stepping stone on their lifelong voyage of discovery towards becoming global citizens.

#### 4.6 Master Theme 4: The Study Abroad Question

Studying abroad was a tough decision for Japanese students and international students. Higher tuition and living costs were presented as obstacles for studying abroad for both groups of students as explained in section 4.4.2. Moreover, Japanese students were balancing other academic pressures that diverted their attention away from studying abroad. Thus, even if students were aware of the benefits of studying abroad as it relates to becoming GHRs, they were left questioning whether or not the short and long-term benefits outweighed the costs.

##### 4.6.1 Subordinate Theme 1: The Motivations for Studying Abroad

The students' motivation for studying abroad were driven by internal and external reasons as well as their understanding that studying abroad was best done at an earlier stage in life when they could strengthen their inner core (see Diagram 4.12).

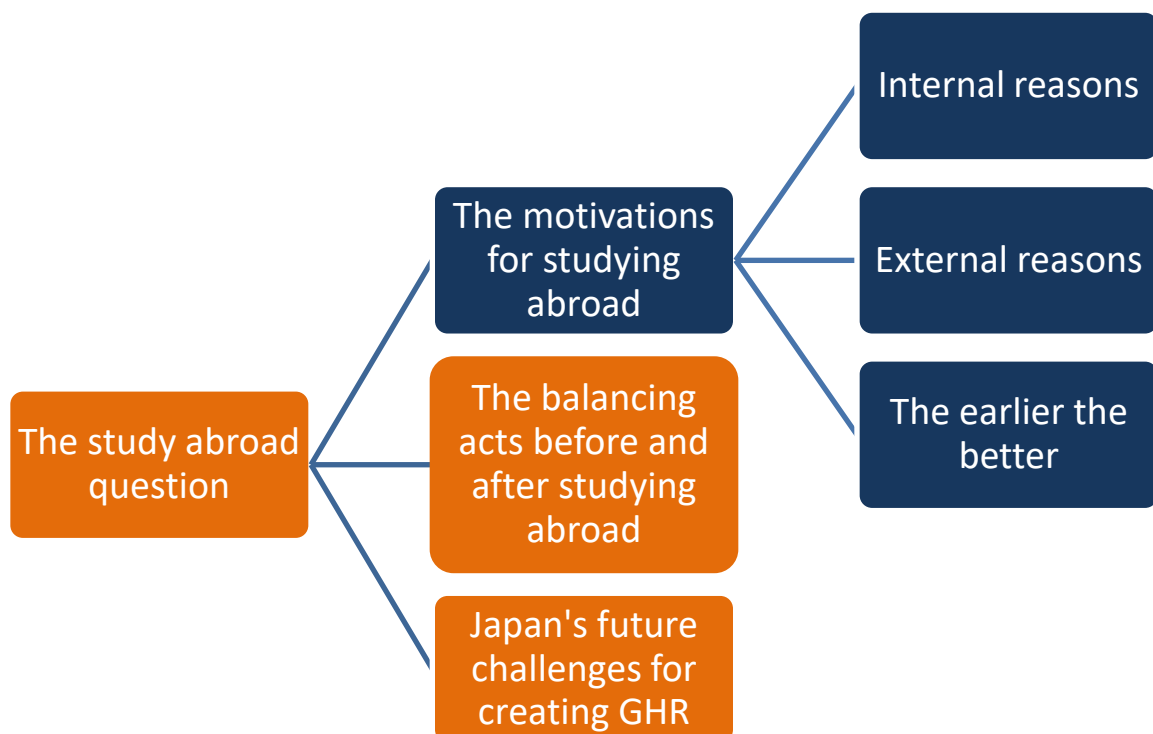


Diagram 4.12. Master theme 4 and subordinate theme 1

#### 4.6.1.a Internal Reasons

Self-determined factors for studying abroad (Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, & Lynch, 2007) that were related to students' own desires to become GHR were tied to students' motivations for studying abroad. Some students wanted to see for themselves what the world had to offer while identifying the skills they lacked. Their goal was to epitomize the ideal GHR – possessing a strong inner core, communicative competence in foreign languages, intercultural competence, and eventually making global and local impacts through their specialization. Such students fit in the category of being intrinsically motivated – “because the activity meets their interests and not because of the expectation of rewards” (Chirkov et al., 2007, p. 203).

*“I went to America this year and before I went I thought that blacks and whites were totally segregated but to my surprise whites and blacks were walking together, there were even mixed couples, and I thought the people who don’t judge could understand. First, you need to go abroad and you need to challenge your previous ways of thinking.”*

Shiho, FG2, page 10, line 15.

*“It’s not like the things which I read in the books but I can experience it with my own hands, own eyes, and the whole of me.”*

Lisa, page 10, line 6.

*“Because you have to see the world. You can’t read only or see on TV shows about foreign languages and cultures. It’s not the same. You have to go outside and see. And you need your own experience in foreign countries.”*

Michelle, page 16, line 24.

For the international students who were studying foreign languages and culture, studying abroad would give them a chance to improve their communicative foreign language and intercultural competence. Many international students came to Japan because they had developed an interest in Japanese language and culture as a result of watching Japanese *anime* (animation) or reading *manga* (comics) in their home country. Japanese animation's effects on motivating international students to study in Japan should not be understated. Japanese animation, having penetrated global markets, has garnered a cult status among youth from around the world who are attracted to this more modern image of Japan (Manion, 2005).

The international students in this study have confirmed that indeed animation and *manga* were catalysts for their interest in the language and culture of Japan. Initially, students like Anna were oblivious that *anime* was from Japan until their curiosity led them towards discovering the original version of the animation in Japanese. At that point, they wanted to understand the Japanese version and began watching *anime*, which motivated them to learn Japanese and about Japanese culture (Fukunaga, 2006).

*"I started watching animes when I was really young...I don't remember exactly when I realized it was Japanese and I realized there was this thing called anime...Different concepts would appear in the anime and I wouldn't be able to understand them because we didn't have that kind of thing back home, so that's how I started reading about Japan. Japanese culture."*

Anna, page 16, line 25.

*“I watched a lot of anime...Dragon Ball for example...because Dragon Ball, Sailor Moon were in Europe and in America and were really really really really popular...Then when I was a bit older I also started to watch movies, Japanese movies.”*

Michelle, page 15, line 26.

*“Actually from secondary school I was really into Japanese pop culture. Anime, manga.”*

Anthony, page 23, line 23.

Some of the international students said that they were motivated to study abroad because they wanted to become more outgoing. Studying abroad and being in an environment devoid of a social network would force them to reach out to others.

*“I wanted to do something that would build me up as a person. I was very shy in school. I wasn’t very social and I thought learning a language would almost force me to be social and going abroad would really force me to become the person I wanted to be. You know through all the awkward experiences I have had.”*

John, page 22, line 10.

*“...in (home country) I am such an introvert and such a shy person...Once I came to Japan, I had nobody, so I started creating relationships and getting to know people.”*

Anna, page 20, line 15.

The international students in this study braced themselves for an overseas experience that would require them to become less introverted so that they would be able to interact with people from various cultures in a foreign setting. Apparently, even for international students, shyness was a weakness that needed to be overcome through worldly experiences and encounters.

#### 4.6.1.b External Reasons

In addition to internal rewards for studying abroad, there were external incentives that sparked international students' decision abroad. The international students admitted that government scholarships were a significant incentive for them. Although the scholarships that international students received varied in amount and duration, most of them were getting full-tuition scholarships and living costs paid. Students such as Jane and Sally, both from Asia, noticed increased funding had contributed to a learning environment where they were surrounded by Chinese students. Overall, international students said that scholarships facilitated their decision to study abroad.

*“And to study in France it was just money wise it would be really expensive so I was like I can stay in (home country) that’s fine or I can try for this program...it was very sudden, the exams were in June and I decided to go for it in April.”*

Eva, page 17, line 18.

*“They need a lot of international students. Because not only me but also for my friends around me, coming to Japan was not very hard...”*

Sally, page 5, line 12.

*“Maybe 60%...Everywhere Chinese (students).”*

Sally, page 17, line 24.

*“I want that kind of course that has many global students in one class because now in my class most students are Chinese...”*

Jane, page 7, line 18.

Some Japanese students were eager to study abroad if the biggest structural impediment – financial cost – could be removed or lessened. Japanese students were vocal about receiving funding for study abroad. Full scholarship programs such as *Tobitate Japan* sponsored by MEXT and private corporations were mentioned, which contrasted with typical study abroad programs in that students were not only studying languages but also their special interests. This is not surprising given that sections 4.3.1.b and 4.4.2.a illustrated students' view of GHRs as having special interests as well as their concerns about the high cost of studying abroad. Thus, Japanese students such as Aoi felt that the government and subsequently the university should find ways to cover the high costs associated with becoming Japan's GHR.

*“Tobitate. You get quite a bit of money, quite a lot, almost all expenses paid, almost free, a lot of financial assistance. If you get that, it would make it easier to study abroad. As it relates to me, I am grateful for it and think it is a good system.”*

Aoi, FG3, page 16, line 1.

In section 4.4.2.b, Japanese students discussed the pressures of being a university student such as getting around the cap system so that they could take and pass enough courses to graduate. Naoya said that in addition to getting financial assistance for studying abroad, he would be motivated to study abroad if there were other overseas options that would allow him to earn course credit. Formal and informal alliances across HEIs are intended to move Japan out of a domestic-centered and into cosmopolitan internationalization (Kudo & Hashimoto, 2011) so that stakeholders on the macro and meso level can implement policies that may align with those at the grassroots level. Naoya wanted SCJU to expand the criteria for getting credit for going overseas beyond formal interuniversity exchange programs.

*“I think that students are enslaved by getting credits. There are some study abroad experiences where you can get credit but if there are other opportunities to get credit, it would make it easier to go overseas in addition to financial assistance.”*

Naoya, FG1, page 17, line 22.

Japanese students reported that some students were feeling pressured to go abroad for self-preservation – to avoid unfavorable conditions in Japan such as shame and humiliation for not taking advantage of study abroad opportunities (Chirkov et al., 2007). This pressure may be related to meeting others’ expectations whether it be overtly expressed or indirectly implied by the government, parents, teachers, relatives, friends, and companies. Daisuke revealed how some of his friends were opting to study abroad because not doing so would be “uncool” when they needed to find jobs later. Thus, he was not a staunch advocate of government funding of study abroad programs to students who were not serious about studying abroad.

*“...for the majority it (studying abroad) is just ending up as one line on their CV and I feel it is a waste especially if they are getting funded...There are a lot of students in their third year who are studying abroad, and some people are thinking maybe I have to study abroad too. If I don’t maybe people will think I am not cool.”*

Daisuke, FG3, page 16, line 19.

Eva, who was enrolled in a French international school in her home country, shared similar sentiments.

*“In general, more and more high school students in (home country) want to study abroad because it’s respected more I guess...Especially from high schools like mine, the one I graduated that deal with foreign languages.”*

Eva, page 17, line 3.



Students at her school perceived studying abroad as a requirement because they were expected to be internationally-oriented. Studying abroad at distinguished universities garnered respect and accolades from others.

#### **4.6.1.c The Earlier the Better**

Many students suggested earlier intervention to becoming GHRs – in line with what MEXT has been promulgating in GHR development through study abroad programs for high school students and Super English Language High Schools (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009). According to Llanes and Muñoz (2013), children who have studied abroad tend to benefit more than adults in terms of raising their proficiency in speaking, whereas adults who have studied abroad outperformed children in writing. In addition to foreign language skills, GHRs must reflect on their experiences and attitudes so that they can gradually become ethnorelativists who can accept pluralistic cultural realities (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001).

*Naoya: “Do you think that we should go abroad at least once?”*

*Hiroko: “I think so.”*

*Naoya: “Like in middle school or high school.”*

*Shoichi: “Is it better when we are younger?”*

*Hiroko: “The earlier the better, isn’t it?”*

FG1, page 12, line 20.

*“Maybe in the school breaks they could do some exchange to abroad countries...They have to start earlier than university...In university they decide on one topic and when they are not interested in English or some language, it’s done I think.”*

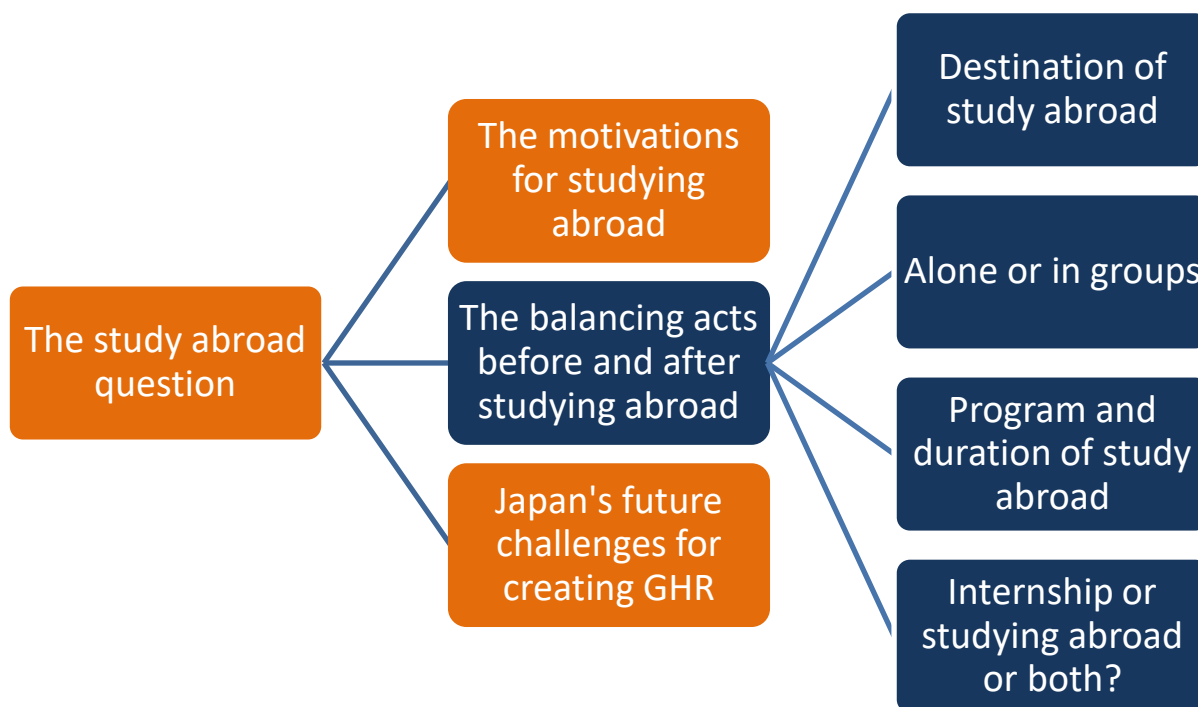
Michelle, page 4, line 30.

Japanese and international students explained that seeing the world through their own eyes was best done before entering university, as young adolescents who were more flexible in thinking and less pressured to find their disciplinary focus.

#### **4.6.2 Subordinate Theme 2: The Balancing Acts before and during Studying Abroad**

Before and even during their study abroad experience, students posed the following questions: Should they go to “major” countries (e.g., America, Canada, or England) or to “minor” countries (e.g., Hungary)? Would it be better to go alone or in a group? How long would be ideal to go abroad? Should they focus on language learning or content or both? Should they participate in an internship instead of studying abroad or while they are abroad?

Students were aware that their answers would be determined by their motivations and anticipated gains from studying abroad. If foreign language competence was their primary aim, it was best to go to the country where the language was spoken, enroll in language courses, go alone rather than in groups, and stay for at least six months. If they also hoped to hone their specialization, it was best for them to take some content courses and participate in internship programs that would lead to concrete output in their field of interest. The students’ choice of studying abroad required analyzing where to go abroad, with whom to go abroad, how long to study abroad, and what program to study abroad as illustrated in Diagram 4.13.



**Diagram 4.13. Master theme 4 and subordinate theme 2**

#### **4.6.2.a The Destination of Study Abroad**

Most of the international students decided to study abroad in Japan because they were interested in Japanese language and cultural studies. Consequently, they sought to raise their fluency in Japanese, learn more about Japanese culture, and hone their specialization. In contrast, most of the Japanese students were not majoring in English and were not particularly committed to studying in a particular country. Those who were interested in going abroad discussed the role of “major” and “minor” study abroad destinations. Major study abroad destinations were English-speaking countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom that are benefiting from the higher tuition fees paid by international students (Hegarty, 2014). Minor destinations were countries in Africa or European countries in Eastern Europe that were not seen as popular destinations among Japanese students. According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), students assess study abroad destinations on their overall knowledge of the particular country, recommendations from family and friends, the local attractiveness of the country such as safety, the overall number of international students, and studying and living costs in the host country.

Claire, Sally, and Eva came to Japan because of recommendations from others such as bosses, teachers, or family members (Bodycott, 2009). Unlike Claire and Sally, who were already majoring in Japanese prior to coming to Japan for a year, Eva did not have a strong desire to study in Japan for language or cultural reasons. Since she had attended a French international school, she was intent on studying in France if it were not for the high costs associated with living there. Her father, who was working in Japan, persuaded her to apply for a MEXT scholarship. Accordingly, she came to Japan to be trained in Japanese so that she could spend all her undergraduate years in Japan.

*“South Central Japan University has the largest amount of the foreign students...and as my boss used to say to me that South Central Japan University has the best program for foreign students so that’s why a lot of people want to come here to enjoy Japan as best as they can.”*

Claire, page 16, line 8.

*“They (teachers in home country) teach Japanese language and then the culture of Japan. And the Japanese way of thinking about things...And they told me some nice things about Japanese people – what they do and what they think about things which are quite different from (people from home country).”*

Sally, page 3, line 8.

*“He (her father) said listen there is this program. You have to pass these exams, you get a scholarship, you will get a Japanese course and so on. And I was like yeah, why not?”*

Eva, page 17, line 10.

The Japanese students except for Shiho had limited experience with studying abroad. Shiho admired her friend who had opted to go to less popular destinations to achieve her lifelong dream. International students such as Eva, who came from what Japanese students might consider a less desirable study abroad destination, were acutely aware of the pull factors that more popular countries in Europe might have.

*“My role model of global human resources is my friend who wants to work for the United Nations. This has been her childhood dream and she studied abroad in Hungary...and to West Africa and studied French...She does not just judge people by where they come from and is also interested in what we call minor countries in Africa and Europe...”*

Shiho, FG2, page 2, line 13.

*“Well, who wants to go to (home country)...I mean I’m not saying it’s a bad country or anything but I think people tend to go to bigger more famous countries when they go abroad.”*

Eva, page 11, line 24.

Anthony and Anna supported governments and HEIs that would extend financial and other support through diplomatic and academic partnerships to more countries so that students could freely choose to study in any country, major or minor, that was aligned with their ambitions.

*“If you have the right environment, people will just take the opportunities...Many offers, so people can change where they can study...Or they just can choose a country they would really like to study...”*

Anthony, page 2, line 13.

*“Right now everybody is thinking first from a financial point of view and then what would they want to study, where they should go to study.”*

Anna, page 12, line 5.

The reality may be that even with financial and moral support on the macro and meso levels of higher education to go to non-traditional destinations, students would continue to choose major countries if the primary allure of minor countries may be restricted to venturing into unfamiliar territory to satisfy students' curiosity of exotic countries (Woolf, 2007). In fact, studying abroad to non-traditional countries has been decreasing over the years, which is not encouraging for such countries that could benefit from international students who could not only act as promoters of the host country to other students in their home country but also contribute to a knowledge economy based on market-driven principles (Jessop, 2016).

#### **4.6.2.b Alone or in Groups**

Unlike the past where study abroad was seen as a privilege for a limited few, studying abroad in groups has become more common among Japanese students today. Toyokawa and Toyokawa (2002) found that in a collectivist Japanese society, fear of being ousted from the group could contribute to a sense of obligation to operate in activities organized by others in the group when abroad. Hence, when Japanese students go overseas as a group, although they would benefit from a social network of Japanese students, they would also have the added pressure of remaining loyal to this group by not joining other (non-Japanese) groups.

The Japanese students who had gone abroad prior to their university years noticed several drawbacks of going abroad in a group. One of the concerns that the Japanese students had was living in their own (Japanese) world – in a bubble like expatriates but with less “first class” lifestyle privileges (Fechter, 2007). When studying abroad with other Japanese students, they would be tempted to speak Japanese all the time, thereby sacrificing opportunities to interact with others who might help them improve their communicative foreign language and intercultural competence.

*“I went to England to study abroad...Even though we went to England, we were just speaking Japanese. It was called a Science Program with an emphasis on science, so there wasn’t much for cross-cultural interactions but if I were to go, I think going alone would be better...in a group you will speak Japanese all the time.”*

Kayo, FG2, page 10, line 28.

*“For study abroad programs that focus on learning a language, there are many programs in groups for Japanese people, so Japanese (students) will just operate in groups.”*

Shiho, FG2, page 11, line 15.

SCJU offers study abroad programs for Japanese students to study in America in between semesters. Often, students go in large groups of 30-50 students, spend most of their time studying English in classes with other Japanese students, and go on excursions in large groups with their Japanese friends. Anthony remarked on the detriments of Japanese students relying on Japanese enclaves when abroad.

*“Close to Seattle...because we have many Japanese people studying there basically you have like university Japanese ghettos. People only talking with other Japanese people. So, in this way you don’t really benefit from studying in another country.”*

Anthony, page 24, line 13.

Internal reasons for studying abroad in section 4.6.1.a highlighted that students who were intrinsically motivated to go abroad hoped to grow emotionally, linguistically, culturally, and socially. When Japanese students go overseas, the “us” versus “them” dichotomy could be exacerbated for students who operate within a group-oriented ethnocentric or exclusive mentality. Going overseas might reinforce stereotypes if they are not willing to critically analyze how pluralistic cultural realities might be feasible in a more ethnorelativist and inclusive society (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001).

For Kayo who was interested in becoming a GHR, studying abroad in groups with other Japanese students would not lead to outcomes she had wanted such as enhancing her communicative foreign language and intercultural competence. In contrast, Anthony, who did not have the option of coming to SCJU with a large group of students from his home country, remarked that being alone forced him to use English to interact with other exchange students in the dormitory.

*“I am the only (nationality) person living in my dorm. I don’t really have any problems speaking in English. Well, my comfort zone is like other languages (like English) than like Japanese.”*

Anthony, page 24, line 27.

Going overseas alone, however, was not necessarily equated with acculturation, assimilation, or enhanced foreign language proficiency for international students. Many of the international students advocated being more outgoing even if they had the natural inclination of being reclusive. Essentially, the issue of going alone or in groups due to the perceived drawbacks of relying on a social network consisting of members of their own nationality was not seen as significant if students lacked the drive to challenge themselves by experiencing other cultures, learning other languages, interacting with people from other countries, and immersing themselves in a foreign culture. International students prioritized getting to know other cultures, people, and languages, especially if they expected to reap concrete benefits from studying abroad.

*“So actively research and I’d say sink, dive into the culture, language, culture you are interested in.”*

David, page 3, line 22.

*“Language and culture and interacting with others. It’s being more aware of the different cultural backgrounds...It’s not like being a hikikomori (recluse).”*

Lisa, page 11, line 26.



*“They need to have an outgoing personality. They need to challenge and receive new things from abroad.”*

Jane, page 2, line 8.

#### **4.6.2.c Program and Duration of Study Abroad**

Program choice and duration of study abroad depended on whether students' aim was language acquisition, content specialization, or both. Studying languages could be done in short periods of time – as short as three weeks for Japanese students in intensive language study programs for those who wanted to get a taste of what it was like going overseas before committing to semester or year-long programs at universities abroad. Some Japanese students thought that concentrating on their interest overseas in semester or year-long programs would bring out more benefits than studying foreign languages. Such attitudes of weighing content more heavily than language acquisition may be connected to the priority given to GHRs as developing a strong inner core by being competent in all three areas – languages, culture, and specialized interests, with specialization being the key to how they could impact the world both globally and locally. Alternatively, they may have assumed that studying content would automatically facilitate foreign language acquisition as they would be taking courses in the local language and/or in English.

*“When going abroad, instead of just studying foreign languages, we would definitely gain much more if we go abroad like students in the sciences – to learn something specific overseas.”*

Minami, FG2, page 11, line 13.

*“Instead of going overseas to study foreign languages, I want to get something specific out of it, so now I am studying a lot about international political science and America is pretty much where it all takes place, so I am thinking of going to America and studying international political science there.”*

Aoi, FG3, page 35, line 29.

The international students, with actual study abroad experiences unlike many of the Japanese students in this study, were asked about the duration of studying abroad. Studying abroad had the following critical periods for most international students: (1) dealing with everything new; (2) adapting and developing a social network; (3) reflecting on studying abroad, reverse culture shock, and their future. As for language acquisition, some improvement was felt after about six months, even if for many, they admitted to needing to stay longer to gain fluency in Japanese. One year was seen as the minimum duration to stay abroad to benefit from their overseas experience in terms of language, culture, and specialization (Davidson, 2010; Dwyer, 2004).

*“One year. Because after six months you start to see the world differently. When you come here you need three months to come here and do your stuff and go to seminars and you don’t have the time to think about everything and the country and life. And after that, you are relaxed and you can review...But for languages six months is not enough.”*

Michelle, page 18, line 15.

*“Let’s say one month and one year definitely makes a great difference. But from one year to four years I don’t really think it’s all that different really...Half a year is not enough to hugely improve your English or Japanese...during one month you can get the general idea of other country... But during one year you definitely can make friends...So definitely understanding of another country is something that really changes depending if you are spending just one month or a year.”*

Anna, page 20, line 5.

It was difficult for international students to specify the time needed for students to stay abroad because the outcome of becoming a GHR depended on an individual's willingness to communicate and interact with people from other cultures including the local culture to develop their social skills (Tanaka & Okunishi, 2016).

#### **4.6.2.d Internship or Studying Abroad or Both?**

Japanese students such as Shoichi separated studying abroad from doing internships while international students viewed internships and studying abroad as complementary – both could be pursued while overseas. In addition to doing internships, some international students were employed as teachers, tutors, translators, researchers, or hotel receptionists. For some students like Eva and Anna, their part-time jobs became permanent jobs after graduation. Work and study were integrated for international students in practice, whereas for Japanese students they were disparate in principle. These differences could have emerged because many of the international students, while in Japan, had created professional networks that would enable them to tap into employment opportunities through formal or informal arrangements. In contrast, most of the Japanese students were relying on their imagined selves in the target community (Yashima, 2009) and were probably not as familiar with internships or employment that could be sought while overseas. Their knowledge of internship programs such as Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales (AIESEC) were those that had been promoted to Japanese students at SCJU despite gradual changes being made to overseas programs such as the *Tobitate Japan* that would allow Japanese students to have more flexibility in pursuing internships and/or studying abroad.

*“I am going on AIESEC’s internship program. It’s nice that there is a manager and a support system. There will be mutual growth between us and an opportunity for a challenge, which is what made it attractive to me, so I chose that instead.”*

Shoichi, FG1, page 18, line 8.

*“For now I am working with these engineers... after I graduate they want me to work full-time for them. So the job has been very interesting. I am learning new things and they’re actually German.”*

Eva, page 23, line 19.

*“Someone offered me a job at the middle school here in Japan. To teach English... They offered me the job if I will be able to graduate in time...”*

Anna, page 31, line 19.

Working and studying abroad were options available to international students who appeared to benefit greatly from both as they expanded their professional network in Japan or elsewhere. Even if, as explained in section 4.5.3.b, international students used their experience in Japan as a stepping stone towards other global experiences, while they were in Japan, they found ways to contribute locally and globally by interacting with Japanese people. Gradually, they felt that they were edging towards their role model of GHRs and possibly moving Japan closer to cosmopolitanism. John, who wanted to act as a bridge between his country and Japan, summarized the role of international students in Japan.

*“It (Japan) is a very homogeneous nation. A short-term goal, if you were to bring more international students, it does a lot more for the country than tourism because tourism feeds off the country and the culture, whereas international students and people who are living here and trying to assimilate to the culture, sort of give something back as well. They teach Japan about their cultures, and make it more, well, a global place.”*

John, page 6, line 21.

#### 4.6.3 Subordinate Theme 3: Japan's Future Challenges for Creating Global Human Resources

The sustainability of a top-down campaign such as GHR development depends on the propriety and engagement of stakeholders at the grassroots level (Cho & Palmer, 2013). Japanese students were skeptical of a policy that was more rhetoric than reality while international students remained disenfranchised. Students viewed passive teaching, language issues in seminars, a social network based on international students, and a non-cosmopolitan Japanese society as challenges for creating GHRs (see Diagram 4.14).

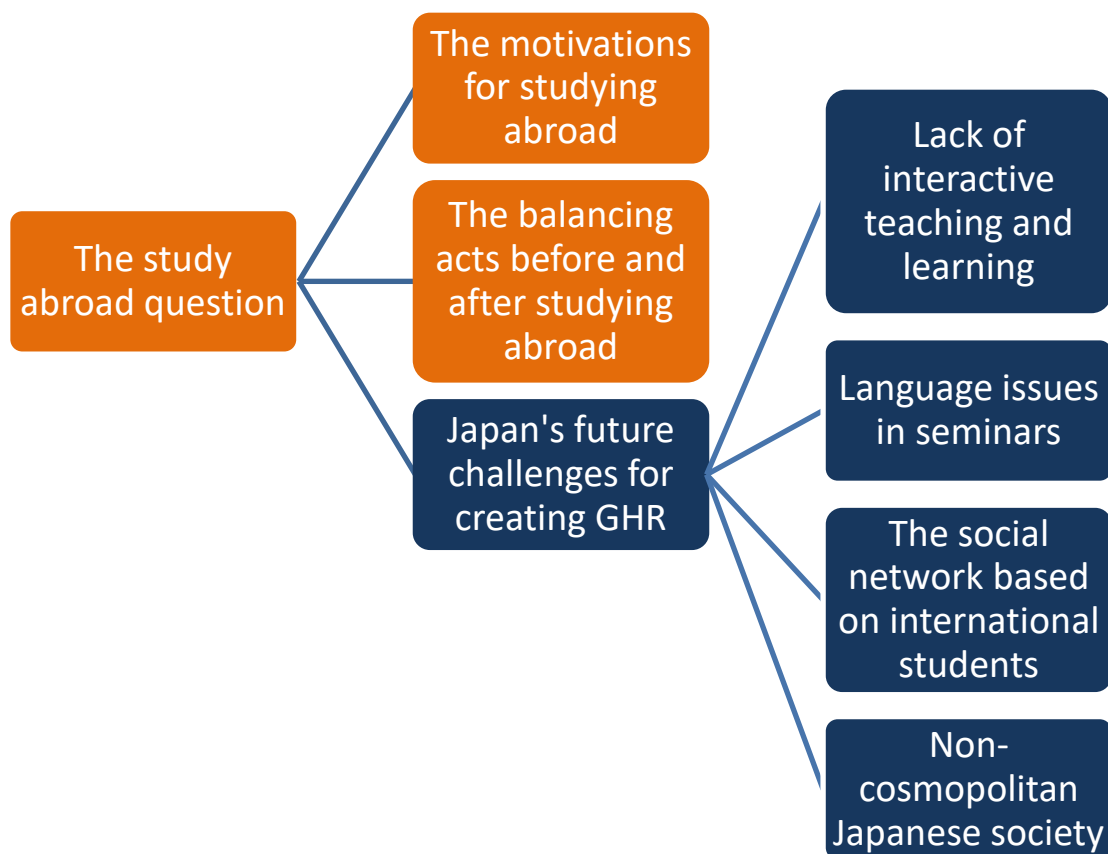


Diagram 4.14. Master theme 4 and subordinate theme 3

#### 4.6.3.a Lack of Interactive Teaching and Learning

Among stakeholders on the meso level at SCJU, in addition to feeling the need to globalize curricula, there has been the added pressure of adopting active learning principles in teaching. Active learning is linked to student-centered teaching and learning, which differs from traditional teacher-fronted lecture formats at Japanese HEIs. Active learning requires students to engage and reflect critically on the learning process through collaboration, cooperation, and problem solving (Prince, 2004). The merits of active learning may be obvious – fostering critical thinking, lifelong learning strategies, and tangible outcomes. However, in practice, as alluded to in section 4.4.1, foreign languages, which conceivably should foster communicative competence through active teaching and learning, have been taught in teacher-fronted classroom settings so that Japanese students can pass high-stakes exams (Humphries & Burns, 2015; Takanashi, 2004).

In university, although some of the Japanese students said that their foreign languages courses were more interactive, they pined for other opportunities in addition to their foreign languages courses that would give them opportunities to discuss, debate, and interact with students so that they could overcome their primary weakness of their (un)willingness to communicate.

*Naoya: “They (Japanese people) don’t have opinions so they can’t communicate. It’s like even if they watch the news they don’t have opinions.”*

*Shoichi: “That’s true if we just get information passively, it’s not very deep. After watching it, we need to have clear opinions. In that respect foreigners are thinking more critically than Japanese. It’s important to have basic knowledge of general topics.”*

*Hiroko: “Don’t you think with respect to having our own opinions, we should have more opportunities to discuss? Thinking more.”*

FG1, page 8, line 14.

*“In a course about education which is in a debate format, there are a lot of student discussions. These kinds of classes are stimulating for me but there isn’t much of that in Japan because everyone says it’s all about input...We all are given an opportunity to discuss, so everything is new...We have to talk. Have our own opinions.”*

Hiroko, FG1, page 15, line 27.

David and Eva were critical of a Japanese education system that limited interaction between teachers and students or even among students. David posited that Japanese students needed to formulate opinions, discuss them, and be more proactive by finding, researching, and discussing topics of interest. David felt that the GHR policy was intended to stimulate Japanese students to become more willing to communicate on worldly issues.

*“The Japanese educational system is currently still well under the influence of a traditional mentality. That is basically juku – cram – do whatever you are told by the teacher and no comment. So, what they need are people who have experienced a more creative way of learning. And basically people who do active research. Who find their own interest who can, who have an opinion to begin with...and who are willing to express their opinion and debate about it. Which is scarcely done here.”*

David, page 5, line 25.

Eva, who had spent about six years getting her undergraduate degree, touched on problems with teachers who were unaccustomed to active teaching, particularly in large lecture-style classes. Unlike David, who blamed Japanese students’ passivity, she held teachers more accountable for providing opportunities for students to be more active learners. She realized that Japanese students were shy and unwilling to communicate in large groups but felt that teachers, foreign or not, were equally responsible for creating an environment where students would be encouraged to speak.

*“I would personally love to see more foreigners as teachers and the main reason is I don’t really like the way Japanese professors present their information. Most of my classes have been with a big group of people...but there’s no interaction with the students...The exchange students were mainly the people who would talk. Because the Japanese people didn’t...So I think the more teachers that we have that actually make sure they (students) interact with them would make that better...Actually the teachers don’t have to be foreign. They just have to try more to interact with the students.”*

Eva, page 15, line 10.

There were international students such as Sally, who thought that Japan’s higher education system contrasted with her country’s system in that Japanese students were expected to challenge themselves by pursuing independent studies while students in her country waited for instructions from their teachers. Eva and David were focused more on learning in class as well as outside of class, whereas Sally concentrated on learning beyond the classroom environment.

*“The teachers (in Japan) are just leaders and lots of things you have to do by yourself. Like do some research and do a lot of things...reports and search for something because in the classes the teacher just tells you something in the textbook. They just read the textbooks. In (home country) they just tell you a lot. Maybe not just the textbook.”*

Sally, page 6, line 25.

This difference in opinion may have resulted because Sally was a postgraduate student who needed to conduct extensive research outside of class. Moreover, Sally was from Asia, which contrasted with Eva and David, who were from Europe where perhaps stating their opinions may have been more customary compared to Confucian Asian learning settings that may place less value on critical thinking skills (Tran, 2013).



#### 4.6.3.b Language Issues in Seminars

International students identified problems when taking seminars open to Japanese and international students. Some foreign teachers taught in English to international students and then translated for Japanese students, resulting in redundancy and inefficiency where much of class time was lost in translation. Perhaps not all the Japanese students were in need of translation but in a culture where grammar-translation and accuracy over fluency is the norm to foreign language acquisition (Takanashi, 2004), some of the Japanese students might have felt reassured if the contents were translated even if as Anna explained below, most were catching up on their sleep.

*“The mythology class was taught by a Romanian woman...And it was in English but it was actually Japanese and English because we had four (country of origin) students...and one Japanese student from South Central Japan University...The Japanese student didn’t speak any English. The class was sort of taught in two languages. She (professor) would say everything in English and then just say the same thing in Japanese.”*

John, page 14, line 16.

*“I found it really strange that an American teacher taught us about Japanese culture. And then he was trying to use both English and Japanese at the same time to teach the class. Which was interesting but quite odd at the same time. Because like most of the things he had to say twice...It was kind of redundant. Maybe for Japanese students it was good even though I doubt it. Most of the class was sleeping.”*

Anna, page 12, line 26.

International students felt that they would have benefited from taking content seminars in English or at least with professors who could speak some English. Unfortunately, some of the Japanese professors who were teaching seminars were not capable of or willing to teach in English to the international students. As a result, the international students reported that their lack of fluency in Japanese and the professors' dearth of English proficiency obstructed their ability to understand their specialization. Evidently, the international students who viewed GHRs as having competencies in foreign language, culture, and specialization missed an important element of becoming a GHR – the specialization they needed to be a global citizen who could have a global and local impact (Hunter, 2004). For most international students, this specialized knowledge could only be attained while studying abroad in Japan because their home country did not offer such specialized courses. In the end, international students found themselves in a vicious cycle – expecting to study in Japan to take courses that would hone their specialization, yet finding themselves bereft of a lingua franca with Japanese professors who could assist them in becoming specialists in their field of interest.

*“I had to talk with him (professor) in Japanese. But sometimes because he teaches me Bungo, the traditional Japanese in Edo period...I could not understand his explanations because it was really difficult and it was difficult because he couldn't speak a word of English. And that's a problem I think. When you have to go here as a foreigner to the seminars the professors and the teachers can't speak any word of English. Because then you really need a high level of Japanese...”*

Michelle, page 11, line 29.

*“I didn't finish all of them but I had one seminar. One seminar basically on Japanese and German politics. That was really difficult though. In Japanese.”*

Anthony, page 15, line 25.

This predicament could be solved, according to Michelle, if exchange students were given the option of taking higher-level seminars in English or in English and Japanese. Foreign faculty could be invited to teach seminars in English to international students (Tsuneyoshi, 2005).

*“Higher level English seminars. And some bilingual seminars. Not only in Japanese. Because lots of foreign exchange students start here to improve their Japanese. They don’t have such a high level of Japanese and they have to take a seminar so they are lost.”*

Michelle, page 14, line 17.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned problems of some Japanese teachers with specializations being unable to teach in English or foreign faculty having to teach in both languages would not be resolved if the English level of Japanese students and teachers remained low and the international students lacked the language proficiency required to comprehend seminars taught in Japanese.

#### **4.6.3.c The Social Network Based on International Students**

The international students represented a small sampling of the international students at SCJU but had access to a close-knit community of international students (Penrod et al., 2003). They had cogent views about the role international students could play in contributing to GHR development in HEIs in Japan and felt welcomed by the university and Japanese students. Nonetheless, their informal social interactions were limited for the most part to international students with whom they could travel around Japan, discuss global issues, and learn about other cultures.

*“Most of my friends are not Japanese people. I have a lot of western friends. Because I am now living in an international students’ dormitory so I have more chances to know (them) and most of the international students are from Europe and America.”*

Jane, page 8, line 36.

*“So after one month, all the international students I knew them already and I became friends with so many of them. And we were going out all the time and we had to basically balance study and going out and traveling because at least at the beginning you want to do so many things.”*

Anna, page 20, line 24.

*“I have a group of friends like from Romania, Poland, Holland, and the Netherlands...Chinese too...in the semester we nearly meet up every day so we talk about a lot of things. When there’s a question or something comes up, we say it’s just like this in (home country). It’s like that in China.”*

Claire, page 19, line 25.

As explained in sections 4.5.2.b and 4.6.3.b, international students did have formal arrangements such as club activities and seminars that allowed for interaction with Japanese people. In informal settings, the international students relied primarily on other international students to build their social network, which could be attributed to language, culture, and exclusivity issues with Japanese students (Moon, 2016). Although Japan’s exclusive nationalism (Morita, 2015) may have hindered international students from venturing into informal settings to interact with Japanese students, it may have also been that Japanese students felt that the international student community remained exclusive. Thus, given the difficulty for both groups to insert themselves into informal settings, formal arrangements may have been required for interactions to ensue between both groups.

Japan's future challenge for GHR development would be closing this gap of the informal channels of communication between the international student and Japanese community so that international students do not have colonial experiences while they are in Japan. One of the criticisms of international students as well as expats is that some may have a colonialist mentality of feeling entitled to the privileges of being a foreigner in their host country and may have a superficial appreciation of the host culture (Ogden, 2008). Colonial students are the antithesis of GHRs who wanted to dive into cultures, challenge their stereotypes, and move towards ethnorelativism by comparing and contrasting the cultures. The Japanese students and international students were aware of the detriments of being a colonial student and as such had found as many formal and informal channels as possible to learn other languages and explore other cultures. Generally, the international students' social network was limited to other international students and a handful of Japanese students who were willing to communicate with them. If MEXT is serious about fostering GHRs, it might be in their best interest to focus also on increasing informal arrangements for cross-cultural communication between Japanese students and international students.

#### **4.6.3.d Non-cosmopolitan Japanese Society**

Japanese HEIs are fighting in a fiercely-competitive "War for Talent" (Li & Lowe, 2016). Attracting the best and brightest human resources will not be easy for Japanese universities such as SCJU if the Japanese government continues to instill nationalistic ethos into its citizens (Yonezawa, 2016). Even if HEIs are pursuing cosmopolitan policies that are intended to benefit international students, if Japanese society remains exclusive to Japanese people as Yonezawa (2016) argues, the international students will come to Japan, study Japanese language and culture, and leave Japan for other global experiences.

Anna and Michelle said that the rhetoric of globalization on the surface did not match the reality of living in Japan, resulting in cognitive dissonance (Lee, Therriault, & Linderholm, 2012).

*“...if you go out people either stare at you or avoid you. If you try to talk to someone in Japanese and you start with something like sumimasen (excuse me) if they know a bit of English they would answer in English. They wouldn’t even consider maybe you know a bit of Japanese...But sometimes at least in the beginning I found that a bit strange and sometimes annoying because I am trying here. I am making an effort here and you don’t even care?”*

Anna, page 15, line 5.

*“It’s like we want to represent globalness and a globalized country but on the other hand they don’t really let foreigners in this country. Maybe some educated ones but it’s not enough.”*

Michelle, page 10, line 1.

Anna thought that Japanese society needed to have a more grounded appreciation of the world rather than simply relying on major countries such as the United States as their frame of reference for all things global.

*“But I kind of noticed they are more focused more on America and they are very influenced by American culture. And I also noticed that even though Japanese people really want to go and study abroad, most of them have this kind of dreamy image of what Europe or America is. So, their expectations and reality don’t always match up.”*

Anna, page 7, line 33.

The idealized native speaker role model of people who spoke inner circle varieties of English (Breckenridge & Erling, 2011) was also seen as problematic for non-native English speakers who had a strong command of English. Whatever globalization that was embraced in Japanese society was restricted to major (English-speaking) countries, which became challenging when Anna was trying to find teaching jobs in Japan.

*“They want to have as many international students as possible but they don’t really want them to stay. And when I tried to do that (find a part-time job) on my own because my Japanese is not very good I could only find like an English teaching job...And they would be willing to be very open in the beginning. They would like you and things like that. But then all of a sudden they would realize you are from (home country) and not from America, Australia, or Great Britain. So, all of a sudden you weren’t good enough anymore.”*

Anna, page 22, line 33.

Consequently, Anna found that Japanese society welcomed international students from various countries to study at Japanese HEIs but in the “real world”, Japanese society was only open to native speakers who could provide some value added – who had Japanese proficiency and could teach English, for example. Others who were less desirable were expected to leave after studying abroad.

*“I think they are interested in having native English speakers that can speak Japanese working in their companies, in their schools...but other international students it’s good for them to come here and stay for one year but after that they should go home.”*

Anna, page 23, line 15.

In a Japanese society that has yet to become cosmopolitan (Yonezawa, 2016), international students must master speaking and acting Japanese. Fortunately, their definition of GHRs was individuals who could accept and adapt to other cultures without forgetting their roots due to a resilient inner core. Eva revealed a turning point in her life in Japan when she was able to pass herself off as Japanese because of her native-like ability to speak and act Japanese.

*“I popped into a taxi and I just said South Central Japan University as fast as you can. I guess that the taxi driver knew it was around the time you have exams. So, he was like are you going to an exam? And I was like yes, I am late. I overslept. I started talking to him...and then he’s like so what are you going to do after you graduate? And I was like I’m probably going to go back to my country. And then he almost stopped the car and was like you’re not Japanese? He said oh, you’re a foreigner. Because I actually had sunglasses on. So, I was a bit shocked but at the same time very flattered that he actually didn’t even think that she must be a foreigner. He actually thought I’m Japanese from the way I was talking...I’ve taken how to say enough of the Japanese in me for people to think I’m Japanese...And that’s when even Japanese people start looking at you differently.”*

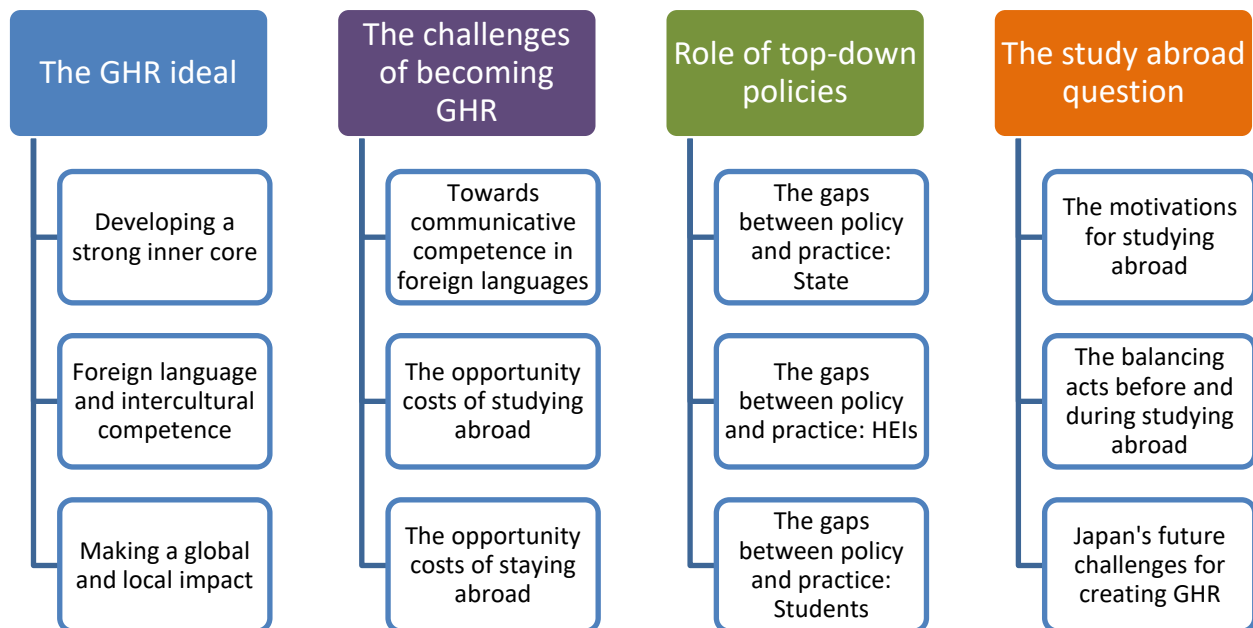
Eva, page 21, line 18.

A non-cosmopolitan Japanese society does not imply the demise of GHR development in Japan. With time, international students will find ways to cope and thrive in a society that is torn between the ethos of cosmopolitanism and nationalism. Some may decide to stay in Japan, return to Japan, or use their experience in Japan to pursue other global opportunities. Hopefully, their stay in Japan will leave an indelible footprint in creating a society that will foster the development of GHRs, as defined by the students in this study.



## 4.7 Conclusion

The success of GHR development lies in informing, engaging, and assisting Japanese and non-Japanese university students to reach the goals and aims of human resource development policy. The Japanese and international students' perceptions of MEXT's GHR policy were founded upon their motivations towards becoming closer to their ideal version of a GHR. For some, their idealized GHR image corresponded with the official definition. For others, there were competencies that needed to be acquired, gaps that needed to be clarified within top-down policies, and obstacles that needed to be removed for them to emulate their ideal GHR. Studying abroad was not an easy decision for most Japanese students, and for international students who had decided to study abroad in Japan, staying in Japan was not always desirable. If MEXT hopes to implement policies that stimulate brain circulation from Japanese students and brain gain from international students, it may want to address some of the issues stipulated below in Diagram 4.15 that illustrate the challenges students face when trying to become their idealized version of a GHR, not only for Japan but also for the world.



**Diagram 4.15. Final table of master themes (n=4) with subordinate themes (n=12)**

## **Chapter 5: Contribution, Impact, Implications, and Recommendations**

This study has revealed the unique lived experiences (Smith et al., 2013) of Japanese (n=12) and non-Japanese (n=10) university students at SCJU within MEXT's policies of the internationalization of higher education. The research questions were answered using a qualitative and inductive IPA research method and philosophy that investigated changeable and subjective realities (Reiners, 2012) of Japanese and international students who may move MEXT's strategy of fostering GHRs forward by boosting the global ranking of Japanese universities and Japan's presence in the global economy. The findings exemplified that the students' definition of GHRs impacted upon their views of how gaps between government (macro), institutional (meso), and student (micro) levels could be narrowed. It became apparent that the clashes (Knight, 1997) between the ethos of nationalism and processes of internationalization of higher education at the macro level and activities to promulgate global activities such as study abroad and foreign language and intercultural competencies at macro and meso levels could be closed by encouraging elements of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism would facilitate brain circulation and brain gain from Japanese students and international students who could have global and local impacts to benefit Japan.

### **5.1 Contribution to Knowledge**

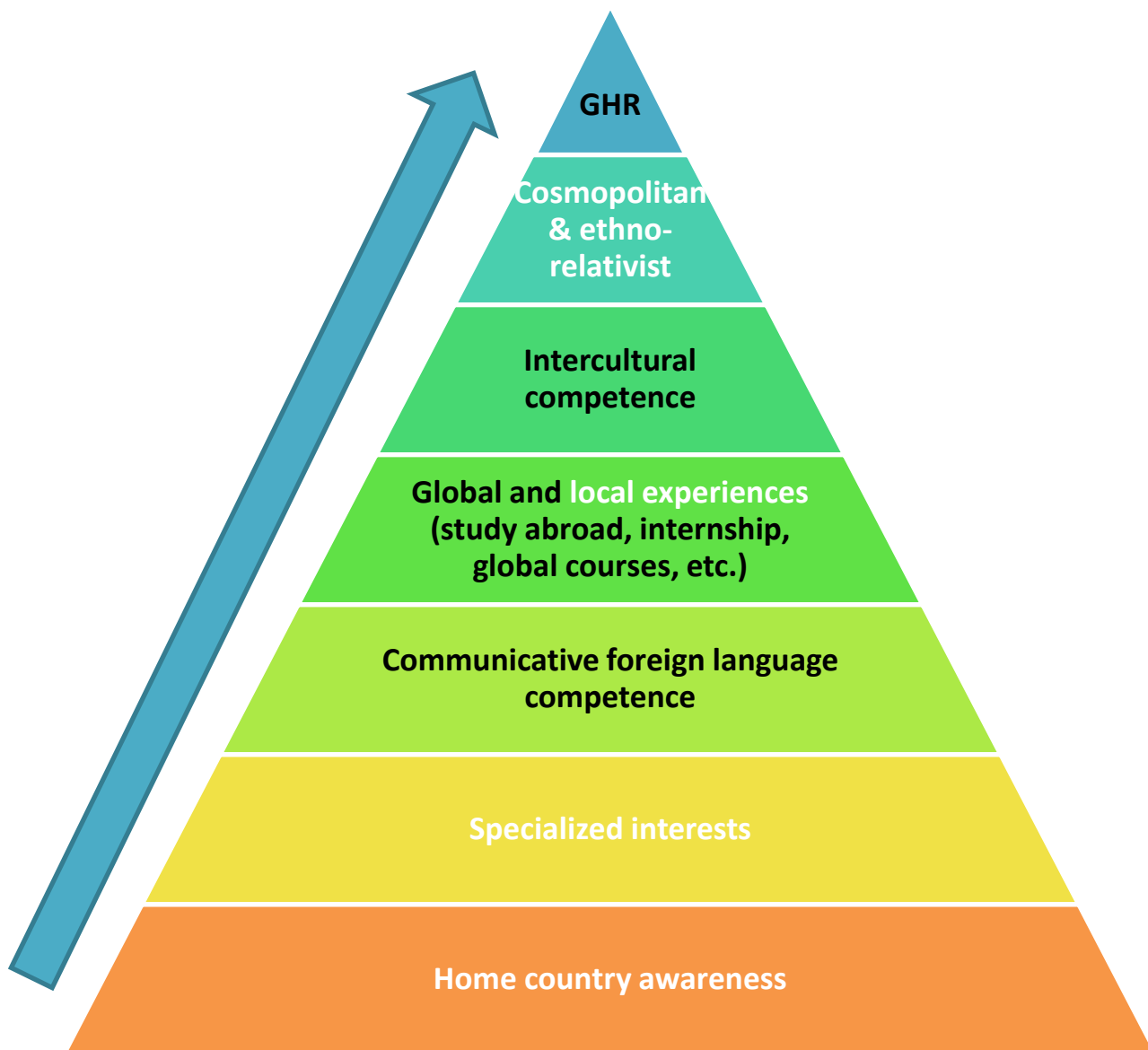
My literary analysis of the internationalization of higher education policies exposed a paucity of research done on the grassroots level. The aim of my research was to bring in the perspectives of stakeholders at the grassroots level for the purposes of dialogue and reflection (House & Howe, 1999; Moore, 2005) using Knight's (1997) four categories (ethos, processes, activities, and competencies) as the theoretical framework for analysis (see Chapter 2). Students' attitudes on GHR development have brought to the forefront the challenges that must be addressed as MEXT continues to implement policies that are expected to internationalize Japanese higher education through traditional internalization strategies (Altbach & Knight, 2007) such as study abroad programs.

The main contribution of this study was to bring policy closer to practice within Japanese HEIs such as SCJU that are trying to align itself with macro-level policies of GHR development. Japanese students and international students were neither oblivious nor apathetic towards macro-and meso-level policies that permeated into their lived experiences. Students were aware of the nationalistic ethos that clashed with efforts to raise cosmopolites through HEI policies that promoted learning through study abroad courses and programs (activities) intended to raise their foreign language and intercultural competencies. As human resources who possess their own agenda for becoming GHRs, they were interested in taking advantage of local and global opportunities that would enable them to embody their idealized image of a GHR. Generally, Japanese students and international students supported MEXT's policy of facilitating migration flows of human capital to and from Japan. However, Japanese students were critical of GHR development policies that had limited impact on the masses because it favored students who already had an inclination towards becoming GHRs. International students were less critical of government policies but more critical of a non-cosmopolitan Japanese society and learning environments that did not foster more interactive learning of their specialization using a lingua franca.

#### **5.1.1 Value of Qualitative Investigation**

My research will assist policy makers, educators, managers, and students who envision the internationalization of higher education policies such as GHR development as the foundation for preparing students to becoming global citizens who are transitioning into ethnorelativist individuals with pluralistic cultural realities (Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Although the Japanese students were feeling pressured to go abroad, they were seeking their own answers to why, how, where, and when to go abroad. Similarly, international students who had already decided to come to Japan were also searching for their own answers as to why, how, where, and when to go abroad, while envisioning future possibilities of venturing beyond Japanese borders to broaden their ethnorelativist perspectives. The answers to these questions were often limited by the structural realities (Lassegard, 2013) that existed such as financial costs of studying abroad, academic pressures, social ties back home, and competing priorities in life.

Looking at the effect of top-down policies on student perspectives regarding GHR development, my research showed that students were aligned with several of the government aims – the need to boost their foreign language and intercultural competencies or what the government defines more holistically as communication skills through global and local activities (MEXT, 2015, para 1). However, as illustrated in Diagram 5.1, becoming a GHR was multifaceted and introspective for Japanese and international students, indicating that it is essential to examine in detail the additional components of GHR development.



**Diagram 5.1. GHR development**

MEXT's GHR policy is to "develop global human resources who will drive growth in Japan and be active in various fields on the world stage, to equip them with rich language and communication skills, independence and assertiveness, and a mindset that can understand other cultures premised on in-depth understanding of Japanese culture and their own identity as Japanese" (MEXT, 2015, para. 1). This definition was relevant to Japanese students although the understanding of Japanese cultures and their own identity as Japanese implied nationalistic aims on the macro level that conflicted with cosmopolitan goals on the institutional level (Yonezawa, 2016). Nevertheless, students recognized that being self-aware – of their own weaknesses as an individual or a group of individuals as it relates to their upbringing in a given culture – was their initial point of reference in a lifelong journey of exploration, analysis, and interpretation of other global experiences. Without a reference point for comparison, they found that they would lack the ability to engage in comparative and contrastive analyses of other cultures, customs, and traditions that could facilitate their transition from ethnocentric citizens to ethnorelativist cosmopolites.

Another component that students mentioned was the need for government policies (processes) to diversify GHR strategies beyond study abroad programs that were typically intended to raise the foreign language competence of Japanese students. Fortunately, the government has started to emphasize through programs (activities) such as *Tobitate Japan* that students should have not only foreign language competence but also knowledge of specific interests that would transform them into global citizens with foreign language and intercultural competence (Hunter, 2004). Although such programs cater to Japanese students, for international students who came to Japan equipped with specific interests, gaps existed between what the students expected to study in Japan (their special interests and Japanese language) and the reality of taking specialized courses that were difficult to follow because they were often taught in Japanese to Japanese students and a handful of international students. According to the Japanese and international students, having a specialization was the key to becoming a GHR who could have global and local impacts. These student perspectives demonstrated some of the challenges that MEXT might face if it continues to implement its top-down policies.

One of the most significant findings from this study was that Japanese students and international students had similar interpretations of what it meant to be a GHR. GHRs were reflective individuals who relied on a resilient core that would allow them to think critically about their global and local experiences as cosmopolitan citizens (Delanty, 2000). Having a positive effect on Japan's economy was not as relevant as the effect that GHRs could have within and beyond Japan's borders. Japanese students who had not studied abroad were more aligned with MEXT's definition of being GHRs from the angle of being a Japanese citizen. However, those who had studied abroad shared the views of the international students – that GHRs were able to consider worldviews that were more inclusive and ethnorelativist. My research findings have impact and implications on stakeholders at all levels at SCJU and possibly at other universities that are fostering GHR development.

## **5.2 Impact and Implications**

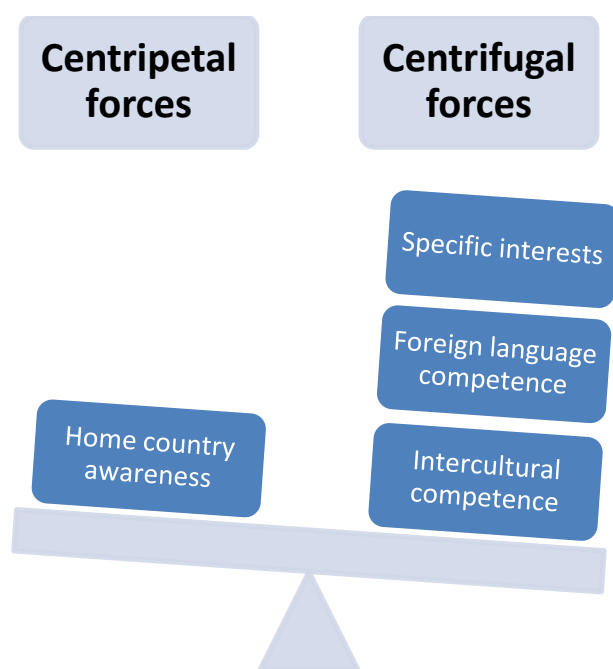
The success of top-down policies of GHR development lies in its ability to create cosmopolitan individuals with pluralistic realities who can contribute to the global economy (Yonezawa, 2016). One of the limitations of MEXT's policies is how it infers that GHRs are to reside in Japan and work for Japanese companies when in reality GHRs should be borderless individuals who are on a lifelong journey of self-actualization (Murtaza, 2011). Retaining human resources is feasible if students who aspire to be GHRs have visions of remaining in Japan and working for Japanese companies. However, students in this study had various motivations towards becoming GHRs, implying that there could be better alignment of policies for stakeholders at the government (macro), institutional (meso), and student (micro) level.

The top-down nature of MEXT's policy implementation has made stakeholders especially at the institutional level reactive agents of change (Yonezawa, 2016). Moreover, to date, student voices at the micro level have been unheard, possibly because students have been unduly categorized as being inward gazing, with little interest in going abroad (Burgess, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2011). However, this study posits that stakeholders at the highest levels should adopt a more inclusive approach to higher education policies because students have clear opinions about policies that impact upon their lived local and global experiences at SCJU and beyond. In short, the students in this study proffer a multifaceted definition of GHRs, strategies beyond study abroad as the means of creating GHRs, and an empowered approach to GHR development in policy design, implementation, and reflection.

### **5.2.1 Impact and Implications on the Macro Level**

The definition of GHRs with respect to ethos (Knight, 1997) has been categorized in Diagram 5.1, which underscores how MEXT's policies of GHR development could have a greater effect if home country awareness as well as honing students' specialization could also be integrated into internationalization of higher education strategies. As it stands, MEXT's definition of GHRs has been created so that Japanese HEIs could become major players in an uneven playing field of the international higher education market (Marginson, 2008). MEXT's gaze of GHR development is thus outward – towards promoting Japan to the world through world-class universities. In response, flagship universities in Japan are trying to align themselves with MEXT, to move themselves from the periphery to the center in the global competition of creating globally-recognized HEIs (Altbach, 2009). In contrast, university students are gazing internally and externally, inquiring about what it means to be a global citizen who can have both global and local impacts.

My research shows that MEXT's definition of GHRs was not entirely inclusive of the attitudes and perspectives of students at SCJU. Japanese and international students were balancing centripetal forces and centrifugal forces (Gaudelli, 2009; Holland, 2006) that were complementary in nature (see Diagram 5.2). Centripetal forces such as home country awareness facilitated the creation of a reflective self who could unearth hidden biases and inherent weaknesses in a global community. In contrast, centrifugal forces such as specific interests, foreign language competence, and intercultural competence could move them beyond the self, towards a global self who has membership in global communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). MEXT's definition of GHRs, with a more inclusive slant towards university students at Japanese HEIs could be reinterpreted (italicized sections have been modified from MEXT's statement cited in section 5.1.1) by students as a policy that is to “develop *cosmopolitan ethnorelativists* who will drive growth *locally and globally* and be active in *their specific interests to have global and local impacts*, to equip them with *communicative foreign language and intercultural competence*, and a mindset that can understand *and reflect on* other cultures premised on in-depth awareness of *their home country*.”



**Diagram 5.2. Centripetal and centrifugal forces of GHRs**



### **5.2.2 Impact and Implications on the Meso and Micro Levels**

Japanese HEIs and university students are reactive actors in the government policies towards the globalization of higher education (Yonezawa, 2016). Knight's (1997) categories of processes and activities will be applied towards analyzing the impact and implications on the meso and micro levels.

Participants mentioned that government-driven GHR development policies were augmenting the structural inequalities that existed (Shultz, 2007) at the grassroots level for Japanese students. Japanese students who were already globally-inclined benefited from the policy, whereas those who were more locally-minded were being marginalized from MEXT's policies of GHR development because they were not able to readily take advantage of global programs and courses offered by the university. On the whole, the Japanese students said that top-down policies were targeting those who probably would have pursued becoming GHRs with or without MEXT's policy of removing structural impediments (Lassegard, 2013). Moreover, in my study, international students were able to improve their Japanese but struggled with taking courses in Japanese that would sharpen their specific interests. Thus, activities in addition to studying abroad were found to be needed so that universities such as SCJU could create new activities and opportunities that would allow more students to participate in global and local experiences that might contribute to more cosmopolitan learning environments.

Students in this study were proponents of studying abroad because they felt that studying abroad allowed them to challenge their stereotypes, build on their perceived weaknesses, enhance their fluency in foreign languages, and lead to other global opportunities on their journey towards becoming GHRs. However, barriers such as financial costs (Lassegard, 2013) and academic pressures were seen as real obstacles that could further alienate those who have been excluded from top-down policies of GHR development.

In addition to policies that encourage university students to study abroad to and out of Japan, my research reveals the need to raise the local effectiveness and propriety of GHR development policies within Japanese HEIs. Studying abroad is the end product of a decision-making process that requires students to weigh short and long-term costs and benefits. Some Japanese students, even if they may not ever have the chance of going abroad, were still eager to participate in local opportunities that might facilitate their transition towards becoming GHRs. These students challenged MEXT's labeling of GHRs as students with study abroad experiences because they felt that home institutions should also play a greater role in fostering GHRs through local activities, particularly for those who did not have the financial means or luxury to study abroad. After all, home institutions are key stakeholders in this policy and can foster cosmopolitan learning environments by offering more global courses taught in a lingua franca, communicative foreign language classes, and opportunities for formal and informal cross-cultural interactions and discussions.

My research findings could empower faculty members of global programs and courses on the meso level to find ways to raise the global interest of students to become GHRs. It might be better for faculties of global programs and courses to create more programs and courses that would allow for more formal and informal active learning opportunities between non-Japanese students, faculty, and Japanese students to raise intercultural competence (Jon, 2013). Evidently, interaction alone does not guarantee cross-cultural learning opportunities. However, if those who have been excluded from the GHR movement are to feel a sense of propriety towards the policy, they may need to be motivated to actually see the merits of situating themselves within global communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). This motivation may come from cross-cultural learning opportunities with international students or even from faculty members who can engage in deep dialogue about global issues. Therefore, implying that institutions at the meso level should create new programs and courses (activities) that empower more students to move along the path of GHR development (see Diagram 5.1) was a significant impact of my research results on GHR development within Japanese HEIs.

### **5.2.3 Impact and Implications on a Personal Level**

Prior to my research, I was unaware of the limitations of studying abroad as a strategy for GHR development for students. I had wrongly assumed that students from all faculties were eager to study abroad, when in reality many Japanese students were weighing other priorities that were competing with their desire to study abroad. One of the biggest implications of my research on my professional practice was that Japanese and international students realized that being a GHR was a lifelong journey that was multifaceted and complex – requiring a cosmopolitan mindset, experiences, competencies, and specific interests. Preparing as many students as possible, not only those students who are already on the path towards becoming GHRs but also those who may not be able to go overseas but are still eager to find global opportunities locally, to take this lifelong journey is my newfound mission as a practitioner-researcher in higher education at SCJU. My research signifies that I could provide SCJU students with more local opportunities where Japanese and international students can openly discuss global issues, engrained stereotypes, and cross-cultural communication challenges while reflecting on the path of GHR development.

Studying abroad is but one component of becoming GHRs. There is much more I can and should do beyond my classroom in a wider community of practice (Wenger, 1998) that would certainly empower more students to adopt a more cosmopolitan and relativist mindset needed to become GHRs who can embrace pluralistic realities. In professional circles, I have begun disseminating my research at academic conferences such as the 2016 Pan Asian Conference International Symposium on English Teaching, where the lack of consideration of cultural norms in IPA as a rationale for using focus groups was broached. I have also completed a chapter in a book with University of Liverpool cohort members and Yonezawa (2016) about how study abroad programs can be further enhanced through courses that allow students to go beyond simply imagining their future selves abroad but also reflecting on their selves in relation to their ambitions of becoming a GHR. In the future, I intend to make changes in my professional practice, which will be explained in the recommendations section 5.5.

### **5.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

The strength of this study is that I have shed light on the gaps that exist on GHR development policy initiatives not only from the Japanese perspective but also from a non-Japanese perspective using IPA methodology that has been used predominantly in the fields of clinical, health, and counseling psychology (Smith, 2011). In educational settings, phenomenological studies for education can facilitate the knowing of a phenomenon as individuals search for meaning (Selvi, 2012). Using IPA, I have worked in tandem with my participants to co-construct and interpret GHR development within SCJU.

Although I would have preferred to do interviews with Japanese students in English as I did with the international students, I prioritized their preference of conducting discussions in Japanese as indicated in the pilot projects in section 3.4 because I felt confident that their voices would be heard more clearly if they used their native language (Gray, 2014), especially among Japanese students who tend to value accuracy over fluency. The use of Japanese, however, meant that I had to rely on professional translators and on my own Japanese ability. The decision to use Japanese with Japanese university students was essentially “based on a political recognition of the ontological importance for people of their first language and the implications of colluding, through early translation, with the invisibility of some languages and their users” (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 174).

This study included a total of 22 participants, which exceeded the optimal number of five to 10 participants (Smith, 2011). Unlike quantitative studies that require large number of participants to allow for generalizability and transferability, in IPA studies with a limited number of participants, I had to make deliberate attempts to prioritize the context, individual, and interpretation of lived experiences within specific contexts. This was challenging when I had a plethora of data to transcribe, analyze, understand, interpret, reflect, and categorize into master, subordinate, and emerging themes. At times, I was tempted to fall back on quantifying qualitative data by tallying words that were repeated and conducting statistical analyses as is the preferred method of research in linguistic studies of second language acquisition in my department.

Qualitative studies, among my community of practice, have little credibility as they are subject to criticisms such as lacking in validity and reliability. When those negative voices reverberated in my head, I reread my researcher positionality in section 3.2 to alleviate any of doubts that I had regarding my study and proceeded with the steps I outlined in section 3.8. By following the prescribed steps of IPA that I had explained and justified in section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 I discovered that I was challenging myself and others who were skeptical of qualitative research in higher education.

Another weakness of this study is my relative inexperience with conducting focus group discussions or interviews for research purposes. Although the pilot projects proved instrumental in raising my confidence in facilitating discussion and interviews, when I was dealing with students I have never met before, I was not able to control the conversations as well as I had intended. My inexperience was apparent when conversations and discussions started to take a life of their own (Gray, 2014) and I felt unsure as to when or how I should intervene. As a teacher, I excelled in classroom management, but as a researcher I lacked some important management skills to facilitate the discussion and interviews. Moreover, I spoke rather quickly, which I realized was counterproductive in putting the participants at ease and tended to ask too many questions at once. After each discussion or interview, I wrote a reflection, which helped me reduce my shortcomings over time. By the third focus group discussion and about the fifth interview, I felt that I had finally become more of a moderator who could “orchestrate” (Gray, 2014, p. 474) the participants in communication.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

GHR development is a phenomenon that is being analyzed, reinterpreted, and evaluated by stakeholders at the macro level as evidenced by the government-driven policies that are starting to impact upon stakeholders at the lower levels. My research has explored the lived experiences of Japanese and international students studying at SCJU as it relates to GHR development. GHR was defined from the bottom up – from the perspective of the students who were interested in becoming GHRs.

Qualitative research on how students make meaning of top-down policies sheds light on the gaps that exist in rhetoric and in reality (Howe, 2009). The ethos (Knight, 1997) of nationalism in MEXT's market-driven policies and the reality of students wanting to be GHRs who were ethnorelativist cosmopolites were at odds and the gaps have yet to be narrowed. Japanese HEIs, particularly those that are flagship universities at a crossroads (Yonezawa, 2007), are conceivably the most important stakeholders that could respond to students' needs of being immersed in learning environments that could foster the development of GHRs.

By introducing local activities (Knight, 1997) that could motivate students to begin or continue their journey towards becoming GHRs, HEIs might be able to motivate more students to pursue local and global opportunities that can have local and global impacts. Ironically, discussions on GHR development must return to the local. Students, faculty, and managers of global programs must investigate how best to create cosmopolitan learning environments that would allow for international students and Japanese students to benefit most from studying at Japanese HEIs that are trying to become world-class universities with a cosmopolitan academic environment (Altbach, 2009). In the following section, recommendations will be made for stakeholders at various levels to align more closely with student perspectives of GHR development in Japanese HEIs.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

### **5.5.1 Recommendations for the Macro Level**

The details of how policies of GHR development can be customized to the needs of Japanese HEIs and students have yet to be clearly articulated (Yonezawa, 2016). Generally, GHR development is a policy that facilitates studying at Japanese HEIs for international students and to foreign HEIs for Japanese students. Offering financial incentives to both Japanese and international students for studying abroad might contribute to the policy in the short run but in the long run if MEXT envisions implementing sustainable policies of GHR development, it may have to consider how it could promote cosmopolitanism at home.

To promote cosmopolitanism, MEXT should modify its definition of GHRs to be more inclusive of the perspectives of Japanese and international students. Currently the nationalistic aims of the government are not resonating well with students who believe MEXT's "global" policy is for the benefit of the Japanese economy. International students, who are expected to contribute to cosmopolitan academic and business environments, are relegated to tools to globalize Japan rather than as individuals who might pursue other opportunities that would allow them to have a greater global impact. In short, global policies such as GHR development must respect the wishes of cosmopolitan citizens of the world who "seek both to honor the local and dialogically move towards a universal notion of self, morality, and society" (Gaudelli, 2009, p. 76).

### **5.5.2 Recommendations for the Meso and Micro Levels**

As for recommendations on the meso and micro levels, student engagement with programs and curricula (activities) that develop their competencies are most pertinent. Students recommended that global courses and programs at Japanese HEIs be more aligned with their idealized version of GHRs who have a robust inner core, foreign language and intercultural competencies, and a specialization that can have global and local impacts (see Chapter 4.3).

The robust inner core can be developed through courses that engage Japanese and international students in active learning (Prince, 2004) where students would be given opportunities to engage and reflect critically on their learning process through collaboration, cooperation, and problem solving on global issues. Although such classes were said by students to exist at SCJU, they appeared to be exceptions. Therefore, with respect to course and program design, there must be more discussion on how to bring both groups of students into interactive cosmopolitan learning environments to develop their intercultural competence. Currently, many non-Japanese teachers who are teaching specialized courses are teaching the content in English to international students and translating the same content into Japanese for Japanese students, leaving little opportunity for activities that might encourage Japanese and international students to engage in cross-cultural communication or learning opportunities.

To foster more cosmopolitan learning environments in programs and courses, it is also important to look at the role of critical thinking, which is a requisite for developing intercultural competence (Durkin, 2008). Critical thinking, lamented by Western educators as lacking in Asian learning contexts, must be further researched given the complexities that abound in learning settings across Asian countries (Ryan & Louie, 2007). Through debates and discussions on cross-cultural issues using a lingua franca such as English, students might be able to boost their communicative competence in foreign languages and raise their critical thinking skills and intercultural sensitivity to becoming more proactive members in cosmopolitan academic and non-academic settings. What is most important in the process of creating GHRs is to understand that the attitudes of stakeholders at the meso and micro levels be engaged in ensuring that programs and courses are modified from the bottom up.

### **5.5.3 Recommendations for Personal and Practitioner Research**

In this thesis, I have suggested that a more inclusive definition of GHRs (see section 5.2.1) be adopted at the macro and meso level so that gaps between stakeholders at all levels can be narrowed. My revised definition can guide how policies, programs, and courses can be implemented so that ultimately more students will feel motivated to take the journey towards becoming GHRs.

GHRs are critical and reflective individuals with short and long-term views of how they can become active members in global communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). In future studies, it is recommended that longitudinal studies of their lived experiences including their role as alumni be researched to see how their definition of GHRs might change over time, their progress towards reaching their idealized version of a GHR, and their use of their specialization to have global and local impacts. It would be interesting to see how diverse the paths of GHR development might depend on the life choices of students.



In classrooms, there could be attempts at introducing, analyzing, and reassessing active learning projects such as debating and cross-cultural discussions. For example, currently in a debate project sponsored by the Japanese government and unrelated to the global programs I teach, I have been researching the effects of synchronous e-debates in English between Japanese students and university students in other countries on the development of students' intercultural competence. Such activities have given me insight into how best I could foster the development of GHRs as defined by the students in this study. I hope to expand this project where students will prepare and participate in debates overseas with students in other countries.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This thesis has focused on examining the unique lived experiences of Japanese and non-Japanese university students at SCJU within MEXT's policies of GHR development. It is significant to note that these lived experiences have been shared, analyzed, and interpreted so that stakeholders at all levels will be able to grasp the complexity that exists in creating GHRs who are presumably ethnorelativist cosmopolites if top-down policies remain nationalistic in nature.

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## Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet (Japanese Students)



9/15/15  
Version 4

### Ethical Review: Participation Info Sheet (PIS) for Students

#### 1. Title of Study

Global human resource development within study abroad programs and courses in Japanese higher education institutions

#### 2. Invitation Paragraph

My name is Marian Wang, and I am a Doctor of Education student at the University of Liverpool. I will refer to myself throughout this information sheet as 'the researcher'. You are being invited to participate in a research study that will be used in my thesis. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and ask me if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

#### 3. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to identify and explore policy, program, and curricular alignment of Japanese universities in global *jinzai ikusei* (global human resource development) with student and manager perceptions and goals of studying abroad at a national university in Japan. At the beginning of this study, government policy of global human resource development and institutional responses will be analyzed. Then, program and curricular changes will be investigated. Finally, in World English Courses (WEC), student and manager perceptions towards government policy and institutional responses of global human resource will be analyzed to determine if changes could be made to existing programs and curricula to reflect stakeholder goals in studying abroad while fulfilling the government's objectives. By asking questions to managers who are in charge of developing study abroad programs and curricula and to students who will study abroad and potentially become Japan's future global human resources, I hope that policies, programs, and curricula will become more responsive to the study abroad aims and goals of program managers and study abroad students.

#### **4. Why have I been invited to take part?**

You, the WEC student, have been invited to take part in the focus group discussion on a first-come, first-served basis for the following reasons: 1) you are enrolled in WEC; 2) your class may be composed of students enrolled in a variety of faculties and majors; and 3) the researcher is not your current or past instructor. These are important for this research because they are considered ideal for this qualitative study which will consist of audio-recorded focus group discussions of eight to 10 students in study abroad courses to share motivations for studying abroad, views towards the government and institutional approach to developing global human resources, and suggestions for improving the curriculum and program.

#### **5. Do I have to take part?**

Participation in this study is voluntary and will not result in any disadvantages if you decide not to participate. Moreover, if at any time during the investigation you feel that you would like to withdraw, you can do so without explanation or consequence. You may also choose not to answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering. The decision to participate or not will be yours and there will be no penalty or consequence, now or in the future, if you choose not to participate in this research.

#### **6. What will happen if I take part?**

If you agree to take part in the study, your answers will help contribute to a better understanding of how universities in Japan can prepare study abroad programs and curricula that meet the aims and objectives of stakeholders within the realm of global human resource development. Your response will also help improve the experience of future WEC students.

#### *What are the methods?*

The design of this research will involve data collected from WEC students and managers in charge of designing curricula and programs for global human resource development. The face-to-face focus group discussions of eight to 10 WEC students will involve 16 to 20 willing participants who will share reasons for studying abroad, views towards the government and university approach to developing global human resources, and suggestions for improving curriculum and program design. For students who agree to take part, the focus group discussions will take place during a time and at a location that is convenient and comfortable for participants. Discussions will be in the students' native language (Japanese), will be recorded using a voice recorder, with participants' permission, and later will be transcribed and translated into English. If however, students prefer that discussions take place in English, English will be used as the language of communication.



*Who is the researcher?*

The researcher is Marian Wang, who is a native English-speaking assistant professor at South Central Japan University (SCJU). She was raised in a bilingual household (Japanese and English) and has attended a Japanese government-sponsored school for eight years. Marian has been teaching WEC as part of the Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource Development. For the last three years, she has been pursuing her Doctor of Education degree with the University of Liverpool, and this research is an important part of her thesis phase.

*Who will be carrying out the research?*

Marian will be carrying out the research. A WEC administrator will send a bilingual (English and Japanese) invitation email to WEC students inviting them to participate in the study. This invitation email will contain attachments of the participant information sheet (PIS) and the participant consent form (PCF). In both the invitation email and the PIS, the researcher's email address will be clearly written so prospective participants can ask any questions before agreeing to join the data collection process.

*What is the frequency and duration of the interventions?*

For the 16 to 20 students who are willing to join focus groups discussions, the process will involve organizing two groups consisting of eight to 10 students and should take up to two hours. The exact questions have not been decided upon but participants are expected to share motivations for studying abroad, perceptions towards the government and institutional approach to developing global human resources, and suggestions for improvement in curriculum and program design. The focus groups discussions, which will be audio recorded, are to be done in their native language – Japanese – and will be translated later into English. If, however, participants are willing to communicate in English, the researcher will transcribe without any translation. After the focus group discussions, Marian will send anonymized focus-group translations/transcriptions to participants in order to seek approval on what was recorded and may ask for further clarification regarding the content of the discussion.

*What are your responsibilities as a participant?*

You are responsible to decide if you are willing to join the study or not. While free to withdraw at any time without consequence, you are encouraged to provide honest information, experiences, and opinions. You will be expected to respond to questions to the best of your knowledge and ability, but you do not have to answer questions that you are not comfortable answering. You may choose to remain silent during the focus group discussion if you do not want to contribute. You may also choose to leave early if you feel uneasy during the focus group discussion.

What is discussed in focus group discussions should not be shared with others outside of the focus group discussion. If you decline to participate in the research or wish to skip certain parts of the data collection process, you are free to do so without penalty or consequence. You are responsible to ask the researcher any questions you may have and to express any discomfort or misgivings you have during the process. If you are not comfortable approaching the researcher with your questions and concerns, you can reach the researcher's supervisor or consider other contacts details as explained in section #10.

### **7. Expenses and/or payments**

There will be no monetary incentive (payment) for participation in the focus group discussion.

### **8. Are there any risks in taking part?**

One possible disadvantage to participating could be the personal time that you will need to dedicate to the focus group discussion (up to two hours). Some of the questions could be personal in nature and might require you to reflect on reasons why you may or may not think that the policy, programs, and curricula are meeting the goals of multiple stakeholders. These types of questions could possibly lead to discomfort, but you should be assured that there are no right or wrong answers. If you experience any discomfort during the research, you may choose to refuse to answer questions that cause discomfort or withdraw your participation from the study, without explanation needed. You can approach the researcher regarding any experienced discomfort, or if you would prefer to contact someone else, please go to section #10 in this form for other options. Based on the scope of this study, you will be excluded from this study 1) if you are not a WEC student at SCJU; 2) if the researcher is currently your instructor or was your instructor in another class; or 3) if you cannot speak or write in English or Japanese. This is done to ensure consistency in the sample. At no point will you be expected to waive your legal rights or reveal your identity.

### **9. Are there any benefits in taking part?**

This research could help establish better study abroad programs and curriculum at SCJU, as well as policy and practice that will better address the needs of stakeholders from the grassroots level. There will not be any personal benefit to students taking part in this study other than knowing that their contribution will help future students.

### **10. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, you can contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Ian Willis, at [ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk). The next alternative is to contact me at [marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk). If you remain unsatisfied, you can contact the Research Participant Advocate (USA number 001-612-312-1210) at [liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com](mailto:liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com). If contacting the Research Participant Advocate, you should provide the USA number, the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make. At SCJU, you can contact the WEC office at [xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp](mailto:xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp) or the general affairs division at [xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp](mailto:xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp).

### **11. Will my participation be kept confidential?**

All data (transcriptions, recordings, and emails) will be stored in a password-protected computer, located in the researcher's private office at SCJU. You will never be asked to reveal your name but will be asked to provide your university email address so the researcher may contact you to seek approval on what was recorded and may ask for further clarification regarding the content of the discussion. If you choose to participate in the focus group discussion, correspondence will be done through your stated email address, and all data will be kept secure in a password-protected email account created exclusively for this research project. If email exchanges are copied into Microsoft Word documents they will be kept secure in a specific folder of a password-protected computer, located in the researcher's personal office. Data will be stored for at least six years and the researcher is the only person who will have access, though her supervisors (Dr. Ian Willis and Dr. Morag Gray) will be granted access upon request. After this time, all digital data will be deleted from the mentioned digital mediums. In any analysis and dissemination of results (articles, reports, presentations, etc.), participants might be referred to by an alpha value (e.g., student A, student B, etc.); however, personal details including name, email address, and name of institution will never be used.

### **12. What will happen to the results of the study?**

I will send you the results of the study if you make a request through my email account. The completed thesis will be stored on an online repository or parts of the study may be published in academic journals. These will be made public online, so you may access them, if you choose. If you would like to be notified of any publications that use the data from this study, you can contact me at [marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk). In any published materials, your name, the institution's name, your email address, and any other personal details that could make you identifiable will not be used.

**13. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

You can withdraw at any time during the research without explanation. Results up to the point of withdrawal may be used if you allow it. Otherwise, you may request by email that data are destroyed and no further use will be made of them. If you do not wish to take part in the research, no explanation will be needed nor penalty incurred.

**14. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

As the principal investigator, I can be contacted by email at [marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk) or you can contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Ian Willis, at [ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk).

## Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form



### Committee on Research Ethics

**Title of Research Project:** Global human resource development within study abroad programs and courses in Japanese higher education institutions

**Researcher:** Marian Wang

**Initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study (Version 4, 9/15/2015 or Version 1, 2/14/2016). I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide, and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.
5. I will maintain confidentiality on the content of the discussion taking place during the focus group or interview and on the identities of participants.
6. I agree to take part in the above study.

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

_____ Participant Name	_____ Date	_____ Signature
_____ Name of Person Taking Consent	_____ Date	_____ Signature
_____ Marian Wang, Researcher	_____ Date	_____ Signature

## Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet (International Students)



2/14/16  
Version 1

### Ethical Review: Participation Info Sheet (PIS) for Students

#### 1. Title of Study

Global human resource development within study abroad programs and courses in Japanese higher education institutions

#### 2. Invitation Paragraph

My name is Marian Wang, and I am a Doctor of Education student at the University of Liverpool. I will refer to myself throughout this information sheet as 'the researcher'. You are being invited to participate in a research study that will be used in my thesis. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and ask me if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

#### 3. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to identify and explore policy, program, and curricular alignment of Japanese universities in global *jinzai ikusei* (global human resource development) with student goals of studying abroad at a national university in Japan. At the beginning of this study, government policy of global human resource development and institutional responses will be analyzed. Then, program and curricular changes will be investigated. Finally, student perceptions towards government policy and institutional responses of global human resource will be analyzed to determine if changes could be made to existing programs and curricula to reflect stakeholder goals in studying abroad while fulfilling the government's objectives. By asking questions to international students who are now studying abroad and potentially will become Japan's future global human resources, I hope that policies, programs, and curricula will become more responsive to the study abroad aims and goals of study abroad students.

#### **4. Why have I been invited to take part?**

You, the international student, have been invited to take part in one-on-one interviews on a first-come, first-served basis for the following reasons: 1) you are an international student; 2) you can communicate in English; and 3) the researcher is not your current or past instructor. These are important for this research because they are considered ideal for this qualitative study which will consist of audio-recorded interviews of eight to 10 international students to share motivations for studying abroad, views towards the government and institutional approach to developing global human resources, and suggestions for improving the curriculum and program.

#### **5. Do I have to take part?**

Participation in this study is voluntary and will not result in any disadvantages if you decide not to participate. Moreover, if at any time during the investigation you feel that you would like to withdraw, you can do so without explanation or consequence. You may also choose not to answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering. The decision to participate or not will be yours and there will be no penalty or consequence, now or in the future, if you choose not to participate in this research.

#### **6. What will happen if I take part?**

If you agree to take part in the study, your answers will help contribute to a better understanding of how universities in Japan can prepare study abroad programs and curricula that meet the aims and objectives of stakeholders within the realm of global human resource development. Your response will also help improve the experience of future students.

#### *What are the methods?*

The design of this research will involve data collected from university students. The one-on-one interviews with eight to 10 international students will involve sharing reasons for studying abroad, views towards the government and university approach to developing global human resources, and suggestions for improving curriculum and program design. For students who agree to take part, the interviews will take place during a time and at a location that is convenient and comfortable for participants. Discussions will be in English and will be recorded using a voice recorder, with participants' permission, and later will be transcribed and translated into English.

#### *Who is the researcher?*

The researcher is Marian Wang, who is a native English-speaking assistant professor at South Central Japan University (SCJU). She was raised in a bilingual household (Japanese and English) and has attended a Japanese government-sponsored school for eight years.

Marian has been teaching World English Courses (WEC) as part of the Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource Development. For the last three years, she has been pursuing her Doctor of Education degree with the University of Liverpool, and this research is an important part of her thesis phase.

*Who will be carrying out the research?*

Marian will be carrying out the research. A student who is closely tied with the international student community will send an email to international students inviting them to participate in the study. This invitation email will contain attachments of the participant information sheet (PIS) and the participant consent form (PCF). In both the invitation email and the PIS, the researcher's email address will be clearly written so prospective participants can ask any questions before agreeing to join the data collection process.

*What is the frequency and duration of the interventions?*

For the eight to 10 students who are willing to join the interviews, the process will take up to one hour. The exact questions have not been decided upon but participants are expected to share motivations for studying abroad, perceptions towards the government and institutional approach to developing global human resources, and suggestions for improvement in curriculum and program design. The interviews, which will be audio recorded, will be done in English.

*What are your responsibilities as a participant?*

You are responsible to decide if you are willing to join the study or not. While free to withdraw at any time without consequence, you are encouraged to provide honest information, experiences, and opinions. You will be expected to respond to questions to the best of your knowledge and ability, but you do not have to answer questions that you are not comfortable answering. You may also choose to leave early if you feel uneasy during the interview. What is discussed in the interviews should not be shared with others. If you decline to participate in the research or wish to skip certain parts of the data collection process, you are free to do so without penalty or consequence. You are responsible to ask the researcher any questions you may have and to express any discomfort or misgivings you have during the process. If you are not comfortable approaching the researcher with your questions and concerns, you can reach the researcher's supervisor or consider other contacts details as explained in section #10.

## **7. Expenses and/or payments**

There will be no monetary incentive (payment) for participation in the interviews.



### **8. Are there any risks in taking part?**

One possible disadvantage to participating could be the personal time that you will need to dedicate to the interview (about one hour). Some of the questions could be personal in nature and might require you to reflect on reasons why you may or may not think that the policy, programs, and curricula are meeting the goals of multiple stakeholders. These types of questions could possibly lead to discomfort, but you should be assured that there are no right or wrong answers. If you experience any discomfort during the research, you may choose to refuse to answer questions that cause discomfort or withdraw your participation from the study, without explanation needed. You can approach the researcher regarding any experienced discomfort, or if you would prefer to contact someone else, please go to section #10 in this form for other options. Based on the scope of this study, you will be excluded from this study 1) if you are not an international student at SCJU; 2) if the researcher is currently your instructor or was your instructor in another class; or 3) if you cannot speak or write in English or Japanese. This is done to ensure consistency in the sample. At no point will you be expected to waive your legal rights or reveal your identity.

### **9. Are there any benefits in taking part?**

This research could help establish better study abroad programs and curriculum at SCJU, as well as policy and practice that will better address the needs of stakeholders from the grassroots level. There will not be any personal benefit to students taking part in this study other than knowing that their contribution will help future students.

### **10. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, you can contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Ian Willis, at [ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk). The next alternative is to contact me at [marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk). If you remain unsatisfied, you can contact the Research Participant Advocate (USA number 001-612-312-1210) at [liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com](mailto:liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com). If contacting the Research Participant Advocate, you should provide the USA number, the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make. At SCJU, you can contact the WEC office at [xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp](mailto:xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp) or the general affairs division at [xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp](mailto:xxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.jp).

### **11. Will my participation be kept confidential?**

All data (transcriptions, recordings, and emails) will be stored in a password-protected computer, located in the researcher's private office at SCJU. You will never be asked to reveal your name but will be asked to provide your university email address so the researcher may contact you to seek approval on what was recorded and may ask for further clarification regarding the content of the discussion. If you choose to participate in the interviews, correspondence will be done through your stated email address, and all data will be kept secure in a password-protected email account created exclusively for this research project. If email exchanges are copied into Microsoft Word documents they will be kept secure in a specific folder of a password-protected computer, located in the researcher's personal office. Data will be stored for at least six years and the researcher is the only person who will have access, though her supervisors (Dr. Ian Willis and Dr. Morag Gray) will be granted access upon request. After this time, all digital data will be deleted from the mentioned digital mediums. In any analysis and dissemination of results (articles, reports, presentations, etc.), participants might be referred to by an alpha value (e.g., student A, student B, etc.); however, personal details including name, email address, and name of institution will never be used.

### **12. What will happen to the results of the study?**

I will send you the results of the study if you make a request through my email account. The completed thesis will be stored on an online repository or parts of the study may be published in academic journals. These will be made public online, so you may access them, if you choose. If you would like to be notified of any publications that use the data from this study, you can contact me at [marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk). In any published materials, your name, the institution's name, your email address, and any other personal details that could make you identifiable will not be used.

### **13. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

You can withdraw at any time during the research without explanation. Results up to the point of withdrawal may be used if you allow it. Otherwise, you may request by email that data are destroyed and no further use will be made of them. If you do not wish to take part in the research, no explanation will be needed nor penalty incurred.

### **14. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

As the principal investigator, I can be contacted by email at [marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:marian.wang@online.liverpool.ac.uk) or you can contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Ian Willis, at [ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ian.willis@liverpool.ac.uk).

#### **Appendix 4: Questions Asked in Focus Group Discussions and Interviews**

1. How would you define global human resources?
2. Do you know anybody around you who you would call a global human resource? If yes, why would you call him/her/them a global human resource?
3. What do you think students need to do to become global human resources?
4. What do you know about the government (MEXT's) policy of raising global human resources?
5. How do you feel about the government policy (if you know about the policy)?
6. If you were to come up with a policy of raising global human resources, what kind of policy would you implement?
7. Which courses have you taken at South Central Japan University that you think were related to creating global human resources? Why do you think they were related to global human resources?
8. What other courses (that do not exist) might help you in becoming a global human resource?
9. Have you ever considered studying (working, living) abroad? Why or why not?
10. Do you think studying abroad is helpful for becoming global human resources? Why or why not?
11. If you have not studied abroad (and you might be interested in studying abroad), are there any programs at South Central Japan University, other universities, or the Japanese government that interest you?
12. Do you think you would like to become a global human resource (based on your definition)? Why or why not?

#### **Additional questions for international students**

1. Why did you consider studying (working, living) abroad (in Japan)?
2. Do you have any examples from studying abroad that might be related to raising global human resources?

## Appendix 5: Ethical Approval from the University of Liverpool



Dear Marian Wang		
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.		
Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)	
Review type:	Expedited	
PI:		
School:	Lifelong Learning	
Title:	Global Human Resource Development within Study Abroad Programs and Courses in Japanese Higher Education Institutions	
First Reviewer:	Dr. Lucilla Crosta	
Second Reviewer:	Dr. Anthony Edwards	
Other members of the Committee	Prof. Morag Gray, Dr. Martin Gough, Dr. Janis McIntyre	
Date of Approval:	15/09/2015	
The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:		
<b>Conditions</b>		
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc>.

Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).

**Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.**

Kind regards,

Lucilla Crosta

Chair, EdD. VPREC

## Appendix 6: Letter of Approval from Institution

14 September 2015

Dear Marian Wang,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled: Global Human Resource Development within Study Abroad Programs and Courses in Japanese Higher Education Institutions

As part of this study, I authorize you to

- Collect data from university documentation in respect to internationalisation initiatives, strategies, policies, achievements and strategy reviews. These documents could be those on our website or made available to you through the [redacted] office with responsibility for managing programs for the promotion of global human resource development.
- Recruit the participation/cooperation of up to four senior [redacted] managers who are responsible for designing [redacted] programs and curricula at the [redacted]
- Recruit the participation/cooperation of up to twenty [redacted] students who will be enrolled in [redacted] courses starting in October 2015 and ending in August 2016.
- Collect data in the form of responses from asynchronous email communication from [redacted] managers and from focus groups discussions from [redacted] students.
- Use the collected data to complete your report and share the collected, anonymous data with your faculty supervisor and course colleagues at the University of Liverpool.
- Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include the provision of time and resources to carry out the work related to providing relevant documentation, answering email communication and conducting focus group discussions. We understand that any special/extra accommodations above and beyond those provided for the normal work-based project are not required in order for you to complete your EdD Thesis project. You will cover all the costs for your transport and accommodation and we are not liable for these costs. We understand that this project is being supervised by your faculty supervisor at the University of Liverpool. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting. I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from your university's ethics committee.