

Identifying and Exploring Discrepancies in Study Abroad Intent Amongst First-Year
Japanese University Students

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Abstract

As participation in study abroad grows at higher education institutions around the world, involvement amongst Japanese students is decreasing. Action has been taken by various stakeholders to address the downward trend; however, this is being done under conflicting interpretations of internationalization. Applying an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (quantitative $N=311$, qualitative $N=10$) and pragmatic worldview, this study aims to identify some key factors that contribute to study abroad intent amongst first-year Japanese university students while generating actionable knowledge that may lead to improved domestic curriculum and interest in international opportunities. To accomplish this, the theory of planned behavior is employed alongside second-language (L2) acquisition models that reflect the inherent nature of study abroad involving a foreign language for most Japanese students. Through interpretation of the data, the research first aims to address the primary research question, involving differences between those with strong intent to study abroad and those with weak intent. Particular focus is placed on the attitudinal variable of *international posture*, as well as perceived benefits and deterrents to study abroad. Secondly, based on identified differences, the defining of a predominantly willing group of students as *self-selecting* is proposed. These students generally have higher achievement in the L2; prior international experience; greater international posture; a positive association between study abroad and purpose; and a flexible outlook on the traditional higher education practices and traditions in Japan. Finally, this thesis examines how certain self-selecting traits can be fostered in a classroom environment, thus potentially increasing interest in study abroad. If L2 educators can integrate an international dimension into the language curriculum, by means of transformative learning and internationalizing the curriculum, then domestic studies may benefit not only students who plan to study abroad, but also those who genuinely lack the means to participate.

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Chapter 1. Introduction of Study

This thesis reports on an investigation into study abroad intent amongst first-year Japanese students. In response to the decline in study abroad participation involving university students in Japan, research questions were designed to identify the differences between those with strong intent to study abroad and those with weak intent, in hopes that a definition of participant *self-selection* could provide direction in improving domestic second language (L2) curriculum. To ensure the anonymity of those involved in this research, the university under investigation is referred to throughout the thesis as the University of Japan, or UoJ.

1.1. Background

Increasing accessibility, interconnectedness, and global collaboration have made the practice of study abroad at higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world a global phenomenon. Defined as “students who cross national borders for the purpose or in the context of their studies” (Kelo, Teichler, & Wächter, 2006, p. 5), study abroad is often promoted as an academic activity that expands the worldview of participants while helping them acquire knowledge of foreign language and culture. In 2012, more than 4.5 million global participants were involved in study abroad, compared to 800,000 in 1975 (OECD, 2014). This is projected to grow to over seven million by 2020 (OECD, 2014; Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). While participation has been increasing amongst higher education students in neighboring China and South Korea, Japan has been experiencing a decline since the mid-2000s (OECD, 2014; MEXT, 2013). Specifically, the number of Japanese students abroad in 2008 was 20% less than its peak in 2004 (MEXT, 2013), and there has been a continuing decline since. At the time of writing, less than one percent of all Japanese higher education students were enrolled in HEIs abroad, compared to 2.1% of Chinese and 3.5% of South Korean students (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016).

One might attribute the decline in participation to Japan’s demographics, especially its ageing society and corresponding decrease in population amongst those aged 18 years and younger (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Others may suggest recent troubles with the national economy as the reason why fewer students lack the means to take sojourns abroad (Ota, 2011; Lassegard, 2013). While these factors are associated to the decline, it is important to note that enrollment in Japan’s HEIs – especially in the more “elite” institutions – has remained relatively stable over the last few decades (MEXT, 2010). In recent years, college

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registration in Japan has been trending upwards, with a historical high of 51.8% of university-aged citizens being enrolled in tertiary institutions (OECD, 2014). This is partially due to the loosening of acceptance criteria set by the government in the 1990s, in anticipation that diversification and competition would have a synergistic effect on graduate outcomes (OECD, 2014). A negative consequence of the top-tier universities maintaining their enrollment numbers, despite the ageing population, is that the pool of qualified and academically inclined students could be decreasing, thus resulting in such institutions undermining their academic standards to maintain enrollment (Huang, 2011). A more general argument as to why Japanese students may be averse to sojourns abroad, but not one that directly addresses the recent decline, involves the dichotomy between deeply rooted cultural characteristics spurred by Edo-period *sakoku* (closed country) policies and contemporary cross-cultural goals (Burgess, Gibson, Klaphake, & Selzer, 2010). Because of this, *internationalization* objectives are often in opposition to local values, including the desire to protect traditional national identity (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Burgess et al., 2010; Seargeant, 2005).

For many HEIs around the world, a high amount of student mobility – both inbound and outbound – is seen as an indicator of institutional prestige and quality (Green, 2012; Wildavsky, 2010). The relationship between the internationalization of HEIs in Japan and study abroad has been entrenched in policy since the term internationalization became part of the government discourse. The call for Japan to internationalize emerged in the 1980s and the desire has intensified, especially since the revelation of slumping study abroad numbers (Ninomiya, Knight, Watanabe, 2009). Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has played a key role in the allocation of funds to HEIs for internationalization purposes, and has hailed this effort as critical for placing more Japanese elite institutions in the top 100 worldwide (Kakuchi, 2014). In a 2010 study, it was determined that most university presidents in Japan agree that higher global rankings will lead to greater recognition and respect on the world stage (Yonezawa, 2010). To implement initiatives that support this ambition, funding has been made to the country's elite institutions in hopes that cross-cultural programs will promote internationalization on campuses. Governmental departments, like the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), have placed the responsibility in the hands of the individual institutions to develop and implement programs. This is in line with the recommendation that “universities themselves should take a more active role in increasing opportunities for international exchange” (Yonezawa, 2010, p. 121). Unfortunately, few programs at UoJ are designed that actually integrate both Japanese and foreign students,

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so the diversity on campus remains superficial, since there is little chance for natural and authentic interactions. Also, recruitment of a set number of foreign students has resulted in a quota system, which has some questioning the academic qualifications of foreign exchange students and the actual interest they have in learning about their host culture (Keller, 2007; Ninomiya et al., 2009).

1.2. Purpose, Originality, and Significance of Study

The initial impetus for conducting this study relates to my professional and personal background. After multiple years of teaching English at language schools in South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, I am currently employed as an assistant professor at a large, private university, located near a major urban center in Japan. My primary responsibilities include developing and delivering curriculum that is designed to improve students' English proficiency and cross-cultural literacy, while preparing enrollees for interactions with non-Japanese students during the various student mobility opportunities offered by the institution. Experiences with current and past students evoked questions related to study abroad intent and the academic outcomes in fostering intercultural awareness in the L2 classroom. Essentially, I believe students become more interested in cross-cultural interactions from international course content, so I wanted to collect empirical data that would help prove or disprove this notion. From a personal standpoint, an interest in world travel, foreign phenomena, and "the unknown" have contributed to my spirit of inquiry into study abroad intent. The results from this research provide the basis for making contributions to an improved intercultural curriculum that could academically inspire students, while instilling a global curiosity that I have found so valuable over the course of my professional, academic, and personal life.

The findings from this investigation could help develop a better understanding of the unique factors that contribute to study abroad intent amongst Japanese students. Currently, curriculum and education practices are designed based on questionable interpretations of internationalization and their accompanying goals (as will be discussed in chapter 2). Since these arguably misguided goals manifest in programs and policy at Japanese HEIs, it becomes important to have an empirically supported foundation of knowledge to challenge the existing infrastructure. I aim to apply relevant theory and a mixed methods approach to establish study abroad intent amongst first year Japanese students and to ascertain how students with strong intent might differ from those with weaker intent. After the strong and

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weak intent groups are identified, they will be compared in terms of demographic attributes; perceptions of study abroad benefits and deterrents; and extent to which they embody the attitudinal variable of *international posture*, which is the degree to which someone sees him or herself as belonging to the international community. If commonalities and differences in both attitude and background can be determined, then I will be in a better position to make recommendations on how interest in study abroad and intercultural events can be fostered, even amongst those with weak intent to study abroad. Such actionable knowledge could be used to improve intercultural curriculum and study abroad policy at the institution and beyond.

The examination of study abroad intent amongst Japanese university students seems to be a fertile area for advancement. Numerous investigations have been conducted in the US and other non-Japanese contexts to establish the type of students who are most likely to enroll in study abroad; however, these seldom extend to Japan or Japanese students. There is a dearth of literature that examines the relationship between attitudinal variables (e.g. international posture) and study abroad intent amongst university freshman, so this is another gap in the knowledge base that can be addressed through the current study. As Japan provides a unique higher education learning environment due to its geographic and cultural isolation, it is posited that there will be unique motivators that affect a student's intent to go abroad for educational purposes. This study applies a theoretical framework and motivational concepts deemed as suitable for UoJ to answer multiple research questions related to study abroad intent.

1.3. Research Questions

Despite the knowledge society that exists today, Lassegard (2013) suggests that there is a scarcity of published empirical research in the field of higher education that relates to study abroad intent. This appears to be especially applicable to the East Asian context. Since the phenomenon of study abroad is taking a more prominent role in the discourse of stakeholders worldwide, there appears to be a greater need to build understanding of the motivational forces that contribute to the decision to participate. This need, alongside my personal and professional background and interests, have contributed to the development of the following research questions:

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1. Which factors differentiate those with strong intent to study abroad from those with weak intent?
 - 1a. To what extent, if any, is there a relationship between study abroad intent and the perceived benefits and barriers of study abroad?
 - 1b. To what extent, if any, is there a relationship between study abroad intent and international posture?
2. In the Japanese context, what could be a suitable definition of *self-selection* that could be applied to those with strong intent to study abroad?
3. Is there a need for UoJ to revise its second language curriculum to better prepare students for cross-cultural experiences?
 - 3a. If so, how?

1.4. Research Setting

Japan provides some unique considerations for a researcher engaged in any form of humanities-related investigation. As an island nation with a homogenous population that is 98.5% ethnically Japanese (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016), it can be both geographically and culturally isolated. The student bodies of most HEIs in Japan reflect the homogenous makeup of the country as a whole, and the university involved in this study is no exception. UoJ consists of four campuses enrolling over 22,000 students; however, the main campus is home to nearly 17,000. The student body is predominantly Japanese, as only two percent of full-term degree-seeking students come from abroad, and the majority of those are from neighboring South Korea and China. In terms of the available options for short-term international sojourns, students tend to gravitate to universities in native English speaking countries; however, UoJ has exchange agreements with over 130 universities in 33 countries.

In developing a comprehensive network of study abroad options, both for domestic students and foreign students interested in studying in Japan, UoJ established a department to facilitate the hosting of approximately 500 short-term international students per semester, and this number has been steadily rising. Exchange students take courses designed for their L2 capabilities in Japanese; therefore, limited assimilation with the domestic Japanese student occurs in the classroom. Integration efforts have been made through the development of a “Global Lounge” in addition to monthly coffee hours that foreign students are required to

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attend. While one may consider this a form of forced student blending, it does offer some degree of cross-cultural contact. This is congruent with the goals and mission statements of the university, as students are encouraged to strive for world citizenship by embracing global education.

The specific sample targeted for this study involves first-year Japanese students enrolled in a course titled “Intensive English”. This course is administered by UoJ’s English Language Center, which consists of 21 foreign national instructors who design and deliver intermediate to advanced content to qualified students. Having the largest total enrollment of all language courses at the institution, Intensive English is the flagship course offered by the Language Center. It is perceived as valuable by the institution since it theoretically prepares students for the more advanced elective courses that they may take following completion of Intensive English. Similar to the elective English courses, Intensive English requires a minimum score on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Students generally deem the course as desirable to take, as it meets three times a week, meaning they can obtain their language credit minimum in an expedited amount of time, compared to mandatory language classes that are conducted only once a week. The total number of students enrolled in these classes in the Fall 2015 semester was 763 and they were placed in 30 different classes of around 25 students each, based on their TOEIC scores, which ranged from 320 to 970 (maximum score is 990). Each class consisted of students of various majors (humanities, sociology, law & politics, economics, business administration, and human welfare). This sample, which will be explained more in chapter 3, is considered as suitable to address the proposed research questions.

1.5. Organization of Thesis

The current chapter is an introduction to this thesis. It covers the research background; the purpose and significance of the study; the research questions; and the research setting.

Chapter 2 reviews the various bodies of literature that inform the study’s foundations. These include an analysis of the different interpretations of internationalization; relevant study abroad research that has been conducted both inside and outside Japan; and finally, coverage of the various pertinent traits of Japanese society and higher education that could influence intent to study abroad. The chapter then transitions to the applied theoretical framework that is applied alongside specific theory and concepts that guide the study

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Chapter 3 focuses on the philosophical perspective and how this influenced decisions regarding study design and methodology. After introducing the theoretical perspective of pragmatism that guides the investigation, the implemented theory of planned behavior is described, alongside applicable L2 acquisition models. I provide details on the research sample, the pilot study, the final survey instrument, and the email questionnaire given to respondents. The process of analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data sets are explained along with a discussion of how they satisfy validity and reliability concerns.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Highlights include the descriptive demographic data; perceived benefits and demerits of study abroad; international posture outcomes and trends; insights from the email questionnaire; and a discussion of the research triangulation approach. These results are organized and presented under the elements of the theory of planned behavior, and they provide the foundation for answering the research questions.

Chapter 5 involves a discussion of the research findings and the impact that it can have on curriculum design at UoJ and beyond. Particular focus is on the discrepancies and similarities between the two featured sample groups: those with strong intent to study abroad and those with weak intent. I examine the results through the lens of the theoretical framework before establishing a definition of self-selection. The chapter concludes with the potential impact the results may have on building intercultural competences and international posture domestically through integration of the *international dimension*.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by stating the limitations presented throughout the process while mapping future directions that can be taken in response to the research findings.

Chapter 2. Review of Related Literature

Identifying and analyzing related literature was a critical first step for the current study. To accomplish this, a strategy was enacted involving several search engines (e.g. Google Scholar, Discover) and the identification of academic journals and books from various libraries. For both online and library searches, key words and concepts were used deemed to yield relevant and contemporary material. Such words and terms included “internationalization”, “study abroad”, and “Japan”. Results generated from these searches included seminal works that define key terms as well as contemporary studies that facilitate the positioning of results into the current study abroad discourse. The literature review process adhered to the seven pillars of information literacy that requires a researcher to (1) plan, (2) gather, (3) evaluate, (4) manage, (5) present, (6) identify, and finally (7) define the scope of the research (Bent & Stubbings, 2011).

Due to the inherent international component involved in the practice of study abroad, relevant international-related terms are first discussed in this chapter. Following this, actual and perceived benefits and barriers of study abroad will be shared, as they should theoretically influence one’s decision to study abroad or not. Prior research helps establish the type of student who opts to study abroad, and this contributes to the veracity of classifying certain students as being self-selecting when it comes to participation. Since the overall goal of this research is to generate actionable knowledge to identify possible approaches to improving domestic cross-cultural curriculum, the profile of Japan’s HEIs and students will be summarized.

2.1. International-Related Concepts

Given the nature of this study, centered around the decision to spend a considerable amount of time in a foreign country, multiple concepts involving international attitudes and dispositions emerged. Ubiquitous in mission statements and philosophical directions of HEIs around the world, the adopted interpretation of internationalization will be considered along with ancillary terms that are pertinent to this study, including the international dimension, *global citizenship*, and *global jinzai*. Additionally, as learning goals often associated with study abroad, the concepts of intercultural competence and international posture will be introduced.

2.1.1. Internationalization.

In the realm of higher education studies, the concept of internationalization is applied broadly and diversely, and there is much criticism over how it should be defined and operationalized in HEIs (de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2007). Knight (2004) concedes that there may never be a universal definition of internationalization, though she suggests that a common understanding amongst academic leaders and policy makers is crucial. Knight proposes that internationalization is “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (p. 11). This interpretation is considered as one of the most accepted in higher education literature and found at the core of intercultural (communicative) competences in the classroom (Byram, 2015). Knight (2015) deliberately applies the triad of the “international, intercultural, or global dimension” since they represent distinct relationships (p. 2). *International* involves associations amongst countries and cultures; *intercultural* accounts for cultural differences that exist within the borders of nations and communities; while *global* is described as a “controversial and value-laden term” involving worldwide scope and implications (Knight, 2015, p. 3). Considering the purposes of this investigation, and for the sake of clarity, I will apply the term *international dimension* as espoused here, but with the caveat that associations amongst cultures also encompass cultural differences between ethnic groups within Japan (Knight, 2004; 2015).

Before discussing the specific application of internationalization in HEIs, it is important to first establish its relationship with *globalization*. Definitions of globalization depict a rapidly changing world and global order that will require students to possess intercultural communication skills and a broad knowledge base involving technology and increasing interconnectedness (Paige, 2005). In comparison, internationalization focuses more on “relations across borders, or institutions situated within national systems: i.e. international relations” (Marginson, 2007, p. 38). These institutions, such as universities, are concerned with “creating an environment that is international in character – in teaching, in research, in outreach” (Paige, 2005, p. 101). Such an environment can manifest on campuses by exposing students to myriad intercultural phenomena in preparing them for cross-cultural interactions.

Due to the varied motivations for internationalization, both geographically and temporally, Altbach (2015) concludes that internationalization today is “widely misunderstood” (p. 6). He defines it as “the specific policies and initiatives of countries and

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individual academic institutions or systems to deal with global trends” (p. 6) and suggests that its goals shift depending on economic and political climates. For instance, the creation of the European Union ushered in the need for HEIs in member states to accommodate student mobility from country to country while instilling a sense of European consciousness amongst students. Also, as the global network of HEIs becomes increasingly connected; English has emerged as the lingua franca, along with a country’s local first language (L1). Altbach’s contributions, in conjunction with contemporary global trends, would suggest that internationalization is indeed fluid and rooted in the constantly changing face of culture within global contexts. This is a departure from Knight’s (2004) interpretation, which infers that internationalization has a set of fixed features.

Both De Wit (2002) and Scott (1998) suggest broad definitions of internationalization that include the increased popularity in online programs, offshore branch campuses, and collaborative degree programs. One might believe that an inherent quality of internationalization is a balance between contributions and voice amongst people of all global regions; however, Altbach (2015) notes that the voices discussing internationalization are predominantly Western. Some suggest a reluctance of periphery economies to join the discourse due to trepidation of a brain drain effect, as seen in India, where local talent emigrates to other countries (Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri, 2007).

Knight (2011) expresses skepticism about how internationalization is being interpreted and applied in academia. Her primary concern is that HEIs are shifting their application of internationalization from one embedded in the pursuit of academic excellence towards more superficial goals of “status building initiatives to gain world class recognition and higher rankings” (p. 1). Japanese stakeholders at the governmental level have recognized the difficulty in defining and applying internationalization to national and institutional policy. To illustrate this, MEXT funded research involving the presidents of Japan’s elite universities to determine a national interpretation of internationalization (Yonezawa, Akiba & Hirouchi, 2009). Analysis of the data indicates a strong inclination towards associating internationalization with the development of Japan’s domestic and global human resources. It is believed that realization of this will bolster Japan’s slumping economy and promote the country’s research and scientific competitiveness on the world stage (Yonezawa, 2010). This MEXT study seems to legitimize Knight’s (2011) concerns that contemporary policy – established in the name of internationalization – is being misconstrued. Specifically, in lieu of being rooted in academic excellence, it is instead applied to “competition, commercialization,

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self-interest and status building” (p. 1). This discrepancy in beliefs and interpretation is even more apparent when considering the goals of contemporary initiatives.

In recent years, UoJ has expanded its opportunities for students to go abroad through government funding, which has cemented its status as an elite institution in Japan. Funding has been received through programs including Global 30 and Super (Top) Global Universities, which share the common goal of increasing exposure of foreign culture to Japanese students, while giving more opportunity to those who want to study abroad. Global 30 was introduced in 2009 under the premise that Japan’s HEIs are falling behind in global university competitiveness due to emerging economic powers in the region, especially China and South Korea. The goal of the program is for selected universities to build programs that will attract a total of 300,000 foreign students to Japanese campuses for study, while sending at least 120,000 abroad by 2020 (Global 30, 2012). The current Super (Top) Global Universities project will run for 10 years (from 2014) and aims at placing 10 Japanese HEIs in the global list of 100. To accomplish this, Prime Minister Abe claims that “the number of foreign students at a university will define its success” (para. 2) and this foreign presence extends to hiring more foreign faculty members (Ince, 2014). Some see this as a superficial way to become internationalized while others regard it as an opportunity for students to gain more exposure to the ideas, culture, and beliefs of those who come from outside Japan (Chapple, 2014; Maruko, 2014). Funding under the Super (Top) Global initiative is provided to a total of 30 Japanese HEIs: 10 defined as “Type A” and 20 as “Type B”. The Type A universities are institutions receiving over 10 million USD annually and deemed as prospects for a global top 100 ranking (MEXT, 2014). The Type B HEIs, of which UoJ is included, receive only a quarter of the amount of Type A universities.

Amongst many HEIs in Japan and around the world, the role of internationalization is often tied to the more specific goal of global citizenship. While each individual institution might maintain an interpretation of global citizen that suits its academic vision, three central dimensions have been established that apply to the higher education context and this study (Morais & Ogden, 2011; Schattle, 2009; Israel, 2012). These include (1) social responsibility, or concern for society and the environment, (2) global awareness or the understanding of where one stands in the global context, and (3) civic engagement at the local, regional, national and global level. For Japanese universities, tensions arise between these goals and those espoused by the government, which fall under the parlance of *global jinzai*, or global human resources. MEXT, in partnership with the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), released criteria of the abilities required for *global jinzai*, under the impression that

they could and should be fostered at the higher education level. These criteria include the ability to communicate in a foreign language (particularly English), to understand and take advantage of different cultures, and to build fundamental competencies for working persons (Yonezawa, 2014). The gap between global citizenship and *global jinzai* goals bears similarity to the different interpretations of internationalization. It is posited that development of intercultural competence and international posture at the tertiary level may help bridge this gap.

2.1.2. Intercultural competence.

Multiple definitions of intercultural competence, and synonymous terms, exist in the literature, with many applied interchangeably. Freeman (2009) defines it as “a dynamic, ongoing, interactive self-reflective learning process that transforms attitudes, skills and knowledge for effective and appropriate communication and interaction across cultures” (p. 1). This involves an approach across all cultures to challenge preconceived notions, assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices. Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (1999) expand on this by associating intercultural competence with “the general ability to transcend ethnocentrism, appreciate other cultures, and generate appropriate behavior in one or more different cultures” (p. 13). These slight variations are expected as Deardorff (2006) explains that terms vary by discipline and approach. In the language acquisition field, intercultural competence is defined as an approach that “help(s) language learners to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, and to be aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors” (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 7), thus fostering intercultural speakers. Byram (1997) proposes a model for intercultural competence that is intended to be “accessible to and useful for teachers of foreign languages” (p. 31). It comprises five factors, or *savoirs*, that influence one’s intercultural competence. These include (a) attitudes (*savoir d’être*), (b) knowledge (*saviors*), (c) skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), (d) skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre*), and (e) critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*) (p. 34). The first four aspects presented here may be acquired through experience, interaction, and reflection; however, Byram (1997) outlines approaches the L2 instructor may take to assimilate them in the classroom. The central element – critical cultural awareness – is “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 1997, p. 53). It is this skill of becoming both aware and explicit of values where one may truly understand how values influence views and understandings of others.

Intercultural competence has been aligned with the development of an international dimension in language teaching, which corresponds to the interpretation of internationalization espoused previously by Knight (2004, 2015). For this reason, intercultural competence is referred to as a learning goal when classroom recommendations are made in chapter 5 of this thesis. To develop intercultural competence in higher education settings, it is important to first understand the distinction between intercultural competence and intercultural *communicative* competence. The former can be defined as “the ability to meet and engage successfully with people of another social group” in either one’s native language or an L2 (Byram, 2015, p. 2). In clarifying this, “the ability to meet and engage” is not completely determinant on speaking the same language. However, intercultural communicative competence involves L2 comprehension as a key element of the interaction.

2.1.3. International posture.

International posture is an extension and alternative to Gardner’s (2001) concept of *integrativeness*. Integrativeness is defined as a positive disposition towards the L2 community along with a desire and willingness to identify and engage with its members (Yashima, 2009). International posture, on the other hand, intends to gauge the propensity of seeing oneself as belonging to the greater international community, instead of one specific L2 group. It seizes both integrative and instrumental aspects of motivation and is specifically designed for contexts that may lack authentic cross-cultural contact with speakers of the target L2 or culture (e.g. Japan). International posture consists of five individual variables (Yashima, 2009):

- 1) *Intercultural approach-avoidance tendency* evaluates the likelihood that a respondent might approach a non-Japanese person to engage in interactions.
- 2) *Interest in international vocation* gauges the degree of interest in an international career or overseas work.
- 3) *Interest in foreign affairs* determines the respondents’ interest in issues and affairs outside of Japan.
- 4) *Ethnocentrism* evaluates ethnocentric attitudes and reactions to different customs, values, and behaviors, as they relate to one’s own.
- 5) *Willingness to communicate to the world* reflects a desire to share ideas and opinions with others from around the globe.

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Past studies have confirmed international posture to be a valid construct that relates to motivation to learn and willingness to communicate amongst Japanese learners (Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). It also adopts components of intercultural competence (Gudykunst, 2005; Kim, 1991), including openness to different perspectives, adaptability, empathy, and willingness to approach those of different ethnicity.

In the literature, international posture has been applied to determine benefits of study abroad amongst Japanese students. Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) compared benefits of study abroad and intercultural content-based curriculum between three groups of high school students: (1) a group that studied abroad for one year, (2) a group that stayed in Japan but enrolled in a significant number of content-based classes, involving intercultural issues and (3) a group who took a smaller number of content classes in lieu of more grammar-translation English classes, meant for university entrance tests. It was ascertained that study abroad results increased international posture; however, there was a tier of students who stayed in Japan but who were enrolled in intercultural content classes that reaped similar benefits to those who went abroad. In conclusion, the researchers identified that “a higher exposure to content-based curriculum resulted in a higher level of international posture” (Yashima, 2009, p. 150). Additionally, Yashima et al. (2004) examined the role of international posture over the course of a sojourn, from the pre-departure to post-departure stage; however, there remains a gap in the knowledge about the role a student’s international posture might play in intent to study abroad.

International posture can be conceptually linked to study abroad intent, since an inherent feature of sojourns for Japanese students is the necessity to apply L2 skills in a foreign environment outside of Japan. While this L2 is often English, there are instances when students go abroad to countries that do not use English as a primary language, such as some located in South-East Asia and Europe.

2.2. Overview of Study Abroad

2.2.1. Trends in study abroad participation.

Described as “a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes” (Kinging, 2009, p. 11), study abroad generally intends to “broaden students’ horizons and help them better understand the world’s languages, cultures and

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business methods” (OECD, 2014, p. 342). Within the domain of internationalization, study abroad can be an effective means to foster the international dimension amongst students.

The inflated number of students originating from China and India has spearheaded a global spike in study abroad activity. Since the 1970s, the number of higher education students participating in study abroad from these two countries has sharply risen to a point in 2008 when they represented almost half of all outbound students (Altbach, 2009). Despite Japan being closer in proximity to such Asian countries that are experiencing a surge in study abroad participation, the country is faced with engagement trends that are more similar to certain Western countries. In terms of the outgoing flow, the United States (US) has not experienced a decline in student mobility; however, numbers are still described as low (Loberg, 2012; HEFCE, 2013). Australia, on the other hand, is experiencing decreasing numbers of outgoing participants, although international mobility is manifesting in different types of sojourns. For instance, there is an increasing tendency of students joining sponsored international work placements, in lieu of spending the usual high tuition fees required by foreign universities for academic sessions (Daly, 2011). This action of getting corporations involved in the internationalization process could be seen as contrary to Knight’s definition (2004), in that it focuses on competition instead of true understanding of foreign culture and assimilation of the international dimension. The United Kingdom (UK) is another country experiencing a decline in study abroad and it has been partly attributed to the increasing likelihood of students from more diverse socio-economic backgrounds living in their parental homes while attending university. Research has shown that higher education enrollment of non-traditional students is increasing, and that these students may lack the financial means to study in a different country (Prazeres, 2013). UK stakeholders bemoan their study abroad numbers as they also believe that involvement indicates success in becoming more internationalized; therefore, the government has responded in a similar fashion to the Japanese government: by injecting funds into initiatives that may encourage participation (HEFCE, 2013; Prazeres, 2013).

To generate more insight into the reasons why certain countries may be experiencing a decline in participation, it is first prudent to consider the attitudes and beliefs students have towards study abroad and how this impacts their decision-making process. The next section introduces empirically-based advantages and disadvantages of study abroad, followed by a contrast of what students in the pre-departure stage perceive as benefits and barriers.

2.2.2. Established advantages and disadvantages of study abroad.

Participants in study abroad have experienced numerous benefits through their international and cross-cultural activities. One empirically-supported advantage, realized by many after returning to their home country, involves greater fluency and understanding of an L2. Studies based on a comparison of pre-departure and post-return L2 ability have provided evidence that upon return, students demonstrate improved proficiency, fluency, communicative competence, and other discourse skills (Kinging, 2009; Freed, 1995). In addition to fluency in the L2, participants who have completed study abroad have shown more social confidence, autonomy, skill in cross-cultural interactions, and motivation to study the L2 (Freed, 1995; Williams, 2005; Ingram, 2005). Additional benefits of study abroad, based on comparative pre-departure and post-return studies, include greater cross-cultural learning, intercultural competences, global mindedness, and self-awareness (Lassegard, 2013; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Hadis, 2005; Kitsantas, 2004). Studies reveal that longer experiences abroad can yield greater benefits to the student (Dwyer, 2004), but there is also evidence that short-term sessions can positively affect students' cross-cultural sensitivities (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). Instruments designed to assess global learning and development show significant gains in the three domains of cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal change amongst those who studied abroad for both short and long periods of time (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009). The literature on intent to study abroad amongst Japanese students is limited, though benefits of the practice have drawn interest by academics. Based on tests before, during, and after study abroad, Yashima et al. (2004) and Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) report positive linguistic outcomes and greater willingness to communicate in the L2 after students return from sojourns. Sasaki (2011) suggests that study abroad increases the motivation of Japanese sojourners in their L2 studies; however, this benefit is only realized with a minimum period of three months. Kinginger (2013) ascertains that students who go abroad are not uniform in the skills and abilities assimilated, as some thrive, while others flounder.

In their 2015 qualitative study of eight Japanese students studying abroad in the US, Sato and Hodge identified four themes that contribute to an overall negative experience: (1) social distance leading to academic struggles, (2) collectivism, (3) isolation in group discussion, and (4) negativity of professors. The students involved in this study did not assimilate to the American lifestyle and they experienced anxiety when communicating in classrooms and elsewhere on campus. They described the burden of “neurotic perfectionism”

(p. 220) due to the expectation of reaching native-level competency, which has been corroborated by other researchers examining the Japanese sojourner (Piller, Takahashi, & Watanabe, 2010), and Japanese society as a whole (Hofstede et al., 2010). Results from these studies contrast with institutional and governmental promotions of the study abroad experience, which describe involvement as enriching and conducive to cross-cultural understandings (Lipinski, 2014).

In extending the discussion on advantages and disadvantages of study abroad, a question emerges of whether there is a disconnect between actual benefits of study abroad and those perceived by participants in the pre-departure phase. Also, to what extent is participation discouraged, and are these reservations closely aligned with the disadvantages, highlighted by the literature (Sato and Hodge, 2015; Piller, Takahashi, & Watanabe, 2006).

2.2.3. Perceived benefits and barriers.

The literature indicates that student expectations of studying abroad have significantly influenced participation (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015). In their conceptual framework of factors that influence study abroad, Bandyopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay (2015) developed a model involving multiple variables that can be categorized as either discerned benefits or deterrents to participation. The variables in their framework include general perceptions of study abroad, existing intercultural awareness, personal growth potential, professional development potential, intellectual growth potential, duration, cost, and demographic factors. In New Zealand, Doyle, Gendall, Meyer, Hoek, Tait, McKenzie and Looiparg (2010) attempted to determine the timing when willingness is fostered. They concluded that intent is established at the inception “of early understanding of the benefits of studying abroad” (p. 471). In other words, students make a decision of whether they want to participate from the perceived value and barriers that exist for the individual.

Described as a “an educationally enriching and potentially life-changing experience” (National Survey of Student Engagement, NSSE, 2007, p. 16), students can be quick to gravitate to study abroad opportunities in pursuit of the novel or unknown (Shames & Alden, 2005; Doyle et al., 2010). In a more practical and measurable sense, Foster (2013) identified improvements to the L2 and cultural interactions as the benefits expected by Brazilian students. While being limited in scope, research conducted in Japan reveals motivating factors as a desire for L2 skills and global mindedness (Lassegard, 2013). Compared to the actual advantages of study abroad participation (see 2.2.2.), the anticipated benefits are more

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abstract in nature. For instance, instead of simply experiencing something new, sojourners report improved social confidence, global mindedness, and cross-cultural literacies. Because of the limited number of studies in the Japanese context surrounding perceived benefits of study abroad, the current study's first research question was established to explore this.

In a cross-cultural study involving university students in three countries – the US, France, and China – Sanchez, Fornerino, and Zhang (2006) delineated four categories of barriers that deter students from studying abroad: (1) family, (2) financial, (3) psychological, and (4) social. In Brazil, Foster (2013) claims that family members and inadequacies in L2 ability can discourage one from making the decision to study abroad. Also, multiple studies cite a lack of financial resources as the most influential deterrent (McNeill, 2010; Lassegard, 2013). Furthermore, homesickness and separation anxiety, involving a yearning for familiar environments, has been identified as a negative indicator of participation, adjustment, and study abroad satisfaction (Harrison & Brower, 2011). Finally, Relyea, Cocchiara, and Studdard (2008) determined that perceived risk is a major deterrent of study abroad participation. In Japan, Asaoka and Yano (2009) explored factors that discourage university students from sojourns and the top responses involved issues of funding, delayed graduation, and health hazards. Lassegard's (2013) study followed this and ranked the top two deterrents as financial restrictions and perceived lack of competence in the L2. Considering the small scale of these two Japanese studies and the fact that they yielded different results (aside from the prominent role of financial restrictions), follow-up through the current research seems warranted.

Overall, there were some notable differences between perceived barriers and actual disadvantages; for example, issues of social isolation, negative professors, and language related anxiety. Intention to study abroad does not occur in a vacuum of perceived benefits and deterrents. In fact, it depends largely on personal characteristics and traits. These are explored in the following section.

2.3. Traits of Study Abroad Participants

Research has helped establish traits and qualities that might make certain students more inclined to study abroad. The majority of the literature in this area comes from the US context; however, studies from other countries are included in this section to allow for comparison when examining Japan. The prevalence of literature based in the US and other Western nations reveals a gap in the knowledge that can be filled with a comprehensive

examination of study abroad participation in Japan. Many studies have attempted to identify the traits that participants exhibit, which may give HEIs an advantage in targeting those most likely to join sojourns. According to the literature, the following are some of the qualities manifested by those non-Japanese students with strong intent.

2.3.1. Gender and ethnicity.

In their 2015 analysis, Luo and Jamieson-Drake claim, “study abroad intent and participation are interrelated and shaped by an array of factors, including gender, race or ethnicity, major and involvement in college activities” (p. 29). Specifically, in terms of gender, most studies have identified a correlation between study abroad intent and being female (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015; Kim & Goldstein, 2005; Stroud, 2010; Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2010). In examining such gender roles, the females’ decision is largely influenced by educational context and authority figures (e.g. teachers, parents) while males are more encouraged by peers, experience, and personal values (Salisbury et al., 2010). Gender-focused studies in the US have also identified Caucasians as most likely to study abroad, while visible minorities – such as Asian-American and African-Americans – are less willing (Salisbury et al., 2010; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015; Cheppel & Kovacich, 2012; Lindsay, 2014).

2.3.2. Involvement in university-sanctioned activities and studies.

Various higher education activities and academic interests have been correlated with participation in study abroad. These include ambitions of earning an advanced degree and plans to join clubs and circles while abroad. In terms of majors of study, those enrolled in the humanities, liberal arts, and fine arts have been deemed as more inclined to study abroad (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015; Salisbury et al., 2010). Naffziger, Bott, and Mueller (2008) describe students with high intent to study abroad as those who consider the sojourn as complementary to their degree’s focus. On the other hand, qualities that correlate negatively include being a member of music, sport, political, or theater clubs, as they tend to demand considerable dedication and time. Other factors that correlate negatively with study abroad intent include the desire to further one’s education after bachelor studies and studying certain fields, such as engineering and architecture (Stroud, 2010; Cheppel & Kovacich, 2012; Lindsay, 2014).

2.3.3. Personal profile / other demographics.

Stroud (2010) contributes to the literature on study abroad willingness by identifying greater participation by students attending universities more than 100 miles from home. Conversely, those living with family members while studying are identified as being less likely to enroll. Fornerino, Jolibert, Sanchez, and Zhang (2011) ascertain that American students are primarily driven by a desire to please parents; an intention of improving professional and social status; and having fun. Naffziger et al. (2008) identify financial incentives as a factor in the decision to study abroad as many students gravitate towards options that are more affordable. In examining business students, Pope, Sanchez, Lehnert, and Schmid (2014) conclude, “the desire for individual growth was significantly and positively related to Gen Y business students’ intention to study abroad”. Fornerino et al. (2011) also identify factors that negatively correlate with intent, including financial burdens and an unwillingness to be away from friends and family. Naffziger et al. (2008) claim that those with low intent have a greater fear of the unknown, less association between the sojourn and career goals, and fewer commitments to domestic social obligations.

In China, Zhang, Sun, and Hagedorn (2013) align intent to study abroad with satisfaction with campus life, English proficiency, and level of institutional support. This could provide a more accurate parallel study for the Japanese context, in contrast to candidates in other countries where English is spoken as a primary language. In Southeast Asia, Pyvis and Chapman (2007) examine the motivating factors that drive Malaysian students towards study abroad opportunities and they determine a competitive advantage in the job market as the predominant factor. Foster (2013) reveals that the attitude of Brazilians towards study abroad is connected to strong family ties, opportunities to apply for scholarship, and previous experience abroad. Kim and Goldstein (2005) identify an association between L2 interest and low ethnocentrism as related to positive expectations of study abroad.

2.3.4. Study abroad participants as self-selecting.

Some researchers describe students who opt into study abroad as self-selecting. Daly (2011) defines a group of Australian students as self-selecting based on common traits including pre-existing intercultural competences, foreign language ability, interest in travel abroad, and personal relationships with people of varying ethnic backgrounds. Pope et al.

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(2014) corroborate these findings in the US context, while Dwyer (2004) applies the term of self-selection to those with “more interest in studying abroad to begin with” (p. 155), in part because of heightened intercultural tolerances. Soria and Troisi (2013) associate self-selection with “a natural enthusiasm” to study abroad (p. 10). Also in the US context, self-selection has been connected with hedonistic inclinations and escapist motives, as heavy drinkers may enroll in study abroad programs with a primary motivation being to imbibe in foreign locations (Pederson, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer & Lee; 2010). These lifestyle choices manifest in myriad ways, as Relyea et al. (2008) define study abroad participants as having “high risk propensity” (p. 346). Conversely, in Dutch programs designed specifically to facilitate study abroad, self-selection has been used to define a group of minority students who decide not to join sojourns abroad (Souto-Otero, Huisman, Beerkens, de Wit & Vujic, 2013). These interpretations and applied criteria towards establishing self-selection in study abroad intent suggest a high degree of flexibility in determining self-selection at UoJ, and the Japanese context as a whole.

2.4. The Cultural Profile of Japanese Society

Some argue that the inherent challenges facing Japan in its drive towards internationalization lie in the country’s cultural profile. This profile, influenced by geographic and historic isolation, results in characteristics and attitudes that are unique compared with other countries; even those in the same East Asian region (Hofstede et al, 2010; Burgess et al., 2010; Seargeant, 2005). Hofstede developed multiple models on national culture through data collected from IBM employees during the 60s and 70s, and his findings were revalidated in 2009. In his six-dimension model of national culture, he established a score for most countries under the following six dimensions: (a) power distance, (b) individualism, (c) masculinity, (d) uncertainty avoidance, (e) long-term orientation, and (f) indulgence. Scores for each dimension are scaled with 0 being the minimum, 100 the maximum, and 50 as a midlevel. As seen in Figure 1, Japan is particularly masculine (95), uncertainty avoiding (92), and long-term oriented (88). On the individualism scale, Japan appears more individualistic than its regional neighbors of South Korea and China; however, it still resides in the collectivistic half of the spectrum.

Hofstede et al.’s (2010) dimensions are considered as a comprehensive framework to defining cultural values and characteristics; however, its limitations and validity have been criticized. Ailon (2008) and McSweeney (2002) challenge the model and point out various

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weaknesses. They argue that it is difficult to define national culture based on only six dimensions and that all members of society are not equally represented as there will be discrepancies in gender, age groups, income groups, and ethnicities. Also, the results do not recognize that culture is fluid and that it can vary widely within the borders of a single nation, given differences in language, religion, and local traditions. While the methodology involved in collecting data has evolved since the 60s, when only IBM employees were involved, the sample is still limited to professional adults, making the data best suited towards identifying business culture instead of student culture.

Despite the many legitimate critiques of Hofstede's work, its key analytical elements seem applicable to this research, and Japanese HEIs as a whole, since Japan represents an ethnically homogenous country where values and beliefs may be more consistent across the nation, compared to multicultural nations, such as the US and UK. Furthermore, it is posited that the majority of university students in Japan intend to seek employment with corporate entities, thus making them similar in profile to the sample used in Hofstede's research. With the decision to include Hofstede's findings in this thesis, the four dimensions of individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation will be the focus of the following subsections since they are deemed as most relevant in addressing the research questions.

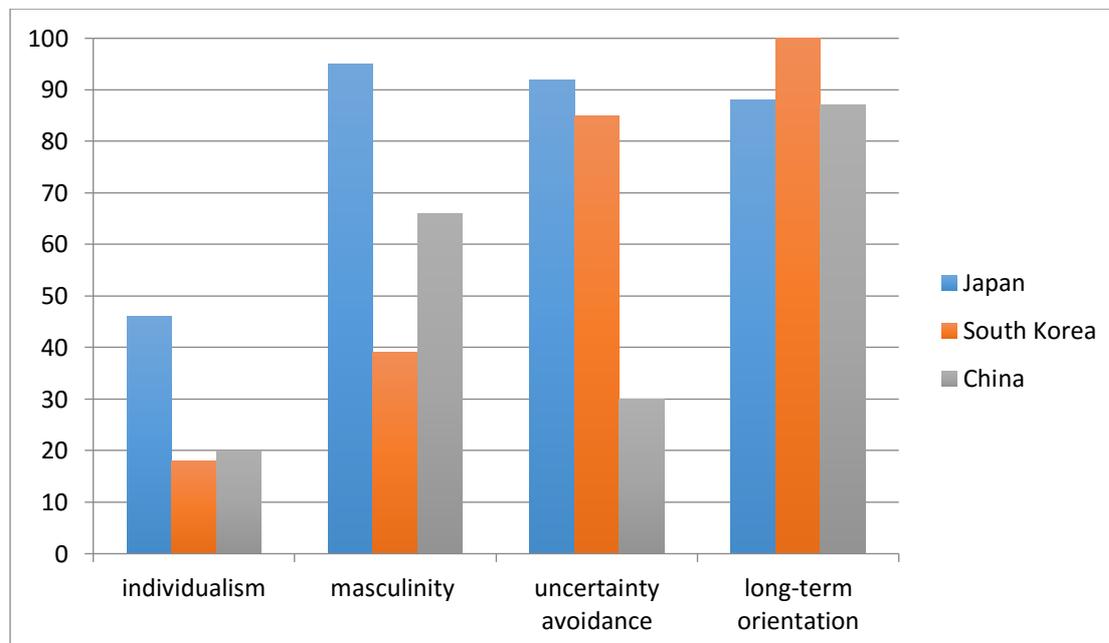


Figure 1. Hofstede et al. (2010) Cultural Dimensions comparing Japan, South Korea, and China.

2.4.1. Individualism.

According to the literature, one of the most dominating social characteristics of the Japanese population is the adherence to groupism, defined as “harmonization within the in-group, achieved when members downplay their individualism for the well-being of the group” (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000, p. 229). Asiatic and Confucian beliefs align people of East Asian countries to a group consciousness (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000). This reflects the parlance and collective vernacular of Japanese people when describing how an unspoken consensus exists amongst them, alongside the belief that non-Japanese people are unable to fully comprehend these silent communicative dynamics (Greenholtz, 2003). The belief in a unique and collective mindset accompanying the ability to understand each other without words is termed *haragei*. This attitude can manifest in English discourse when Japanese interlocutors use the phrase “we Japanese” in speaking definitively about the preferences and inclinations of all Japanese people. As a grouping society, classifying all citizens as unified when explaining phenomena and attitudes reaches back to 1939 when Suma describes the potential of invading China: “We Japanese are not under the illusion that we can conquer China” (Suma, 1940, p. 233). This is prevalent in modern day Japanese society, as someone may claim that Korean food is “too spicy for we Japanese”.

The Japanese brand of groupism is unique when compared to regional neighbors. Japan values the collectivistic trait of harmony, yet small groupings (e.g. the nuclear family unit) and a preference for privacy explain why Japan scores higher than China and South Korea in individualism (Hofstede et al., 2010). Despite this, evidence of groupism can be displayed in the classroom, the boardroom, and the streets to the extent that Japan has been described as a “herd society” (Tsuneyoshi, 1992, p. 31). The virtues of groupism result in a population that is generally polite, serious, modest, yet resistant to change (Hofstede et al., 2010). These traits can be misconstrued by non-Japanese people, who may label certain Japanese individuals and groups as exclusive or elitist (Hofstede et al., 2010).

2.4.2. Masculinity and long-term orientation.

Masculinity refers to the degree that people in a society are driven by achievement, competition, and success (Hofstede et al., 2010). Japan’s high score is reflected in long-working hours and the desire to make superior products, such as automobiles and electronics.

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If extending these values to HEIs, some contradictions emerge. In developing the Global 30 initiative, MEXT identified apathetic attitudes and a lack of motivation in learning (Clark, 2010). This was attributed to the education structure in Japan that involves a reluctance to fail students, and the notion that grades are seldom important in achieving long-term ambitions, such as finding desirable employment. The practice of dismissing grades can discourage students from making adequate efforts in class, and it can also act as an excuse for instructors to not dedicate themselves to developing high-quality curriculum. In connecting Japan's high masculinity with its aversion to study abroad, the question emerges of how Japanese students perceive study abroad experience in relation to future ambitions and competitiveness. This could be answered, in part, by considering Japan's long-term orientation. Countries scoring high in this category – as do Japan and its neighbors – “encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future” (Hofstede, n.d., para. 7). Financial issues have been identified as a barrier to study abroad in non-Japanese research (see 2.2.2. and 2.2.3.), so this will be further investigated in the current thesis.

2.4.3. Uncertainty avoidance.

Japanese students have been described as risk-averse, insular, inward thinking, and reluctant to experience the unknown world outside of Japan's borders (Fukushima, 2010; Asaoka & Yano, 2009). Ota (2011) reinforced this notion by suggesting that younger generations of Japanese people have an apathetic attitude towards the prospect of living abroad due to the cultural and linguistic challenges that are expected, alongside a belief that foreign countries are dangerous. This perception of danger and safety could enact uncertainty avoiding tendencies, resulting in students who are unwilling, unmotivated, and poorly prepared for study abroad.

2.5. Study Abroad Intent in the Japanese Context

Japanese HEIs provide a sharp contrast with the Western countries subject to most study abroad intent research. Infamously describing Japanese HEIs as a “motivational wasteland” (Berwick & Ross, 1989, p. 207), its students have been depicted as being inward thinking, risk averse and not interested in the world outside of Japan (Asaoka & Yano, 2009; West, 2015). To further illustrate this, Sanno University conducted research identifying 50% of new Japanese employees having no interest in working abroad, as well as 55.9% who

believe that their English education was not useful (Hirai, 2014). One account claims “the Japanese education system lacks teaching students how to use English in their daily lives and business scenarios” (para. 18). As mentioned, Ota (2011) claims that Japanese students perceive foreign countries as dangerous thus rationalizing an aversion to study abroad. While this notion lacks empirical support, it is an area that will be discussed in this research. In beginning this exploration, some of the factors that might contribute to study abroad intent amongst Japanese students are described here.

2.5.1. Role of L2 (English) acquisition.

Despite the financial woes that have plagued the country since the economic bubble burst in the 1980s, Japan continues to spend a significant amount of capital on the acquisition of English language skills. Because of this investment, one might expect a population proficient in the L2; however, Japan has produced disappointing results in English aptitude tests. When compared to the rest of the non-English-speaking world in proficiency tests such as TOEIC, Japan scores relatively low (The TOEIC Test, 2012). While there are some indications that performance in these standardized language tests is improving, Japan still ranks as only “moderately proficient” in English use (EF Education First, 2013, p. 6). In the current Japanese education system, English is taught as a compulsory subject from the fifth grade, and there is a polarizing debate of whether this should be done earlier. While some believe that language is best learned at a young age, others feel that mandatory English classes offered later would allow students to first acquire advanced skills with the Japanese language (Ng, 2016). Considering that the Japanese education system has valued test-taking preparation for more than 100 years (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006), the evaluation of L2 proficiency continues through tests such as the TOEIC, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Jitsuyō Eigo Ginō Kentei (EIKEN), despite the criticism that they do not focus on practical language skills (Kubota, 2011).

In Japan, research identifies a weak association between the target L2 group and one’s future (Miyahara, Namoto, Yamanaka, Murakami, Kinoshita, & Yamamoto, 1997). This is a concern for stakeholders, as it complicates assimilation of the international dimension (Knight, 2004) and discourages desire to acquire the international L2 skills needed to compete in the global job market (Yonezawa, 2010). A closer examination of the Japanese higher education tradition of job-hunting, through the lens of study abroad intent, is presented next.

2.5.2. Role of job hunting.

The job-hunting process at Japan's HEIs is a rigid system that has been in place for decades. It involves information sessions hosted by employers, lengthy application processes, and multiple interview stages. Occurring over the course of a student's final two years of study, it is often perceived as an obligation, and one that students express fear of missing or delaying (Okano, 2009). At the time of writing, the official job-hunting process begins during the third year of a student's four-year degree and can continue until graduation. If students are concerned with being on campus for the duration of the process, then this significantly limits one's window of opportunity to study abroad. The perception of job hunting as critical to one's future is exacerbated by the tendency and tradition for Japanese people to seek lifetime employment, that is, dedication to a single company for one's entire working career. This is becoming less of a promise that companies can deliver on, due to the current economic conditions (JICA, 2011; Mouer, 2009; Kato, 2001).

2.5.3. Role of financial issues.

Because of the slumping Japanese economy, students are finding it increasingly difficult to pay higher education fees. Reports have been released that indicate a significant number of students dropping out of university for financial reasons. For instance, 80,000 students prematurely left their institutions in 2013 due to lack of financial resources (Billones, 2013). Most Japanese students rely on parents to fund their higher education, but as the financial restrictions of the new Japanese economy impose hardships on less affluent families, there is an upward trend of dropouts and student debt, the latter now standing at five billion US dollars nationally (Billones, 2013). Being a cash-based society that places emphasis on saving money, the student loan is a relatively recent phenomenon, unlike in the US, where students have amassed a total federal student loan debt of 1.2 trillion US dollars (Japan Times, 2014). The increase of Japanese dropouts is not only attributed to financial insolvency of the family unit, but also of the nation's institutions. There are comparatively few academic scholarships offered to Japanese students, thus forcing parents and family members to take the responsibility of funding education and study abroad opportunities (Japan Times, 2014).

2.5.4. Role of family and peers.

In Japan, there is a strong likelihood that students will live with their parents until graduation, and often marriage (Okano, 2009). Considering the benefits and overall satisfaction that many have with study abroad, it seems logical that parents and family members with previous experience would be more inclined to encourage their children to do the same. On the other hand, to what degree do family members and parents play the role of deterrent, in cases that they have not studied abroad, or who have studied abroad but had an overall negative experience? While funding for higher education in Japan often comes from parents, instead of bank loans, to what extent do monetary restrictions play for those who are expected to pay for study abroad? One study in the US identifies a relationship between study abroad participation and having siblings or parents with international experience or job placements (Loberg, 2012); however, there is currently no literature that examines this possibility in the Japanese context.

2.5.5. Role of Japanese clubs and circles.

A common behavior of Japanese higher education students is to join a club or circle that one will remain loyal to throughout his or her university life. Cave (2004) specifically examines the values that Japanese school clubs, or *bakatsudo*, instill in the students during their secondary schooling. Cave associates such clubs with communities of practice that reinforce traditional Japanese values of conformity, imitation, repetition, and respect for hierarchy. Similar to the secondary education practice of joining clubs, students in HEIs often join a club in their freshman year and participate in this club, in various capacities, until they graduate. Club responsibilities can “demand enormous time, energy and commitment” (p. 384), and for those involved, loyalty and dedication for the duration of the student’s university tenure is expected. While some students may resign from a club, especially during their final year, it is generally frowned upon to leave a club prematurely in favor of joining another. For those heavily invested in club activities, they could become discouraged to take a leave of absence for the purpose of studying abroad.

2.5.6. Role of foreign language anxiety.

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Studies have been conducted in East Asia that examine the role of language anxiety and how it can act as a barrier to L2 acquisition, and in turn, study abroad. Some argue that foreign language anxiety – defined as a feeling of unease, apprehension, or nervousness experienced when using a foreign language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994) – is more pronounced in Japanese students because of the formal nature and complexities of the L1 (Saito & Samimy, 1996). Foreign language anxiety in Japan can also involve perceived lack of skill in using English and fear of being negatively evaluated (Kitano, 2001). One Japan-based study determined that those with study abroad experience have less foreign language anxiety; however, it is not established whether students with greater confidence assimilate such traits during the sojourn abroad, or if it is inherent (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

Research examining language anxiety in Japan presents a foundation to suggest that language anxiety can be a significant barrier to participation (Williams & Andrade, 2008). Further hampering motivation to learn the L2 is the pressure placed on students – by themselves and external parties – to be native-level speakers. This is often viewed as a barrier to progress by language teachers and it elicits a need to establish “a positive image of L2 users rather than seeing them as failed native speakers” (Cook, 1999, p. 185). Additionally, Covington (1992, 1998) suggests that education contexts are where students feel the most pressure in delivering L2 as they are subject to the scrutiny of peers and teachers. There is little evidence of how this phenomenon may manifest in study abroad situations.

This chapter has introduced some reasons why motivational issues involving study abroad intent may beset Japan. First, since Japanese is spoken as an L1 only in Japan, an inherent quality of all study abroad participants is that they will be studying in an L2, which is usually English. This is problematic due to proficiency levels, perceived abilities, and language anxiety. Second, Japan’s geographic isolation contributes to a national culture that can result in tensions between an intense desire to open up with an equally strong inclination to protect national history, customs, and beliefs. The desire for progress and becoming a player on the world stage is mitigated by prevailing nationalistic tendencies, resulting in resistance to change and an insular closed-in mindset (Burgess et al., 2010). Finally, the traditional perceptions of employment, responsibilities, and English use contribute to action and pre-conceived notions that are not conducive to study abroad participation. To investigate this study’s research questions, the following theoretical foundations and framework are applied.

2.6. Theoretical Foundations and Framework

The applied theoretical framework was chosen in part due to the higher education, internationalization, and study abroad contexts in Japan. One held assumption is that stakeholders in Japan may be more willing to embrace suggested change to curriculum design if recommendations are in line with the interpretations of internationalization and overarching goals of related initiatives, such as Global 30 and Super (Top) Universities. These initiatives focus on the interpreted internationalization attributes of competitiveness and developing human resources, which run counter to goals aligning internationalization with academic excellence and the integration of a global dimension in all facets of the higher education experience (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2011) – traits that I feel have significant value when considering change. Given the scope of this research, a theoretical framework that accommodates multiple interpretations of internationalization is adopted. Another applied assumption involves the inherent role of L2 acquisition in study abroad for Japanese students, as HEIs outside Japan’s borders are conducted in languages other than Japanese, and most notably, in English. Taking this into consideration, I want the theoretical framework to reflect the prominent role an L2 might play amongst Japanese students in their intention to study abroad or not.

In the next section, the chosen persuasion model will first be introduced before explaining how it will be complemented by language-centric models, resulting in a harmonious, yet rigorous approach to answering the research questions.

2.6.1. Persuasion model – theory of planned behavior.

In the current study, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1991) is the foundation used to provide greater insight into the decision-making process of potential study abroad participants. This theoretical foundation was chosen based on my personal philosophical inclinations towards pragmatism, which will be discussed in detail in section 3.1. of the methodology chapter.

Designed by Ajzen (1985), the theory of planned behavior’s central tenet involves “the individual’s *intention* to perform a given behavior” (Ajzen & Driver, 1992, p. 208). This theory is an extension of the *theory of reasoned action*; a persuasion model designed by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) to understand the relationship between attitudes and behaviors, especially as they relate to persuasive messages. As seen in Figure 2, this original model

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assumes that one's attitudes towards a behavior, in conjunction with influence from others (subjective norm), will result in intention, and ultimately behavior of an action.

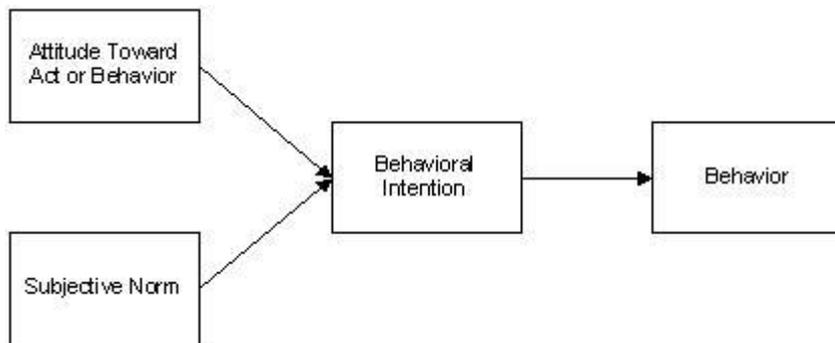


Figure 2. Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action.

To build on the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behavior encompasses a third element of *perceived behavioral control* to ameliorate predictive power (see Figure 3). Essentially, the theory states that these three different elements contribute to intent, which in turn, results in behavior. The first element in the model is attitude towards behavior, or behavioral attitude. This involves the extent to which someone has a positive or negative perception and evaluation of the behavior in question. The second determinant is the subjective norm, which is a social factor incorporating the perceived pressure to perform the action from those who are close to the subject. Finally, the third predictor is perceived behavioral control. This involves the regarded difficulty or ease that one may have if performing the action or behavior through past experience as well as anticipated obstacles and barriers. The theory, as a whole, postulates that strong perceived behavioral control, in tandem with favorable attitudes and subjective norms, will result in stronger intention to perform the behavior under consideration (compared to the theory of reasoned action). Furthermore, the theory intends to identify the various motivational forces that influence intent and behavior, as well as the degree of effort that one might exert in performing the action.

In many cases, the theory of planned behavior has been employed to the predictive nature of consumerism (Hansen, Jensen, & Solgaard, 2004; Cheng & Huang, 2013; Chen & Tung, 2014), which seems fitting for higher education in Japan since Japanese stakeholders often associate study abroad with competitiveness. The theory is also implemented over multiple disciplines to connect beliefs and behavior, and studies in the Western context have applied it to the decision to study abroad (Zhuang, King, & Carnes, 2015; Presley, Damron-

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Martinez, & Zhang, 2010; Goel, deJong, & Schnusenberg, 2010; Schnusenberg, de Jong, & Goel, 2012). While there is an absence of study abroad research using this theoretical model with Japanese participants, its underpinnings have been successfully integrated into comparative research in other fields. For example, Bresnahan et al. (2007) apply the theory when comparing intent of university students in Japan, Korea, and the US to donate organs. Furthermore, it has been used to establish the likelihood of Japanese citizens using green technology in the context of post-megaquake behaviors (Stanislawski, Sonobe, & Ohira, 2013). Despite the foci of these investigations contrasting with study abroad intent, they lend more credence to the belief that the theory of planned behavior acts as an effective persuasive model for Japanese society.

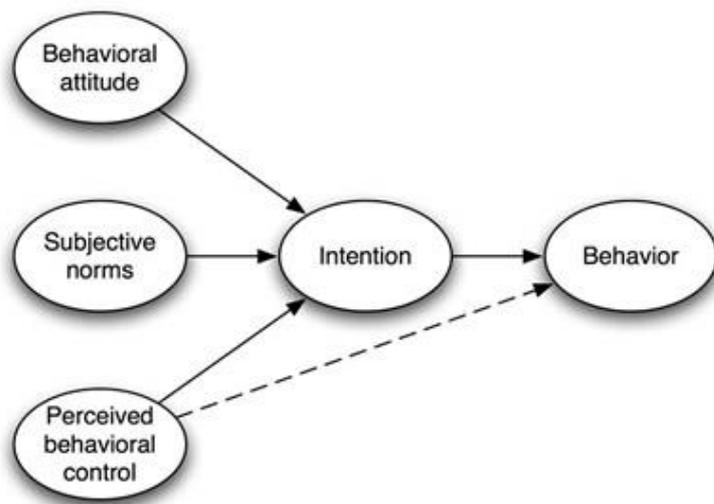


Figure 3. Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior.

The theory of planned behavior was chosen over the theory of reasoned action as the overarching construct for this research because of the impact that perceived behavioral control could have on the intention to study abroad. This element is derived from self-efficacy theory, proposed by Bandura (1977), which proposes two distinct types of expectations: self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. In this context, self-efficacy relates to the degree of conviction that one can successfully execute a behavior, resulting in an expected outcome. Bandura posits that self-efficacy is the most important precondition for behavioral change, and if perceived behavioral control is strong enough, this will result in a greater likelihood that favorable intention will result in action.

The theory of planned behavior was also chosen in favor of the more recent persuasion model, developed by Fishbein and Azjen (2010), called the reasoned action

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approach. Being similar to the theory of planned behavior, the more recent iteration integrates the element of *actual* control, that connects to the third construct of perceived behavioral control, thus moderating behavior. The first reason this model was not applied to the current study is that it has not been validated for evaluating study abroad intent. Through use of structural modeling, Schnusenberg et al. (2010) have determined the theory of planned behavior as suitable for establishing the relationship between study abroad belief and intention. Since similar studies have not been done with the reasoned action approach, I did not feel as confident moving forward with it. Furthermore, it is posited that first-year students may not have a clear understanding of actual control factors (e.g. funding sources, freedom to make decisions) at this stage in their university tenure, thus compromising the validity of actual control.

The scope of this thesis is focused on intention to study abroad, but it is important to note that intention is not always an antecedent to action. While the theory of planned behavior considers the perceived behavioral control of an action, there are actual control factors that are not always evaluated, such as money, cooperation of others, and skills (Ajzen, 1985). It is not within the scope of this thesis to project on these factors; however, the questioning found in both phases of the research requires respondents to think deeply about such issues and to establish perceptions of control. Perceived behavioral control has been described as “realistic”, in that “it can be used to predict the probability of successful behavioral attempt” (Ajzen & Driver, 1992, p. 209). Due to the development of the study abroad program at UoJ, it is assumed that study abroad options are clearly explained and presented to all prospective students and that options exist, even for students who lack advanced proficiency in the target L2. Since Ajzen and Driver (1992) suggest that evaluating intent and prediction of behavior “are expected to vary across behaviors and populations” (1992, p.210), data generated in this study will be categorized and examined based on the theory of planned behavior to determine whether it applies to study abroad intent in the Japanese context.

Some concerns could emerge if the theory of planned behavior were used exclusively as the theoretical framework of this study, since it often informs commercial interests (e.g. advertising), thus potentially non-reflective of the adopted internationalization definitions. As discussed, a model frequently associated with competitiveness and marketing might compromise the original interpretations of internationalization presented by Knight (2004, 2011), that is, one aligned with the international dimension and academic excellence. As seen in the study abroad context, the theory of planned behavior has been integrated into

research, although this has been done exclusively in Western and multicultural settings. In this study, the consideration of Japan as a unique context, along with the innate and inherent relationship between study abroad and L2 acquisition, has resulted in expansion of the overall theoretical framework. In examining and interpreting the data, L2 acquisition models will support the theory of planned behavior in order to satisfactorily address the research questions and to apply a more all-encompassing definition of internationalization.

2.6.2. L2 acquisition models.

In the field of psychology, studies involving L2 motivation did not appear in the literature until the 1960s (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Much has been discovered about L2 acquisition since early literature theorized that the primary predictors were intelligence and aptitude (Carroll, 1958). In 1959, Gardner and Lambert (1959) called for a rethinking of the qualities of a successful language learner and multiple models of L2 acquisition and motivation emerged, most notably the notion that L2 acquisition is an inherently social endeavor where “social contextual perspectives began to inform mainstream motivational psychology” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p. 40). I believe that if one prefers to focus on the international dimensions of study abroad and the intercultural competences that can be assimilated over the course of a study abroad experience, then models that focus more on the individual’s academic and personal development should be applied.

2.6.2.1. Socio-educational model of L2 acquisition.

First proposed by Gardner and Smyth (1975), the socio-educational model of L2 acquisition is classified under the umbrella of the social psychological approach. Having undergone numerous revisions since its inception (Gardner & McIntyre, 1993; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Gardner, 2010), this was chosen as a suitable complementary model since it is based on the premise that learning an L2 “involves taking on features of another cultural community” (Gardner, 2010, p. 2). The contemporary model is based on the primary concept of *integrative motivation* (Gardner, 2001), which involves the three variables of (1) integrativeness, (2) attitudes towards the learning situation, and (3) motivation. Integrativeness is the centerpiece of the model, representing the general attitude towards the L2 group and a “genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community” (Gardner, 1985, p. 5). This L2 acquisition model is not the

primary one applied to this study, though it contributed to a more applicable and contemporary model of L2 motivation: the L2 motivational self system.

2.6.2.2. L2 motivational self system and self-discrepancy theory.

The L2 motivational self system is a model proposed by Dörnyei (2005), and it represents the concepts of self and identity in L2 motivation. To build on the vague notion of integrativeness, as discussed in the previous section, the psychological concept of *possible selves* is proposed. Possible selves involve envisioning ourselves becoming what we want to become, and also what we do not want to become. Markus and Nurius (1986) first investigate possible selves by looking at “how individuals think about their potential and their future” (p. 954). Higgins’ (1987) *self-discrepancy theory model* explains how individuals shift from a present state to a desired future self-state by virtue of two standpoints of the self: one’s own personal standpoint and the position of a significant other. These two perspectives result in internalized standards called *self-guides*, which comprise the following three domains of the self: (1) *actual self* involves your interpretation of the attributes you actually embody. It can also include the attributes that you believe others perceive you as having, such as intelligence, attractiveness, and abilities. (2) *Ideal self* is your representation of the attributes that either you or others would like you to ideally possess. It often involves positive outcomes and can include aspirations, hopes, and wishes. (3) *Ought self* is your representation of attributes that you or others feel you should possess. It entails the possibility of negative outcomes and can represent a sense of obligation, duty, or moral responsibility.

Within the realm of L2 motivation, Dörnyei (2005) builds on Higgins’ (1987) theory by proposing the L2 motivational self system, in which L2 learners acquire motivation to build future L2 learning selves and to decrease discrepancies that might exist between one’s present and future state. The three components that compose this system include *Ideal L2 Self*, *Ought-to L2 Self*, and *L2 Learning Experience*. The relationship that the domains of self (actual, ideal, ought) have on motivation bears similarity to the behavioral attitude and subjective norm presented in the theory of planned behavior. In many regards, the application of these three components to the theory of planned behavior seems congruent and complementary. For instance, assuming that improvement in L2 is a central motivational force in the decision to study abroad, as well as a primary perceived benefit, then this would be classified as both ideal L2 self and the behavioral attitude element of the theory of planned behavior. The ought-to L2 self, or the perceived obligation to assimilate an L2 aligns nicely

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with the subjective norm component of the theory of planned behavior. Finally, L2 learning experience could relate to perceived behavioral control as success in language class or cross-cultural interactions may influence perceived ease or difficulty in successful study abroad experiences.

2.7. Summary

Studies have shown that Japan represents a unique context in the realm of internationalization, higher education, and study abroad intent. This chapter first summarized various interpretations of internationalization before a discussion on how it is currently applied in Japan. Stakeholders in Japan often align internationalization with the practice of study abroad, and in doing so, promote the empirical benefits that have been established from students in the post-return stage. A question that emerged when considering the students who report benefits of study abroad is “who is choosing to study abroad?”. This is addressed in the chapter by introducing the beliefs and characteristics of past participants. Also, the expectations – both positive and negative – of potential sojourners was explored alongside the role they play in their decision to participate, thus contributing to various definitions of self-selection, as it applies to study abroad participation. Since this thesis primarily concerns the Japanese learner, the current chapter shifted focus to the cultural profile of Japanese society before summarizing the unique traits of the Japanese higher education experience that may influence a students’ willingness and intention to study abroad. By examining the limited study abroad research conducted in Japan, it became clear that there are gaps in the literature that this investigation aims to address through the adopted theoretical framework comprising the theory of planned behavior and L2 motivational self system. The next chapter discusses the philosophical perspective and methodology that was applied in addressing the study’s research questions.

Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology

Creswell (2014) associates the pragmatic worldview with “its importance for focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem” (p. 11). This seems to give license to using a mixed methods approach in answering this study’s research questions. The numerous ways that quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined into mixed methods has been criticized for leading to inconsistent and fragmented methodologies (Snape & Spencer, 2003). There is concern that mixing methods across paradigms “may lead to a lack of analytical clarity” due to the application of different assumptions in data collection; however, it is also recognized as an inherent feature of pragmatism (p. 17). Regardless of philosophical perspective, in recognizing the potential value of drawing on both quantitative and qualitative paradigms, it is crucial to clearly articulate the rationale behind a given approach. This chapter intends to provide further elucidation of the logic behind the chosen design and methodology, and how these relate to and complement the theoretical framework.

3.1. Philosophical Perspective – Pragmatism

Pragmatism emerged in the late 19th century through the seminal work of Peirce, James, and Dewey (McDermid, 2006). Early iterations of pragmatism propose thought as a tool for prediction, problem solving, and action; while philosophical topics like beliefs, meaning, and language are best synthesized and disseminated through the lens of practical use. Originally applied to philosophical discourse, pragmatism has since forged a place in the contemporary fields of public administration and social sciences. In modern education, pragmatism is defined as “the view that knowledge is derived from interaction among groups of individuals and the artifacts in their environment, which together create a reality” (Schuh & Barab, 2007, p. 68). Furthermore, pragmatism involves identifying and addressing a practical approach to a problem (Maxcy, 2003), which makes it an even more applicable perspective for the current research, since the goal is to generate actionable knowledge in effecting positive change. To highlight the strengths of the pragmatic approach, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) articulate the philosophical position I wish to maintain throughout the research:

...it offers an immediate and useful middle position philosophically and methodologically; it offers a practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry that is based on action and leads, iteratively, to further action and the elimination of

doubt; and it offers a method for selecting methodological mixes that can help researchers better answer many of their research questions. (p. 17)

This definition and justification of the pragmatic approach run parallel with the ambitions cited earlier – to take a middle-ground position on the different perspectives of internationalization so that beneficial solutions may be established and implemented. Guided by the pragmatic ontology of human action leading to change, this research focuses on the outcomes, actions, and situations of discovery. One goal of this study involves a bottom-up approach where positive intercultural curriculum change can first be initiated in classrooms at UoJ, if needed, before possible expansion to other HEIs in Japan and beyond. Given this objective, I endorse the pragmatic ontological stance that “the essence of society lies in an ongoing process of action” (Blumer, 1969, p. 71). While action is critical in manifesting change, I respect the role that numerous intermediaries need to play, most notably students and stakeholders at various levels of the higher education spectrum.

Pragmatism has been described as a paradigm advocating “whatever works best” in answering the research question (Jupp, 2006, p. 180); therefore, this gives license to integrate multiple complementary theoretical constructs in the current research. This perspective contrasts with those aligned with single method research designs. For instance, positivism most often involves quantitative approaches and constructivism is usually qualitative. The pragmatic perspective, which led to the chosen mixed methods design, draws on both qualitative and quantitative elements, that together with the literature, provide rigor in answering the study’s research questions.

3.2. Mixed Methods Approach – Explanatory Sequential Design

Described as a “third paradigm” (Denscombe, 2008, p. 271) and an alternative to exclusive quantitative and qualitative designs, mixed methods research is prevalent in the social sciences. In respecting the notion that there are “inconsistencies in the way scholars define and conceptualize mixed methods” (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p.3), it addresses weaknesses that surround single-method approaches. For instance, quantitative studies involving close-ended survey questions have been criticized for not being able to delve deeply enough into issues (Creswell, 2015). There is also a chance that unmotivated respondents might misrepresent their true sentiments. With an exclusively quantitative approach, there is little opportunity to correct mistakes, and since surveys for research tend to involve anonymity, it is difficult to identify surveys that have been inadequately completed.

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There are also issues with bias and fatigue that can negatively affect data integrity. On the other hand, criticisms of an exclusively qualitative study include limited generalizability, usual involvement of only a small number of participants, highly subjective interpretations, and an over-reliance on participants (Creswell, 2015). Mixed method approaches aim to limit the weaknesses of single-method approaches while taking advantage of their strengths. Furthermore, this design is especially useful to further investigate reasons or rationales behind unexpected results in the initial analytical stages (Morse, 2003).

Mixed methods were employed for this study, not only because of the weaknesses that exist with a single-method designs, but on account of the applied pragmatic theoretical framework. Similar to how (post-) positivism might inform quantitative approaches, and interpretivism or constructivism might set the assumption involved in a qualitative study, pragmatism often underpins the mixed methods approach while providing assumptions about knowledge and inquiry. Some academics express skepticism in mixed method approaches (Snape & Spencer, 2003), although others argue that higher education problems involving issues such as “new knowledge/power regimes”, call for such a design (Slaughter, 2001, p. 409). This dichotomy of beliefs was considered and evaluated; however, the latter attitude prevailed as there is more evidence that a mixed methods design is best suited to address this study’s research questions. Specifically, advantages include (a) an increased ease of triangulating data to ensure validity and reliability; (b) an ability to generate a more complete and valid representation of the research themes; (c) a greater capacity to minimize bias that might emerge if only a single-method approach is employed; and (d) facilitation of sampling where qualitative email questionnaire participants are screened and chosen based on the initial quantitative survey (Creswell, 2015). Of the many variations of mixed method models, the *sequential explanatory design* was chosen owing to the scope of the study, which places emphasis on the initial quantitative instrument to identify statistically significant and anomalous results, with a secondary purpose of providing more profound explanation and insight of the results, via a qualitative investigation. Essentially, it was felt that the most notable results would be revealed through the quantitative survey, but that numbers alone might not answer the question of “why?”.

As seen in Figure 4, there are usually stronger quantitative leanings (QUAN) in the sequential explanatory process, so quantitative data is first collected and analyzed. Results from this then inform the secondary qualitative (qual) component, which in turn, contributes to the interpretation of the entire analysis. As the name of the method suggests, the timing of the data collection occurs in phases, or sequentially. In the sequential explanatory mixed

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method design, weight typically is given to the quantitative data, and that was the initial intention of the current study. It is the integration of this qualitative data into the initial survey data that mixing will occur.



Figure 4. Sequential explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell, 2015).

The mixed methods design adopted for this investigation involves an initial quantitative data collection phase through a survey. Results from the quantitative phase informed the line of questioning in the qualitative questionnaire phase, with the goal of addressing gaps in the knowledge through in-depth discussions over email. Overall, the qualitative phase played an important, yet supplementary, role in the research design. This synergistic relationship – discussed in detail later in this chapter – contributed to the title of this thesis, as the survey aims to *identify* while the email questionnaire aims to *explore* and explain discrepancies in intent to study abroad amongst first-year Japanese university students. The methodological procedure is discussed in this chapter, starting with an introduction of the sample.

3.3. Sample

With the focus of the research involving intent to study abroad, quantitative data was collected from Intensive English students who were just beginning the second semester of their first year. This particular group was chosen since they share some common characteristics (e.g. age, nationality, interest in L2), while being involved in an early stage (i.e. first year) of the undergraduate higher education experience, which theoretically allows for the greatest window of future opportunity to study abroad. Administered by the HEI's Language Center, the four-skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) Intensive English class requires a minimum TOEIC score and takes place three times a week over the course of an academic year, meaning that students can achieve their required language credits in an expedited amount of time, compared to students who join mandatory language classes that meet only once a week. During the fall semester of 2015, Intensive English had a total enrollment of 763 first-year students, plus a few second-year students who did not pass the course the previous year. Before the Fall 2015 semester began, Intensive English students

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were placed in classes of around 25, based on their TOEIC scores (ranging from a minimum score of 320 to a maximum of 970). Intensive English classes usually combine students from all majors of study offered by the institution (humanities, sociology, law & politics, economics, business administration, and human welfare). It was hypothesized in the early stages of the planning process that having a diverse mix of students from different majors and with varying English proficiency scores would allow for a more profound comparison since a student's major has been identified as influencing intent to study abroad in the American context (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009; Stroud, 2010).

The breakdown of first-year student faculties is listed in Table 1. Most notable is the proportionally large number of humanities and business students who enroll in Intensive English compared to the total number enrolled.

Table 1

Enrollment of Freshmen in Intensive English

School	Total enrollment	IE enrollment	% of total
Humanities	820	226	28
Sociology	670	140	21
Law & Politics	679	116	17
Economics	708	100	14
Business	608	154	25
Human Welfare	300	27	9
Total	3816	763	20

Note. IE = Intensive English.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

Before the pilot study and proceeding research phases took place, ethical considerations were addressed, and approval received from both UoJ and the University of Liverpool. The latter involved a lengthy and meticulous process of multiple deliberations with the Virtual Programmes Research Ethics Committee (VPREC). Approval for the process hinged on satisfactory completion of several documents: (a) participant consent form, (b) participant information sheet, (c) ethics application form, and (d) the ethics response form. To determine that I met all the ethical requirements of the University of Liverpool, multiple iterations of the four aforementioned documents were produced, with some of the discussed ethical issues presented here.

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The fact that I am an instructor at UoJ raised several concerns regarding conflict of interest. For instance, the question was posed of whether students would feel coerced to participate in the data collection since it is possible that I was, am, or could be their instructor. For this reason, my initial plan of briefing students about the survey in person and conducting face-to-face interviews was challenged. As a result, the informing and briefing of the survey, as well as most communication, was done through intermediaries: the students' instructors of Intensive English and a member of staff. In communicating directly with students by email regarding their participation in the qualitative email questionnaire phase, I was sure to respect and maintain anonymity through using blind carbon copies (Bcc) when sending group email, and I never required students to share personal details that might make them identifiable in any dissemination of the research. At no point was class time used for information exchange, and instead, all interactions were conducted via university sanctioned email accounts, which are made public to university administrators, teachers, and students. Face-to-face interaction was never requested or required, and as an additional measure to avoid coercion and collusion, students were asked to voluntarily complete the survey online on their own time.

One unique issue that needed to be explored in this study, and detailed in the ethics process, involved the language used to collect data. In ensuring a high degree of data integrity, it was deemed necessary to provide survey and email questionnaire items both in English and Japanese. Since I am not fluent in Japanese, a qualified translator without association to UoJ or its students was hired. There is a risk of misinterpreted meaning and nuance in any study where multiple languages are used, so it was established through various quality-control samples that the translator was skilled at translating language from a high context culture, like Japanese, into English. Also, the translator was chosen as she is proficient in both languages but is not an expert in the subject of the research (i.e. study abroad intent). This was done to avoid a situation where guilty knowledge of the content might emerge (Williams, 2009). For instance, if there are knowledge gaps in the translated written responses, the translator may inadvertently apply personal bias and guilty knowledge, thus leading to inaccurate interpretation.

Another ethical concern for the VPREC involved the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The act of excluding certain students in a study could result in discomfort or stigmatism, if one feels they were specifically targeted for inclusion or exclusion. Inclusion criteria involved the need to be a first-year Japanese student enrolled in an Intensive English course. Exclusion criteria entailed being non-Japanese, not a first-year student and a non-native speaker of Japanese. To avoid any misunderstanding about the intentions or purpose of the

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research, students were asked to read the participant information sheet in advance, and confirm understanding before they agreed to complete the survey.

In developing the participant information sheet, clarity was ensured by avoiding use of jargon and technical language. Additional ethical issues addressed by the participant information sheet included expected time commitment (20 minutes for the survey, an hour for the email questionnaire), the possibility of some questions being personal in nature, and the freedom to withdraw or opt out of the research at any time, without incurring consequence or penalty. If participants wanted to contact anyone concerned with the investigation, they were given contact information for the researcher, as well as the thesis supervisor, and the University of Liverpool ethics department.

3.5. Quantitative Survey Design and Piloting

In scientific research with a significant quantitative component, field testing or piloting is an integral step. Used primarily to ensure that instruments are capable to collecting the desired data, some discourage the undertaking of research without conducting a pilot study (Dörnyei, 2010). Dörnyei (2010) highlights various purposes of the pilot study, which include testing for ambiguously worded items, complicated items, personal or sensitive items, and respondent fatigue (p. 53).

When developing the pilot survey, there were many qualities that I wanted the instrument to exhibit. First, I hoped it could be completed in 20 minutes or less to avoid respondent fatigue. I also wanted it to contain a rich mix of questions that would keep the participant engaged, while at the same time, generate data that could address the research questions. The contents of the survey composed of a number of single-item and multi-scale questions for the respondents to answer.

3.5.1. Survey – single items.

Several of the items designed to collect background information, as well as perceived barriers and benefits of study abroad, were drawn from Kasravi's (2009) study titled *Factors Influencing the Decision to Study Abroad*. Additionally, Stroud (2010) conducted a contemporary investigation into study abroad intent in the US, and items were drawn involving majors, housing arrangements, source of tuition, and future ambitions. In their conceptual framework of factors that influence study abroad, Bandyopadhyay and

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Bandyopadhyay (2015) developed a model involving multiple variables that can be categorized as either benefits or deterrents to study abroad, and several of these were adopted. The full list of questions used in the final instrument can be found in the Appendix, with examples including “How do you pay for the majority of your tuition fees?” and “which situation best describes your living situation?”.

3.5.2. Survey – multi-scale items.

For the Japanese context, two different scales were identified and believed to be suitable in answering the research questions: McCroskey and Richmond’s updated (2013) willingness to communicate tool and Yashima’s (2002) 22-item instrument to determine international posture. Yashima’s (2002) 22 items were all used to ascertain correlation, or lack thereof, with intention to study abroad. This intention was to be empirically ascertained based on a question in the survey that asked “How certain are you that you will study abroad during your time at UoJ?”. To establish willingness to communicate, the updated tool by McCroskey and Richmond (2013) was used, which asks participants to evaluate their likelihood, on a scale of 0 (*never*) to 100 (*always*), of communicating in 20 different situations, for example, “talking with a service station attendant” and “talking in a large meeting of strangers”. Values were then calculated to establish overall level of willingness to communicate with others. In the pilot study, I wanted to determine how willing one is to communicate in their native language (Japanese) compared to English, so I asked respondents to answer the scale once for Japanese use (in Japan) and once for English (in foreign contexts), resulting in a total of 40 questions.

3.5.3. Administration and results of pilot study.

The pilot itself was conducted with 70 students from UoJ, and care was taken to recruit those who would not be involved in the main data collection phase. Respondents were enrolled in different years of study so they were not exactly representative of the target group (first-year students); however, they were “similar to the target sample the instrument has been designed for” (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 53). These respondents were all recruited by email, under the same stipulations of anonymity and freedom to opt out, as presented to those of the actual study. Students who volunteered to join the pilot accessed the questionnaire via email on their personal electronic devices, but in addition to answering the questions, I asked them to take

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notes and respond to several follow-up questions related to the structure and contents of the survey:

- Were any of the questions difficult to understand?
- Would you word any of the questions differently?
- Were any of the questions unnecessary?
- Did the English and Japanese seem consistent for each question?
- Did you experience any discomfort or frustration with the survey questions?
- Any other comments about the survey?

Respondents completed the survey over a period of two weeks. In addition to the above questions designed to identify deficiencies, a focus group of six bilingual students was assembled to allow for a real-time continuous discussion on the proposed instrument. Focus group members were chosen based on their proficiency and interest in the English language. Since I regularly interact with them because of our mutual involvement in English Speaking Society activities and thesis writing, they were vetted and confirmed as accessible, competent, willing, and trustworthy.

After receiving the replies and analyzing the data, the survey proved to be effective in many regards, but there were also areas that needed improvement. It took the vast majority of respondents less than 20 minutes to complete the survey, and some of those who took longer were reportedly being more meticulous with reading both the English and Japanese language of each item, which was encouraged. After confirming that the timing was within the target limits, a few changes were made to the wording of questions to make them more precise and understandable.

The most outstanding issue was with the McCroskey and Richmond (2013) instrument intended to measure willingness to communicate. There were two scales to be completed: one to determine willingness to communicate using Japanese in Japan and another using English in a foreign country. Several respondents failed to answer one of the scales, while others seemed to answer one or both scales in an indiscriminate manner. Identified in the focus group and online comments, cultural and interpretive issues resulted in uncertainty when answering some question items. For example, on a scale of 0 (*never*) to 100 (*always*), participants were asked to identify the “percentage of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation”, and types of situations include talking to strangers, talking to a service station attendant and talking to a garbage collector. Several students

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commented about “not being able to imagine” talking to a garbage collector, or even a stranger. For this reason, many respondents decided to either not answer the questions or to do so arbitrarily (e.g. answering all 20 prompts with 0 or 100). For this reason, McCroskey and Richmond’s (2013) willingness to communicate scale was not included in the final instrument.

With the Yashima (2002) international posture items, responses were grouped into their respective variables (e.g. approach-avoidance, interest in foreign affairs, etc.) and Cronbach’s Alpha values computed in SPSS (ver. 23) to establish internal consistency reliability (Dörnyei, 2010). Internal consistency relates to the correlation of different items of a common variable or construct; therefore, a Cronbach Alpha of 1.0 would indicate perfect consistency. The sufficiency of a Cronbach Alpha depends on the field of study and nature of investigation. Kline (1999) suggests that in the social sciences, a Cronbach Alpha of .9 represents an excellent degree of reliability, while .7 to .9 is good, and .6 to .7 is acceptable. Dörnyei (2010) claims that “well-developed attitude scales containing as few as 10 items ought to approach 0.80” (p. 94). More recently, Plonsky and Derrick (2016) conduct a meta-analysis of reliability coefficients in L2 acquisition and propose an acceptable Cronbach Alpha as between .74 and .82, while anything over this is deemed as high reliability. As seen in Table 2, the alpha for ethnocentrism falls below the .6 threshold, so debate ensued on whether to include this variable in the final research instrument. To help determine this, the Cronbach Alpha was established for all variables, excluding ethnocentrism, to see if the overall reliability of international posture would strengthen. Since results showed that the overall international posture reliability score would only marginally increase to .89 (from .88), ethnocentrism was retained to see if its score would improve with a greater number of respondents in the main study.

Table 2

Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for International Posture – Pilot Study

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha
Approach-avoidance	.74
Interest international vocation	.76
Interest foreign affairs	.85
Ethnocentrism	.57
International Posture	.88

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Because of the lack of useful responses to the McCroskey and Richmond (2013) willingness to communicate instrument, I decided to exclude it. Since I still wanted to empirically establish the role that one's willingness to communicate might have on intent to study abroad, I adopted Yashima's 2009 addition to her international posture instrument – having things to communicate to the world (6 items) – as this captures the essential elements sought from McCroskey and Richmond's (2013) instrument. Also, since Yashima's willingness to communicate items can be seamlessly integrated into the other international posture questions, it would make my survey flow smoother and decrease the chance of respondent fatigue.

In the pilot, I asked one explicit question to discern intent to study abroad (How certain are you that you will study abroad during your time at University X?). After reflection, and agreeing with the idea that “(m)inor differences in how a question is formulated and framed can produce radically different levels of agreement or disagreement” (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 23), I expanded on the single item to determine study abroad intent. In complying with a more scientific questionnaire design (Dörnyei, 2010), I created a 5-item scale that would be arbitrarily presented to respondents within the other 28 international posture items (see Appendix).

Aside from the above alterations, minor changes were made to the wording and structure of some items to ensure easier understanding, thus greater engagement with the instrument. These proposed changes were presented to the translator to ensure consistency in the translations.

3.6. Phase One: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

3.6.1. Quantitative data collection procedure.

In the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the purpose of the quantitative phase is to provide a general understanding of the topic under investigation before carrying out the qualitative phase, which explains and refines the quantitative results. After finalizing the survey instrument, help with data collection was requested from 17 instructors at UoJ involved with the 30 targeted Intensive English classes, each consisting of at least 25 students. Instructors were given a two-week window to voluntarily inform their students of the research by sharing the study's participant information sheet and link to the online survey. At one point during this two-week period, another reminder was given to teacher volunteers to relay the survey information. Students were informed that the survey would take

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approximately 15 minutes to complete, and that the final question would involve a *yes* or *no* response to whether they would be willing to join the second phase of the study: the qualitative email questionnaire. Of the 763 students enrolled in Intensive English, I received responses from 348; however, after eliminating the responses that were ineligible based on exclusion criteria, the total number of responses equaled 334, with 311 containing answers to each question. To ensure consistency in the reporting, it is these 311 complete responses that constitute the quantitative data. After receiving the data, some preliminary analysis was conducted in Excel and Survey Monkey. This initial analysis included basic and descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviations, and significance. More advanced analysis, such as correlation and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), was done with SPSS.

3.6.2. Reliability of survey data.

3.6.2.1. Study abroad intent items.

As discussed, the defining of study abroad intent shifted from a single-item question in the pilot, to a multi-item scale in the final survey. I integrated five original questions into the international posture items to establish intent to study abroad, such as “studying abroad during my time at university is a goal of mine” and “I intend to study abroad during my time at university”. For the five study abroad intent items employed in the survey, the Cronbach Alpha was .95, which is considered as excellent reliability (Kline, 1999; Plonsky & Derrick, 2016). Deleting any individual item would result in negligible improvements, so all five items were kept in the analysis.

Central to answering the research questions presented in this study, I needed to establish differences in intention to study abroad. To accomplish this, three different groups of students were classified: one with strong intent to study abroad ($N=69$), one with weak intent ($N=66$), and a group exhibiting moderate or inconsistent degrees of intention ($N=176$). The process to define these groups is explained in section 4.1. With focus on the strong and weak groups, similarities and differences that emerged not only played a pivotal role in answering the research questions, but also in identifying email questionnaire participants in the qualitative phase of the study.

3.6.2.2. *International posture items.*

In evaluating the reliability of Yashima's 28-item international posture instrument, internal consistency – the correlation of different items intended to measure a variable or construct – was measured. From the analysis of the 311 complete responses involving the 28 items comprising international posture, the Cronbach Alpha was .89. In analyzing each international posture variable in isolation, there were no instances where the omission of any item improved the overall reliability of international posture. A breakdown of the reliability of each individual variable composing international posture, as well as study abroad intent, is shown in Table 3. The values are presented for the 311 participants, and also those constituting the strong ($N=69$) and weak ($N=66$) intent groups. To garner an understanding of the international posture variables, each is explained in detail, along with a description of their relevance and consistency to the current study.

Table 3

International Posture & Study Abroad Intent Cronbach Alpha Coefficients

Variable	All Participants	Strong Group	Weak Group
International Posture	.89	.87	.84
Approach Avoidance	.75	.63	.76
Interest international vocation	.79	.75	.76
Interest in foreign affairs	.79	.79	.84
Ethnocentricity	.65	.64	.71
Willingness to communicate	.77	.81	.69
Study Abroad Intent	.95	.94	.92

- 1) *Intercultural approach-avoidance tendency* is a 7-point scale that evaluates the likelihood of a respondent approaching a non-Japanese person to engage in interactions. In this study, the overall alpha was computed as .75, thus representing an acceptable to good level of internal consistency (Plonsky & Derrick, 2016; Kline, 1999). Examples of questions in this scale include “I would talk to an international student if there were one at school” and the negatively worded item “I try to avoid talking with foreigners if I can”. Deleting any individual items would decrease the overall reliability of this variable and international posture.
- 2) *Interest in international vocation* is a 6-item scale that gauges one's degree of interest in an international career or working abroad. The alpha for this construct was .79, again representing acceptable to good consistency. Individual questions include “I

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want to work in a foreign country” and “I don't think what's happening overseas has much to do with my daily life”. Deleting the latter of these two questions would result in a marginally improved alpha for the variable (.8); however, doing so would also reduce the overall reliability of international posture, so it remained in the analysis.

- 3) *Interest in foreign affairs* is a 4-item scale to determine the respondents' interest in issues and affairs outside of Japan. Items for this variable include “I often read and watch news about foreign countries” and “I often talk about situations and events in foreign countries with my family and/or friends”. The internal consistency was .79. The omission of one particular item would increase the reliability to .8; however, this would have an adverse impact on the reliability of international posture as a whole.
- 4) *Ethnocentrism* is a 5-point scale, which evaluates ethnocentrism and reactions to different customs, values, and behaviors. Items include “I enjoy working with people who have different customs and values” and “I feel awkward by what foreigners say and what they do”. The alpha for this variable was .65. The exclusion of one inconsistent item would increase the alpha to .7; however, this would have a negative impact on the overall reliability of international posture, so it was retained. Ethnocentrism is notorious for having low reliability in international posture, so while .65 appears weak, it is stronger than several Japanese studies that have applied it. In a 2010 study, Yashima computed an alpha of .61 for ethnocentrism, yet continued to use it in her study. Also, .65 is still within the parameters of acceptable, according to Kline (1999).
- 5) *Willingness to communicate to the world* is the final and most recently added component of international posture (Yashima, 2009). It consists of six items, including “I know a lot of topics I can discuss with people from around the world” and “I have no clear opinions about international issues”. The alpha for this (.77) again represents acceptable to good reliability and there were no outstanding items that if deleted, would improve both consistency of the individual variable and international posture.

3.6.3. SPSS analysis – correlation and MANOVA.

Research questions presented in this study involve the differences between those with weak intent to study abroad and those with strong intent. In attempting to identify these differences, analysis was executed to ascertain which international posture variables may be

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correlated with study abroad intent. Data from the 311 complete survey responses were processed in SPSS to determine correlation between intent and the five variables comprising international posture: approach avoidance, interest in international vocation, interest in foreign affairs, ethnocentricity and willingness to communicate. MANOVA was also employed as it can be used in situations where “there are several correlated dependent variables, and the researcher desires a single, overall statistical test on this set of variables instead of performing multiple individual tests” (Carey, 1998, p. 1). In the analysis, the independent variable was defined as study abroad intent at two levels: strong intent and weak intent. Additionally, the five elements of international posture were delineated as dependent variables. The MANOVA was executed to determine the differences in mean international posture scores between the strong and weak intent groups.

3.7. Phase Two: Qualitative Data Collection

In adhering to the explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell, 2015), the second phase of the study – the qualitative email questionnaire – aims to explain the survey results through an in-depth investigation of the respondents’ attitudes towards study abroad. This qualitative phase also intends to help explain and rationalize some of the results from the survey deemed as unexpected or inconsistent. To achieve this, 10 respondents from the initial quantitative phase were presented with open-ended questions, derived from the quantitative results. This section aims to explain (a) the process involved in choosing the email questionnaire participants, (b) the email questionnaire rationale, (c) the data collection process, and (d) the analysis of qualitative data.

3.7.1. Identifying the email questionnaire participants.

As a final question in the quantitative survey, respondents were asked whether they were willing to participate in the qualitative email questionnaire. Described in detail in the participant information sheet, willing respondents confirmed their email addresses so they could be contacted following analysis of the quantitative data. Of the 311 eligible survey respondents who completed all questions, 69 were defined as having strong intent, 66 as weak, and 176 as moderate or inconsistent. After screening the respondents to identify only those with willingness to join the qualitative phase, 52 were classified as strong, 28 as weak, and 113 as moderate or inconsistent for a total of 193. For the qualitative phase, it was

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desired to have an equal number of those with strong and weak intent. Since a primary objective of the research relies on identifying differences between strong and weak groups, students belonging to the middle group were not contacted. All willing email questionnaire participants from the strong and weak groups were contacted and six strong group members and four weak group members confirmed their participation. While not an ideal number to ensure saturation of qualitative data, it is recognized that studies involving multiple methods and in-depth interviews, such as this one, require few qualitative participants (Lee, Woo, & Mackenzie, 2002). Furthermore, a homogenous sample comprising Japanese students of similar demographic backgrounds would require fewer participants in order to be “sufficient to enable development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations” (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006, p. 78).

Since all willing students who represented both strong intent and weak intent groups were contacted, this group of 10 email questionnaire participants represents a purposive, nested sample since they embody specific qualities being sought for this study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). This approach of *extreme case sampling* in mixed methods has been done in situations where the researchers are concerned with collecting qualitative data only from those who exhibit polarizing qualities, and it is understood that participants who are both qualified and willing may be few (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Way, Stauber, Nakkula, & London, 1994).

3.7.2. Email questionnaire rationale.

For various reasons, the email questionnaire format of the qualitative data collection phase was chosen over other methods, such as one-to-one interviews, focus groups, or recordings of responses. There was initial interest in conducting face-to-face interviews; however, this was reconsidered due to the potential language challenges posed, both for researcher and participants. Since my academic Japanese communication skills are limited, I was not confident in conducting semi-structured interviews in Japanese. Furthermore, since the English abilities of participants vary from intermediate to high, I decided that conducting the sessions in English could put some interviewees at a disadvantage that may compromise the goal of preserving a high degree of data integrity. A suggested option entailed having the translator at hand during the face-to-face investigation so they could translate my English questions into Japanese, followed by a translation of all Japanese responses into English, for possible follow-up enquiries. This option was declined since the translator was purposely

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chosen because of her disconnect to the university and its students. Furthermore, the responses of the students could be influenced by location, bias, and power differences, and that these potential pitfalls may be exacerbated in the Japanese context, since Japanese people are acutely aware of power differences and might try to give the “right” answers, while in the presence of an instructor and professional translator (Cohen et al., 2011). Finally, the benefit of spontaneity, often characterized by face-to-face interviews and focus groups, would be undermined by the need to translate every spoken word.

The focus group approach was discussed as a possible qualitative data collection option, as students might feel a sense of solidarity in partaking in an activity with others (Wilkinson, 2004). While they could support each other in this type of environment, it could also lead to coercion, assimilation, or inaccuracies in reporting, as certain students with unique views might be stigmatized, depending on their opinions and experiences. In the classroom, students have been reported to respond well to structure and guidance from perceived superiors, so an interview format where they are expected to guide the conversation might not produce data that adequately reflect student perceptions and thought. Being more reticent in nature and placing value on “harmonization within the in-group, achieved when members downplay their individualism for the well-being of the group” (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000, p. 229), could both act as a benefit and barrier to obtaining legitimate data. When debating the legitimacy of using focus groups, many of the same concerns involving face-to-face interviews emerged, particularly involving language.

While contemplating the use of voice recorded responses, a study involving critical incidents abroad by five Japanese returnees was considered (Ford, 2009). This study initially employed recorded monologues but they were found to yield “a lot of background information and a range of other topics” (p. 67). Ford later changed her approach to written narratives focusing on the themes of her research, which proved to be more successful.

In summary, the approach to collect qualitative data remotely by email was chosen as it ensures the greatest degree of anonymity and freedom in responses. This process does pose some weaknesses, such as a lack of spontaneous reaction and difficulty in seeking immediate clarification; however, the follow-up email stage integrated into the study mitigates these shortcomings. As a final step to the qualitative phase, participants also agreed to be available for follow-up questions by email, aimed to satisfy concerns about spontaneity, free-flowing exchange of information, and clarification. In fact, with communication all done remotely by email, students could potentially be more comfortable in revealing genuine feedback and thoughts about the content since the written medium reduces the impact of language anxiety.

3.7.3. Qualitative data collection.

Based on the survey results, an interview protocol was established for the qualitative phase. This involved 12 questions; examples of which include “to what extent do your family members encourage and discourage you to study abroad? Explain with examples” and “what role has your major (e.g. humanities, business) had on your intention to study abroad? Has it made you more likely to study abroad? Less likely? No impact? Explain with examples”. In most cases, participants did not receive every question since some were tailored specifically for students with particular experience and beliefs, as stated in the survey phase. That said, the vast majority of questions were given and satisfactorily answered by the 10 volunteer participants. All questions are found throughout the findings and analysis chapter (Chapter 4).

After receiving the bilingual questions, volunteers were informed that they would have two weeks to answer the questions in Japanese. After analysis of the preliminary qualitative data, all participants were contacted again with follow-up questions, and then four participants were contacted a third time, due to questions that emerged from their responses in the first two rounds of questioning. This made the email questionnaire phase continuous and relatively free flowing. To maintain anonymity, only email addresses from the university were used, and these do not reveal personal details of the students. When sharing the responses with the research assistant, the institutional email addresses were omitted.

3.7.4. Qualitative data analysis.

The data generated from the email questionnaire represent the final step of triangulation, following the analysis of literature and survey results. To achieve the objective of using the qualitative data to refine and explain the quantitative results, I conducted thematic analysis of the email responses through the lens of the theoretical framework and accompanying L2 acquisition models. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytical method used to identify and analyze themes, or patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While often used as a qualitative analytical method across multiple theoretical and epistemological approaches, thematic analysis is touted as being “theoretically flexible” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77). Despite not being explicitly associated with pragmatism in their seminal work, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) rationale for thematic analysis aligns with the versatile tenets of pragmatism in that it can accommodate a variety of theoretical frameworks. Thematic

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analysis is often applied to single method qualitative research; however, it is found in other mixed method studies (Trahan & Stewart, 2013). Due to the explanatory sequential design of the current study, where questions were conceived based on quantitative results, participants of the qualitative phase were asked to provide rich descriptions of specific phenomena related to study abroad intent. Analysis of the qualitative data was then conducted in a theoretical, deductive, or “top down” way, where codes and themes were derived from the philosophical and theoretical framework. This analyst-driven process tends to reflect a theoretical approach where coding address specific research questions. This contrasts with a more inductive approach where a researcher codes data without trying to fit them into a particular frame or theoretical model. In the case of the current study, themes were identified at a semantic level where student descriptions were scanned for explicit and surficial meaning, then interpreted for deeper meaning and implications through the lens of the literature and quantitative data.

The specific steps taken in the thematic analysis approach of this study can be seen as unconventional due to its explanatory sequential mixed methods design and deductive analytical approach using the theory of planned behavior and L2 acquisition models. The thematic analysis process generally involves six phases of coding: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) the generation of initial codes, (3) the searching for themes amongst the codes, (4) reviewing the themes, (5) defining and naming the themes, and finally, (6) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, responses from the qualitative phase were collated in Microsoft Word and a manual two-step coding process was executed (Hay, 2005). The first step involved basic coding, which allowed for broad themes to be defined based on the theoretical framework. It was at this stage that follow-up email questions were established for further investigation. After all the data were retrieved from the follow-up questions, a more rigorous interpretive coding phase was applied to all responses that helped to identify patterns and refine themes. An example of this includes coding phrases of obligation such as “I should”, “I need to”, and “I have to” into the broader theme of ought-to self. After themes were created from the two-step coding process, they were refined further through splitting, combining, and discarding. Very few themes needed to be discarded because of the adopted mixed methods design, though due to lack of data, themes of “gender” and “commute” were not included. As seen in chapter 4 (findings and analysis), final themes are presented in tables, organized and categorized under the three elements of the theory of planned behavior: behavioral attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Under these three categories, themes were derived from components of the L2 motivational self system (e.g. ideal self, ought-to self), recurring describers, and other aspects of the theoretical framework.

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Under each theme, extracts are given that attempt to capture the essence of the theme's contribution to answering the research questions.

The aforementioned steps can result in more valid and reliable data. The next section of this manuscript takes a closer look at the validity and reliability measures that were taken throughout the various stages of the investigation.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

A researcher can never be guaranteed that his or her work is entirely valid and reliable; however, if the proper validity measures are applied in an adequate way, then the overall project should maintain a significant degree of integrity (Cohen et al., 2011). Considering the scope of this research project, a substantial amount of care was taken to ensure "honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved" (p. 179). An inherent quality of the adopted mixed methods design is that the triangulation of quantitative data, qualitative data, and literature enhances the probability of validity and reliability. Triangulation is achieved through the utilization of the survey data, qualitative conversation data, and also the literature that has emerged from prior studies on the topic of study abroad intent.

There are certain threats regarding validity in mixed methods studies. Generally speaking, issues that could impact validity of mixed methods research include sample sizes of the quantitative and qualitative sample groups, whether the samples exhibit parallel units of analysis, the process of merging the results from the two phases, and how contrary or divergent results are explained (Creswell, 2015). In the current study, these criteria are satisfied by having a reasonably representative ratio of strong and weak intent members in both data collection phases. Also, qualitative results are later merged with quantitative results, as defined by the subscribed explanatory sequential design. In this particular mixed methods design (explanatory sequential), Creswell (2015) presents several questions that can help ensure validity:

- What quantitative results need follow-up?
- How will you select the sample of follow-up participants?
- How will you develop relevant interview questions?
- How will you ensure that the qualitative data indeed explain the quantitative results?

(p. 19)

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The questions presented in this list are addressed throughout the current chapter. In short, the literature was referred to in identifying quantitative results deemed appropriate for follow up. Also, a sample of strong and weak intent participants emerged for the qualitative phase of the study, in which relevant literature was consulted in developing interview questions. These interview queries were also designed to address the research questions, with multiple validity strategies employed to ensure that qualitative data offered insight into the survey results.

Simply because both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in the study, it does not mean that the scope and rigor of each method is compromised or diminished. In fact, in regards to ensuring validity and reliability, the two conjoined methods are viewed as a united piece, and also in isolation, since qualitative validity differs from quantitative validity. In checking that the quantitative component of this study is reliable, many steps are described in this chapter, including the execution of a pilot study, focus groups, and seeking assistance from a professional translator to ensure that there were no glaring omissions or mistakes in the translation. As explained in the description of the quantitative phase, analysis was conducted in SPSS that yielded a near-excellent degree of reliability for international posture as a whole, and significantly better reliability for the items that determined intent to study abroad.

In brief, qualitative validity means that “the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). This particular study employs validity strategies to assure the reader that findings are accurate. Through researcher positionality in the introduction (chapter 1), honesty is conveyed, which may be helpful to identify *bias*. Identifying bias through self-reflection “creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate with the readers” (Creswell, 2014, p. 202). Especially with the qualitative analysis, connections are made between opinion and how this might be influenced by factors such as nationality; profession, academic experience, and culture. Additionally, another practice that can make a design more valid includes the presentation of *negative or discrepant information*. When appropriate, unexpected or counter intuitive results are disclosed and discussed. To ensure the adequacy of the current study’s thematic analysis, it was examined through the lens of common pitfalls, described by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the themes and extracts contribute to preliminary analysis (chapter 4) followed by more detailed analysis (chapter 5). Second, the themes were not derived directly from the email questions themselves, but from the answers,

and how they related to elements of the theoretical framework. Third, while there is some overlap in themes (e.g. ought-self being found in multiple tables), they are found under discrete categories of the theory of planned behavior and it is explained how the theme contributes to the understanding of each category. Finally, care was taken to ensure consistency in the data extracts, the interpretation of the extracts, and the theory.

3.9. Summary

Considering the scope of the research and the applied theoretical framework, an explanatory sequential mixed methods design was chosen for data collection and analysis. For the initial quantitative component, a pilot was first conducted with 70 students from UoJ. Feedback from this process resulted in a final survey instrument, which 311 first-year students completed. Following this, analysis was done on the quantitative data, leading to a series of questions that were presented to 10 volunteers of the qualitative email questionnaire: six with strong intent to study abroad and four with weak intent. After receiving responses and making follow-up enquiries, thematic analysis and the theoretical framework helped define of themes and codes that will provide the basis for answering the research questions. In the next chapter on findings and analysis, results of the investigation are organized and presented based on the three elements of the theory of planned behavior, that is, (1) behavioral attitudes, (2) subjective norm, and (3) perceived behavioral control.

Chapter 4. Findings and Analysis

This chapter will summarize the key findings of the research. Analysis of the quantitative survey data offers insight towards answering the research questions; however, several outstanding questions remained which were probed through directed questions in the qualitative email questionnaire. Considering the nature of explanatory sequential mixed methods – where the qualitative phase is conducted after the quantitative analysis, so it might be able to add insight and rigor to the overall process – results from both quantitative and qualitative phases are paired and presented together in addressing the research questions.

After revealing the approach to identify strong and weak intent groups, results are organized based on the three contributing elements to the theory of planned behavior: (1) behavioral attitude, (2) subjective norms, and (3) perceived behavioral control. For each element, data generated from the qualitative email questions both support and challenge survey results. When suitable, qualitative results are thematically organized under elements of the L2 acquisition models adopted for the theoretical framework, for instance, the self-discrepancy theory (actual-self, ideal-self, and ought-self), the socio-educational model of L2 acquisition (integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, and motivation), and the L2 motivational self system (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience). In certain sections, answers to follow-up questions clarify outstanding issues from the initial qualitative phase, and this data is integrated into the reporting. While the purpose of this chapter is to present and conduct preliminary analysis on the data, further insight and discussion are found in chapter 5.

4.1. The Sample: Establishing Strong and Weak Intent Groups

The sample for this study involved a total of 311 first-year Japanese students taking an elective intensive English course. Stemming from the research purpose to define and compare students with a strong intent to study abroad from those with weak intent, I delineated intent from a 5-item instrument using a 6-point Likert scale. An example item is “I intend to study abroad during my time at UoJ”. Of the 311 total respondents, 69 answered *strongly agree* to all five items, thus constituting the strong group. To ensure that no respondents were included whom arbitrarily selected answers, or who chose the same answer for each item, a negative item – “studying abroad does not interest me” – was added to the instrument. After inverting the numeric answers of the negative item (i.e. changing 1 to 6), the group of 69 respondents with strong intent to study abroad could be identified. To define

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the group of students with weak intent to study abroad, a similar approach was taken; however, answers were filtered to include only those who responded *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *slightly disagree*, and *slightly agree* to the items, again, with answers to one negatively-worded question being inverted. This resulted in a group of 66 students with weak intent to study abroad. The ratio of female to male students is similar in both strong and weak groups, though the proportion of females in the weak group is marginally less than the overall ratio (see Table 4).

Table 4

Respondent Numbers – Quantitative Phase

Groups	Total N	Gender	Ratio
All respondents	311	221F, 90M	71:29
Strong intent	69	48F, 21M	70:30
Weak intent	66	44F, 22M	67:33

Note. N = number; F = female; M = male.

The qualitative email questionnaire phase of the study involved 10 volunteer respondents of the quantitative survey, who also belonged to either the strong or weak group. Since a primary objective of this research is to determine differences between those with strong intent to study abroad and those with weak intent, the participants making up the middle group were not represented in the qualitative phase. Of the 10 volunteers, six belonged to the strong group and four to the weak group. Ideally, both groups would be equally represented since the number of strong intent respondents (69) is almost equal to that of the weak group (66); however, the recruiting process yielded a slight discrepancy in the qualitative sample. While not the desired outcome, having two more strong voices in the qualitative email discussion phase bears little impact on answering the research question on self-selection, since it only draws on characteristics of those with strong intent to study abroad. With the other research questions dependent on the comparisons and relationships between both groups, attempts are made to adequately represent both sides with the data provided, while recognizing the imbalance.

In terms of gender, despite more females volunteering to join the qualitative stage, a male voice is still represented in both groups. Throughout this chapter, the participants will be identified from their alpha-numeric identifier shown below in Table 5 (e.g. S1, S2, W1, W2), alongside their profiles, which are composed of gender, faculty, TOEIC score, GPA,

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desire for lifetime employment with one company, past experience abroad, and number of countries visited.

Table 5

Participant Profiles – Qualitative Phase

Participant	Gender	Faculty	TOEIC	GPA	LTE	PLA	CV
Strong intent							
S1	F	Humanities	601-650	2.6-3.0	Y	N	1-2
S2	M	Humanities	451-500	3.1-3.5	N	N	1-2
S3	F	Human Welfare	651+	2.1-2.5	N	Y	5-6
S4	F	Humanities	451-500	2.6-3.0	N	N	1-2
S5	F	Humanities	651+	1.1-2.0	Y	Y	1-2
S6	F	Humanities	601-650	2.6-3.0	N	Y	1-2
Weak intent							
W1	M	Law	501-550	2.6-3.0	Y	N	3-4
W2	F	Sociology	601-650	2.1-2.5	N	Y	5-6
W3	F	Humanities	451-500	1.1-2.0	Y	N	0
W4	F	Business	551-600	2.1-2.5	Y	N	1-2

Note. LTE = desire for lifetime employment with one company; Y = Yes; PLA = past life abroad – either studying or living; N = No; CV = number of countries visited.

4.2. Behavioral Attitudes

In the theory of planned behavior, behavioral attitudes involve the extent to which someone has a positive or negative perception and evaluation of a conduct (Ajzen, 1985). This is reflected in Figure 5, where I highlight the contribution that behavioral attitude has on the intention to perform a behavior.

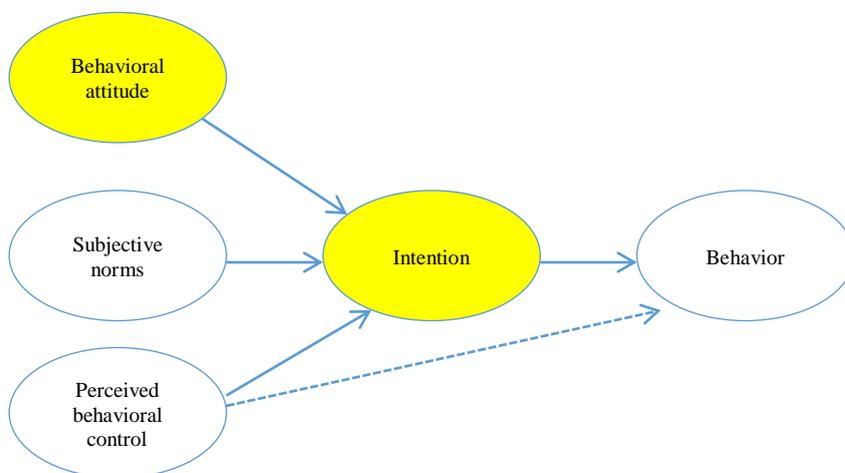


Figure 5. Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior: behavioral attitude path.

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In this research, the behavior in question is enrollment in study abroad. Under the theme of behavioral attitude, results from the quantitative survey led to the establishment of the following conversation questions asked in the qualitative email phase:

1. How can study abroad increase maturity and social confidence? Give some specific examples.
2. What would you consider as the biggest risk towards studying abroad? What would or could you do to minimize the risk?
3. Do you think studying abroad for at least one semester would help or hurt your future job prospects? Explain with examples.
4. Has your desire to work for one company your entire life influenced your intent to study abroad or not? Explain.

Results from both quantitative and qualitative phases are organized and presented under these four questions, representing behavioral attitude. First, the survey results that evoked the above questions are shown, then excerpts are presented in tables from the email questionnaire phase, under themes derived from the theoretical framework and qualitative results.

4.2.1. Perceived benefits of study abroad.

In identifying positive perceptions that students may have of study abroad, the survey contained an item where respondents evaluated their beliefs about the benefits reaped through study abroad. Table 6 shows the perceived advantages of study abroad, based on past research that has focused on discerned and empirical benefits (Kasravi, 2009; Lassegard, 2013; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015; Bandyopadhyay & Bandyopadhyay, 2015). Benefits are ordered from most significantly positive down to least. Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with the benefits on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly agree* (6) to *strongly disagree* (1). The mean weighted average of responses (M), out of a maximum score of six, is represented along with the standard deviations (SD). The closer the score is to six, the more the corresponding group considers the benefit as advantageous. Results show

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perceived attitudes towards study abroad for all respondents (Total), and also for the strong and weak intent groups.

Table 6

Weighted Averages of Perceived Study Abroad Benefits

Perceived Benefit	Total (N=311)		Strong (N=69)		Weak (N=66)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Maturity & social confidence	5.68	.57	5.89	.31	5.30	.85
L2 improvements	5.58	.65	5.82	.48	5.19	.85
Learn about foreign culture	5.49	.73	5.81	.42	5.16	.89
Global mindedness	5.47	.79	5.86	.41	5.03	1.09
Relationships with foreigners	5.37	.74	5.65	.62	5.06	.88
Fun and enjoyment	5.19	.89	5.59	.66	4.75	1.1
Professional & academic skills	4.87	1.05	5.36	.86	4.52	1.03
Improve chances of good job	4.72	1.11	5.23	1.03	4.28	1.19

Note. M = mean / weighted average; SD = standard deviation.

For each benefit, the strong group scores higher than the weak group. Additionally, the rankings of the top two perceived benefits and the bottom three benefits are identical, with some differences in between. Amongst all three groups (total, strong, weak), the top rated perceived benefit of study abroad is “increased maturity and social confidence”. Since past studies investigating study abroad benefits and intent in Japan did not offer maturity and social confidence benefits as a possible option (Lassegard, 2013; Asaoka & Yano, 2009), the following query in the email questionnaire was designed to probe further:

Conversation question 1: How can study abroad increase maturity and social confidence? Give some specific examples.

Qualitative responses from both strong and weak group members involved the tendency of Japanese students being reticent, shy, and uncomfortable in conveying personal opinions and beliefs. A participant from the strong group (S1) described study abroad as playing a role in her becoming “a proactive person”, as she “heard students in other countries are apt to speak a lot in the class and I should be like that through study abroad”. Another respondent (S2) suggested that there will be a natural shift in disposition, resulting in opportunity to “challenge many things with a positive attitude”. S3 mentioned that she

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developed confidence when being understood in English in shops and at restaurants during a trip to New York City. S4 expressed a belief that study abroad fosters maturity and social confidence as she has seen several of her friends become more “mature, strong, and open-minded” from academic trips abroad. Her statement of “I should be like them through study abroad” reflects the ought-to self of the L2 motivational self system. Also, S4 equated making decisions “far away from family” as developing maturity and social confidence. Others discussed “a wide perspective and flexible way of thinking” (S5) and “being able to solve problems” (S6).

The wording of members in the weak group was more ambiguous when discussing the fostering of maturity and social confidence. W1 stated “I guess the improvement in English ability (from study abroad) will make people confident”. W2 questioned the potential of benefits without a clear goal or intention, which is contrary to S3 who said that “study abroad could help you with finding a job”. W4 provided an outlier response amongst the weak group members by agreeing with multiple strong group members that being understood in English “will allow me to become more confident when I talk to people from different countries”.

Table 7 visually represents the qualitative data from the email questionnaire phase based on themes conducted through thematic analysis. While only the qualitative data is exhibited, the themes were determined based on the triangulation of literature, quantitative, and qualitative results. Since Japanese society often places value on grouping (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000), some participants made a connection between developing independence and becoming more mature and socially competent. This results in a theme called “independence”, along with two domains of self from the self-discrepancy theory: ideal self and ought self. To reiterate, ideal self often involves one’s aspirations, hopes, and wishes, while ought self relates more to obligation, duty, or moral responsibility.

Table 7

Reported Development of Maturity and Social Confidence

Theme	Example from participant
Independence	I will face more situations where I have to make decisions by myself. (S1)
	I think people become independent by solving problems or making decisions by themselves in different countries far away from their families. (S4)
Ideal self	I want to become a proactive person. (S1)
	I think being understood in English will increase my confidence. (S3)

	I think the experience of being understood in English or understanding what people say in English will allow me to become more confident when I talk to people from different countries. (W4)
Ought self	I've heard students in other countries are apt to speak a lot in the class and I should be like that through study abroad. (S1)
	My friends encourage me to study abroad to make foreign friends, which they have and I don't. (S2)
	I've seen many of my friends who have done study abroad become more mature, strong, and open-minded than they used to be. I should be like them through study abroad. (S4)
	I think when you are abroad, locals expect you to speak English, which forces you to improve your abilities. They won't understand you otherwise. (W3)

4.2.2. Perceived deterrents of study abroad.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent that they agree or disagree that particular barriers are personally relevant. The same six-point Likert scale was used with a range from *strongly agree* (6) to *strongly disagree* (1). The following table (Table 8) exhibits the ranking of deterrents, with the most significant deterrent at the top, per weighted average, along with standard deviations. The closer the mean score is to six, the more the respondents agree that the deterrent could discourage them from studying abroad. The ranking is based on all responses to the survey; however, weighted averages are also shown for the strong and weak groups. Despite these results having no bearing on whether a respondent was defined as having strong or weak intent, the weak group exhibits a greater overall perception that barriers to study abroad are personally significant, compared to the strong group members.

Table 8

Weighted Averages of Perceived Study Abroad Deterrents

Perceived Deterrents	Total (N=311)		Strong (N=69)		Weak (N=66)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Financial issues	4.50	1.53	4.14	1.69	4.58	1.37
Low L2 ability	4.06	1.43	3.64	1.51	4.29	1.3
Troublesome application process	3.88	1.45	3.53	1.77	4.31	1.09
Insufficient grades	3.88	1.4	3.64	1.56	3.89	1.16
Delayed graduation	3.88	1.45	3.41	1.54	4.09	1.23

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Dangers and disease abroad	3.74	1.44	3.15	1.47	3.91	1.44
Would miss out on UoJ/home events	3.50	1.49	3.10	1.64	3.89	1.24
Homesickness	3.41	1.59	2.94	1.77	3.83	1.49
Not confident in making friends	3.29	1.45	2.90	1.65	3.62	1.4
Travel abroad can be done post-grad	3.25	1.41	2.60	1.44	3.88	1.21
Hurt chances of finding good job	3.15	1.39	3.01	1.57	3.18	1.24
Lack of Japanese food	3.14	1.47	2.75	1.44	3.76	1.45
Friends / family would discourage	2.28	1.29	1.78	1.14	2.55	1.17

Note. M = mean / weighted average; SD = standard deviation.

By a significant margin across all three groups, it is clear that financial restrictions are the top deterrent to study abroad. This is in line with the literature that has explored study abroad intent both abroad and in Japan (Sanchez et al., 2006; McNeill, 2010; Lassegard, 2013). The second overall deterrent – low L2 ability – is also reflective of the literature; however, it ranks third amongst the weak group members, after “financial issues” and a “troublesome application process”. In perusing the results of all three groups, there are a few inconsistencies, though the differences are marginal. For instance, amongst respondents in the strong group, insufficient grades and the negative effect study abroad might have on “finding a good job” are more significant than the sample as a whole. By comparison, those in the weak group express greater concern over delayed graduation, the belief that world travel can be done after graduation, and a lack of authentic Japanese food abroad.

The survey results show clear differences between strong and weak intent groups and their perceptions of barriers; however, after analysis, there remains ambiguity about whether these barriers are surmountable by a shift in attitude and perception, or if they represent actual barriers to participation. In trying to establish more clarity on the negative perceptions of study abroad that might be reversed through education and dialogue, the following question was created for the qualitative email component:

Conversation question 2: What would you consider as the biggest risk towards studying abroad? What would or could you do to minimize the risk?

Despite only ranking as the sixth most notable deterrent to study abroad, “dangers and disease abroad”, particularly the threat of terror, was seen in numerous responses from both strong and weak group members (S4, S5, S6, W3, W4). S6 said family members have become concerned about study abroad because of terrorist threats and S4 cited “safety” as a risk, especially since she is coming from Japan, “where big crimes don’t happen so often”.

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While safety issues were the predominant perception of risk in the email questionnaire, other deterrents were identified. S1 revealed the unrealistic and “shallow” expectation that “study abroad can automatically improve your language ability” as a risk. Other responses were given involving financial risk (S2, S3, W1) and the possibility of delayed graduation because of study abroad (S3). Another perceived risk was described as a lack of “convenience” (S4), with the exemplar of a toilet getting clogged in a friend’s bathroom while they were living in Seattle – an incident that reportedly rarely occurs in Japan.

In Table 9, data involving behavioral attitude of study abroad is shown from the email questionnaire phase. Data is categorized based on the most significant perceived barriers, as indicated in the quantitative survey, in addition to the unpredictable factor of terrorism. These categories include (a) safety issues, (b) financial risk, and (c) English ability. The qualitative data do provide support to the quantitative conclusions, as perceived risk claimed by strong group members is often followed up with feasible solutions to minimize the risk (S2, S3, S5). Conversely, weak group members either did not state a solution to risk (W1, W3), or expressed solutions to minimize risk that might not be realistic (W4).

Table 9

Greatest Perceived Risk of Study Abroad

Theme	Example from participant
Safety issues	I’m used to living in Japan where big crimes don’t happen so often. (S4)
	Terrorism and safety problems are the biggest concern. I would avoid dangerous places. (S5)
	The biggest risk would be safety. (W3)
	I would stay home at night and avoid being alone. (W4)
Financial risk	I can minimize the financial problem if I work a part-time job. (S2)
	In order to minimize the financial risk, I would choose a short-term study abroad. (S3)
	The biggest risk involves the expenses and costs. (W1)
English ability	You can’t become better at the language just by being abroad. (S1)
	Your Japanese won’t be understood when you really need help. (S6)

A paradox emerged in the discussion of risk as several participants mentioned financial risks in the context of acquiring English. For instance, some identified preference

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for short study abroad, which is cheaper (S3) and thus minimizes financial risk, while others suggested that a short-term sojourn is ineffective in achieving significant language gains; therefore, a waste of money (S1). English communication skills, or lack thereof, was also considered as a perceived risk (S4, S6). The qualitative data is valuable in defining potential approaches to overcoming barriers, as will be discussed in the next chapter of this study. Other results from the survey will be discussed in the following sections; most notably, the views of study abroad participation through the lens of third parties, and how study abroad might affect the future ideal self in various capacities, including employment.

4.2.3. Perceptions of employment issues.

In comparing strong and weak groups (see Table 10), survey results reveal that significantly more respondents in the weak group (71.2%) want to work for one company for their whole career, compared to the strong group (46.4%).

Table 10

Desire for Life Employment with Only One Company (in %)

Lifetime employment?	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
Yes	56.6	46.4	71.2
No	43.4	53.6	28.8

Comparatively, numbers are almost identical between the strong and weak groups regarding the desire to participate in the job-hunting process while studying at university (Table 11), with marginally more respondents with strong intent having no interest in joining (4.3% to 1.5%). What the data in Table 11 indicate is that the vast majority of respondents (over 95%) in all three groups have at least some intention to participate in job hunting activities during their tenure at UoJ, as indicated by the “yes” and “maybe” responses. This is noteworthy since employment activities – such as information sessions and interviews – take place during the school year, and studying abroad participation could conflict.

Table 11

Intention to Job Hunt During Undergraduate Studies (in %)

Job hunt?	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
Yes	56.3	53.6	54.5

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No	4.8	4.3	1.5
Maybe	38.9	42.0	43.9

To establish more clarity on the impact that job-hunting activities might have on intention to study abroad, a survey item asked when respondents would most likely engage in the job-hunting process. As shown in Table 12, majorities across all three groups stated third year as the opportune time, with those having weak intent to study abroad demonstrating significantly more preference towards third year involvement (80.3%). Strong members seem more open to extending the job search to their fourth and final year. If most students do intend to job hunt in their third year, with a possible extension of seeking employment during their fourth, then this indicates a relatively short window of opportunity to study abroad during one's higher education experience. Evidence of this limited time frame is provided in Table 13, as a high percentage of strong members (72.5%) and weak members (84.9%) identify second year as the most desirable time to study abroad.

Table 12

Planned Year of Job Hunting (in %)

If job hunt yes, when?	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
1 st year	1.0	1.5	1.5
2 nd year	9.0	5.8	3.0
3 rd year	71.4	68.1	80.3
4 th year	18.6	24.6	15.2

Table 13

Ideal Year for Study Abroad (in %)

If study abroad, when?	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
1 st year	3.5	4.3	1.5
2 nd year	74.6	72.5	84.9
3 rd year	20.2	21.7	12.1
4 th year	1.6	1.5	1.5

With conflicting data regarding the impact of study abroad on the role of future career and job-hunting, participants were explicitly asked to comment on study abroad and employment issues in the qualitative email questionnaire phase:

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Conversation question 3: Do you think studying abroad for at least one semester would help or hurt your future job prospects? Explain with examples.

Conversation question 4: Has your desire or disinterest to work for one company your entire life influenced your intent to study abroad or not? Explain.

In the email questionnaire phase, all 10 participants indicated that study abroad would help future job prospects; however, some added caveats about the pre-existing conditions and attitudes that would need to exist in realizing such benefits. For example, S3 specifically mentioned a long-term desire to work abroad, while others expressed vague notions of how study abroad could improve English and cross-cultural skills that may be transferable to the job market. Stated reasons why study abroad may help future job prospects include the potential of participants facing new challenges (S1, S2), improving English ability (S2, S3, S5, W3), assimilating “real life English” skills (S3), understanding foreign culture (S2, S5, S6), developing problem-solving skills (S2), and experiencing successful interactions with future colleagues (S5). While weak-group members expressed agreement that study abroad could contribute to employability, rationales were either not explained (W1), or conditions were stated: “it will help my future career if I have a definite objective” (W2) and “I might be late graduating compared to my peers” (W3).

A significant difference between the strong and weak intent groups is the desire to work for a single company during one’s career. While 71.2% of the weak group desire lifetime employment, only 46.4% of the strong group have this aspiration (see Table 10 above). Of the 10 participants in the qualitative phase, two of six strong-intent members desire lifetime employment (S1, S5) while this sentiment is shared by three of four weak-intent members (W1, W3, W4). Of these five participants, not one stated that their desire for lifetime employment has affected their decision to study abroad, but W4 suggested a greater likelihood of “staying in Japan” to work at one company, as she feels this would provide the most stable future. Conversely, the five participants without desire for lifetime employment (S2, S3, S4, S6, W2) also claimed no connections between their professional endeavors and intention to study abroad. S4 expanded on this by claiming “I haven’t considered my future career yet”, so perhaps at this stage of a students’ life (first year university), such a question is frivolous for many. However, despite a desire to work for multiple companies over the course of her career, W2 connected the practice of job-hunting as being negatively perceived in Japan as “it might not give a good image in Japan”. This response suggests that there is

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some awareness that the practice of job-hunting in Japan and its corresponding societal pressures is a unique cultural attribute.

Perhaps more pertinent to the first-year student are the issues of sojourn length and timing, and the implications they may have. S6 mentioned the time commitment of study abroad and related it to job prospects. She articulated the idea of a limited window of opportunity to study abroad due to job hunting activities:

as long as I choose the right time to go, it won't hinder my job hunting... In Japan, third year students usually start job-hunting around summer vacation. I think students should come back to Japan by then so they can look back on their study abroad and find a good way to make good use of their experience.

A common theme of late graduation was mentioned amongst the weak group (W2, W3, W4), or the idea that studying abroad will result in the need to catch up on courses required to graduate upon returning from the sojourn. W2 added a caveat that study abroad would benefit future job prospects "only if I study abroad with a definite objective". He also mentioned

if I study abroad without any goals, or just because I'm interested in other countries, I think it's a waste of time and could ruin my job prospects. I actually experienced this when I studied abroad for one year when I was in the first year of high school. At the time, I didn't relate study abroad with my future career and as a result, the study abroad ended up being only a "good experience". Now I regret this and think I could have done it better.

W3 acknowledged the possibility of late graduation but suggested that language benefits of long-term study abroad would outweigh the negatives.

Based on the above analysis of the two types of data through the lens of the theoretical framework, themes are presented in Table 14, that connects the role study abroad might play in employment and employability. These include the two domains of self (ideal, ought) and integrativeness, or attitude towards the L2 group and a desire to get closer to it.

Table 14

Reflections Regarding Employment Issues

Theme	Example from participant
Ideal self	I will be able to improve my English ability, my understanding of a different culture, and my problem-solving ability. (S2) Those experiences will help you build a good relationship with your co-workers from other countries in the future, especially if you work for a

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	foreign company. (S5)
Ought self	my friends gave me advice that I might have to go to school longer if I don't get enough credit by the time I start job-hunting. I'm worried about that. (S4)
	I might be late graduating university compared to my peers. (W3)
integrativeness	Study abroad will help you acquire the language faster than when you are in Japan and allow you to understand a different culture. (S5)
	if you want to find a job overseas in the future, a long-term study abroad over one semester will help you a lot with understanding the lifestyle or customs of a different country. (S6)

4.2.4. International posture.

4.2.4.1. Correlation of study abroad intent and international posture.

As discussed in the methodology (3.6.2.2), the five individual variables composing international posture exhibit degrees of reliability considered as acceptable for this study. Data from the survey were used to determine correlation of study abroad intent with the individual elements of international posture. From Table 15, the Pearson correlation reveals that study abroad intent is significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) with all five variables, except ethnocentrism. Also, the five variables composing international posture are correlated with each other at the same 0.01 level, except ethnocentrism and interest in foreign affairs, which correlate at the 0.05 level. Overall, these results suggest that if a student can increase his or her international posture, then intention to study abroad should also increase.

Table 15

Correlations Among Study Abroad Intent and International Posture Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Study abroad intent	-					
2. Approach avoidance	.35**	-				
3. Interest international vocation	.51**	.54**	-			
4. Interest foreign affairs	.21**	.36**	.39**	-		
5. Ethnocentrism	.09	.37**	.32**	.14*	-	
6. Willingness to communicate	.3**	.52**	.49**	.6**	.27**	-
<i>Number</i>	311	311	311	311	311	311
<i>Mean</i>	23.3	30.8	24.7	15.2	16.7	20.9
<i>Std. Deviation</i>	6.3	5.1	5.9	3.7	3.6	5.1

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Of the significant correlations between study abroad intent and the international posture variables, the strongest relationship is with interest in international vocation (.51). It is also important to note that despite a weak correlation with study abroad intent, ethnocentrism has a significant correlation with approach avoidance tendency (.37) and interest in international vocation (.32). In developing questions in the email questionnaire that might provide insight into these ethnocentrism correlations, results from a one-way MANOVA are also considered.

4.2.4.2. MANOVA.

A MANOVA test is often performed to determine whether there are any differences between two independent groups on more than one continuous dependent variable. In this case, the objective was to generate understanding on whether there are differences amongst the five international posture variables in regards to the independent variable of study abroad intent. Specifically, the MANOVA aims to identify whether there is a significant difference between the mean scores of international posture variables for the weak and strong groups. This independent variable consists of two independent groups – those with strong intent to study abroad and those with weak intent. Since this study involves only two groups, no additional post-hoc test was needed. Table 16 shows the descriptive statistics of international posture scores for the two groups.

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics for International Posture

Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
International Posture	Strong	118.0	17.5	69
	Weak	96.4	13.4	66
Approach-avoidance	Strong	33.2	4.8	69
	Weak	27.8	4.7	66
Interest international vocation	Strong	28.3	5.6	69
	Weak	24.2	5.1	66
Interest foreign affairs	Strong	16.7	3.8	69
	Weak	13.9	3.4	66
Ethnocentrism	Strong	17.0	4.1	69
	Weak	16.1	3.5	66
Willingness to communicate	Strong	22.8	6.0	69
	Weak	18.6	4.0	66

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In executing the MANOVA, the assumption of homogeneity of variance (as tested by Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance and Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices) was not violated; therefore, Wilks' Lambda is reported for significant values. Results of the MANOVA reveal a significant multivariate effect $F(5,129) = 18.68, p < .0005$, which indicates that there is a significant difference in international posture scores between the two groups, found in the direction of strong intent. In other words, the strong intent group has significantly higher international posture scores than the weak intent group, meaning that international posture has an influence on the students' intention to study abroad.

Given the significance of the overall test, differences in each dependent variable (i.e. univariate main effects) were examined and are presented in Table 17. This table reveals that there are significant univariate effects for approach-avoidance, $F(1:133) = 44.4, p < .0005$; interest in international vocation, $F(1:133) = 81.9, p < .0005$; interest in foreign affairs, $F(1:133) = 19.5, p < .0005$; willingness to communicate, $F(1:133) = 22.8, p < .0005$; and no significant effect for ethnocentrism $F(1:133) = 1.9, p = .17$. Therefore, the strong intent group has significantly higher scores than the weak intent group on all variables, with the exception of ethnocentrism, as well as international posture as a whole.

Table 17

Univariate Test Results

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>n</i> ²
<i>International posture</i>				
Approach-avoidance	44.4	1	.00	.25
Interest international vocation	81.9	1	.00	.38
Interest foreign affairs	19.5	1	.00	.13
Ethnocentrism	1.9	1	.17	.01
Willingness to communicate	22.8	1	.00	.15

Note. *df* = degrees of freedom; *Sig.* = significance; *n*² = eta squared

In summary, the MANOVA indicates that (a) the strong group has significantly higher international posture than the weak group, (b) there are significant differences between strong and weak groups as they relate to four of five international posture variables, and (c) there is not a significant difference in the fifth variable (ethnocentrism) between strong intent and weak intent groups.

4.2.4.3. Ethnocentrism.

In the quantitative data analysis, ethnocentrism was the only international posture variable that showed no significant difference when comparing the strong and weak intent groups. This outcome elicits questions, such as “do most Japanese students, regardless of study abroad intent, exhibit some degree of ethnocentrism?” and “is there a more profound explanation of why those with strong intent hold similar ethnocentric beliefs to those with weak intent?”. The qualitative email questionnaire phase of the study aimed to determine whether participant explanations or rationales could help explain this discrepancy.

Ethnocentrism can generally be defined as the act of interpreting and evaluating the behavior of others based on one’s own standards; however, I employ an interpretation that is more relevant to the context of this study and the items that compose ethnocentrism in the international posture instrument, that is, “a bias toward the in group that causes us to evaluate different patterns of behavior negatively, rather than try to understand them” (Gudykunst, 1991, pp. 66-67). In the initial qualitative phase, questions were omitted that might directly seek to elicit ethnocentric beliefs and attitudes, under the rationale that it would be more representative and genuine if such sentiments emerged naturally. While certain responses did reflect elements of ethnocentrism (e.g. “big crimes don’t happen in Japan”), such beliefs were limited in frequency in the initial exchange of questions and answers. Consequentially, follow-up questions were designed and sent to all email questionnaire participants:

- Based on your experiences abroad and/or interactions with non-Japanese people, how do you think Japanese society and culture compares with those abroad?
- Based on your experiences abroad and/or interactions with non-Japanese people, what do you think are foreign values? To what extent are you able to understand them? To what extent could you assimilate them?
- How would you feel about integrating into a foreign culture long-term (i.e. not just for a limited time during study abroad)?
- What did you (or would you) miss about Japan if you lived overseas for a significant period of time (e.g. study abroad)?

Of the participants who replied to these follow-up questions (all except S1 and W1), one common ethnocentric trait that emerged from both groups related to comfort. Comments ranged from “Japanese people always strain for comfort. I think it is a Japanese value” (W3)

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to “I missed taking long hot showers. It made me feel that Japan is very convenient and comfortable” (S2), with respondents in both groups echoing similar sentiments (S5, S6, W2).

Samples of responses from the participants are found in Table 18 and they have been coded into two themes, or positions, that reflect ethnocentric and assimilating tendencies: ethnocentrism and acculturation. Acculturation involves the psychological process of adjusting to the different elements of another culture (Berry, 2003; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, Szapocznik, 2010).

Table 18

Ethnocentrism Related Commentary

Theme	Example from participant
Ethnocentrism	Japanese people don't seem to trust products in other countries, like medicine. (S2)
	There's a belief that everything Japanese is better quality. (S2)
	Japanese food outside Japan is strange. (S4)
	It is difficult for me to assimilate foreign values. I think I can't integrate into a foreign country long term. I miss Japanese comfort technology such as a warm toilet seat. I want foreign people to install Japanese technology and culture for comfort. (S5)
	Japanese people want to live in comfort, so they keep their own space clean. (S6)
	While abroad I missed Japanese people's skill to read between the lines. (W2)
	I had something stolen from me, so this made me miss Japan. (W4)
Acculturation	I realized that it is ok to have different opinions and act differently. (S2)
	Japanese adopt foreign cultures they consider as good, enjoyable, or useful. For example, Japanese people enjoy Christmas, Halloween, and Valentine's Day in a Japanese original way. (S3)
	Japanese people tend to accept foreign cultures more easily compared with foreigners. There can be an influence of Meiji era ideology, which embraced change. (S5)
	Many Japanese acknowledge that their culture has been greatly influenced by Chinese culture and American culture. (S5)

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From analysis of this data and in comparing beliefs between those with strong intent to study abroad and those with weak intent, trends and patterns are difficult to identify since both groups exhibit ethnocentric and assimilating traits. This mirrors the survey results that indicate no correlation or significant differences when comparing ethnocentric or acculturation tendencies between the two groups. If one concludes that all Japanese students are similar in their ethnocentric views, then curriculum focused on reducing the influence of ethnocentrism should be considered. What would such a curriculum look like? Is it possible to reduce ethnocentric tendencies? If so, would this make a student more likely to engage in international opportunities? This warrants further investigation and discussion, found in chapter 5.

4.3. Subjective Norms

Subjective norms represent the second element of the theory of planned behavior as it involves the perceived pressure from others to perform an action. This is reflected in Figure 6, where I highlight the path of subjective norms and intention.

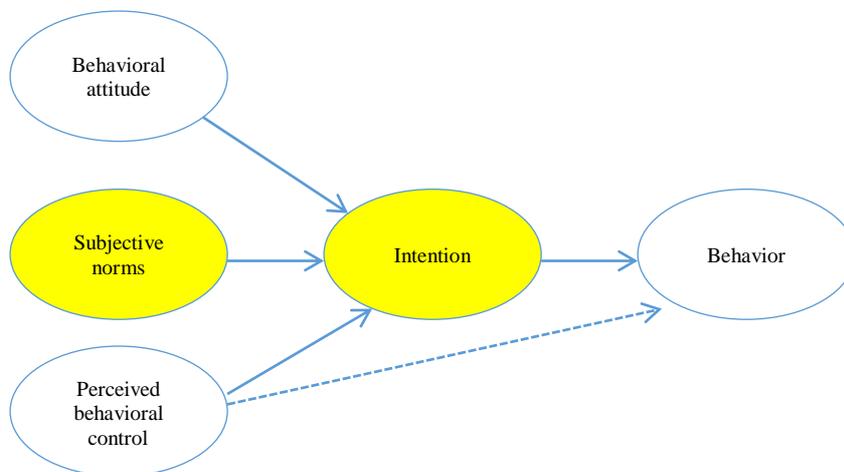


Figure 6. Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior: subjective norms path.

Based on the literature in Japan and abroad, this investigation identifies multiple people and social environments that could play a role in influencing a student's decision to study abroad. From the quantitative survey results, the following questions were devised for the email questionnaire phase:

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5. To what extent do your family members encourage and discourage you to study abroad? Explain with examples.
6. To what extent do your friends encourage and discourage you to study abroad? Explain with examples.
7. Aside from friends and family, what other people in your life have encouraged and/or discouraged you to study abroad? Explain with examples.
8. What kind(s) of club or circle are you involved in? Has your involvement made you more likely or less likely to study abroad? No impact? Explain with examples.
9. What role has your major (e.g. humanities, business) had on your intention to study abroad? Has it made you more likely to study abroad? Less likely? No impact? Explain with examples.

4.3.1. Family influence.

In the survey, respondents were asked whether they have family members who have previously studied abroad. Also, questions were posed to identify living arrangements and the majority provider of one's tuition. As seen in Tables 19 to 21 there are some consistent numbers between the strong and weak intent groups, most notably, the tendency of parents to pay for higher education (89.8% and 86.4% respectively – Table 19) and the likelihood that Japanese students live with their family (79.7% and 77.3% respectively – Table 20). However, notable outcomes emerge about family members with study abroad experience as only 27% of strong group family members studied abroad, compared to 37.9% of weak group family members, which may seem counter-intuitive (see Table 21).

Table 19

Funding for Majority of Respondent's University Tuition (in %)

Tuition payments	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
Parents and family	88.4	89.8	86.4
Personal savings	.6	1.5	0
Bank loan	.6	0	1.5
Academic scholarship	10.0	8.7	12.1
Don't know	.3	0	0

Table 20

Respondent's Current Living Arrangements (in %)

Living arrangements	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
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Live with family	74.9	79.7	77.3
Student dorm – private	1.0	0	0
Student dorm – shared	.3	0	0
Apartment – private	20.9	18.8	22.7
Apartment – shared	2.9	1.4	0

Table 21

Family Members Who Have Studied Abroad (in %)

Study abroad family members?	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
Yes	25.8	27.0	37.9
No	69.2	67.6	54.5
Don't know	5.1	5.4	7.6

Questions in the email questionnaire were designed to generate qualitative data that might contribute to a better understanding of these quantitative survey findings:

Conversation Question 5: To what extent do your family members encourage and discourage you to study abroad? Explain with examples.

This question, asked to all 10 email questionnaire participants, was specifically designed to address the outcome of the weak study abroad group having more family members who have previously studied abroad (37.9 to 27%). Of the email questionnaire participants, strong group members had no family members who previously participated, while one weak member (W4) had family who took part. This participant claimed being discouraged by the family member about studying in “dangerous” countries and those with strong dialects “like Australia”, or in countries that are too expensive. A follow-up question was asked to this participant to determine the type of experience his family member had and how this may have affected his decision. His reply claimed that his father “enjoyed the experience, but didn’t explicitly benefit”.

When asked about familial support and roles in study abroad intention, responses amongst the strong group were ambiguous or they expressed different degrees of support. For example, “my parents don’t disagree with my studying abroad” (S1) to more specific rationales, such as “I think they are very favorable to study abroad compared to other parents” (S3). Also, there was a connection made between family support to studying abroad and improvements to English (S1, S4). Since family is often relied on for academic-related funds,

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there was mention of taking shorter stints abroad for financial reasons (S2) or avoiding Western countries because of the high costs of living (S5). With strong members showing a greater likelihood of past study abroad experience, S3 and S4 described parents' willingness to fund previous sojourns while S5 confirmed family support by saying "my family allows me to make all decisions about study abroad. In my father's opinion, even if I can't improve my English ability so much through study abroad, it will be a good experience, so I should go". S6 explained how his family does not recommend study abroad, yet they support him now that he has a specific goal. Even in the weak group, members expressed autonomy in making the decision to study abroad. W2 described his parents "strongly recommending" long-term study abroad for future professional reasons; however, he has declined because he currently has no "goal and purpose". W3's mother thinks study abroad is a good idea, even for a short period of time.

4.3.2. Influence of friends and acquaintances.

As shown in Table 22, nearly all members of the strong group have friends who previously studied abroad (95.7%), while the weak group members exhibit a lower number (87.9%).

Table 22

Have Respondent's Friends Previously Studied Abroad (in %)

Friends study abroad?	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
Yes	89.1	95.7	87.9
No	7.7	2.9	7.6
Don't know	3.2	1.4	4.5

To gain clarity on the role that friends might play in the personal decisions to engage in a sojourn abroad, a question was posed to the email questionnaire participants:

Conversation question 6: To what extent do your friends encourage and discourage you to study abroad? Explain with examples.

Based on the data, all email questionnaire participants, with the exception of S3, cited having friends who engaged in study abroad. S1 commented that friends perceive study

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abroad as “cool but tough”, though this has not dissuaded her. Some participants expressed encouragement by friends (S2, W4) while others offered specific reasons articulated by acquaintances, such as improved English skills (S5) and cultural knowledge (S5). Several participants suggested that they made the decision exclusively on their own volition or that friends had no influence on their decision to study abroad or not (S3, S6, W1, W2). Some evidence was given where friends indirectly discouraged study abroad by bemoaning the costs (S4, W4) or dangers, such as terrorism (S5), or even the missing of important events, like the coming-of-age ceremony (S6) or entrance exams (W2). W3 stated she is being encouraged to study abroad with a friend, but that she ultimately will not.

Initial analysis of the data relating to the subjective norm of friends and family suggests they generally play a more positive role in influencing participation. Since W1 and W2 claimed that friends “neither encouraged nor discouraged” them and W3 and W4 said that friends encouraged them, identifying subjective norms that influence the intent to study abroad remains inconclusive when solely evaluating the role of friends. To extend this enquiry, the following question was given to all email questionnaire participants:

Conversation question 7: Aside from friends and family, what other people in your life have encouraged and/or discouraged you to study abroad? Explain with examples.

This question was designed to identify other players involved in one’s intention to study abroad; however, most expressed no other influences outside of family and friends (S1, S2, S3, W1, W3). S4 and S6 mentioned a high school teacher playing a positive role but W2 was strongly discouraged to study abroad in high school by teachers, as they were told it would interfere with preparations for their university entrance exams. W4 experienced similar pressure to not go abroad until after university entrance exams were complete, though she was encouraged to join an international academic sojourn “at some point”, especially if she had a better idea of her career trajectory. I sought clarification from W2 and W4 by following up with “did the advice of your teachers to avoid study abroad in high school affect your intention to study abroad in university?”. W2 simply answered “not really” without elaboration, while W4 reiterated her desire to focus on studies domestically since she lacks “purpose”.

One participant (S5) commented how “people at her workplace” encourage her to go abroad for academic purposes. I asked the follow-up question “what kind of place do you work and what is the background of your colleagues who encourage you to study abroad?”.

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She replied that this was at a cram school with senior students from “higher-level universities”. The power dynamic exhibited in this exemplar instills a feeling of ideal and ought self as she could potentially reach the levels of her seniors (*sempai*) by engaging in the same experiences.

Not one participant mentioned anyone employed by their current HEI as playing a role in their intention to study abroad by either encouraging or discouraging them. Survey respondents in this study are first-year students; however, results suggest that they may not be getting the encouragement within the institution that stakeholders at top governmental levels want, considering the internationalization initiatives that are in play.

4.3.3. Influence of club activities.

During the higher education experience in Japan, students make friends and acquaintances through their club activities (Cave, 2004). As discussed in the literature review (2.5.5.), involvement in clubs or circles has a unique social aesthetic when compared to joining similar clubs in countries such as Canada or the United States. Since involvement in clubs at the highest level has been identified as a barrier to study abroad in the American context (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015), it is an issue worthy of exploration in Japan. From the survey item asking respondents about their involvement and time commitment to clubs, there are slight, but not significant differences between groups (see Table 23).

Table 23

Time Commitment to School Clubs (in %)

Hours	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
0 – 4	58.8	63.8	57.6
5 – 9	24.4	18.8	27.3
10 – 14	10.6	10.1	6.1
15 – 19	2.6	4.3	1.5
20+	3.5	2.9	7.6

To further explore a possible lack of connection between university extra-curricular activity and intention to study abroad, a question was designed for the email questionnaire participants who indicated involvement in club activity in the survey phase:

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Conversation question 8: What kind(s) of club or circle are you involved in? Has your involvement made you more likely or less likely to study abroad? No impact? Explain with examples.

Results show only one strong intent group member (S6) and two weak intent members (W1 and W3) as active in a club. S6 made a connection between study abroad acting as a facilitator to success in their club: the English Speaking Society. Of the weak group, W1 is part of the musical band and W3 is a member of the art club. The former said there is no connection between his intent and band membership, while the latter claimed to being tempted by study abroad based on the stories of more senior members of her club who did participate. In all three cases, the club activity claims five to nine hours of the participants' time per week, which indicates a moderate to high degree of participation.

4.3.4. Influence of study majors and faculty.

Research has concluded that students in certain fields may be more inclined to study abroad and that students with more willingness to study abroad generally perceive international sojourns as complementary to one's focus of study (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015; Salisbury et al., 2010). This influence could stem from not only the course content, but also subjective norms, such as classmates and professors who teach the classes. In investigating the impact that one's major may have amongst those at UoJ, Table 24 indicates significantly more interest in study abroad from respondents in humanities and economics and significantly lower intention amongst those enrolled in sociology and business.

Table 24

Respondent Schools of Study (in %)

Faculty	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
Humanities	33.8	43.5	30.3
Sociology	18.0	17.4	25.8
Law & Politics	16.7	10.1	15.2
Economics	14.8	15.9	10.6
Business	14.1	10.1	16.7
Human Welfare	2.6	2.9	1.5

To provide clarity to these results, the following question was asked of all participants

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in the qualitative email questionnaire phase:

Conversation question 9: What role has your major (e.g. humanities, business) had on your intention to study abroad? Has it made you more likely to study abroad? Less likely? No impact? Explain with examples.

Despite the relatively small sample size, results from the email questionnaire can contribute to understanding the relationship between study abroad and faculty of study. S1, majoring in psychology, worried about falling behind other students since she would miss psychology “training classes”. Conversely, another psychology major (S2) believes study abroad would benefit his studies. Since he is often asked to read English papers, he thinks time spent abroad would improve his skills and the ability to comprehend class materials. Some explicitly made connections between their discipline and study abroad, such as S3, who studies human welfare and is inspired to visit developing countries to investigate child poverty. S5 studies British and American literature, so she is interested in visiting the UK or US. Others expressed no connection between their intention to study abroad and their major (S4, S6, W1, W2, W3, W4).

4.3.5. Summary of subjective norms findings.

In Table 25, the data generated from the five conversation questions above clearly show the impact of subjective norms, particularly the influence of family and friends, and to a lesser extent, colleagues and instructors. Through the lens of the self-discrepancy theory and L2 acquisition models, the triangulation of themes highlights the role of desired future self and the impact that study abroad might have. Themes that were identified in the analysis include attitudes towards the learning situation, ideal (L2) self and ought-to (L2) self.

Table 25

Influence of Subjective Norm

Theme	Example from participant
Attitudes towards learning situation (study abroad)	My parents were always happy to support my study abroad. I think they are very favorable to study abroad compared to other parents. (S3) (My parents) became very worried about (study abroad) after the ISIS terrorist attacks happened. (S6)

	(My parents) won't allow me to study in dangerous countries. (W4)
Ideal (L2) self	I study human welfare so I want to visit countries to investigate child poverty. (S3)
	I study British and American literature so I want to study in the UK or US. (S5)
Ought-to (L2) self	My friends often encourage me to study abroad as they think I can gain a new perspective and see many different places as they have. (S2)
	In my father's opinion, even if I can't improve my English ability so much through study abroad, it will be a good experience anyway so I should go. (S4)
	However, there was only one friend who asked me not to go or change the time to go study abroad because he wanted to attend the Coming-of-Age ceremony with me. (S6)
	My parents often tell me not to worry about the cost, and say I should study in a different country if I want. They also gave me advice that I should be careful when choosing a country to study because some countries, like Australia, have a strong dialect. (W4)

4.4. Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control involves the regarded difficulty or ease that one may have if performing an action or behavior. This is reflected in Figure 7, where I highlight the contribution that perceived behavioral control has on intent, and possibly also directly with behavior.

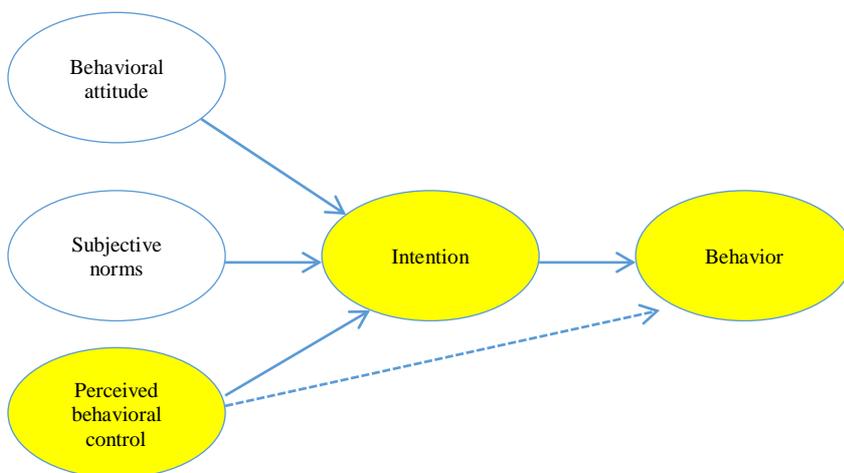


Figure 7. Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behavior: perceived behavioral control path.

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This path can involve influence of past experience as well as anticipated obstacles in achieving success. Perceived behavioral control could directly result in behavior, especially in a situation where a student has had successful experience studying abroad or interacting with foreigners, and if the means (e.g. financial, temporal, opportunistic) are disposable. Various factors could influence projected success in study abroad; for instance, favorable or unfavorable outcomes in language classes, language proficiency tests, past experiences visiting foreign countries, and possibly even past experiences studying abroad. These factors were explored through the survey and the proceeding email questionnaire questions that were crafted based on the survey results:

10. Do you think the university and your English classes are adequately preparing you for intercultural experiences, such as world travel, study abroad or talking with foreigners at UoJ? Why or why not? Give examples.
11. Do you feel your current English ability is adequate to successfully study abroad? Explain with examples.
12. How has your past experience living and/or studying abroad affected your current intention to study abroad or not?

4.4.1. Impact of perceived ability and L2 class experience.

Inherent in all Japanese study abroad candidates is the need to utilize an L2 (usually English) with some degree of proficiency. In comparing the strong and weak intent groups, survey questions were asked to identify possible differences in English proficiency and attitude. Data reveal 30.4% of strong group members have a TOEIC score of over 651 (out of a maximum of 990), while only 15.2% of weak group members have this score (see Table 26).

Table 26
Respondent TOEIC Scores (in %)

TOEIC	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
more than 651	18.6	30.4	15.2
601-650	19.6	20.3	19.7
551-600	15.8	13.1	13.6
501-550	22.5	15.9	24.2
451-500	13.8	11.6	16.7

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400-450	8.7	7.2	9.1
Less than 400	1.0	1.4	1.5

Achievement in language proficiency tests, such as TOEIC, could result in increased confidence to successfully engage in and complete an academic overseas sojourn. To extend this exploration, the L2 classroom experience is considered to determine how in-class achievement and knowledge acquisition might contribute to perceived behavioral control. For example, is curriculum helping develop cross-cultural skills that could, in theory, influence willingness to study abroad? Since this would be difficult to establish by quantitative means (i.e. a survey), it was introduced in the email questionnaire phase with the following question:

Conversation question 10: Do you think the university and your English classes are adequately preparing you for intercultural experiences, such as world travel, study abroad, or talking with foreigners at UoJ? Why or why not? Give examples.

Participants in both groups were split regarding their beliefs of whether language classes adequately prepare them for intercultural experiences. Some answered “not at all” due to their tendency of using Japanese in class with their classmates (S1, S2). Also, S4 bemoaned that not enough variations of words are taught and that “most classes don’t focus on practical English for proper communication (when abroad)”. This same participant values special external English language classes (*eikaiwa*) more than those at UoJ. While these answers specifically refer to the Intensive English classes that are taught three times a week, others believe the small specialty classes (e.g. communication, reading) offered by UoJ are more effective in achieving language goals (S3). Others reflected positively on their Intensive English class, in addition to activities outside of class that allow for cross-cultural interactions. One UoJ-sanctioned bi-monthly event called “coffee hour” involves both Japanese and foreign exchange students who congregate on campus with the intention of socializing in English. One participant claimed that Japanese students remain fairly passive during these interactions as they only involve “hearing interesting stories of countries where those people came from” (S5).

As for the participants with weak intent to study abroad, there was a greater degree of negativity in the responses regarding language classes, for example, “they don’t intend to prepare us for international experiences” (W1). In relating the qualitative data to the contemporary internationalization goals of Japanese institutions, W2 believes her classes “are

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preparing us well for international business situations, but not for travel, study abroad, etc.”. As a follow-up question, this participant was asked by email if a class focused more on study abroad or travel would affect her intention to study abroad, and she conceded that this approach might “give (her) more purpose and motivation to study abroad”. Also, W2 elaborated that her class focuses on business English situations, such as conducting meetings and making business phone calls, which she found impractical and not relevant to her future ambitions. W3 and W4 believed classes are not adequately preparing them for intercultural experiences due to the lack of practicality. These responses present the possibility that existing curriculum might discourage study abroad participation by creating negative impressions of the L2 and foreign community.

4.4.2. role and relationship of L2 ability and anxiety.

In the survey data, respondents indicated “assimilation of L2 skills” as the second most significant benefit of study abroad (Table 6), while “current low level of L2” represents the second most significant deterrent (Table 8). This raises a pertinent question of how prospective sojourners might apply abilities in authentic L2 situations. To help understand the role that L2 classes and perceived ability play in preparing one for study abroad and cross-cultural contact, the following question was asked:

Conversation question 11: Do you feel your current English ability is adequate to successfully study abroad? Explain with examples.

From examining the results of the qualitative investigation, those with strong intent to study abroad do not seem to exhibit significantly greater confidence in using the L2 than those with weak intent. S1 claimed “I am not adequately prepared to successfully study abroad, I should improve my vocabulary and listening comprehension”, while S6 similarly bemoaned their lack of skill with “I’m still not good. I’m very slow to read English sentences, and can’t understand English conversations”. Despite having strong intention to study abroad, S5 said “I don’t think my current English ability is good enough for study abroad”. S3 exhibited greater confidence; however, she credits that confidence to her propensity to communicate with teachers in English and to “guide foreigners who are lost”. This has culminated in a dynamic where she “can communicate with people in English to a certain degree”. Furthermore, there seems to be a perceived discrepancy between English ability on

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paper (e.g. TOEIC and TOEFL scores) and actual ability, as S6 claimed that “my TOEFL score meets the requirement for study abroad, but in terms of my English ability and communication skills, there is still room for improvement”.

There is evidence that perceived confidence is based on critical incidents. For example, W4 described a scenario where she helped a lost tourist and concluded that “(t)his is why I think I’m close to having an adequate level”. On the contrary, negative incidents seem to play a role in perceived L2 inadequacies, which may impact intent. For instance, W3 is quite sure that her level is insufficient, as she claimed “I often have times I can’t understand what my teachers say in English class”. Listening skills also trouble W1 as he described an “English ability far from accurate”. W2 expressed some confidence in using English to meet people; however, when watching videos in English without Japanese subtitles, she has to watch them “over and over”, which causes frustrations.

Based on conversation questions 11 and 12, discussed above, attitudes towards the classroom learning experience and perceived behavioral control are highlighted in Table 27. Results are categorized on intersecting themes from the L2 motivational self system (L2 learning experience), as well as perceived ease and difficulty, as dictated by perceived behavioral control.

Table 27

Reported Relationship Between L2 Ability and Study Abroad Intent

L2 learning experience	I think they are not adequately preparing me. No matter how hard I try, I tend to speak more Japanese than English at school because most students are Japanese and it is natural to speak Japanese. Sometimes using English is shameful. (S1)
	(In class) the students are all Japanese so we don’t really interact with our native teacher and each other in English. (S2)
	I think they are preparing us well for international business situations, but not for travel, study abroad, etc. (W2)
	I don’t think they are preparing us well for our intercultural experiences because the English we learn in the class is not practical. (W3)
Perceived behavioral control - ease	From when I was in junior high, I have liked to talk to assistant language teachers or guide foreigners who got lost in English. This gives me confidence to study abroad. (S3)
	I think my current English ability is good enough for having daily conversation or making friends with native English speakers. (W2)

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	A foreigner once asked me whether his train ticket was the right one for the line. I could guide him and chat a little bit which means at least I have the ability to communicate and help people in English. This is why I think I'm close to having an adequate level. (W4)
Perceived behavioral control - difficulty	If I study abroad, I won't be able to understand what people say or express myself most of the time. (S1) I feel like my listening and speaking ability is not good enough. This makes me nervous about studying abroad. (S2) I feel like I have an English ability far from adequate. I'm not good at listening. (W1) I can't say I will be able to understand university classes well in English and get a satisfactory grade. When I watched a lecture of an American university online, it was hard for me to understand it without Japanese subtitles and I had to watch it over and over. (W2) My current English ability wouldn't be good enough for a successful study abroad. I often have times I can't understand what my teachers say in English classes and I'm sometimes nervous to speak in English. (W3)

In various instances, participants in the qualitative phase expressed feelings of shame or nervousness in using English, thus indicating the existence of foreign language anxiety. Foreign language anxiety has been identified as a deterrent to using English for Japanese students due to perceived lack of skill and fear of negative evaluation (Kitano, 2001). In exploring the role that language anxiety might play in intention to study abroad and international posture, participants in the email discussion follow-up phase were asked specifically about English use and situations that might cause feelings of uneasiness, apprehension, or anxiety:

- How do you feel when speaking English to someone you are meeting for the first time?
- How do you feel when using English in English class? Outside of English class? With other Japanese people? With foreign people? What are the differences?

Language anxiety was only explicitly investigated by follow-up questions, but results indicate different perceptions of anxiety-inducing L2 situations. Data is represented in Table 28 and is based on the L2 motivational self system's L2 learning experience, organized in

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categories of L2 output location: inside classroom in Japan, outside classroom in Japan, and outside Japan.

Table 28

Reports of Language Anxiety in the L2

Theme	Example from participant
L2 learning experience - Japanese classroom	I'm comfortable using English in class with my classmates, because that is the purpose of English class. (S4)
L2 learning experience – outside class in Japan	<p>I do get nervous about using English outside of class when other Japanese people are there. I am afraid that people will think of me as someone who speaks English with confidence, but who speaks poorly. (S3)</p> <p>I don't want to use English that is too good in front of my Japanese friends or they might think I'm showing off. But if I make a mistake, they also might make fun of me. (S4)</p> <p>I get excited about the idea of speaking to foreigners but I worry about saying something rude because I am not proficient at English. (S6)</p> <p>While I was with my friends, I once asked a foreigner who looked lost whether he needed any help. My friends teased me later for being good at English. (W2)</p>
L2 learning experience – outside Japan	<p>I was comfortable speaking English to my Japanese friends while we were studying abroad because all the locals around us were also speaking English. (S3)</p> <p>When studying abroad, I used English when talking with Japanese friends, and I didn't feel weird about it. (W2)</p>

4.4.3. Role of prior international experience.

When discussing self-selection in study abroad, multiple reports have defined self-selecting students as those who have prior experience with study abroad. Despite the downward trend of study abroad participation amongst Japanese higher education students, there has been an increase amongst those enrolled in high school and junior high school (Education Tour Institute, 2012). Considering this, it is perhaps expected that 36.2% of the strong group has prior study abroad experience, compared to only 21.2% of the weak group (see Table 29). Furthermore, there is a significant discrepancy in number of countries visited

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when comparing strong and weak intent groups: 37.9% of weak members have never been outside of Japan, while this number is only 17.4% for the strong group members (see Table 30)

Table 29

Prior Experience Studying Abroad (in %)

Past study abroad English?	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
Yes	30.5	36.2	21.2
No	69.5	63.8	78.8

Table 30

Number of Countries Visited (in %)

Countries visited	Total (N=311)	Strong (N=69)	Weak (N=66)
0	28.3	17.4	37.9
1-2	43.4	44.9	39.4
3-4	17.7	24.6	10.6
5-6	6.8	5.8	6.1
7-9	1.6	4.4	0
10+	2.3	2.9	6.1

To gain more understanding of the international experiences that might have a direct influence on intention to study abroad, the following email questionnaire question was presented only to participants who indicated in the survey that they had prior experience living or studying abroad:

Conversation question 12: How has your past experience living and studying abroad affected your current intention to study abroad or not?

This question was specifically designed to extend the understanding of self-selection in the Japanese context. Of the participants in the email questionnaire, three strong intent members (S3, S5, S6) had prior experience compared to only one member of the weak intent group (W2). In examining the responses, S3 wants to build on her prior international experience, which she had while her father was conducting business in America. More specifically, she wants to harness the benefits of study abroad and promote her experience as “a strength” in future personal and professional endeavors. Furthermore, she confirmed that

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prior international experience “has affected my desire to study abroad”. S5 expressed a similar sentiment by describing a three-week living abroad experience as “a major turning point in my life” and that it “extremely widened my perspective; however, I want to study abroad again to broaden my horizons more than ever before”. S6 shared memories from a one-month study abroad experience in Australia, and attributed her strong study abroad intent to wanting to expand on her improvements in English that she made while in Australia, at a time when she “couldn’t speak much English”. Based on these responses, one can identify a relationship with past study abroad experience and intention to study abroad for an additional period of time. Of the weak group, the one participant (W2) who previously studied abroad believed that doing so again would be for “shallow” reasons. In a follow-up question, this participant was asked to define what she meant by “shallow”, to which she replied “I don’t want to waste my parents’ money since I don’t have a strong enough reason or purpose to go” while adding “I believe it will become a big mistake if you decide to study abroad just because you are interested in it”. Responses from both quantitative and qualitative phases of the research provide a solid base of data in which the research questions can begin to be addressed.

4.5. Summary

By using the theory of planned behavior as the overarching construct in presenting results, along with corresponding data aligned with the self-discrepancy theory and L2 acquisition models, the findings shown in this chapter represent the basis for the forthcoming discussion and conclusion chapters. In moving forward with the discussion and impact, I will refer to the most notable results presented in this section to suggest how the three components of the theory of planned behavior may, in fact, converge into intention and ultimately behavior. From the results, the reader can begin to identify some of the factors that differentiate those with strong intent to study abroad from those with weak intent. The data also provide insight into helping establish a suitable definition of self-selection that can be applied to Japanese higher education students with strong intent to study abroad. Finally, based on the data, there appears to be an opportunity for UoJ to reconsider its domestic language curriculum so that students may be better prepared for cross-cultural experiences that, in turn, could result in greater interest and participation in international opportunities.

Chapter 5. Discussion and Impact

This chapter aims to provide a discussion of the results in answering the study's three research questions:

- 1) Which factors differentiate those with strong intent to study abroad from those with weak intent?
 - 1a) To what extent, if any, is there a relationship between study abroad intent and the perceived benefits and barriers of study abroad?
 - 1b) To what extent, if any, is there a relationship between study abroad intent and international posture?
- 2) In the Japanese context, what could be a suitable definition of *self-selection* that could be applied to those with strong intent to study abroad?
- 3) Is there a need for UoJ to revise its second language curriculum to better prepare students for cross-cultural experiences?
 - 3a) If so, how?

Questions are addressed through the lens of the theoretical framework. Originally, I expected the qualitative component to play a secondary complementary role to the quantitative survey data; however, the process yielded data that resulted in both types contributing equally to answering the research questions.

5.1. Differentiating Strong and Weak Intent Members

The first research question and two sub-questions are organized and answered based on the three constructs of the theory of planned behavior: behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985). In some cases, when differences contribute to a definition of self-selection (the focus of the second research question), they are initially mentioned here, but discussed in greater detail in section 5.2. The previous chapter revealed how strong and weak intent groups compare, but this chapter offers analysis of why differences manifest and how this may be influenced by Japanese culture and higher education practices.

Throughout this chapter, the importance of goal-oriented (or goal-directed) behavior in the decision to study abroad becomes evident. In previous studies, goal-oriented behavior has been aligned with and added to the theory of planned behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001) to investigate the phenomena of travel habit (Kim, Lee, Lee, & Song, 2012; Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2000). Defined as “behavior oriented toward attaining a particular goal” it is posited that goal-oriented behavior materializes when a person “engages in detour behavior when it encounters obstacles to the goal” (Psychology Dictionary, 2016). Detour behavior, for the purposes of this paper, involves a belief that perceived barriers to study abroad are surmountable, thus triggering action to overcome the barrier. Goal-directed behavior, in theory, leads to goal-directed actions where “an agent desires the goal and believes that the behavior in question will achieve the goal” (de Wit & Dickinson, 2009). Similar to the action of travel – which is volitional, goal-directed, and involving engagement with foreign phenomena (Kim et al., 2011) – it is assumed that goal behavior plays a similar role in study abroad intent. The role of purpose, meaning, and goal-oriented behavior is a recurring theme that will be discussed in this section of the thesis.

5.1.1. Behavioral attitudes.

In many aspects, a clear contrast between strong and weak intent groups is established through the triangulation of literature and mixed-methods research. Under the theme of behavioral attitudes, differences are discussed relating to (a) perception of benefits and barriers, (b) perception of employment and ambitions, and (c) international posture.

5.1.1.1. Perception of benefits and barriers.

Research question 1a involves the differences between the strong and weak intent group relating to perceived benefits and barriers to study abroad. The question is predominantly addressed here, although relevant insight is also offered in 5.1.1.2. and 5.1.1.3. When comparing the perceived benefits of study abroad across the three targeted groups (all, strong, weak), the rankings are similar; however, for every option, the strong group interprets the potential benefit as being more beneficial, and perhaps more motivating, than those in the weak group (see Table 6). In terms of the rankings, there are discrepancies. One involves the perceived value between “global mindedness” and “learning about foreign culture”. For strong intent members, global mindedness is ranked as the second most significant benefit

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(M=5.86) while weak members rank it fifth (M=5.03). On the other hand, weak members rank foreign culture learning as the third most significant benefit while strong members rank it fourth. Since the survey data indicate that strong group members have greater exposure to foreign phenomena, an explanation of the varying perceptions of global mindedness could be that those with strong intent have already learned about foreign culture, to some capacity, thus making global mindedness the next sequential and sought-after step. From the viewpoint of weak intent members, they possibly place greater priority on simply learning foreign culture since they do not see themselves applying the knowledge to a future ambition, purpose, or ideal/ought self. To further illustrate this, and to support the notion that students are more inclined to study abroad if they have pre-existing intercultural competences (Daly, 2011), learning about foreign culture would be categorized under Byram's (1997) aspect of intercultural competence, called knowledge, or *savoirs*. However, global mindedness, defined as "a worldview in which an individual perceives his or herself as connected to the world community and is aware of his or her responsibility for its members" (Kehl & Morris, 2008) involves components across all intercultural competence aspects, including commonalities with the central element of critical cultural awareness, or *savoir s'engager* (Byram, 2000).

The prospect of "increased maturity and social confidence" was not considered in prior Japanese investigations on study abroad participation (Lassegard, 2013; Asaoka & Yano, 2009) though it is the top benefit for the three targeted groups in this study. When asked about maturity and social confidence, some responses from the email questionnaire reflected global mindedness. For instance, S5 described using the study abroad experience to allow her to understand her home culture better, which is a key feature of intercultural competence (Byram, 2002). Data reveal that strong intent students value this benefit significantly more (M=5.89 vs. M=5.30) and that they have a clearer idea of how study abroad might expedite maturity and social confidence, based on success in past experiences using English in authentic situations. For those with weaker intent, there is a belief that time spent abroad could enhance maturity and social confidence; however, these developments remain a more abstract concept, compared to those who experienced degrees of transformation from past cross-cultural experiences. This is reflected in the qualitative phase through conditional statements where ambiguous language and reasons to not go abroad supersede the perceived abstract benefits. Comparatively, the strong group members expressed desire for independence, and they articulated this throughout their responses in the qualitative phase.

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In shifting to perceived barriers, once again, the rankings between strong and weak intent groups do not significantly differ; however, for all barriers, the weak group consistently evaluated them as potentially more problematic. One notable exception to similarity in rankings involves the “troublesome application process”, as strong intent members rank it as the fourth most significant barrier while weak members rank it second. A possible explanation to this involves the fact that weaker members generally have lower TOEIC scores, and this could limit one’s opportunities, making the application process seem more difficult, or even impossible, depending on the destination university. Also, the application process is lengthy, so even if there is interest in study abroad, weak members may not exhibit the detour behavior to initiate and complete the application process, while strong intent members could interpret it as only a slight, yet surmountable, inconvenience.

Overall, the top two barriers include lack of financial resources and low L2 ability (see Table 8), which do not vary significantly from related studies (Sanchez et al., 2006; McNeill, 2010; Lassegard, 2013). In the survey, concerns about “dangers and disease abroad” rank sixth out of the 13 possible deterrents across all survey respondents. This contrasts to the qualitative data, where the most common response to study abroad “risk” related to terrorism and safety concerns. Because of the timing of the ISIS terrorist attacks in Paris (November 2015), which happened to occur after administering the survey but immediately before the qualitative data collection phase, there could be a recency bias in the reporting, as this news was omnipresent in the Japanese media. The fluid nature of the sample and their interpretation of the world outside of Japan should be recognized as constantly shifting depending on global stability and media portrayals. Strong intent group members perceive dangers and disease as less of a deterrent compared to weak members, so it is possible that their experience and disposition is not as easily influenced by negative depictions in the media.

5.1.1.2. Perception of employment and ambitions.

Similar to the Schnusenberg et al. (2012) study, employment issues emerged as a significant factor in intention to study abroad, but only after complete analysis of the data. According to the three groups delineated in this research (total, strong, weak), the potential of study abroad to benefit one’s future career is not a strong motivator for participation. To illustrate this, students involved in all three groups believe “improved chances of getting a good job” and gaining “professional and academic skills” are the least pertinent benefits,

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while a perceived barrier to participating in study abroad – hurting one’s chances of finding a good job – is found in the bottom tier of the rankings, yet comparatively more relevant to those with strong intent (see Table 6). Considering these outcomes, one may adjudge employment issues as having little relevance to study abroad intention, or perhaps it could indicate a disconnect between study abroad and the development of global human resources at the institution level. These findings are a stark contrast to the literature, which claim career ambitions as a strong motivator for study abroad participation (Fornerino et al., 2011), and in the case of one Malaysian study, the most prominent factor (Pyvis & Chapman, 2007).

In considering other questions from the survey, a considerable difference was noted in preference for lifetime employment amongst those with weak intent to study abroad (71.2% to 46.4%), and analysis through the lens of perceived benefits and barriers in the qualitative phase provided insight into these findings. Specifically, there is some evidence that the job security of lifetime employment is less “risky” than having multiple jobs during one’s career since upward mobility and promotion in Japan are often seniority-based. If examining this deeper through the lens of Japanese cultural dimensions, a preference for lifetime employment can be explained by some of the highest degrees of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance in the world (Hofstede et al., 2010). An aversion to uncertainty could help explain the relationship between weak intention to study abroad and a preference towards lifetime employment amongst the weak intent group. This is corroborated by Relyea et al. (2008), who classify study abroad participants as having “high risk propensity” (p. 346). Conversely, since the results from this survey item indicate shifting attitudes towards lifetime employment, the fixed nature of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions is challenged. As globalization trends permeate Japanese society at a greater pace, there is increasing likelihood that general characterizations of society may not accurately reflect reality.

Despite all 10 participants of the email questionnaire phase claiming no connection between lifetime employment and study abroad intent, the qualitative phase revealed some awareness regarding the possible conflicting goals of study abroad and future ambitions, especially the prospect of later graduation. For strong intent members, delayed graduation could be seen as a surmountable risk, as students have the opportunity to graduate on time, as long as they enroll in programs that provide equivalent credits to their home institution. This possible alternative is not recognized by the weak intent members, thus manifesting in decisions based on preconceived notions about study abroad causing an inevitable delay in graduation (Asaoka & Yano, 2009). Questions involving perceptions of job hunting are relatively equal amongst strong and weak respondents; however, once again, the qualitative

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phase provides more depth to the survey data. In the email questionnaire, all 10 respondents stated that study abroad would help job prospects, but only those with strong intent articulated clear and unconditional ideas of how it will help. Conversely, weak group member answers are vague and carry “if” and “but” conditions. It is these conditional statements that reflect an unwillingness to seek actions that may detour such obstacles towards the goal of study abroad. Additional insight regarding the role of employment and future ambitions on study abroad intent is presented in this chapter (5.2.1).

5.1.1.3. International posture and study abroad intent.

Research question 1b is discussed here by taking a more detailed look at international posture and its relationship with study abroad intent. Overall, the findings in this study indicate that those with greater intent to study abroad exhibit stronger international posture. Also, the MANOVA shows a difference between the strong intent and weak intent groups, with the strong group evincing more international posture. This is true for the factors of intercultural approach-avoidance tendency, interest in international vocation, interest in foreign affairs, and willingness to communicate with the world. Interestingly, the strongest correlation found between study abroad intent and the individual international posture variables was with interest in international vocation (.51). This relates to the previous discussion in 5.1.1.2. and corroborates the possibility that employment issues have a more instrumental motivational influence on the intention to study abroad; something that was not explicitly clear from the email questionnaire phase of the study. When comparing the international posture means via MANOVA, the most significant difference is found in the variable approach-avoidance tendency. This suggests that regardless of L2 proficiency, those with more willingness to approach others in the L2 also have more intention to study abroad, while those experiencing more language anxiety interpret it as a real barrier to participation (Williams & Andrade, 2008). Other international posture variables also show significant difference between strong and weak groups, with the exception of ethnocentrism.

Of the five variables composing international posture, ethnocentrism shows the lowest correlation with study abroad intent. Kim and Goldstein (2005) cite low ethnocentrism as a top predictor of favorable study abroad expectations amongst American students, thus further illustrating the unique context that Japan provides and the need to investigate ethnocentrism further. Prior studies have ascertained that Japanese university students score significantly higher in ethnocentric attitudes, compared to students in the US (Neuliep, Chaudoir, &

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McCroskey, 2001). Furthermore, Yoo and Donthu (2005) determine a correlation between consumer ethnocentrism with more collective, masculine, and uncertainty avoiding cultures. These are characteristics and dimensions of culture that align with Japanese society (Hofstede et al., 2010), so perhaps this consumer-related ethnocentrism extends to reactions towards different customs, values, and behaviors, as postulated by international posture. In the Japanese context, Hinenoya and Gatbonton (2000) explore the relationship between L2 proficiency and social factors and conclude that there is no relationship between proficiency in the L2 and ethnocentrism. Furthermore, the overall value of ethnocentrism established in this investigation is quite low, meaning that the Japanese university students polled – regardless of intent to study abroad – exhibit some ethnocentric attitudes.

5.1.2. Subjective norms.

Subjective norms have been defined in this study as family, friends, school club members, faculty members, and part-time job colleagues. In examining data from this study through the lens of the literature, there are some contrary findings. For one, in US studies, students show a greater inclination to study abroad if they are attending university more than 100 miles from home (Stroud, 2010). This is not applicable to the Japanese context due to the tendency – both by strong and weak intent group members – to live with family while attending HEIs. In fact, slightly more respondents with weak intent live in private apartments, away from family.

One could assume that the stakeholders responsible for offering financial support might have the most influence in a student's decision to study abroad. Overwhelmingly, in this case, that would be the parents or other family members. As a private university, UoJ has a student body generally coming from affluent families. Despite this, financial restrictions are given as the top barrier to study abroad, which is consistent with other studies exploring intent (Sanchez et al., 2006, Piller et al., 2010; McNeill, 2010; Lassegard, 2013). Notwithstanding this real barrier to participation, the vast majority of both strong and weak intent students have most of their tuition paid by family members (89.8% and 86.4%, respectively). In other studies, both inside and outside of Japan (Lassegard, 2013), there is a common narrative of financial restrictions holding students back from studying abroad; however, at UoJ, this rationale could be challenged as spurious, considering that students may have discretionary income from working part-time jobs and living at home.

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One could assume that students are more inclined to study abroad, and to receive support, if family members previously joined academic sojourns. The quantitative data of this study suggest otherwise, as 37.9% of weak intent members had family who previously studied abroad, compared to only 27% of strong intent members. This finding lends credence to the possibility that family members who studied abroad discourage respondents to do the same, or that those who did not get the opportunity are more likely to encourage their children to seize the chance. Another possibility relates to the current economic climate of Japan where discretionary income is not available, as it was in the prior bubble economy. The qualitative phase revealed one instance of a parent with prior study abroad experience who discouraged participation of a son or daughter based on personal experience; however, it appears to be an outlier as survey respondents, across all three groups, significantly rank “friends / family would discourage” as the least impactful deterrent to study abroad (see Table 8). While it would not be justifiable to draw a general conclusion that parents with study abroad experience discourage their children, this exemplar provides evidence that the dynamic could exist, which seems counter-intuitive since one might assume that family members who travel abroad will encourage relatives to do the same. Based on the literature and the qualitative data, one should consider the degree that a prospective sojourner might decline the opportunity due to an unwillingness to be away from friends and family, as opposed to being discouraged by friends and family (Fornerino et al., 2011).

The role of friends would seemingly play a significant role in study abroad participation in Japanese society due to the tendency of following majority lead (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000). Students often avoid a situation where they are isolated or different from others as reflected in the oft-cited expression “the nail that sticks out gets pounded down” (Hoshino, 1995). One could conclude that if a critical number of friends have been abroad for study, then this would encourage others to follow suit. The survey data corroborate this as almost all strong respondents identified friends as having studied abroad (95.7%), but despite a significant difference, a high percentage (87.9%) of weak member friends have also been abroad. In the parlance of social capital, the information that friends readily provide about their experiences can influence the decision to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2010). Other studies have concluded that peer influence plays a significant role in study abroad decision-making (Salisbury et al., 2010; Loberg, 2012); however, the results of this study do not draw the same conclusion.

An inherent component of study abroad involves the understanding and articulation of subject matter in a foreign language and the role that educators might play in the student’s

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decision-making process. The literature identifies certain subjects and fields of study that may produce more or fewer participants in study abroad (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015; Naffziger et al., 2008; Stroud, 2010; Cheppel & Kovacich, 2012; Lindsay, 2014). Studies conclude that students from hard sciences, such as engineering, physics, and medicine will be less inclined to participate than those enrolled in soft subjects (Salisbury et al., 2010). UoJ is a liberal arts university so subjects and majors tend to be softer in nature; however, business is a major faculty and the literature identifies business students as being amongst the most likely to study abroad in the US context (Pope et al., 2014). In this study, the low intention rate amongst UoJ business students might be partially attributed to qualities of masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation that would make them more focused on securing domestic employment and professional ambitions.

5.1.3. Perceived behavioral control.

This thesis defines multiple factors that could contribute to perceived behavioral control, including prior achievement (or lack thereof) in university classes, language proficiency tests, intercultural interactions, and international experiences. In examining the TOEIC scores amongst those with strong and weak intent to study abroad, the strong intent members, on average, score significantly higher. This result is perhaps not surprising considering the language requirements established by individual destination HEIs that must be met in order to qualify for study abroad. However, perceived L2 ability, as delineated in the qualitative phase, presents a different aspect of L2 proficiency related to study abroad intent.

The literature establishes that proficiency in a language (based either on testing or in-class achievement) is not always directly associated to comfort in using the language (Effiong, 2013; Kitano, 2001; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). While perceived ability in an L2 results in greater resiliency to language anxiety (Williams and Andrade, 2008), someone with high L2 achievement might experience a greater degree of language anxiety than a novice using his or her basic skills to order a meal at a restaurant or engage in superficial conversation. MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan (2002) describe predisposed individual preference when it comes to the choice of communicating or not, and while this is fairly simple to determine when subjects are using their L1, the dynamic becomes more complex when factoring in L2 language anxiety and aptitudes. Furthermore, in elementary L2 classrooms that focus both on grammar-translation, there is a tendency for instructors to call upon

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students to answer questions with either “right” or “wrong” answers, and this may evoke anxiety amongst students due to the potential for negative evaluation from the instructor and peers (Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Chang, 2011; Kitano, 2001; Covington, 1992, 1998). Data from this study suggest a lack of confidence in using the L2 in authentic situations, even amongst those who score significantly high in standardized testing, such as TOEIC. One theory connecting high achievement in L2 tests and language anxiety involves a relationship between this and the Hofstede cultural dimension of masculinity (Hofstede et al., 2010). Hofstede’s (n.d.) analysis of masculinity, which characterizes Japanese people as driven towards “excellence and perfection in their material production and in material services and presentation in every aspect of life” (para.6), could result in a dynamic where students do not want to use their L2 unless it is as strong as their L1. Perhaps counter intuitively, the qualitative data offer evidence of a phenomenon where Japanese people experience more comfort in speaking English to foreigners when other Japanese people are not around, due to fear of being criticized on lack of aptitude (i.e. inadequacy), or conversely, advanced ability with the language (i.e. showing off).

In examining English use in Japan, the data indicate greater comfort using English within the classroom as opposed to outside. Instructors should be cognizant of the dual pressures students face in not speaking satisfactory English and speaking English that is considered as “too good”. While the former may result in eroding confidence, the latter could manifest the undesirable outcome of being identified as superior or different from one’s peers. The qualitative phase of this study also revealed that successful interactions make students believe that they can succeed in a sojourn abroad, thus resulting in greater goal-oriented behavior. Advanced models of the theory of planned behavior have accounted for goal-oriented behavior, and a key harbinger of this involves frequency of past behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). In study abroad intent, the qualitative component reflects this relationship as those with previous regular and successful interactions with non-Japanese people seem more inclined to study abroad than those with limited cross-cultural engagement experience. In developing more effective L2 curriculum that will encourage students to become more engaged with the international community, providing these types of opportunities in-class is summarized within section 5.3. of this thesis.

The theory of planned behavior posits that attitudes involving the three factors of behavioral attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control form an individual’s behavioral intentions and actual behaviors. From summarizing and discussing results from this research, it is clear that attitudes amongst Japanese students towards study abroad can be

categorized into the three factors, alongside goal-directed behavior, and that this could lead to intention, and possibly, eventual behavior. In essence, this study conceptually builds on the theory of planned behavior by integrating international posture, intercultural competences, and L2 acquisition models. The next section will apply the categorized differences between students with strong and weak intent in defining certain Japanese university students as self-selecting into study abroad.

5.2. Study Abroad Self-Selection in the Japanese Context

The second research question posed in this thesis involves the establishment of a suitable definition of self-selection that could be applied to first-year Japanese university students with strong intent to study abroad. Self-selection has been discussed in other studies as a student who would be most inclined to enroll in student mobility opportunities (Daly, 2011; Pope et al., 2014; Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Soria & Troisi, 2013). These non-Japanese studies have described participants as female, studying the liberal arts, attending university away from home, having past international experience, a number of foreign friends, and finally, those embodying high risk propensity (Relyea et al., 2008, p. 346). In recognizing that Japan is a starkly different context compared to multicultural societies that have been the predominant focus of self-selection studies (e.g. American), it is believed that self-selection in Japan may involve unique factors.

5.2.1. Factors contributing to a self-selection definition.

From the triangulation and analysis of data that identified significant differences between respondents with strong intent to study abroad and those with weak intent, students who can be described as self-selecting tend to have the following qualities: they (1) have greater achievement with English language testing (e.g. TOEIC); (2) have prior international experience and have had successful, authentic cross-cultural interactions, both domestically and abroad; (3) can connect purpose, meaning, and goal-directed behavior with the study abroad experience via relationship with study content, personal development, or professional ambitions; (4) have a greater tendency to negotiate risk and see study abroad barriers as surmountable; (5) are not as determined to pursue lifetime employment; (6) are more willing and likely to delay job hunting activity to their fourth year of study, thus creating a greater

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window of opportunity for study abroad; and (7) have a significantly greater degree of international posture. These factors are discussed in more detail here:

1) *Achievement in English proficiency testing*

The data indicate that those with strong intent to study abroad have, on average, better achievement on the TOEIC. This factor acts as a reliable determinant amongst the respondents since they were all required to take the TOEIC before being placed in the Intensive English classes. A discrepancy in the scores between strong and weak members is not unexpected since a number of destination institutions require a minimum level of achievement; however, opportunities do exist where even a student with a relatively low TOEIC score can get admittance to a short-term overseas opportunity. To illustrate this, students placed in the lowest-level Intensive English class (minimum score of 320) also satisfy the minimum TOEIC score for certain short-term study abroad opportunities at UoJ. In contrasting these results to the existing literature, studies explore the connection between language achievement and study abroad; however, they tend to focus on L2 improvements after students return from sojourns abroad (Tanaka, 2007; Sasaki, 2007), making the role of existing L2 ability on intention relatively unexplored.

2) *Prior international experience and authentic cross-cultural interactions*

Based on the empirical data collected from two questions in the survey, I classify international experience as (a) the number of countries visited and (b) past involvement in study abroad. These items were adopted from Daly (2011) and Brooks and Waters (2009), who identify “a strong tendency for exchange students to be well-traveled” (Daly, 2011, p. 63). In the current investigation, students with weak intent are significantly more likely to have never been abroad while those with strong intent have a greater likelihood of visiting three or more countries. In the qualitative email questionnaire, respondents associate the role of engagement with foreign people, both domestically and abroad, as “international experience”. In multiple cases, such domestic cross-cultural interactions affect the students’ study abroad intent, as revealed in the qualitative component. Furthermore, international experience led to the next feature of self-selection: the association of study abroad with purpose and meaning.

3) *Purpose and meaning: goal-directed behavior*

From analytical triangulation employed in the research design, study abroad participation can be connected to goal-directed behavior stemming from major of study, personal development, or future employment and ambitions. Investigation into purpose, meaning, and goal-directed behavior was decided on after considering the reasons why more

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strong intent students have prior international experience and greater likelihood of having interactions with non-Japanese people. The email questionnaire phase revealed numerous associations of purpose and meaning with intent to study abroad, while responses from those with weak intent were devoid of such connections. In examining these inclinations through the lens of the literature, I would agree with the notion that participants of study abroad compose a particular subset of society who have their own goals and desired learning outcomes that may involve the actual program of study at the destination HEI (Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012, p. 1). In short, if a participant has clear objectives and concrete ideas of the intercultural skills that are needed to meet goals, such as competing in the global economy or forging international friendships, then they will be more inclined to join sojourns abroad.

4) *Perception of barriers and risk*

The significance of given barriers is relatively consistent between those with strong intent and those with weak intent; however, the overall weighted average score for each barrier is significantly weaker for those with strong intent. In other words, from the survey, it appears that weak intent members view barriers to study abroad as more difficult to overcome. When asked to elaborate on barriers through the lens of risk, members from both strong and weak groups identified similar issues (financial, safety, etc.); however, the strong members consistently addressed the risks by providing solutions and methods to overcome them (i.e. detour behavior), while weak members simply stated the perceived risks without offering possible approaches to overcome them. Safety and risk concerns could have roots in the cultural profile that suggests Japanese people are less uncertainty accepting and prone to project uncertainty on situations that might arise in unfamiliar locations (Hofstede et al., 2010). Also, being less individualistic, there may be aversion to negotiating risk in an independent endeavor, such as study abroad, where one may not be able to defer to familiar Japanese social structures and etiquette.

5) *Lifetime employment*

In comparing aspirations of lifetime employment, the survey data indicate a strong desire of weak intent members to work for a single company for life, compared to those with strong intent. When probed about this particular discrepancy in the qualitative phase, there were few explicit connections made between aspirations of lifetime employment and study abroad; however, questioning in the email phase about other professional issues helped determine that those with a stronger intent to study abroad also expressed more interest in working abroad and building professional skills with different international companies. In

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Japan, lifetime employment has been described as a “celebrated practice” (Kato, 2001, p. 490). A study in 2001 indicated no significant barriers to lifetime employment amongst those who desired it (Kato, 2001); however, research in 2013 identified a decline in mean tenure amongst workers in response to economic conditions (Kawaguchi & Ueno, 2013). This recent trend could be the cause of alarm amongst university students who associate lifetime employment with stability and security, thus resulting in reluctance to engage in activity that may compromise its realization.

6) *Job hunting and study abroad window of opportunity*

The formal job-hunting process in Japan often starts for students in their third year of study. The survey data reveal a greater tendency of students with strong intent to delay the job hunt until their fourth year. This finding was validated through a cross-check with the question on ideal time to study abroad, which indicated that weak intent members consider second year as the most opportune time to study abroad, to a greater degree than strong members. For strong group members who are more willing to delay the job-hunting process until fourth year, the window of opportunity for study abroad is extended into third year. There is an absence of literature that explores the timing when Japanese students study abroad; however, this timing could carry implications into the efficacy of learning overseas. For example, in research involving development of Japanese vocabulary amongst British students at two different points of a bachelor degree (second and third year), Pizziconi (2013) ascertains that second-year students experience more absolute gains compared to third-year students. Whether this applies to Japanese students and the assimilation of intercultural competences while abroad is undetermined.

7) *International posture*

As established with MANOVA, students with strong intent to study abroad exhibit significantly higher levels of international posture than those with weak intent. This difference applies to all variables of international posture, with the exception of ethnocentrism. According to the SPSS analysis, students with strong intent to study abroad are more likely to (a) approach someone in an L2 situation, (b) have more interest in employment abroad, (c) exhibit more interest in international news and foreign affairs, and (d) have more willing to communicate with people from around the world. This is consistent with other studies investigating international posture amongst Japanese students returning from sojourns (Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide, 2008; Yashima et al. 2004); however, the current study addresses the relationship between international posture and study abroad intent, instead of study abroad returnees.

Compared to the literature, self-selection in Japan involves some common features, including high achievement in the L2 and prior international experience (Daly, 2011; Pope et al., 2014). Conversely, several unique traits are identified that are not mentioned, including greater international posture; a positive association between study abroad and purpose; and a flexible outlook on the traditional higher education practices in Japan, involving job hunting, lifetime employment, and perceived barriers to study abroad.

5.2.2. Applying self-selection at other Japanese institutions and beyond.

An argument can be made that outcomes, results, and recommendations could be applied, to varying extents, at other HEIs within Japan. Being 98.5% ethnically Japanese (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016), Japan is one of the most ethnically homogenous countries in the world, and theoretically, the student profile at UoJ would be similar to most domestic universities. If looking superficially at the sample, one could conclude that results are applicable to other Japanese contexts for multiple reasons: all students involved are first year, Japanese, enrolled in a number of different faculties (humanities, business, etc.), and have varying TOEIC scores. Also, both males and females are represented and there are differing degrees of academic achievement (based on grade-point average) within the sample. In short, the sample seems to represent a group of typical first-year Japanese students enrolled in an English program.

When conducting a more in-depth evaluation of the student profiles involved in this research, certain qualities of the overall sample cast doubt on the potential for applicability to other Japanese institutions. The sample could represent “typical” higher education students of English, but they may have L2 abilities, and possibly cross-cultural experiences, that would exceed those of university students who are not interested or enrolled in elective English classes. Many Intensive English students have high TOEIC scores (required to enroll in the Intensive English program) and an interest in English, as proven through their enrollment in the Intensive English program. However, in the definition of self-selection, the first criterion involves achievement in the language, so this potential discrepancy may be accounted for.

Japanese students are becoming increasingly dependent on bank loans, though to a much lesser degree compared to students in the US (Billones, 2013). In exploring the sources of capital that students depend on for tuition, the data reveal a significant trend of fees being paid by parents. This, in conjunction with the fact that UoJ is a relatively expensive private university, suggests that the study sample comes largely from affluent families, and that they

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may not reflect the higher education student population in Japan as a whole. However, a high percentage of students with weak intent have parents who pay the majority of tuition (86.4%), so this provides a rationale for further investigation at both public and private institutions where students rely on alternative approaches (aside from parents) to cover tuition costs.

The stated definition of self-selection, or a derivative of it, could be applied to other global contexts, especially those in East Asia that share some common features with the Japanese learner. China, South Korea, and Japan are Confucian culture heritage countries, meaning they are collectivist societies with roots in Confucian thought (Phong-Mai, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2005). This means that students in these countries often share traits and attitudes towards educational experiences. For instance, higher education students in Hong Kong and South Korea report more financial and social support than those in Germany and the USA, and like Japan, students in these East Asian contexts tend to live with their families while studying (Fingerman, Cheng, Kim, Fung, Han, Lang, & Wagner, 2014). Some aspects of the Japanese self-selection criteria (e.g. lifetime employment and job hunting traditions) may not be germane to other East Asian contexts, but literature indicates congruency in variables that could impact study abroad intent. In terms of subjective norms, Chinese students “can never separate themselves from obligation to others” (Wen & Clément, 2003, p. 20) resulting in a similar dynamic to Japanese students, where they do not want to risk making mistakes in front of peers. Other studies determine barriers to study abroad (i.e. family, financial, psychological, and social) as being similar in China and Japan (Sanchez et al., 2006). Also in the Chinese context, Ulu, Weiwei and Yu (2015) establish a relationship between international posture and intercultural willingness to communicate, which has been aligned with study abroad intent. If such similarities do exist between the Japanese higher education context and that of its East Asian neighbors, then it is also possible that a common cross-cultural curriculum could benefit students in the region.

5.3. Revising L2 Curriculum

An objective of this research is to process and analyze the data to determine whether UoJ needs to revise its domestic L2 curriculum so that students may be better prepared for cross-cultural experiences. While I would be remiss to assume that the answer to this question is “yes”, I wanted to establish the degree to which revisions are necessary. Furthermore, I aim to gauge the extent that these recommendations and strategies may be applied to other contexts, both in Japan and overseas.

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The data suggest a current lack of content designed to elicit a more meaningful connection between the English classroom and the world outside of Japan. In multiple instances in the qualitative phases of this study, students bemoaned the lack of practical and “real-world” L2 skills that would be useful in situations requiring English, such as study abroad. In exploring the possibility that intercultural competences, international posture, and study abroad intent can be fostered in the L2 classroom, this research presents a framework for L2 teachers to integrate the international dimension into curriculum. Before suggesting change to the curriculum that might address the final research question, I first introduce the current goals and objectives of the L2 class (i.e. Intensive English) that all respondents are enrolled in.

The data from this study, and others in Japan (Yashima, 2009), indicate similar degrees of ethnocentrism between those with strong and weak intent to study abroad. This lack of dichotomy can be explained due to the ethnically homogenous makeup of Japan alongside its cultural profile, which suggests citizens are more uncertainty avoiding and insular than other nations (Kim & Goldstein, 2005; Hofstede et al., 2010; Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000). Considering the uniformity in ethnocentric views, it seems worthwhile to explore curriculum designed to address ethnocentric beliefs, as it theoretically applies to all learners. Reducing ethnocentric tendencies can be viewed as a procedure of steps, similar to developing intercultural competences within the classroom. The extent that ethnocentric views of students can be minimized depends on the time a teacher can dedicate to the process; however, initial steps can be met even within an L2 curriculum that designates the international dimension as a secondary priority. To help the reader visualize how ethnocentric tendencies may be limited in the classroom, it is first important to gain an understanding of the L2 class objectives. These are presented in the following section, and it is theorized that L2 classes across Japan may follow similar L2 curriculum models, thus making the discussion relevant to the national discourse.

5.3.1. Current L2 curriculum – goals and can-do statements.

The syllabi and academic goals of UoJ’s Intensive English classes were established using *can-do statements* inspired by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages. CEFR is described as “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc.” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). Considering the large number of Intensive English sections (30) at the institution, a

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certain degree of standardization across the curriculums was deemed necessary, and CEFR provides goals that all instructors can integrate into their individual curriculum. CEFR categorizes language proficiency into a six-level global scale ranging from A1 (basic user) to C2 (proficient user). The Intensive English classes are designed to foster independent users upon completion of the one-year course (level B1 and B2). As a result, some of the following can-do statements were established for Intensive English students:

Upon completion of the course, I can...

- *start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest*
- *give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my fields of interest*
- *engage in extended conversation in a clearly participatory fashion on most general topics*
- *give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.*
- *describe dreams, hopes and ambitions.*
- *present in front of people somewhat confidently and clearly*
- *speak to an audience using appropriate language on various topics*
- *interact with other speakers with minimal breakdowns*

After initially reviewing the above goals, an issue of relevance emerges as a student could easily pose “so what” or “why” questions. For instance, “why do I need to talk about my interests in English?” and “why do I need to confidently describe my hopes and dreams in English?”. Statements related to these were found throughout the qualitative data of this study. While the above can-do statements may seem suitable for a group of students with intermediate L2 skills, there are no targets that mention the international community and the ability to utilize communication skills in an authentic, real-time environment. This omission is particularly notable, since communication goals stated in CEFR (but not in the UoJ curriculum) indicate that independent users can “deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken” (p. 24) and can “interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party” (Longman, 2007, p. 5). It is possible that this was omitted at UoJ because of the lack of ethnic and cultural diversity in the classroom and on

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campus, and possibly that some students have not been given the opportunity to travel abroad. Regardless, I would argue that these omitted goals constitute the international dimension that can facilitate assimilation of intercultural competences and global citizenship. The international dimension should take a position of priority in L2 curriculum for various reasons. Firstly, it is at the core of the most common interpretations of internationalization (Knight, 2004; Knight, 2015); a goal often cited by HEIs, including UoJ. Secondly, intercultural competence, or “the ability to meet and engage successfully with people of another social group” (Byram, 2015, p. 2) can be encouraged and taught by both native and non-native teachers, meaning its integration will not alienate certain educators. Finally, global citizenship is espoused in UoJ’s mission statement, and L2 classes are potential environments to achieve its realization. In recognizing that not all L2 students will have the means or desire to study abroad, curriculum can foster global citizenship, as it “entails being aware of responsibilities beyond one’s immediate communities and making decisions to change habits and behavior patterns accordingly” (Schattle, 2009, p.12). In summary, even L2 learning environments in Japan, which tend to be ethnically homogenous, can integrate international dimensions, thus leading to intercultural competences and global citizenship.

The existing curriculum goals and the absence of any form of international dimension may help explain why several participants of the email questionnaire phase fail to connect purpose and meaning (i.e. goal-directed behavior) with the L2 and study abroad. This relationship is touched upon in certain publications, but not exclusively explored. For instance, Luo and Jamieson-Drake (2015) suggest that engineering students must follow a structured and sequenced curriculum that is often not replicated at partner institutions, thus diminishing the academic value, or purpose, of studying abroad. Additionally, Phillips (2014) determines that both face-to-face communication and computer-mediated communication (e.g. social networking) are predictors to study abroad, which can be connected to purpose and meaning. This reflects the participant view that prior L2 interactions with foreigners’ help forge goal-directed behavior.

The following sections provide further insight into the absence of a mandated international dimension across L2 curriculums at UoJ and the approaches that might be taken so that students enrolled in Intensive English can “deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken” upon graduation (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24). The viability of whether achieving this could influence intent to study abroad will also be explored.

5.3.2. Role of internationalization in implementing change.

Currently, internationalization at UoJ involves employing more foreign faculty and granting admission to a greater number of international students. This brand of internationalization feels superficial, as it does not guarantee cross-cultural interactions and development. The notion that the more international a university appears, the greater its reputation will be in the higher education community, is debatable and contested in the literature. Knight (2004, 2011, 2015) has been vocal in her disagreement and claims that the original purposes of internationalization – revolving around the integration of the international dimension – are being compromised. As a first step to bridging the gap between the conflicting interpretations of internationalization, stakeholders should first recognize that not all students have the means to study abroad during their university tenures. In acknowledging this, domestic curriculum should be altered to foster intercultural competences, even amongst those identified as having weak intent to study abroad. If this is accomplished, then an overall increase in participation might be realized.

In satisfying the internationalization goals of stakeholders at the government level, implementation strategy has been discussed through the lens of competitiveness, rankings, and human resources. From the employability standpoint, human resource departments around the world bemoan the lack of soft skills of recent graduates, which include problem-solving, mediation, interpersonal skills, and flexibility (Jones, 2014). Furthermore, Jones (2014) confirms the domestic fostering of soft-skills that are often associated with student mobility experiences: “a questioning of personal identity, values, beliefs and mindsets, and can offer significant results in terms of personal growth, self-efficacy, and maturity and enhance students’ intercultural competence” (p. 7). These skills are not only similar to some of the expected benefits of study abroad highlighted in this research, but they are also related to the goals of internationalization as espoused by Knight (2004). This raises a question of whether seemingly contrasting goals of internationalization are, in fact, as polarizing as claimed.

If L2 curriculum can be internationalized and enhanced to foster the international dimension, then the dual yet polarizing internationalization goals of (a) fostering a more academically rich learning environment (Knight, 2004) and (b) increasing study abroad participation to gain more national and global recognition (Yonezawa, 2010), may be realized. My proposal for curriculum change involves a pragmatic approach through the promotion of

transformative learning and internationalization of curriculum, which would aim to foster the international dimension by employing cross-cultural activities in the English learning process.

5.3.3. Transformative learning.

Addressing the concern that people tend to reject notions that do not correspond to personal values, beliefs, or morals; *transformative learning theory* posits that a frame of reference comprises habits of mind and points of view. Being a founder of the theory, Mezirow (2003) describes transformative learning as “learning that transforms problematic frames of reference – sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets) – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change” (p. 58). The transformative process involved in this learning theory comprises ten phases, completed in an unspecified order, for meaning to become clarified:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22)

This was chosen as a suitable applied theory for curriculum change due to the viability of transforming many of the 10 phases into lesson plans or complementary L2 activities. Such lesson plans and activities could culminate into a curriculum that facilitates a paradigm shift – especially amongst students in an ethnically homogenous culture like Japan – needed when building intercultural competences and global citizenship. Instead of dismissing foreign phenomena as “strange” or “weird” due to habits of mind, such as ethnocentrism (i.e. problematic frames of reference), transformative learning promotes open

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mindedness that can challenge one's held assumptions and expectations. In recognizing that humans have a tendency to reject notions that are not aligned with personal values and expectations, a cross-cultural experience like study abroad may be immediately dismissed by some due to the inherent need to welcome foreign concepts and values (Mezirow, 1997). Alternative learning theories, such as constructivism and cognitivism, could have value in an intercultural communications classroom, though they seem less conducive to the goals of intercultural competence and internationalization. For instance, constructivism centers on building around an existing foundation of knowledge (Olson, 2014), which may not be an ideal condition for the student whose foundation of knowledge is built on false premises, such as stereotypes and prejudice, perpetuated by the media and other means.

In the transformative learning theory, frames of reference consist of two divisions: habits of mind and point of view (Mezirow, 2006). Point of view is a perspective which is more fluid and less enduring than habits of mind. Habits of mind are habitual but abstract ways of thinking that can be hard-wired into an individual by society, early education, culture, and psychological dispositions (Mezirow, 2006). A prominent example of habit of mind is ethnocentrism. As established in this research, students with both strong and weak intention to study abroad exhibit similar degrees of ethnocentric beliefs, which may prohibit them from achieving a more all-inclusive and interconnected worldview (Neuliep et al., 2001). I believe transformative learning is applicable to L2 learning situations in Japan since the preconceived notion of *otherness* does emerge, due to Japan being an island nation where citizens have the tendency of viewing foreign societies through the lens of one's own. From the Meiji period in the early 19th century, impressions of *the other* are often expressed with suspicion, and sometimes contempt. For instance, in the 1800s, those from the South Seas region were described as “uncivilized, inferior, lazy, dull and dirty” (Yano, 1979, p. 154), while more recently, people from neighboring China were depicted using words such as “immoral”, “selfish”, “dirty”, and “egoistic” (Uchiyama, 1960, p. 334). In contemporary Japanese society, such bold critiques are only expressed in the public domain by extreme nationalist groups; however, they could still have a subconscious place in the greater national psyche, thus leading to ethnocentric beliefs. Transformative learning, which promotes the reframing of perceptions through self-reflection and the expansion of frames of reference, seems ideally conceived for the Japanese learner who is exposed to negative interpretations of otherness. Furthermore, Japanese students often have a limited scope of cultural reference due to the lack of diversity in one's social and academic circles, making the transformative learning process even more valuable.

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Another reason why transformative learning is suitable for the Japanese context is because of its inherent nature to empower learners in becoming agents of change, not only in their own lives, but also in society as a whole (Freire, 1993). In response to the propensity of following the lead of others (Hinenoya and Gatbonton, 2000), the classroom environment in Japan can act as a suitable incubator of knowledge since learning dynamics often involve group work, discussion, and collaboration. Characterized as an ageing population, political change in Japan and broad attitudinal shifts amongst all age demographics are difficult to realize due to the unparalleled large proportion of Japanese elderly; however, higher education students could potentially act as the vanguard to change for future generations.

Transformative learning has been criticized for being focused too much on the individual, therefore ineffective in enacting change in society as a whole (Cranton, 1996). To counter this, I would argue that a bottom-up approach where such transformations initially occur at the classroom and institutional levels could result in a critical mass of citizens that will eventually be represented in media, academia, and greater society. This critical mass is important to establish given Japanese grouping tendencies of conforming to the actions of the majority (Tsuneyoshi, 1992; Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000).

In implementing and operationalizing the phases of transformative learning in the classroom, features can include active participation, open dialogue, critical reflection, and the fostering of a readiness in navigating content that may be novel, surprising, and perhaps even disturbing, as one's assumptions about the world are challenged (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014). An example of this could first involve the examination of stereotypes in Japan so that students can become cognizant of possible unflattering impressions of Japan, thus fostering more empathy and open-mindedness when evaluating pre-conceived notions of other societies. For instance, if discussing the animated American television comedy series, *The Simpsons* (Cary & Greaney, 1999), particularly the episode titled *Thirty Minutes Over Tokyo*, students might experience a shift in perspective from segments suggesting Japanese people are cruel to animals or that they have disingenuous personal characteristics. Concerning the 10 phases of transformative learning shown earlier, this short task could address a disorienting dilemma, self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame, and critical assessment of assumptions.

For the L2 classrooms at UoJ, participation and critical reflection is integrated into participation rubrics (Nowlan, 2015). In the Japanese context where expressing critical thought is not often expected or comfortably executed, the instructor should define participation grading criteria at the onset of a course. For the purposes of transformative

learning, tasks that challenge the students' beliefs and how they make sense of the world could be administered following exposure to cross cultural content. Such a task may require students to articulate beliefs about an issue or cultural phenomenon before an intervention and then after to determine what beliefs, if any, have shifted and why (Stansberry & Kymes, 2007). In this teaching approach, instructors are expected to take risks and to challenge the cultural norms within the context of their teaching environments and content (Clifford & Montgomery, 2014). At UoJ, instructors of Intensive English are given loose guidelines on expected outcomes and goals (CEFR can-do statements); however, they are given autonomy in how they want to reach the curriculum objectives. The next section rationalizes the integration of transformative learning at UoJ through *internationalization of the curriculum*.

5.3.4. Internationalization of Curriculum.

Much like the term internationalization, the defining of internationalization of curriculum (IoC) is a contested concept and practice. Leask (2016) defines it as “the process of incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study”. This definition is adopted for the recommendations presented in this chapter due to its similarity to the concept of internationalization, presented earlier by Knight (2004, 2011).

Clifford and Montgomery (2011) claim that IoC should facilitate “a transformative educational experience” with “a very strong agenda for active global citizenship” (p. 13). IoC and transformative education both aim to address unequal opportunities and access to educational opportunity, which seem pertinent in the realm of study abroad since students predominantly cite lack of financial resources as a reason for not participating (de Wit & Leask, 2015). If study abroad is in fact restricted to a more privileged class, then through the lens of transformative learning and IoC, HEIs should alter the discourse so the emphasis is not on superficial practices of increasing the foreign presence on campuses and sending as many Japanese students abroad as possible, but instead on fostering the benefits of study abroad domestically.

If applying a transformative interpretation of IoC, some believe a fundamental change in personal and social perspective is required (Clifford & Murray, 2014, p. 1). In the Japanese context, adjusting curriculum to present an opportunity for transformation seems to be an achievable goal, as elements of transformative learning are often shared with the

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objectives of intercultural (communicative) competence. For instance, transformative learning aims for students to reevaluate their perspectives and frames of reference so that they can apply reflective thinking in challenging prior knowledge. Outcomes of this include a shift in understanding, ideas, and perspectives; as well as acceptance of foreign phenomena (Davis, 2006). This contrasts with intercultural (communicative) competences involving “a shared understanding by people of different social identities” and the ability to “see relationships between their own and other cultures... and curiosity about otherness, and an awareness of themselves and their own cultures seen from other people’s perspectives” (Byram et al., 2002, p. 10).

In implementing IoC, educators may struggle to make content related to the discipline and nature of the course; however, the foundations of IoC are flexible enough to be applicable to a variety of disciplines. For instance, in a first-year undergraduate class on climate change, students from American and Australian universities conducted a joint-project on global warming (McGregor, O’Shea, Brewer, Abuodha, & Pharo, 2014). Despite the overall project goals being directly connected to the field of environmental sciences, certain learning objectives call for analysis and thought processes beyond disciplinary and cultural boundaries so that participants might be exposed to a global issue (climate change) that involves an understanding and awareness of multiple viewpoints. This particular project utilized technology to address the distance gap between participants, which facilitated internationalization through real-time and asynchronous discussions. Other features of the activity included scaffolding, active learning, and multi-disciplinary thought. Considering that all language students at UoJ are enrolled in different faculties, the cross-disciplinary aspect of an IoC-centered task is a strong benefit.

The Iranian context shares some traits with Japan in that it is an Asian country that consists predominantly of an ethnically homogenous student base. In an Iranian study by Vajargah and Khoshnoodifar (2013), IoC was employed, but it concluded that student mobility is the optimal approach to assimilate intercultural competences. Since study abroad is not a feasible option for all students in the Japanese context, an alternative *pedagogy of encounter* is proposed, which involves simulation of experience abroad in a domestic setting. Welikala (2011) promotes this approach in the UK context as allowing students to “encounter the world in the classroom” (p.25). Though it may be more of a challenge to create this environment in an ethnically-homogenous environment like Japan, the benefits could be more pronounced since encounters with non-Japanese rarely materialize. One study that would be applicable to Japan is proposed by Jon (2013), who reveals similar gains in the

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intercultural competences of South Korean students who enrolled in culture-based courses involving foreign students domestically, compared to those who studied abroad.

Student mobility is often the focus of internationalization efforts, simply because it is straightforward to quantify in relation to goals and quotas (i.e. Global 30). However, based on the results of this research and the literature, it becomes clear that study abroad is not always a feasible option for students, resulting in a greater need for an at-home component of internationalization (Leask, 2016). Furthermore, Zimitat (2008) suggests “even if domestic graduates never leave their own country, on graduation, they will be forced to compete in international, or multi-national, work and discovery environments” (p. 136). Based on IoC implementation in other contexts, a bottom-up approach can be an effective means to not only generate interest in cross-cultural phenomena, but to provide authentic opportunity to interact with students who are not Japanese.

Curriculum should be revised so that instructors are encouraged and supported in creating cross-cultural engagement in the classroom. Loberg (2012, p. iii) suggests that faculty support, curriculum, and academic integration are most critical in building student involvement in study abroad. As a first step in creating a transformative higher education experience for Japanese students, they need to be given cross-cultural opportunities with foreign people, preferably in real time. Steps to achieve this are summarized in the next section.

5.3.5. Pedagogical implications.

Results from this study provide pedagogical insights that can be conceptualized into L2 activities, although execution of recommended approaches will depend on factors such as student L2 proficiency level, access to technology, and cooperation of students. Existing resources could be utilized to satisfy intercultural learning goals for a wide range of learning levels, including textbooks such as *Building Cultural Competence* (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012) and online sources such as *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Council of Europe, n.d.). For the purposes of the academic context involved in the current research, three approaches are recommended. The first involves the development of intercultural competences by fostering a globalized environment in the classroom. Another aims to develop international posture by the creation of imagined and actual international communities, while the third entails the integration of foreign students into classroom tasks. Ideally, these three approaches would be executed sequentially; however, L2 instructors who

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are supplementing their curriculum with cross-cultural content might choose to deliver any of the three approaches in isolation.

As an alternative to internationalization, glocalization has been proposed (Patel & Lynch, 2013; Robertson, 1995). Glocalization – or the connection of the global and local together – has an ethos that is congruent with the concept of intercultural competence, or discovery of the local through investigation of the foreign (Byram et al., 2002). Underpinned by the notion of a third culture, glocalization could be a less intimidating goal for Japanese students. Since glocalization relates more to the impact of both local and global concerns, this provides a foundation to help students – including those who are not privileged to go abroad – to start critically examining their own culture and society as they evaluate it through the lens of foreign perspectives. In the glocalization pedagogical framework, an alternative viewpoint suggests “(l)earning is effective when contextualized within the local context because that context frames the learner’s experience and lived reality” (Patel & Lynch, 2013, p. 225). While the assumed definition of IoC (Leask, 2016) sites a need to integrate an international dimension into existing curriculum, the degree to which local issues are juxtaposed and examined through the lens of international phenomena is not explicitly cited; therefore, the idea of glocalization fills a gap that is especially pertinent to Japanese higher education, due to the lack of ethnic diversity and exposure. With IoC and transformative learning citing objectives to challenge educational inequalities (de Wit & Leask, 2015), a glocalization approach can help instill a sense of world citizenship even amongst students with low interest in study abroad. In the classroom, glocalization could manifest as an exploration of English varieties, which could ease the tensions involved for students with expectations of native-like abilities. Furthermore, if teaching vocabulary and grammar, a glocalized approach could involve examining English loan words to the Japanese language (e.g. *miruku* for milk, and *suupaa* for supermarket) and also Japanese words that are now found in the English dictionary (e.g. *edamamae*, *kimono*). A shift in attitude and perception could offer more confidence, and even a lesser degree of ethnocentrism as the perceived barrier between cultures begins to erode.

The second approach to develop international posture and competences is to develop imagined and actual international communities. Yashima (2009) conducted a study on how possible L2 selves mediate L2 learning and communicative behaviors in an imagined international community. Yashima posits that a student’s international posture, in addition to their visions of using English, may reflect a desire to belong to and participate in an imagined international community. It is believed that an in-class simulation, such as a model united

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nations, can help students visualize fitting into a foreign context as they engage in an evaluation of self and how they might see themselves in different cross-cultural scenarios. This form of transcendent student engagement would create new images of the world and self. As an alternative, a virtual study abroad experience would be a step in transcending the imaginary realm for one that is more real. As a possible model, Lipinski (2014) introduced a virtual classroom that can be accessed by students who lack the resources to actually go overseas.

The third and final pedagogical strategy involves integration of foreign students in L2 classes. The vision of contemporary universities may involve students from different nationalities, religions, sexual orientations, and ethnic backgrounds. While this dynamic may hold true for universities in culturally diverse countries, Japan provides challenges that warrant special consideration. Yes, there are foreign students on campus, but as mentioned in the literature review, they are often isolated from the classes and activities that consist of the greater Japanese student body. Jones (2014) calls for creative intercultural opportunities that can be employed domestically, thus leading to the following suggestions where a pedagogy of encounter (Welikala, 2011) can be developed. One strategy to realize creative intercultural opportunities includes the utilization of foreign students in semi-structured conversations (Aubrey, 2015; Wang & Nowlan, 2011). An activity involving face-to-face cross-cultural interactions can satisfy not only the tenets of transformative learning and intercultural competences, but also issues regarding L2 anxiety.

If the aforementioned activities are executed successfully, the international dimension would be integrated, which could prove beneficial for assimilating intercultural competences while challenging ethnocentric attitudes. Outcomes could result in students better visualizing themselves fitting into the foreign community; an attribute that those weak in international posture essentially lack. Such activities could enhance one's international posture and its elements, including a greater tendency and willingness to approach foreigners; more interest in international vocation and foreign affairs; and finally, reduced ethnocentrism. Furthermore, IoC can result in evaluated L2 tasks that address the various aspects (*savoirs*) of intercultural competence, including critical cultural awareness (*savior s'engager*). If successfully implemented, such curriculum could help bridge the gap between global citizenship and *global jinzai* goals, as well as the competing interpretations of internationalization.

According to the data that clearly define a relationship between study abroad intent and international posture, participation in foreign sojourns could increase through the internationalization of curriculum and classroom activities such as those described in this

chapter. Well-executed intercultural content in the L2 class could facilitate the path towards intercultural competences and global citizenship under the theory of planned behavior. Essentially, interactions with students from abroad, especially those who might be found at a study abroad destination, would address the three constructs of the adopted framework. If students are well-prepared for the activity, a positive disposition of behavioral attitudes may manifest where Japanese students learn more about potential destination countries, thus making them feel more favorable about studying there. Second, if students are able to form a bond with their cross-cultural interlocutors, then these subjective norms could encourage Japanese students to visit their countries. Finally, this research identifies successful communication with people from another English-speaking group as a confidence builder for Japanese students, and one that results in perception that cross-cultural engagement can be successfully done. If the proposed activities are conducted, then students may realize they are capable to achieving success while abroad.

5.4. Summary

The current chapter addressed the research questions presented in this thesis. After highlighting some of the similarities and differences between those with strong intent and those with weak intent to study abroad, an extended definition of self-selection, as it relates to Japanese university students and their intent to study abroad, was offered. This definition involves factors such as L2 aptitude, and perceptions of benefits, risks, employment issues, and the association of study abroad with meaning and purpose. Self-selection criteria, in addition to adopted internationalization and transformative learning goals, provided the rationale for proposed change of the L2 curriculum. Suggestions involved the establishment of a globalized learning environment; the development of imagined and virtual international communities; and the integration of foreign students into the class.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, I will first summarize some of the study limitations involving the sample, methodology, and execution of curriculum change. Despite these limitations, the current research draws conclusions that can be further explored and developed in future research. If more insight can be generated regarding the decrease in study abroad involvement of Japanese students, then educators will be in a better position to re-imagine and apply internationalization goals to the L2 curriculum.

6.1. Limitations of Study

In the quantitative and qualitative data collection phases, there could be an element of subjectivity in addressing the research questions. For example, in trying to generate further understanding of perceived barriers to study abroad, students were asked to reflect on “risk”. This evoked a range of answers as some associated the high costs of study abroad as a risk, while others believed this to be only a barrier. Furthermore, since the survey and email questionnaire were translated into the students’ L1 (Japanese), there is a possibility of misinterpreting nuance and meaning during the translation process. I attempted to mitigate this through the described triangulation process and the employing of a professional translator with experience in the field of higher education studies; however, research can never be entirely devoid of misinterpretation and bias (Dörnyei, 2010; Creswell, 2015). Furthermore, several findings emerged in the qualitative phase that could have been better explained with questions in the initial quantitative survey. For instance, some surprising results surfaced from the qualitative follow-up process, including the role of language anxiety in using the L2 domestically in the classroom and abroad. Furthermore, the role of goal-directed behavior was not explicitly investigated throughout the quantitative survey, so integrating these types of questions would fortify or possibly challenge the conclusions drawn from the study.

Upon completing and reflecting on the triangulation of data, one should consider the context and timing of claims in the literature. As culture is constantly in motion due to globalization, political, demographic, and socio-economic forces, generalization made about a society as a whole can shift. When comparing some of the results of the current study to the cultural dimensions of Hofstede et al. (2010), it is difficult to claim that culture is static as strong and weak intent groups have similar demographic and ethnic backgrounds, yet vastly different attitudes towards the international community and cross-cultural opportunities.

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Since the student mobility trends at the time of writing this thesis are similar to when Hofstede revalidated his findings (2009), then I feel they can be used in a general sense to define culture; however, care needs to be taken when applying such measures.

When making claims about the study sample, there were some respondent traits that did not allow for a fully adequate comparison. For instance, UoJ is a liberal arts university so all students are enrolled in “softer” fields (e.g. humanities, sociology), which makes it difficult to project on the impact that program of study might have on intention to study abroad. Other questions are also raised about the sample, including whether it qualifies as a representative sample that can reflect the typical Japanese higher education student. Because the students involved in the study are enrolled in an elective English course, they might have a pre-disposed preference to study English that is not shared by other students. Another sample concern involves the relatively small size of the qualitative email participants and the legitimacy of deriving conclusions based on their feedback. Furthermore, there was a slight imbalance in email questionnaire participants (6 strong, 4 weak), possibly skewing responses in favor of strong members, though attempts were made to mitigate this. Finally, the asynchronous approach to qualitative data collection by email was intended to simulate a face-to-face interview; however, the time lag between questions and follow-up questions is inarguably longer, thus possibly compromising true spontaneity.

In terms of executing the proposed IoC, it would be straightforward for an individual instructor to apply his or her own experiences, perspectives, and beliefs to the process; however, for any real sustainable change, IoC should be supported at the departmental level and above. Realizing this bottom-up approach could be challenging considering that personal differences between instructors working within a common system will yield unique beliefs, interpretations, and influence (Whitsed & Green, 2015). Also, in assuming that not all educators involved in the IoC process will have the experience, skills, and knowledge to deliver on IoC, then a support network would need to be established to facilitate proper training.

6.2. Future Research Directions

The theory of planned behavior posits that intention leads to action. In challenging this, Heisel and Stebleski (2009) suggest that such a progression might not always manifest as students with strong intent to study abroad might ultimately forego the opportunity. In a study of American business students, Pope et al. (2014) identify that a “significant number of

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students declare intent to study abroad as freshmen, yet fail to act on those intentions when the opportunity presents itself a year or two later” (2014). In other research, 55% of incoming university students responded to be “certain” or “fairly certain” that they would study abroad, with 26% expressing a strong desire to study abroad; nevertheless, only 1.4 to three percent actually participated in academic sojourns (Institute of International Education, 2011). These studies may expose the tendency of individuals to express intent or willingness to do something in the distant future under the assumption that they will have ample time and resources to engage in the activity when the time comes; however, in reality, the opportunity does not manifest as anticipated. If a similar longitudinal study were conducted in the Japanese context, it is possible that data would reveal different results due to the long-term orientation tendencies of Japanese society.

The natural proceeding phase of this research would be the implementation of recommended changes to the L2 curriculum, as outlined in the previous chapter. This is an area of higher education that has not been explored in depth as Jones (2014) claims that “there is insufficient evidence of student learning outcomes from internationalized curricula in the domestic setting to indicate the full potential of this approach” (p. 7). If the suggestions in this thesis are embraced by the institution and other L2 learning contexts in Japan, then what effect would it have on students with weaker intent to study abroad? Could the described strategies to reduce perceived barriers to study abroad and ethnocentrism actually result in a greater intention to study abroad? To answer these question, a longitudinal study would need to be conducted involving a study, such as this one, administered at the onset of a higher education experience then again before graduation to identify (a) changes in intent to study abroad, (b) whether curriculum actually enhanced international posture, and (c) if curriculum had an effect on ethnocentric beliefs. If there were a trend of strong intent students deciding not to study abroad, what would be the top forces that derail one’s plans? An alternative to this could involve an investigation of weaker intent students who eventually participated in study abroad and the factors that reversed their decision. Results of this study could provide valuable insight for stakeholders who wish to increase participation in study abroad.

According to the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO, 2016), a future challenge is to diversify the range of destination countries for Japanese students who want to study abroad. With financial restrictions being confirmed as a major deterrent to studying abroad, there is already a trend of Japanese students independently traveling to the Philippines for intensive English lessons at language schools (Tokuda, 2016). This type of

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study abroad could extend to HEIs as students continue to consider destinations that are more affordable for living. As one of the participants in the qualitative email phase expressed “my parents... don’t really encourage me to study in Western countries for financial reasons”. It could be interesting to conduct studies on perceptions of these alternative destinations in terms of both benefits and barriers, compared to the more traditional destinations of the US, UK, Canada, and other Western countries that use English as a primary language.

6.3. Closing

In addition to the outcomes and recommendations presented in this study, and others like it, I feel there are several forces at play that will result in the eventual reversal of declining study abroad participation in Japan. A silver lining in the recent downward trend is the surge amongst junior high and high school students (Educational Tour Institute, 2012). In 2011, a total of 827 high schools and 110 junior high schools offered study abroad opportunities to its students. Often described as a collectivistic society and one that is group oriented, the manifestations of groupism in Japan might lead to an eventual situation where study abroad is not just encouraged, but expected from university students. As study abroad participation rises amongst high school students, and the Japanese government continues to invest money into developing cross-cultural programs at its HEIs, numbers of participants could reach its tipping point in the foreseeable future. For those who are not fortunate enough to have the means to take part, hopefully this research contributes to domestic curriculum that will allow students to assimilate some of the same benefits that are reaped through study abroad. The American Lincoln Commission suggests that study abroad experience should be the norm during higher education, rather than the exception (Durbin, 2006). The recent rhetoric regarding study abroad in Japan is similar in nature to this, so it will be interesting to see if the next round of published participation numbers reflects the efforts of the Japanese government. Regardless, Japanese students will continue to be discouraged from studying abroad based on barriers such as lack of L2 and financial restrictions, meaning that institutions should start developing programs that allow the assimilation of study abroad benefits domestically. This may seem difficult to realize in such an ethnically homogenous country such as Japan, but precedents have been set in neighboring countries. While internationalization should not be seen as a goal in itself, it should be viewed as an avenue to improve the quality of education for all.

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Appendix: Study Abroad Intent Survey

1) Consent Form

1. Please write your UoJ email address for identification: ここにあなたのUoJのメールアドレスを入力してください。

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. / 私はこの調査に自発的に参加しており、自分の権利を侵さずに、この調査を自由に途中でやめることができ、また、答えたくない質問があった場合に答えなくてもいいということを理解しています。

Yes / はい

No / いいえ

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. / 私はデータ保護法のもと私が提供した情報をいつでも確認することができ、その情報の破棄を願い出ることができることを理解しています。

Yes / はい

No / いいえ

4. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications. / 私はこの情報の秘密性、匿名性が維持され、調査が公開される場合でも、私であることは特定できないことを理解しています

Yes / はい

No / いいえ

5. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) for the above study (Version 5, 8/5/2015). I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. / 私は本メールに添付されている調査参加に関する規定 (Participation Information Sheet - PIS) (バージョン5、2015/8/5)を確認し、上記の調査に関する内容を理解し参加の是非を十分考え、調査内容に対して疑問がある場合、自らが質問をし、納得する回答を得られた。

Yes / はい

No / いいえ

6. Do you agree to participate in the above study?

あなたはこの研究に参加することに同意しますか?

Yes, I agree / はい、私は同意します。

No, I don't agree / いいえ、同意しません。

7. Gender / 性別:

Male / 男

Female / 女

8. What year are you in university? 大学何年生ですか?

first year / 一年生

second year / 二年生

third year / 三年生

fourth year / 四年生

Other (please specify) / その他

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9. Please select your faculty:

所属学部を選択してください：

Humanities / 文学部

Sociology / 社会学部

Theology / 神学部

Law & Politics / 法学部

Economics / 経済学部

Business Administration / 商学部

Human Welfare / 人間福祉学部

10. Country of birth / 出生地:

Japan / 日本

China / 中国

Korea / 韓国

Other / その他

11. What is your highest achieved TOEIC score? / これまで* に受けた TOEIC の最高点は何点ですか？

651 and over / 651点以上

601 - 650

551 - 600

501-550

451 - 500

400 - 450

less than 400 / 400点以下

12. How do you pay for the majority of your UoJ tuition fees? / あなたの関学での学費のほとんどは誰によって支払われていますか？

parents / 両親

personally (savings and job) / 自分で (貯蓄、仕事など)

bank loan / 銀行ローン

academic scholarship / 奨学金

I don't know / わからない

Other (please specify) / その他

13. What was your grade point average (GPA) from last semester (Spring 2015)? / 前期(2015年度 春学期) のあなたの成績評価の平均値(GPA)は何ですか。

3.6 - 4.0

3.1 - 3.5

2.6 - 3.0

2.1 - 2.5

1.1 - 2.0

0 - 1.0

I don't know / わからない

14. How many clubs or circles do you belong to at UoJ? / 関学でいくつのクラブやサークルに所属していますか？

0

1

2

3+

15. On average, how many hours a week do you spend on all club/circle activities? / 平均であなたは週に何時間クラブやサークルに時間を費やしていますか。

0-4 hours / 時間

5-9 hours / 時間

10-14 hours / 時間

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15-19 hours / 時間

20+ hours / 時間

16. Do you currently work a part-time job? / * あなたは現在アルバイトをしていますか？

yes / はい

no / いいえ

17. If yes, how many hours a week do you work? / もしそうなら、あなたは週に週に何時間働いていますか？

0-4 hours / 時間

5-9 hours / 時間

10-14 hours / 時間

15-19 hours / 時間

20+ hours / 時間

18. Do you intend to participate in job hunting at UoJ? / 関学での就職活動に参加するつもりはありますか？

yes / はい

no / いいえ

maybe / たぶん

19. If yes, when do you plan on starting? / もしそうなら、いつ始める予定ですか。

first year / 一年生の時

second year / 二年生の時

third year / 三年生の時

fourth year / 四年生の時

Other (please specify) / その他

20. Do you hope to work at one company for your entire career? / あなたは生涯1つの会社で働き続けたいですか。

yes / はい

no / いいえ

21. What is your native language?

母国語は何ですか？

Japanese / 日本語

Korean / 韓国語

Chinese / 中国語

Other / その他

22. How many foreign languages are you studying at the moment?

現在、何ヶ国語を勉強していますか？

1

2

3+

23. Which situation best describes your living arrangements at university?

大学でのあなたの住環境は下記のうちどれに当てはまりますか？

I live with my family / 私は家族と住んで□います

I live in the student dormitory in a private room / 私は学生寮の個室に住んでいます。

I live in the student dormitory, and a Japanese student is my roommate / 私は学生寮に日本人のルームメイトと一緒に住んでいます。

I live in the dormitory, and an international student is my roommate / 私は学生寮に留学生のルームメイトと一緒に住んでいます。

I live alone in a room or an apartment off campus / 私はキャンパスから離れたアパート、または部屋で□一人暮らしをしています。

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I live in a room or apartment off campus with a Japanese person / 私はキャンパスから離れたアパート、または部屋に日本人と住んでいます。

I live in a room or an apartment off campus with an international student / 私はキャンパスから離れたアパート、または部屋に留学生と住んでいます。

24. Has anyone in your family previously studied abroad? / あなたの家族で過去に留学していた人はいいますか。(あなたを除く)

yes / はい

no / いいえ

I don't know / わからない

25. Have any of your friends previously studied abroad? / あなたの友達で過去に留学していた人はいいますか。

yes / はい

no / いいえ

I don't know / わからない

26. Have you ever been to an English-speaking country for the purpose of studying English?
英語を学習するために英語圏の国に行った事がありますか?

Yes / はい

No / いいえ

27. If 'Yes', for how long?

はいと答えた方は、とどれくらいの期間でですか?

0-1 semester / 0-1学期

1-2 semester / 1-2学期

more than 2 semesters / 2学期以上

28. Apart from your answer to question 26, have you ever lived in any foreign country for longer than 1 month?

26番の質問の答えとは別に、あなたは外国に1カ月以上住んだ事がありますか?

Yes / はい

No / いいえ

29. If 'Yes', for how long?

はいと答えた方は、とどれくらいの期間でですか?

1-2 months / 1-2カ月

2-6 months / 2-6カ月

over 6 months / 6カ月以上

30. If you study abroad during your time at UoJ, when would you be most likely to do so? もしあなたが関学

在学中に留学をする場合、いつになると思いますか?

during first academic year / 大学1年次

during second academic year / 大学2年次

during third academic year / 大学3年次

during fourth academic year / 大学4年次

Other (please specify) / その他

31. How many foreign countries have you visited so far in your life?

今まで、あなたは何カ国に行ったことがありますか。

0

1 - 2

3 - 4

5 - 6

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7 - 9
10+