The Interaction of Gender and Identity: A 6-year Perspective on Japanese Participants in an Academic Year Abroad

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ABSTRACT

A retrospective six-year, cross-sectional study of alumni from an academic year abroad program for Japanese students at the University of British Columbia found that 1) intercultural perspectives acquired in Canada interacted moderately with gender and time following return to Japan and that 2) attrition of several key perspectives was most likely to occur if opportunities for further intercultural contact and travel were not available. A two-way analysis of variance of responses to Likert-type items on a 64-item questionnaire showed that the men's perceptions of their movement away from an acquired desire to live in an international location overseas and towards recovering a sense of the centrality of Japanese values is significantly greater than that of the women in the study. Men also perceive their return to Japan more problematically and have to recover more of their sense of Japanese identity than the women. Males appear to resolve their greater perception of a problematic return to Japan in terms of their mandatory transition from student to work roles as compared with the more flexible transition of their female counterparts. The self-perceptions of women in these areas remained relatively stable during the transition to work, due, perhaps, to the different career expectations and roles for men and women in Japanese society.

KEYWORDS : year-abroad, acculturation, culture learning, identity and gender

1. Introduction

Academic year-abroad programs remain a staple of international education and retain strong institutional support across North America. The ideology of exchange asserts the benefits of immersion in another culture and the creation of lasting changes among participants that will eventuate in better cross-national communication. Even though colleges and universities remain committed to the assertion of positive outcomes from international education generally, we know surprisingly little in any systematic and empirical sense about the lasting effects of a year-abroad (Berwick & Whalley, 2000; Coleman, 1997). With several key exceptions, researchers have failed to apply sufficient conceptual thinking to the design of studies that examine the participants' personal perceptions about the durability of these changes over an extended period of time.

The issue we address in this study is the persistence of intercultural skills and competencies acquired abroad (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Kim, 1991; Lustig & Koester, 1999) following return to Japan and in the context of commitment to work within a Japanese social environment. We are also interested in the differing perceptions of young Japanese women and men as they move from the culture of student life to the culture of work. In particular, how do the women and men in this study view their return and adaptation to Japanese society during the six-year period that encompasses their transition from student roles to professions and careers? To some extent we are dealing simultaneously with the effects of maturation and memory, and their interaction. We are also looking at the course of personal development in the face of several critical events that other Japanese young people, who did

not live abroad, do not encounter: eight months in a student residence with non-Japanese suite mates, envelopment in a world of English both inside and outside of the classroom, exposure to a multicultural values in the classroom and on the street, eventual return and re-induction into an alternative system of rules and expectations that reasserts itself immediately after the students' return home.

The impact of intercultural experience and its interaction with gender and work is thus the centre of this survey-based study. Because we work in an applied world, we also hope to examine the implications of our findings for further education, and to suggest how the methodology itself may be extended into the study of identity in rapidly evolving intercultural contexts.

2. Conceptualizing the field

One of the central limitations of research directed towards understanding the effects of an academic year abroad is that empirical study is scarce and tends to be focused rather narrowly on gains achieved in a second language. Beyond the question of language gain, however, lies the need to undertake studies examining the impact of residence abroad on "increased cultural awareness and insight" (Coleman, 1997, p. 13) — an area just beginning to receive attention from researchers emphasizing the design of well-controlled studies employing adequate sample size and testing procedures (Freed, 1995).

One area that has received virtually no attention in the literature is the long-term, multi-factoral effects of residence abroad extending a decade or more from the year of participation and return home.

An example of an empirical study that attempted to assess a relatively large number of dimensions of the intercultural experience over the *near-term* is Martin, Bradford and Rohrlich (1995) survey of 248 third-year American university students. The study compared the students' anticipated difficulties on 13 aspects of their sojourn (learning and using a foreign language, meeting people and making friends, etc.) with their actual, experienced difficulties. Findings included a surprisingly high number of positively fulfilled expectations, an indication of satisfactory sojourner adaptation to a new culture. Unfortunately, our understanding of personal development is limited in this study to what amounts to a single assessment of change over a relatively short period — a fairly typical problem in the literature dealing with objective treatment of cognitive and affective development overseas.

The emphasis on personal development within a context of need to deal with the demands of daily life inevitably takes us out of the language classroom and into a world of acculturation in the wider society. For example, employing learners' journals, travel logs, group discussions, and questionnaires, Gmelch (1997), surveyed 51 students over six weeks in non-classroom settings (on weekend travel through Europe) and found that substantial gains occurred in confidence, self-reliance and adaptability in response to daily challenges such as making travel arrangements and negotiating purchases. Gmelch also noted the importance of critical decision-making challenges across a wide range of contexts within a culture, that is, the importance of untutored experience within the culture as a fundamental resource for learning and personal transformation (Mezirow, 1991).

Gmelch's empirical study is helpful in looking at acculturation as a complex of social achievements beyond language gains alone, entailing interaction and observation to support personal growth. However, the study lacks a longer perspective and a larger numbers of participants essential to reliably assess the *persistence* of personal development.

What we have referred to thus far as 'personal development' requires at this point some attention to typologies of development relevant to the period abroad that may be linked to growth of one's ability to establish and maintain relationships across cultures — the core ability of the interculturally competent individual (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Kim, 1991; Lustig & Koester, 1999). One approach to structuring this notion of personal development (Byram, 1997) proposes four kinds of knowledge or skill (four 'savoirs'):

> *savoir   étre* — the ability to abandon ethnocentric attitudes;
>
> *savoir apprendre* — an ability to observe, collect data and analyse how people of another language-and-culture perceive and

experience their world;

savoir — knowledge of aspects of a culture (e.g., school systems);

savoir faire — the ability to draw upon the other savoirs and integrate them into real-time, not imagined, behaviour. (p. 11f)

This view describes competencies of "the intercultural speaker" within the context of defining the objectives and approaches to assessment of a course of learning.

In another view that invokes the responsibilities of educators as well as other educational stakeholders to develop interculturally competent learners, Mason and Stanley (1998) set out to specify "competencies students require to succeed as citizens and professionals in today's global society" (p. 3). These specifications embody a consensus within a community of employers, governments, non-profit organizations and post-secondary educators in British Columbia around the identity of "international learning outcomes" that will facilitate successful work abroad or educational innovation in Canada's multicultural society. The learning outcomes identified were organized into five themes: adapting to the cultural expectations and needs of an international client, acquiring basic skills in an additional language, developing community and global perspectives, developing intercultural competence and demonstrating coping and resiliency skills (p. 3).

The common regions between these two approaches seem to lie first, in developing an ability to identify with the way other people lead their lives and organize their work and social relationships and, second, in the ability to extend new knowledge and skills acquired through acculturation to novel circumstances. Both approaches also emphasize knowledge of aspects of a culture, such as what constitutes situationally appropriate behaviour, as well as the growth of observational and analytic skills, which are of use in making sense of other cultures.

Identity and gender

The familiar concerns about the identity crises of Japanese who return from study abroad, as well as the alienating and painful aspects of acculturation abroad, have been well documented in both theoretical and experiential accounts during the past four decades (Bailey, 1999). Acculturation studies have examined *identity* either peripherally (Althen, Coelho & Pusch, 1981; Bulthuis, 1986) or as a central concern (Doi, 1998; Hinkle, 1992; Johnson, 1988; Kondo, 1990; Morales, Lopez-Zaez, & Vega, 1998; Sagawa, 1998; Worschel, Morales, Paez, & Deschamps, 1998). This domain of research includes studies of students' sojourns and year abroad between Asian and European cultures, and within Asian and European cultures.

Bailey (1999) gives a recent account of his life in Japan, interspersed with returns to Canada over a 25-year period, in which he develops a hermeneutics for understanding Japanese identity and culture. This cultural hermeneutic study of Japanese identity is enhanced by reflection on his own Japanese-and-Canadian family and the presence of his children in the Japanese and Canadian school systems. While there are studies which look at the problems associated with the transitions Japanese students experience during periods of short duration abroad (Segawa, 1998; Jones, 1997), Bailey (1999) is unique to our knowledge in examining the processes of identity development during the transitions from a consensus-seeking to an individualist society and *back again*, exploring changes in perception of one's identity over an extended period following the return home.

Kondo (1990) has a more focused view of identity development within small work settings, that is, of the kinds of close communities that Japanese young people are likely enter following graduation from high school or university. Inequality is assumed in such settings; inequality is essential in offering individuals the opportunity to forge an identity that links them with some participants in the workplace but inevitably separates them from others. The crafting of a disciplined self within this system is thought to be at least as important to the creation of an identity as it is to the success of the work enterprise. Within the context of the present study, then, we might look beyond the year abroad and begin to focus on the period of transition in Japan from student to work roles and the major influence the transition is expected to have on the redefinition of the identities of the participants. In particular, we are interested in the transitional effects of work roles on retention of competencies acquired during

the year abroad.

In order to talk about evidence of maintaining or losing intercultural competencies (see, also, Berwick, 1994 re: the several meanings of *cultural awareness*) we would like next to discuss how we operationalized the sorts of skills, attitudes and states of mind that study abroad programs are supposed to bring about within a framework of personal growth. In particular, we need to understand how gender and identity influence participants' perceptions about the duration and quality of intercultural competencies acquired abroad.

3. Methodology

3. 1. Design and use of instruments

Our initial task was to develop a valid and reliable questionnaire that would reveal the range of elements that contribute to intercultural competence. The work of Mason and Stanley (1998) provided a framework for the construction of such a questionnaire. Four themes, adapted from Mason and Stanley, provided the scaffold for a 64-item questionnaire (Appendix A): Language and Cultural Knowledge for Social and Professional Purposes; Community, National and International Perspectives; Intercultural Competence; Self-awareness, Resilience and Coping. We added an additional theme, Returning to Japan, to explore an interest in the study of returning sojourners as exemplified in the literature (Jones, 1997; Rogers & Ward, 1993; Uehara, 1986; Goodman, 1990; Miyamoto, 1994). Some of the items within these categories were suggested by the work of Mason and Stanley (1998), others by the broader literature of intercultural communication competence (Lustig and Koester, 1999). We also developed and refined questionnaire items during several working sessions involving the contribution of teachers and researchers who had lived and worked in Japan during the past decade. These items were rendered into seven-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 ('strongly agree) to 7 ('strongly disagree'). Appendix A shows the scale format and lists representative items. In order to increase the validity of the questionnaire, all items were constructed to eliminate directionality of response bias by alternating positive and negative choices.

The questionnaire and instructions were translated into Japanese. English language versions of the items were retained on the questionnaires as an additional means of clarifying the meaning of Japanese terms for newly coined words (e.g., *globalization*, *self-awareness*; *identity*), which might have been less familiar than the English equivalent.

3. 2. Participants, programs and administration

Participants in the study were drawn from a pool of approximately 500 alumni from five years of The University of British Columbia's Ritsumeikan (Kyoto)-UBC Academic Exchange Programme between 1991 and 1996. The UBC program involved immersion in Canadian academic culture and a blend of English language/content instruction for mainly second and third-year Ritsumeikan students, typically between 19 to 21 years of age. The program also included residence in four-person suites (two Japanese and two non-Japanese students). TOEFL scores for the groups at entry averaged around 500.

One hundred sixty-nine students and former students from the program years between 1991-1996 (comprising 48 percent of alumni questionnaires sent) responded to our request to return the completed 64-item questionnaire via Japanese post. In order to make a meaningful comparison between student and career groups of alumni, and to examine changes in the alumni's perception of their intercultural competence during the six years, we collapsed respondents into one of two groups, *long-term* or *near-term*, corresponding to completion of their overseas program in 1991-3 and 1994-6, respectively. In effect, this division gave us groups that were either out of university and working full time or at university and not working full time, i.e., workers or students. Table 1 outlines the composition of the sample by period, work status, gender and number.

Table 1.

Periods, status, gender and participants in the study

		gender		
period	status	male	female	total
near-term: 1995 - 1996	students	31	62	93
long-term: 1987 - 1991	workers	29	47	76
Total participants				n = 169

Within the sample of 169 alumni, 38 agreed to be interviewed using a protocol developed to extend the key areas of the questionnaire (Appendix B). The 40-minute interviews were conducted in both English and Japanese, depending on the interviewees' preference, in a wide variety of venues, including coffee shops, restaurants and campus offices. About half of the interviews in the two respondent groups were conducted one-on-one (alumni - researcher), while the remainder of the interviews were conducted with groups of two to four. Each interview was audio taped for later analysis.

Our data include the participants' *perceptions* of their intercultural competence over time gained through the interviews and the questionnaire. Although the use of self-report is a subjective approach to assessment of learning outcomes, it is well represented in recent studies of Japanese living abroad (Jones, 1997; Yoshida, Sauer, Tidwell, Skager & Sorensen, 1997). This self-report literature, however, has not examined experiences over the span of several years nor have groups within the longer span been compared through multivariate analysis.

3. 3. Design and Analysis

Our first concern was to establish whether there were any significant differences between the two alumni groups over time and if there were any significant interactions between gender and social role (student/worker). We recognize, of course, that role is inevitably confounded with age, maturation and length of residence in the home culture. Our central interest here was the discovery of how social role (student or worker) and gender were related to social adjustment and personal identity. For this purpose we designed a series of two-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) comparing the means for items on the questionnaire between the two, combined alumni groups, that is, the temporal distance from the year-abroad in Canada, expressed as *long-term* and *mid-term* (Table 1) from the year-abroad in Canada. We note that the study is based on a cross-sectional treatment of groups participating in the past six years of the program. The questionnaire and interviews were administered to participants in the study within a two-month period in Japan.

In addition to the ANOVA, we listened to the taped interviews to complement and refine the interpretation of statistical findings. For example, learning that the responses to Item 17 on the questionnaire (*"I became more internationally minded"*) discriminated well between the groups, we then located representative comments on a relevant excerpt from one of the interview tapes: "When associating with them [other non-native speakers of English] a sense of consciousness of being the same people on the planet developed....My prejudice disappeared."

4. Findings

A two-way analysis of variance examining the interaction between *group* (working or student alumni) and *gender* is summarized in Table 2, below. Significant interaction effects were found for questions 56 ('the way I think about Japanese values changed'), 63 ('more comfortable overseas than in Japan') and 64 ('continue to be Japanese inside, no matter what'). A near-significant interaction (*p* = .058) between group and gender occurred for question 52 ('Following my return, I experienced problems adjusting to Japanese society'). In general, our interpretation for this group of interactions is that some of the ways that males and females depict their values and sense of self differ depending on whether they are working or not. Clearly the passage from student to worker is inextricably linked to the passage of time in Japanese society (i.e., residence in Japanese society) — it is not apparent from our data whether employment *per se* or immersion in Japanese society for a period of years or maturation or

Table 2.
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: Group by Gender'

Dependent Variable (from Questionnaire)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
V 52 : 'Following my return,I experienced problems adjusting to Japanese society'	12.612	1	12.612	3.641	.058
V 53 : 'increasing ease in communication with Japanese'	.436	1	.436	.156	.694
V 54 : 'problems accepting Japanese standards of dress and appearance'	.445	1	.445	.132	.717
V 55 : 'my behaviour changed'	4.079	1	4.079	2.157	.144
V 56 : 'the way I think about Japanese values changed'	7.544	1	7.544	4.161	.043
V 57 : 'my friends think of me as less Japanese than before I went overseas'	3.129	1	3.129	1.124	.291
V 58 : 'my family still think of me as less Japanese than before I went overseas'	1.923	1	1.923	.724	.396
V 59 : 'lost my sense of identity as a Japanese'	.830	1	.830	.557	.456
V 60 : 'having to work hard at regaining my identity as a Japanese'	.396	1	.396	.180	.672
V 61 : 'more Japanese now than before I left for Canada'	.731	1	.731	.310	.579
V 62 : 'maintain contact with former classmates in Canada'	.151	1	.151	.036	.851
V 63 : 'more comfortable overseas than in Japan'	8.638	1	8.638	4.005	.047
V 64 : 'continue to be Japanese inside, no matter what'	7.563	1	7.563	4.223	.041
'shaded significance levels indicate variables treated for further analysis					

perhaps a combination of all three are the key sources of differentiation — but it is clear that qualitative movement from earlier to later reflection on identity is gender-related.

What is the direction of this relationship and who seems to do most of the changing away from values acquired overseas? Figure 1 depicts the issue of changing Japanese values (re: V56 'Following my return from Canada, the way I think about Japanese values changed'). Clearly, on this issue, the men change significantly more than the women, moving from strong agreement as students to a relatively neutral stance as workers. What we suspect is happening as students take on work roles is a gender differentiation that reflects a Japanese pattern of expectations for men in particular that values careerism, careful attention to the hierarchy within Japanese work settings and submersion of the self into the strong supportive relationships of workplace units.
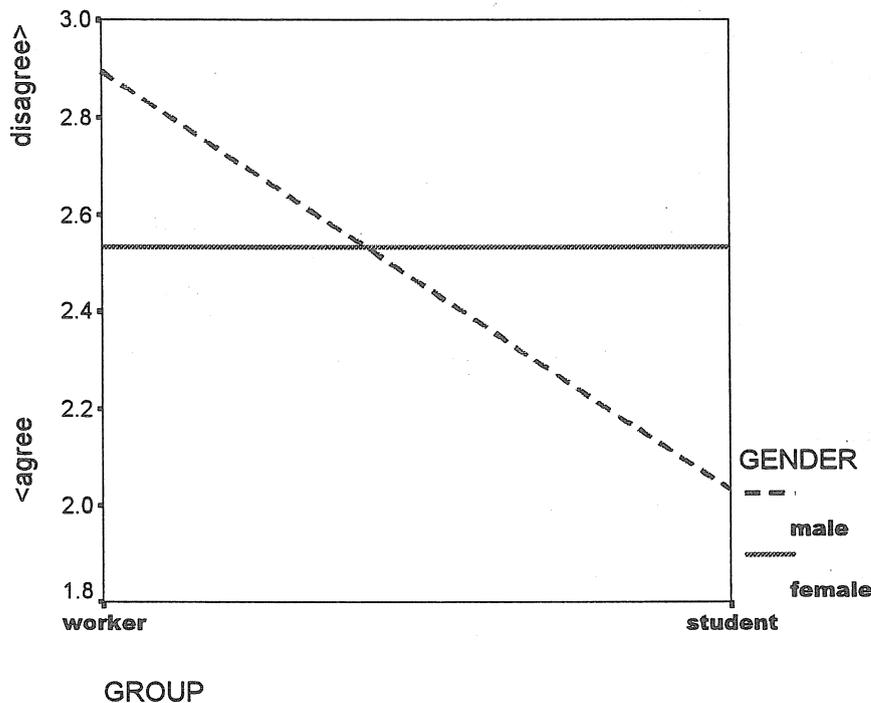
V56: 'The way I think about Japanese values changed'

Figure 1.

Group by gender interaction in response to perceptions of Japanese identity

This transition marks the social maturation of men within traditional roles, effectively returning them to homegrown values infusing the workplace and the roles of parent and spouse. Generally women are still excluded from extended careers in the world of Japanese business and in many other fields due to a gender ceiling. They remain moderately committed to the stance with which they returned home, namely that they remain committed to the core values of their society. One way to look at this finding is that women are initially more centred and confident about their identity as Japanese than the men and that the period of return initiates a relatively more radical transition for the men as they enter the work force.

Figure 2 extends this logic somewhat by focussing on the willingness of alumni to remain cosmopolitan, to prefer residence outside of Japan (V63: 'I feel more comfortable overseas than in Japan'). Preference for this position constitutes, at least

temporarily, evidence for the strong pull of a Canadian lifestyle or quality of life and suggests a rejection of a Japanese style of living. Once again, the men move characteristically towards a dilution of the cosmopolitan perspective whereas the women show that they are increasingly attracted to residence abroad. We also note, in this context, the phenomenon of single Japanese women who reject a social existence in Japan in favor of permanent residence in North America.
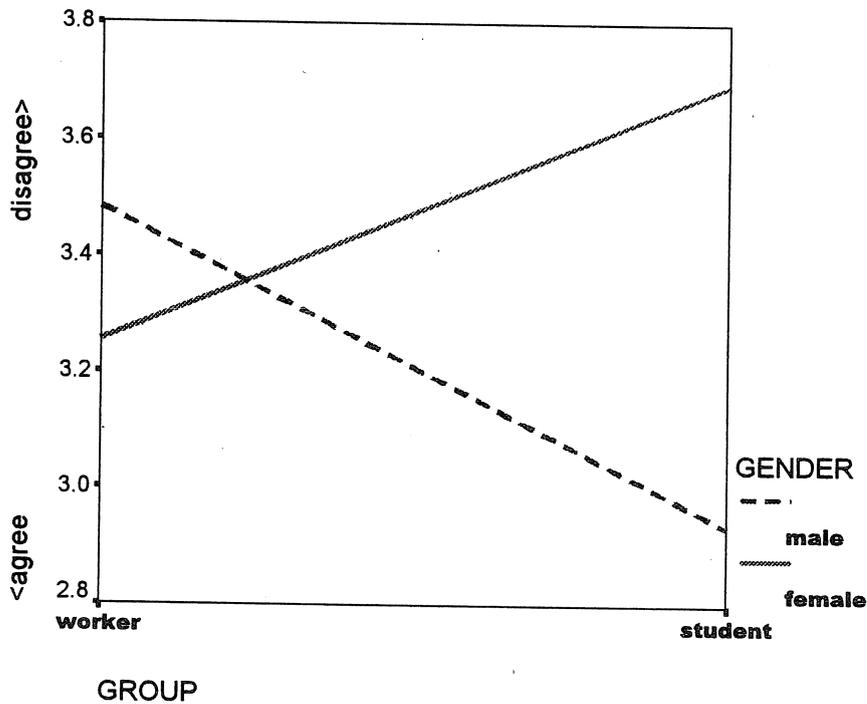

V63: 'I am more comfortable living overseas than in Japan'

Figure 2.

Group by gender interaction in response to perceptions of comfort overseas

As it turns out, the men move farthest along this dimension of comfort with life in Vancouver and are significantly more likely, as students, to agree with view that life is better outside Japan. However, these initial alumni viewpoints on the issue reverse with the passage of time. Women appear to move towards desiring a non-Japanese (perhaps Canadian) lifestyle whereas men begin to reject their earlier views as they commence their career path in Japan. We don't know precisely what 'comfort overseas' means, although the interviews suggested that such dimensions of comfort as increased physical space and personal privacy as well as greater social latitude and freedom counted as reference points for the alumni on this issue. Finally, we recount the strong demands of a Japanese career path and the well-defined re-engagement that men experience as they move into work roles as one way of imagining why they might end up rejecting their earlier more youthful or less career-centered preference for life outside of Japan.

Perhaps the core belief about identity expressed by the alumni is the response to V64 ('I continue to be Japanese inside, no matter what'). The significant difference between men and women on this issue develops most strikingly following their return from Canada, with men much more unsure about their central identity then the women — who appear rock solid on the proposition that their experience overseas has not shaken their view of themselves as fundamentally Japanese throughout the transition from student to work roles in adult society.
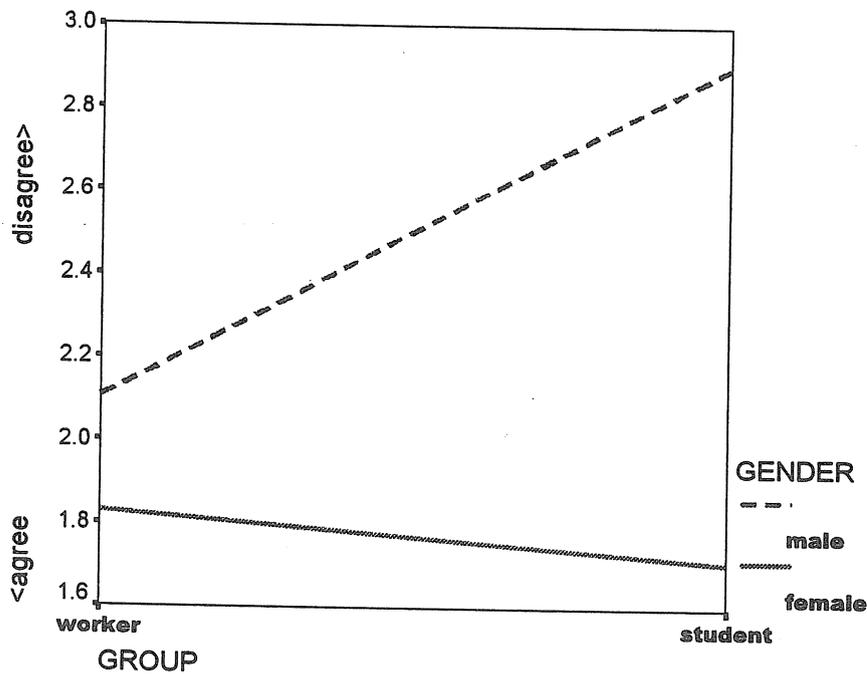
V64: 'I continue to be Japanese inside, no matter what'

Figure 3.

Group by gender interaction in response to perceptions of Japanese identity

Since both groups end up reaffirming their Japanese core, it may be useful to point out that parents and others who may have feared for the destabilization of Japanese identity during the year abroad have little in fact to worry about over the long run. Male alumni are not telling us that they have lost their sense of national identity, only that they are not especially clear about what it means to be Japanese. The surprise in this particular finding, however, is that the majority of men return to Japanese society not only with a larger re-adjustment to make than the women but, based on our interview data, also have relatively little to actually say when compared to the expressiveness of the women on this issue.

So far the results suggest images of young Japanese men and women at variance with their stereotypical likenesses. We note, for instance, a level of openness and disorientation among the men during their remaining student days following their return to Japan--perhaps a response to their immersion overseas--that is soon replaced by a willingness to be engaged by the traditional values of the workplace. We also note a resilience and stability of internationalization among the women that continues beyond their return to the university ― clearly a finding in support of an alternative view of Japanese young women, namely that the women in this study were not especially destabilized by their experience overseas.

What about the period of return itself? How do the working and non-working alumni review their transition from one culture to another? Figure 4 summarizes responses to V52: ('Following my return from Canada, I experienced problems adjusting to Japanese society'). Perhaps the most dramatic shifts of perspective among the males is movement from agreement to disagreement with the view that the readjustment was a difficult one. Since we were working with alumni groups recalling their experiences over increasingly greater periods of time since their return, it may simply be the case that memory of an ostensibly traumatic readjustment changes over time to memory of a reasonably successful adjustment: Interview data suggest a range of individual responses to the return, from deep anomie and disorientation to mere inconvenience, with a consensus that the difficult period
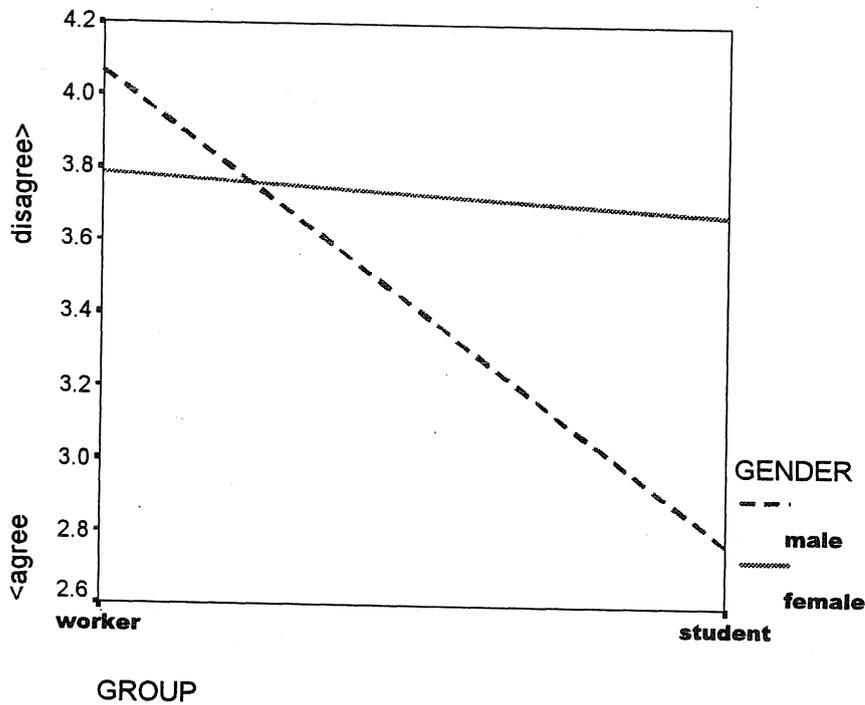
V52: 'Following my return, I experienced problems adjusting to Japanese society'

Figure 4.

Group by gender interaction in response to perceptions of difficulty returning to Japan

extended from two-and-a-half to five months. As noted previously, men of all ages did not respond as volubly as the women, and yet the statistical analysis suggests a thus far unappreciated level of difficulty for returning male students.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The fundamental conclusion of this study is that internationalization and other effects of the year-abroad (such as use of English) appear to dissipate during the 7-year period following return, unless opportunities for continuing international contacts, either through work or travel, are afforded. This is particularly true for young men whose return is to a working future reasonably well established long before they ever left for North America. Our data suggest that in the absence of continuing contact with the values and behaviours of a multicultural society, men will begin to compartmentalize their overseas experience in favour of the more salient demands of their careers beyond the university. In general, the men have a harder landing than the women and find themselves moving more rapidly and single-mindedly into work role expectancies that predate their experiences in North America. That is to say, the men return to a society that places greater value on their immediate involvement in their life-long career development.

Conversely, women return to a society where their less consuming expectations for career development at work are apparently well reflected in the society at large, which still supports work roles with lower expectations for their career development than for men. This helps to explain our findings showing women experiencing a much more gradual and less definitive movement across the student/worker threshold into a system that highly values their contributions to the workplace at the same time that it restricts access to its management. Although these kinds of restrictions may begin to occasion dissatisfaction among women who have

experienced a year abroad, particularly in a multicultural society, the seeds of dissatisfaction are likely to remain unexpressed within a Japanese context in the absence of support for applying intercultural competencies at work, in further educational contexts, or, indeed, during further immersion abroad.

Although the findings of this study are consistent with the ways Japanese society links the allocation of roles and responsibilities with gender--and however much we might like to point towards gender differences in the reformulation of identity following return to Japan--we must also point out that there were only a fairly compact group of significant gender effects following analyses of the entire 64-item questionnaire. In general, all students found their experiences in Canada not merely memorable but affecting: Whenever offered the opportunity to agree with the values and various forms of intercultural experience that the program provided, both men and women responded overwhelmingly in support of the educational value of their experiences. Moreover, where significant gender differences did appear, they were consistent with and perhaps even predictable from an understanding of the participants' Japanese gender-role identities. We stress, however, that both groups reported that the year abroad did not alter their basic identity as Japanese. Rather, they came to a more profound understanding of their own Japaneseness and of international perceptions of Japan. The extraordinary enrichment a year abroad offers is still very much in evidence even six years following the experience, but that experience did not alter in fundamental ways the expectations of these young men and women regarding the basic patterns of their continuing participation in Japanese society.

Finally, we must emphasize that Japanese young people as participant-beneficiaries of the year-abroad experience are, after all, a diverse group with a wide range of interests and capacities in differing contexts. Moreover, as Bailey (1999) and Kondo (1990) point out, contemporary Japanese culture provides for a provocative interplay between traditional and contemporary values. Our data echoes theirs in demonstrating how important context is in understanding what may seem to be contradictory expressions of values and aspirations: the retention of aspirations for volunteer service overseas for example, and the commitment to the life of a salaryman, the sense of *anomie* among some returnees and the brevity of reentry stress for many, a continuing belief in the importance of gender equity and willingness to follow expectations of inequity within the institutional settings of the workplace.

Even though we have pointed to the strong pull of traditional Japanese values on returnees, we want to avoid the unidimensional stereotype of Japanese often found in the literature of language teaching and intercultural communication. We cite here with approval the work of Kubota (1999), who points out that conceptions of Japanese and Japanese society have been caught up in a kind "essentialization and exoticization of culture as well as determinism in cultural representations" (p. 15), blurring the intra-cultural variation that does exist and that may be elicited in survey research. Although we recognize important differences between the kinds of alumni represented in this study--between young men and women who are students or who have begun careers in Japan--we also note the significant variety within groups in terms of responses to Canadian culture. Interviews conducted following administration of the questionnaire revealed an extraordinary scope of sentiment and experience beyond the limits of the individual questionnaire items, indicating to us that Japanese young people who were asked to talk about their experience abroad have many stories to tell us and a wide-ranging emotional response to learning across cultures.

Appendix A

The Questionnaire:

Rating Scale and Selected Items

Example:

"My ability to use English as a means of communication with non-Japanese increased as a result of participating in my program

in Canada."

strongly   strongly
agree   disagree
1............2...✓........3...............4..............5..............6...........7

Sections and selected questions:

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES (1-14)

8: I believe that speaking different languages requires different cultural competencies.

9: People with different cultural backgrounds don't usually have a great deal in common.

COMMUNITY, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES (15-30)

15: A country where people have a wide variety of backgrounds is likely to be an interesting place to live.

17: I believe I've become more internationally-minded than other Japanese who haven't spend a year abroad.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE (31-41)

33: I more often try to understand an issue from the viewpoint of people from another culture.

37: I believe I can benefit from recognizing mutual interests with people who are culturally different from me.

SELF-AWARENESS, RESELIENCE AND COPING (42-51)

42: I'm a little uncomfortable when there are people around me who are culturally different.

45: My ability to understand my own biases towards other cultures has increased.

RETURNING TO JAPAN (52-64)

52: Following my return from Canada, I experienced problems adjusting to Japanese society.

58: My family still think of me as less Japanese than before I went overseas.

Appendix B

Interview Protocol (examples)

Describe in general terms the influence of the year-abroad program on your life.

Describe problems that you had on your return to Japan.

How has your identity as a Japanese changed as a result of your year-abroad experience?

What does the term 'internationalization' or 'kokusai-ka' mean to you personally?

What skills did you acquire during your year abroad (classroom, host-family, residence, community)?

What are your most lasting memories of the year-abroad?

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