

日本に長期滞在する欧米人の生活満足度に関する日本語能力と文化的適合要素との相関

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<https://doi.org/10.15017/1784632>

出版情報：地球社会統合科学研究. 5, pp.77-92, 2016-09-30. Graduate School of Integrated Sciences for Global Society, Kyushu University

バージョン：

権利関係：

Life satisfaction of long-term western foreign residents in Japan correlated with Japanese language skills and cultural fit

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Abstract

This paper will focus on the life satisfaction of long-term western foreign residents living in Japan. Due to the high socio-economic background of most western foreign residents, this study breaks away from many previous studies on immigration. The life satisfaction composite was tested using Pearson's r coefficient to show a correlation with Japanese language ability and cultural fit composites. The data used for the composite variables in this study are taken from a nationwide questionnaire conducted by this author in August, 2014 ($n=306$). The respondents were from a wide variety of urban and country areas in Japan with postal codes ranging from Hokkaido to Kyushu. One specific criterion which makes this study unusual is that all respondents have been living in Japan for more than ten consecutive years at the time of the study. This study challenges whether Japanese language or cultural fit, or both, are determinants of long-term western foreigner life satisfaction in Japan. This study hypothesizes life satisfaction is more positively correlated with cultural fit rather than language ability. Items for discrimination and microaggressions were also used in the analysis and were tested for correlation with life satisfaction as well. The results of this study are discussed and will be used as a part of broader research on hybrid identities of long term western foreign residents in Japan.

Keywords: western foreign residents in Japan, life satisfaction, cultural fit

Introduction

The process or mechanisms used by various immigrant groups to achieve a satisfying life in a host culture have developed and transformed over time.

The western foreign group in this study is not often observed in sociological studies due to their higher economic status when compared to Asian or Latin American groups (Kanno 2008a; Yamanaka 2008). Long-term western foreign residents experience many socio-psychological hurdles when integrating into the Japanese host culture. The attempt to measure their life satisfaction and its correlation to language ability and the *cultural fit* model (Ward and Leong, 2004; Chirkov et al 2005) is to understand what factors determine success from the social and psychological angle. Life satisfaction is key to immigrant assimilation and carries over from the first to second generations from a socio-psychological viewpoint (Safi 2010).

According to immigration studies, there are several factors or caveats waiting for immigrants as they assimilate into a host culture. For example, learning a host-culture's language is key to gaining employment and/or furthering education to gain better employment (Takenoshita, 2015; Harker, 2001). Discrimination against immigrants can also create difficulties with renting an apartment or obtaining bank loans. Gaining full employment, which allows for career advancement and the chance of promotion, can also be a challenge for many as well. Many often experience a spiraling of part-time and/or contract work. Another key factor in the immigration progress is connections to ethnic communities as a support base to promote psychological well-being (Portes et al 2005), which commonly leads to discussions on social capital (Takenoshita 2015). While the above factors are very important when researching immigrants, they do not apply in the same way to all immigrant groups.

English speaking foreigners, whether they are native or of native level, often come from an economic background higher than many of the other immigrant groups. This gives them an advantage upon arrival.

Westerners also have different visa status options, requiring a higher minimum salary than other immigrant groups who are often hired as labourers or entertainers. Westerners, who fit the fourth pattern of the “newcomer” group, have socially different experiences when compared to other *newcomers* (Komai 2001). Most come as sojourners and do not have any intention to stay long term. The “westerner” (Komisarof 2012) label can incorporate a range of racial backgrounds. In the case of Americans, they can range from Black to Asian to Latino as well as the predominantly white groups who also come from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. All of these sub-groups will have different experiences, but few will have the level of economic troubles experienced by Asian and Latin American groups. It is the social angle, not the economic, in which their assimilation styles differ. Most western foreigners and research done on them do not use the term immigrant to describe the group. They tend to use *expat*, *sojourner* or *westerner* which also shows how they “other” themselves from different immigrant groups.

Classic or straight-line assimilation theory was first applied to white European immigrants in the early 1900's in the United States. William Foote Whyte's ethnography of Italian immigrants “Street Corner Society”, in which one of this author's relatives appear, could not be applied to the experiences of non-white immigrants who migrated to the United States in the later 20th century from Latin America and Asian countries (Alba, 1997). While both groups had economic and social problems, the difficulties they encountered were in respective forms. In some cases, the problems even extended into the second and third generation (Sassler 2006, Haller et al 2011).

Segmented assimilation theory, which was developed as a combination of straight-line and the ethnic disadvantage model (Portes and Zhou 1993), allows for more flexibility of cultures to mix rather than just merge with the dominant culture. Gans (1992) stated the road to assimilation was “bumpy” rather than straight (Vasquez 2011). Segmented theory also assumes adaptation of immigrants is reliant on the resources brought with them from their native countries (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Takenoshita, 2015). These resources are often in the form of

support groups linked through immigrants with similar ethnic backgrounds (Portes et al, 2005; Aquilera, 2005). I would argue in the case of westerners, they also tend to bring economic stability, which many other immigrant groups in Japan don't have when they first arrive. The bumpiness described by Gans and others is also referred to as *acculturation* in socio-psychological and intercultural research (Berry 2006), which this study draws much relevant work. Erikson (1980) also stated how a researcher would need to use psychological as well as social science research to determine what depths the individual has entered the community. When searching for a clear picture, the referencing to other disciplines is sometimes necessary.

This said, many westerners who stay long-term can experience a transition from the a once dominant social position to a more subordinate one. As this shift occurs, the rules of assimilation that were not applicable when they arrived, slowly become more relevant. The importance of language becomes more noticeable. Long term western foreigners who did not learn the language have stated that it is one of their regrets (O'Keefe 2013). Even more apparent than language is whether or not they fit into the cultural framework of Japan. It may take years to notice this for some because of the lack of sanctioning from the host culture (O'Keefe 2015) who tend to treat westerners as guests and rarely correct their mistakes in social and professional relationships. This can cause an economic stagnation in their ability to move up within the workplace when compared to their Japanese counterparts. The need to recognize or define what leads to a satisfying life in the social context of Japanese society and the community can be a lifelong hurdle for those who choose to take up residency in Japan.

The state of the long term western foreign group

This section will give an overview of different aspects of the long-term western foreign group. Firstly, many studies on cultural adaptation often do research using exchange students (Ward et al, 2004; Chirkov et al, 2005; Burke et al, 2009) and do not focus on long term residents who have worked and lived in a

foreign country for a long period of time. Long-term satisfaction is an important part of staying power (Sirgy et al 1985) when entering a new culture. Studies on the development of long-term residents can act as a window into the future for new arrivals into Japan. Some long-term residents have done exceedingly well while others can become deculturated (Berry 1980) or rootless (Takeuchi et al 2005), meaning they have not adjusted well to life in Japan but at the same time have also lost connections with their home country after living overseas for many years.

As recorded on Wa-pedia¹, a web site that post statistics on Japan, the western foreign population is very small compared to other immigrant groups, at only 0.01% of Japan's population. As of 2014, according to Japan's Ministry of Justice², the westerner population from the United States, England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand falls at 88,273 (USA: 51,256; England: 15,262; Canada: 9,286; Australia: 9,350; New Zealand: 3,119).

This study hopes to clarify parts of the assimilation process and give some caveats of how certain variables may be prudent to the outcome. This has also been attempted in disciplines outside of sociology. A book by Komisarof (2012) entitled, *At Home Abroad*, interviews long-term western residents in Japan, focusing mostly on famous names in the western foreign group. Many of those interviewed were ivy league or a similar level background, but in many cases they are out of the norm and deserve books of their own. It may be more beneficial to focus on those who live within the standard many western foreign residents reside in. This undoubtedly will lead to the question of what that standard is.

Another hurdle for this study was to find long-term western foreign residents who have lived and worked continuously in Japan for more than 10 years. They are not as easy to locate as other groups in Japan who often live in similar proximity to each other. Unlike other immigrant groups, ethnic communities of long term westerners do not exist, unless you are in the confines of Tokyo and the surrounding areas. When westerners first arrive they are often drawn to places that support English rather than for reasons of ethnic connection. This dissipates over time as some learn the language and venture away from foreign-based

communities. Some westerners are also connected through professions. While teachers' associations tend to be the largest, there are groups that are connected by similar interests or professions. Locating large numbers of respondents to fit the criteria for this study was challenging to say the least.

Extracting information from this group could be used as a guide for future western foreign residents and for Japanese organizations that wish to expand their global workforce and take advantage of this expanding culturally primed group already knowledgeable about the complexities of the Japanese work environment. According to an online relocation service, Paragon Relocation³, Japan is ranked 8th or even higher as the most desired country for relocation by Americans and other western countries. With the plans for Japanese universities to create more English programs for foreign students mostly from Asia, these numbers are most likely set to rise⁴. The larger Asian group is obviously an important aspect of Japan's domestic and overseas labor force in the future, but like the westerners in this study, are a piece of a more complex puzzle. The more focus there is on specific groups, the more accurate its representation will be. With the focus on demographically small groups like long-term western foreign residents, organizations can establish a system of understanding what characteristics or personalities would most likely be a good fit into the Japanese work environment. The life satisfaction of both personal and professional spectrums may illuminate what factors may be a part of that process.

¹ Wa-pedia is a website offers various statistics for Japan. These statistics show asian groups are predominant and also show the breakdown of western foreigners who only make up 0.01%. 37% of whom are found in Tokyo. Various foreigner group statistics: http://www.wa-pedia.com/gaijin/foreigners_in_japan.shtml

² Ministry of Justice (MOJ) . "Record of Registered Foreigners in Japan" (Retrieved on March 15, 2015) : http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri04_00015.html (in Japanese) Ministry of Justice (2014) <http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?lid=000001133760>

³ For American relocation statistics: <http://www.paragonrelocation.com/blog/index.php/americans-relocating-world/>

⁴ *Jiji Press*. December 2, 2013. "Japan Unveils New Program to Increase Foreign Student" (Retrieved March 25, 2014.) <http://www.newsonjapan.com/html/newsdesk/article/105940.php>

The culture gap

Several problems arise which need to be addressed on both the foreign and Japanese sides. For many westerners, who most likely come from a low context culture, understanding Japan is a high context culture can be the difference between success and failure (E. Hall 1976). The non-Japanese side needs to realize a long term stay means to live in a personalized harmony while navigating through compromises within the Japanese community without romanticizing or comparing how it would be done in their own country. Mastering the balance between the host culture and the co-culture is about finding the middle ground accepted by both sides. In other words, their different cultural foundation is most likely what makes them valuable, but they will still need to compromise and be flexible when needed to harmonize with the host culture. The need to be realistic and tactful when dealing with any cultural disparities experienced with Japanese counterparts is also a critical part of this process. This is a proficient skill of some long-term residents. While language skills allow communication with host culture members, they can also be the source of misconstrued ideas from two different cultural standpoints even if the non-native speaker is fluent in the language. One may be speaking the host culture's language, in this case Japanese, while communicating from the context of their own culture. In such cases, a divide can be beyond repair if not recognized. The *cultural fit* concept can be used as an early detection of this disparity.

One example would be how Japanese use *nomikai*, which is going for drinks after work, as a time to communicate ideas and identify problems. Many westerners would prefer to catch someone when they are not busy during the work hours to discuss the same problems and use after work for friends

and family rather than an extension to the work day (O'Keefe 2015). This type of disparity requires resolution or it will cause stress to build up on one or both sides. On the other hand, Japanese would need to be open about how they feel while in an office setting, which can be quite challenging for many outside the *nomikai* setting. Japanese should not expect someone outside their culture to know the unwritten rules of manner, which are completely learnable if taught or experienced over time (Komisarof 2012).

This common example shows where various forms of training could be applied. In general, most people are not consciously aware of their own culture so many would naturally rely on their own experience. These experiences do not venture outside the context in which the individual normally resides making it difficult to objectively judge interactions between the host and co-cultures. This type of mutual understanding would benefit both personal and professional relationships, especially in Japanese organizations, which most often have their own culture. One technique which may work for one organization may be fairly useless to another. An organization that becomes proficient at recognizing these contextual differences has a better chance of making their own company culture easily understandable to new foreign workers. This will also create more support for the organization if it wishes to expand internationally.

The language divide

When the discussion of globalizing Japanese organizations arises, the topic of language ability most likely follows. Japan, supported by the Ministry of Education⁵, has stepped up its goals for English language learning as the country prepares for the Olympics in 2020. The history of language learning in Japan has been infamous for its talk of improvement but unfortunately with little results. Japan is in the bottom ranks when compared to other Asian countries⁶. On the other hand, there are many non-Japanese who are very interested in learning the Japanese language. Those who are successful at doing so could be a valuable asset to a major event like the Olympics. Their value not only shows in their drive to learn the language but also in the cultural knowledge they have

learned from their years of experience in country. They also see Japan through the eyes of a non-Japanese and understand the needs and wants of visitors. But this option is often overlooked and the establishment choice is usually Japanese who speak English.

Some studies show using only English in conversations in Japan causes a stunted or limited form of communication with most information being simplified to a point to where interpretation of the conversation is partially left up to the imagination of the individuals to guess what is being said, which could easily lead to misunderstandings. This could be especially troubling to someone who has lived in Japan for many years and never learned the language. Peltokorpi reported English-only conversations may have difficulty overcoming sociolinguistic orientations which are most likely to complicate conversations with Japanese people (2008). Peltokorpi also concluded that Japanese language skills are necessary to successfully adjust to life in Japan. This could be considered a continuation of Dolainski (1997), who said the host language was not only crucial to work and non-work related relationships but also needed to learn the culture first-hand. This is why language is thought to be a major ingredient for the advancement into the in-group (Francis 1991).

While Japanese language skills allow some westerners to advance into the in-group, there are many westerners who have succeeded with minimal language skills. They put themselves in a situation where Japanese is unnecessary for them and receive the benefits of being given the “unknowing foreigner guest status”. This exempts them from mistakes or any disparities in their actions which is an advantage over those who have learned the language do not always benefit from. Even with proficient language skills several cultural failures may destroy their in-group status. Those who are language proficient (LP) have the ability to speak the language as well as interact successfully with the host culture within the necessary fields. Those who are language deficient (LD) do not necessarily have poor language skills but may perform poorly in certain areas that would require special jargon (O’Keefe 2015). This is especially true for those who are newer to the country and have quickly learned the language but may not understand the

deeper communicative styles of Japanese. Language creates many bridges to places where non-speakers cannot get to, but it also may lead to other frustrations. This can be learned over time through successes and failures, but with the proper guidelines the latter may be avoided. There are many books on basic Japanese culture that will get most sojourners through a short stay of even a few years. But long-term residents need to create or discover ways to accept and execute different cultural concepts in their life which may not coincide with their previous beliefs, culture or legal rights. There are books written for foreign residents like the “*Handbook for Newcomers, Migrants and Immigrants to Japan*” (Arudo and Higuchi 2008), which offers a comprehensive look into legal rights.

⁵ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology - Japan. “English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization.” (Retrieved on May 6, 2015) [http://www.mext.go.jp/english/result.html?q=english for the olympics](http://www.mext.go.jp/english/result.html?q=english%20for%20the%20olympics)

⁶ TOEFL. 2013. “Test and Score Data Summary: 2013” Test Year Data Retrieved from: www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/94227_unlweb.pdf (May 16, 2015)

Culture as a bridge

The cultural fit model can be applied two ways: the natural ability to fit into a particular foreign culture or someone who has applied their learned knowledge of the host-culture to fit in (Ward and Chang 1997). The term *agreeableness* (Buss 1991) has been used to describe a similar trait as cultural fit. *Acculturation* has also been used in numerous studies (Berry, 1997; Gans, 2007; Komisarof, 2012) to describe how cultures go through a mixing of a host and a co-culture to create a more personalized one. The concept is: one may be able to learn all the correct ways and different cultural norms in a Japanese community or organization from a book or classroom, but the application of such knowledge can be challenging and may go against some individuals’ personal characteristics and belief systems. This adjustment can cause identity conflicts (Leong and Ward 2000). In some cases, cultural fit may just be an inherent trait of some people’s personalities (Mount et al 1998), making it easier for them to

apply what they have learned or to even naturally fit into the host culture of Japan. There are also possible connections to stable emotions according to Ones and Viswesvaran (1997), which also allow for a smoother transition. Emotional situations will also have an effect on the satisfaction of the individual. One example could be a subject who is in a troubled marriage would be more likely to have difficulty dealing with the stress of differences between the host culture than someone who is happily married. Burke *et al* (2009) also concluded that communication in the host language with host-nationals was never shown to be a factor of integration. This further adds to the question whether cultural fit may offer answers that raw language skills will not.

For new arrivals to know from the start that they may not fit into the culture in the long run may help some people create more accurate choices for their career and family paths. An individual who enjoys living in Japan but ignores some core differences in its cultural values may be hoping it will change over time as their experience grows. This could be compared to someone who buys new shoes they like but don't fit very well. They like the shoes so much they may ignore how the shoes don't quite fit correctly. They continue to wear them until their feet have sores so painful they take the shoes they once loved and just throw them away. While some do not fit into the shoes, there are others who just naturally do. This is not to say change does not occur, but there is a fine line between learning to belong and changing into something you do not wish to be. Too many sacrifices of personal beliefs may lead to an identity crisis, doubts or depression over time. The choice may be as simple as learning about the differences between cultures and realistically negotiating them to be a part of their life plan.

Hybrid identity

This study is part of broader and ongoing research on hybrid identities (Smith and Leavy 2008). In short, the hybrid identity model can be applied to long termers who have become highly effective by utilizing the middle ground between the host and co-culture in Japan. In many cases they still maintain the connections to their co-culture, which they have

incorporated into their integrative habits. As an example of this, Daniel Kahl, a Japanese TV talent, was interviewed for *At Home Abroad* a book on long term westerners in Japan (Komisarof 2012). To paraphrase: he said he will never be able to speak Japanese at the level of his Japanese counterparts, but he also knows they will never be able to replicate his unique style, because his background as a western foreigner helps him see different angles to stories that Japanese counterparts wouldn't recognize. This is what he attributes to his longevity. In reality, Daniel Kahl's Japanese is what could be considered extremely high level, but for him the ability to find the middle space and fill it, is more important than just language. The idea that non-japanese have qualities that a Japanese community or organization do not have access to, is a strength that should be recognized and not hidden or suppressed. These qualities give weight to the usefulness of the hybrid identity concept. The answer lies in the middle or in the individual compromise of two ideas or concepts to birth a new one or in the case of my broader research, a hybrid one. This concept isn't new to many westerners who live successfully in Japan, but identifying it and showing proof of its existence is an important step this research hopes to accomplish.

Before any discussion of hybrid identity, the individual's satisfaction shouldn't be overlooked. Identity, for the purpose of this study is defined as the simultaneous existence of self-sameness between an individual and the community (Erikson 1980), but life satisfaction can stand alone and doesn't necessarily need to be connected to the community. This leads to the question of whether or not one could be completely satisfied over the long term without language ability or a minimal connection to the Japanese community.

Hypotheses

This study measures three interlocking factors which were generated through factor analysis. Each factor was broken down into separate composite variables and then in some cases sub-scores. The *life satisfaction* (LS) items were split into two sub-scores of *general life satisfaction* which will be explained in the factor's section below. The second sub-score of

LS was for *professional confidence* which focuses on future professional advancement and job security. Cultural fit (CF) was also split into two sub-scores labeled *communication* and *frustration* respectively. The third factor of *language skills* was also broken into *general language skills* and *daily language ability*. The intersection of these factors is expected to have correlations from which several hypotheses can be derived.

The factors in this study are defined in a way for the specific purpose of this research, starting with life satisfaction (LS), which for this study is to measure an individual's satisfaction with being physically in Japan. Items for this variable focus on individual's feelings not connections to the community. Other studies may call it satisfaction with life (Mahmud and Masuchi 2013) on a personal-level. For example, a person could be completely satisfied with their life in Japan, but at the same time have very little connection with the Japanese in their community or in some cases the workplace. Life satisfaction is a reflection of personal well-being, which is different from the multi-dimensional approach taken by subjective well-being studies (Lim and Putnam 2010). Subjective well-being has a history of being connected to studies on identity, but more recently is used with research on social capital (Suh, 2002; Kroll, 2008). One example of life satisfaction as a reflection of personal well-being could be a high ranking executive in a company that operates internationally but within the borders of Japan. Such executives are at the top of their collective hierarchy which can create a fairly large cultural cushion for them to utilize (Peltokorpi and Froese 2009) even if they do not have language skills. However, in general, executives of such caliber are often organizational expats (OE), rather than self-initiated expats (SIE) (Edstrom and Galbraith 1977). In the case of SIE residents who represent the sojourner group, they may also end up in a position or specialized field that does not require them to speak Japanese fluently. Although in recent years this seems to be fading, with more universities and companies stressing the importance of bilingual applicants. University teachers who have been hired into international departments may not have Japanese language skills, but as educators they are put into a special category that allows them to navigate

around any language requirements that may arise by utilizing bilingual staff or colleagues. This leads to the first group of hypotheses of whether language skills are correlated with life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 a-b: General life satisfaction is positively correlated with a) language ability and b) daily language skills.

Hypothesis 2 a-b: Professional confidence is positively correlated with a) language ability and b) daily language skills.

The two cultural fit (CF) sub-scores observe both ends of the integrative spectrum. By the nature of the items this will be obvious. The questions for CF communication were geared towards traits associated with free expression of feelings in the community, the ease of communication, acceptance in the community and the observance of a support network. CF communication items did not ask which language the respondent spoke within their community. The connection to the community is all that is included. Of course, someone speaking only English or a combination of Japanese and English would be limited in some ways, but the depths to which some foreign residents wish to enter the host culture depends on the individual's efforts. CF frustration was associated with items dealing with stress, feeling stuck in Japan and frustration in personal, professional and community-orientated relationships. The feeling of exclusion and a strong sense of cultural difference were also included. CF frustration is not only limited to those who are not proficient in Japanese. Speaking the language, according to past research (O'Keefe 2013), does not mean one is void of culturally inhibited stress. There are several hypotheses that can be derived from this.

Hypothesis 3 a-c: CF communication sub-score is positively correlated to a) general life satisfaction b) professional confidence c) language ability.

Hypothesis 4 a-c: CF frustration sub-score is negatively correlated to a) general life satisfaction b) professional confidence c) language ability.

Several items also covered the topics of discrimination and microaggressions. Discrimination can be a challenging topic to cover due to the inherent nature of bias in the retelling of stories. One must be careful to act on facts only and not create overly subjective stories turning personalized disappointment with the host culture into examples of discrimination. This topic is often the subject of debate in online foreign groups, forums and editorials. Many western foreigners also claim positive discrimination is a common experience among the western foreign group (Komisarof 2012). This is when non-Japanese are treated well because they are not Japanese. True social or institutional systematic discrimination would and should equally affect people in the same way. Although accusations of discrimination can be used to describe disgruntled feelings towards the host culture by members of the co-culture, this does not mean discrimination does not exist. On the contrary, it does. However in the case of microaggressions, people are not always equally affected. Microaggressions are defined as aversive racism on a small scale committed by well-intentioned people, who allow racial stereotypes to interfere with how they communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds (Sue 2010). Successfully integrated people may have ways to cope with microaggressions when they arise while those who are easily frustrated with such cultural bumps may find it a source of great stress.

Hypothesis 5 a-b: CF communication is negatively correlated with a) discrimination b) microaggressions.

Hypothesis 6 a-b: CF frustration is positively correlated with a) discrimination b) microaggressions.

Methods and basic data

Before the online questionnaire was sent out, it was tested with more than 50 respondents in June, 2014. The criteria for all respondents was they needed to have been living in Japan consistently for more than 10 years at the time of survey; and be from a native English speaking country or a European who is capable of filling out an English form. Finally, they

could not have been in active military duty during the last 10 years. The questionnaire was also tested to see if it could be universally understood by native and non-native English speakers of various nationalities. LIKERT style scales as well as scales using 1 (low) to 10 (high) appear in the questionnaire. Yes and no items were also used, but through the testing process many were changed into LIKERT scales for higher variance in the results. There were a few major problems discovered in the first 10 trials which required some adjustment, so the data collected prior to these changes was not used. After the testing was completed, the questionnaire was then transferred to an online questionnaire service (Survey Monkey). One difference between the online version and the interactive PDF was the use of required gateway questions for the online form. Respondents would need to check off all the gateway questions which confirmed they fit the criteria and approved the use of their answers in the study before they were allowed to proceed onto the questionnaire. Another difference between the online version and PDF file was the order of the questions. This was changed mostly due to formatting trouble with the online system, which required more pages than the PDF did and limited creative page setups.

Once the online questionnaire was ready, it was shared through email and networks of long-term western foreign residents which this author had built up while doing master's thesis work. It was also shared on SNS networks (i.e. Facebook). In total, 366 responses were collected during a two-month period with postal codes ranging from Hokkaido to Kyushu. Incomplete forms were dropped. There were also a few completed forms removed because their home country did not fit the criteria (i.e. Russia, China, Korea). The breakdown of nationalities ($n = 307$) was as follows: Americans 51.8%, United Kingdom 18.2%, Canada 15.0%, Australia 7.8%, New Zealand 2.6%, European 4.2%, Other .3%. The life satisfaction as rated on the single 1 to 10 scale was $\bar{x} = 7.4$ ($SD = 1.4$). The years lived in Japan was $\bar{x} = 19.8$ ($SD = 7.3$), the age of respondents was $\bar{x} = 48.7$ ($SD = 8.4$), The males were represented with $n = 184$ and the females were $n = 122$. 79.8% of respondents were married. 72.1% of respondents were married to a Japanese national. 7.7%

were married to a non-Japanese. 11.5% were single and 6.7% were divorced. The birth rate was $\bar{x} = 2.48$, which is high in comparison to the Japanese birth rate (measured at 1.43 in 2012⁷). 82.8% of respondents plan to stay in Japan for an unspecified time while the remainder have plans to go home. However, when asked in an open-ended question when they plan on going home many could not give a specific plan or date to do so. The final number of useable forms fell to 307, but this will vary later on depending on each composite created.

The education level of those who participated in the study is broken down ($n = 307$) as follows: high school graduates were at 2.9%, junior college 2.0%, university 27.1%, graduate degree 45.8%, doctoral degree 12.4%, other certificates or educational backgrounds 9.8%. This shows a fairly high level of education. Language skills were also self-rated on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) broken down by speaking $\bar{x} = 7.2$ (SD=2.5), listening $\bar{x} = 7.6$ (SD=7.6), reading $\bar{x} = 4.9$ (SD=2.8) and writing $\bar{x} = 3.8$ (SD=2.6). The descriptives of the four skills in a composite can be reported as $\bar{x} = 23.7$ (SD=9.4)

The question on race was asked as an open-text question requesting the individual's ethnicity rather than race, which gave a plethora of various answers. When broken down into racial groups the mix was predominantly caucasian. The percentage breakdown is as follows: Caucasian 90.7%, Black 1%, Asian 1.6%, Latino/Hispanic 1.3%, mixed White/Asian 1%, mixed Black/White 0.9%, other 1.4%.

⁷For Japanese birth rates:

<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2013-06-07/japanese-birth-rate-plunges-record-low-death-rate-hits-record-high>

Factors

This section will explain in detail how the factors and their sub-scores used in the final Pearson's r bivariate correlation table were compiled. Three factors were identified during analysis and assembled. All the subscales were created by combining 1 to 10 scales and/or LIKERT scale items and were checked for reliability through a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

test. The LIKERT 1 through 5 scales used "somewhat agree" for the number three choice, which is not the common neutral answer often given. This was done to create a continuous scale for when the items are combined.

The general life satisfaction (GLS) subscale was compiled from 5 items; 1 (low) to 10 (high) scale for life satisfaction was combined with 4 LIKERT scales and was tested for reliability with a Cronbach alpha score of .78. The LIKERT items for GLS focused on being personally satisfied with their life in Japan. The life satisfaction professional (LSP) subscale was meant to represent professional confidence of the individual, taken from the original life satisfaction composite, consists of 3 LIKERT items focusing on future economic stability, i.e. job security, room for professional advancement and whether or not they could find work if they happen to lose their current job or business. It scored a .66 on the Cronbach alpha, which is recognized as below the common acceptance of .70.

The language composite was split into two sub-scores. The first, language ability (LA) consisted of 7 items. Four of those items were self rated on a 1 (low) to 10 (high) scale on Japanese speaking/listening/reading/writing skills and the remaining three were LIKERT scales items dealing with whether or not the individual feels confident in Japanese-only speaking situations or using the language in an emergency situation. The second sub-score covered daily language use (DL), which was compiled of three LIKERT items. The Cronbach alphas were .88 and .59 respectively. The reason for the split between the two subscales may be that daily usage of the language does not necessarily require high language ability, although this could be labeled as subjective.

The cultural fit (CF) composite, as mentioned earlier, is compiled of two sub-scales. CF communication and CF frustration show a Cronbach alphas of .78 and .84 respectively. The CF communication subscale consists of 5 LIKERT scale items. The 5 items included acceptance by Japanese counterparts, having a support network, and feeling free to express himself or herself to Japanese friends and/or co-workers. Finally, the ability to communicate within the community was also included, but this item did not specify which language

they communicated in. The CF frustration sub-scale is made up of 9 LIKERT items dealing with the feelings of frustration, exclusion, stress, feeling stuck in Japan and difficulties with cultural differences. The CF communication and CF frustration subscales act as opposition to each other and were expected to score that way.

Finally, the composite for discrimination was broken down in factor analysis into two subscales. The two subscales are labeled as discrimination and microaggressions with respective Cronbach alphas of .76 and .91. The 5 item discrimination sub-score is a compilation of LIKERT scales which include personal experiences with discrimination. The 2 LIKERT item microaggression sub-score represents whether or not respondents believe microaggressions exist and/or if they had experienced them personally or not.

Results

All of the above factors were then tested for correlations using a Pearson's *r* analysis, the results of which appear in Table 1 along with the mean values (\bar{x}) and standard deviations (SD). Due to the amount of items used for each composite the *n* will vary for each correlation, which is also reported separately below when necessary. The first and the second hypotheses were tested with a sample of *n* = 286. First, the general life satisfaction composite showed a positive correlation with language ability (*r* = .30) but the daily language use composite will accept the null hypothesis (*r* = .06), creating a split for the 1st hypothesis. The 2nd hypothesis showed both language ability (*r* = .32) and daily language use (*r* = .13, *p*

> 0.05) had positive correlations with professional confidence. The 3rd hypothesis can be reported also as a positive correlation between CF communication and a) general life satisfaction (*r* = .73, *n* = 274), b) professional confidence (*r* = .35, *n* = 274) and c) language ability (*r* = .35, *n* = 281). The CF frustration composite for the 4th hypothesis can be recorded as negatively correlated with a) general life satisfaction (*r* = -.60, *n* = 274), b) professional confidence (*r* = -.31, *n* = 274) and c) language ability (*r* = -.22, *n* = 281). The 5th hypothesis (*n* = 233) can reject the null. The composite for CF communication was negatively correlated with both a) discrimination (*r* = -.41) and b) microaggressions (*r* = -.27). The 6th and final hypothesis shows that CF frustration is positively correlated with a) discrimination (*r* = .59) and b) microaggressions (*r* = .39) respectively. All of the above correlations are significant at the *p* > 0.01 level unless expressed otherwise.

There was also one unexpected result. The correlation between sex and microaggressions was (*r* = .26, *n* = 244), which sparked further interest. Cross tables (Table 2a,b) were created. The first question on whether or not the individual thinks microaggressions exist or not showed 28.7% of men and 42.5% of women chose "strongly agree". The second question covered whether they have personally experienced microaggressions or not. The "strongly agree" showed 26% of men and 39.7% of women have experienced microaggressions.

Methodological limitations:

In all, this study can only be considered exploratory

Table1 : Correlation table.

	mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Sex	1.40	0.49											
2 Age of respondents	48.78	8.43	.04										
3 Length of time living in Japan	19.83	7.38	.09	.67**									
4 Marital status	1.26	0.59	.12*	.16**	.06								
5 General Life Satisfaction	22.61	3.82	.00	-.08	.07	.04							
6 Life Satisfaction Professional	9.79	2.75	-.01	-.14*	-.04	-.02	.37**						
7 Language Ability	34.62	11.48	.05	-.21	.09	.04	.30**	.32**					
8 Language Daily use	11.46	2.40	.00	-.04	.06	.01	.06	.13*	.36**				
9 Cultural Fit Balance	18.56	3.22	.01	-.02	.14*	-.08	.73**	.35**	.35**	.14*			
10 Cultural Fit Frustration	24.00	6.20	.07	-.06	-.14*	.04	-.60**	-.31**	-.22**	.03	-.59**		
11 Discrimination	13.94	4.25	.10	-.06	-.03	.08	-.33**	-.20**	.10	.12	-.41**	.59**	
12 Microaggressions	7.78	1.96	.26**	-.08	.01	.10	-.22**	-.03	.18**	.28**	-.27**	.39**	.58**

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

Table2a : Microaggressions

			You think micro-aggressions exist against foreigners in Japan.					Total
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Sex	male	Count	5	11	49	64	52	181
		% within Sex	2.8%	6.1%	27.1%	35.4%	28.7%	100.0%
	female	Count	0	2	26	41	51	120
		% within Sex	.0%	1.7%	21.7%	34.2%	42.5%	100.0%
Total	Count		5	13	75	105	103	301
	% of Total		1.7%	4.3%	24.9%	34.9%	34.2%	100.0%

Table2b : Microaggressions

			You have experienced micro-aggressions.					Total
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Sex	male	Count	11	19	43	58	46	177
		% within Sex	6.2%	10.7%	24.3%	32.8%	26.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	0	6	22	45	48	121
		% within Sex	.0%	5.0%	18.2%	37.2%	39.7%	100.0%
Total	Count		11	25	65	103	94	298
	% of Total		3.7%	8.4%	21.8%	34.6%	31.5%	100.0%

because of certain limitations. To begin with, although the respondents were from varying postal code areas, the sample was not random and originated with the researcher on SNS networks. Although, all respondents were over two separations from the researcher. Moreover, even though the criteria for the study appeared at the beginning of the questionnaire and elicited approval from every respondent, this means it is completely reliant on the honesty of individuals who answered to questions. This can make many of the answers subjective and possibly not a true representation of the group. This type of personal bias has also been mentioned in other studies of ethnic groups in Australia (Mak & Tran 2001). This bias can most often be noted in the language area. There may be some respondents who overrate their ability, while others may be more humble and underrate themselves. This was apparent in some preliminary testing of the questionnaire used in this study. While those preliminary questionnaires have not been added to the final numbers for this paper, this is not to say the answers from the questionnaires received from the main study were any different. However, a self-rated scale could also be considered a reflection of how a person feels about their ability, which may represent their personal feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with said ability.

Discussion

This study will hopefully be the start of a discussion on the topic of integrative methods used by westerners to assimilate in Japan. General life satisfaction (GLS) scores in this study can also act as a foundational quantitative guide to approach the more complex topic of identity. The criteria for this study that respondents had to have been living in Japan for over ten years consistently at the time of the study makes it unique. Notwithstanding time lived in Japan did not show any strong correlations to GLS, experience should not be overlooked. Understanding the source of knowledge can be elusive without understanding the history of individuals. The personality needed to integrate into the Japanese community may already be inherent in some people. The weaker correlation towards professional confidence may show that someone who is more ethnocentric or independent from the community may find a successful professional life in Japan, but this may lead to a smaller window of operation within the host culture.

The correlation of language ability and life satisfaction was not as strong as first expected. According to past studies, language is an important part of the immigration process, but this may not be true for the western foreign group. Further research may show all respondents with Japanese language ability may not have a high life satisfaction, but those

with high life satisfaction most likely possess some language skills supported by CF communication composite. This goes against Giles and Johnson (1981) who stated language as a determinant of social categorization, more so than cultural barriers. This was also reconfirmed by Peltokorpi (2008). But findings presented in this study go against these previous understandings. Moreover, Dolainski (1997) states that language is needed to understand the depths of culture, which may lead to language being one step towards cultural understanding. This may make these factors inherently connected. On the other hand, there are most likely foundational differences possibly based in ethnocentric thinking or personal history that may help answer feelings of dissatisfaction.

This study did not dive deeply into the area of discrimination. The questions used in this study on discrimination were not comprehensive, and deserve more focus in future work. There are numerous recorded instances that discrimination does exist in Japan against various immigrant groups. There are many instances where the lines of true discrimination and mistaken or perceived discrimination are blurred, and vary from group to group. This may be better researched qualitatively rather than quantitatively. In the comment section of the questionnaire, some stated that they know discrimination exists but try to rise above it while also acknowledging that westerners do often benefit from positive discrimination as well. Some people feel this balance is enough to create a feeling of comfort or satisfaction.

Overall, controlling for the different patterns that have arisen in this study should be taken into consideration for future studies. The possibility of discovering specific types of people who adjust well in Japan versus those who do not would be very valuable to organizations looking to hire culturally primed foreign staff. Even more valuable would be the creation of a personal assessment for the individual who wishes to test whether or not they are foundationally prepared to live in Japan or another culture of different context.

Conclusion

This study adds to previous literature on western foreign residents' integrative methods into the host

culture of Japan as well as to broader immigration and assimilation studies, but in many ways is original in its viewpoints. This study does not attempt to show causation but only correlation, which hopefully can be expanded on in future work. Throughout this author's 18 years in Japan, many long-term western residents stated Japanese language skills are the key to living in Japan. This is also supported by various immigration studies. On the other hand, through personal experience I have witnessed some westerners who are proficient in the language and leave the country out of frustration with the system they were part of. This led me to ask whether or not general life satisfaction (GLS) was correlated to language or cultural fit or a variance of both. Also part of my goal for the language composites was to show a connection to professional confidence (LSP). However the daily language skill composite showed no correlation to GLS and only a slight correlation to LSP, the language ability component did show somewhat significant results for both GLS and LSP. Daily language skill is aimed at getting the daily basics of life and work done.

The CF communication subscale created from the items focusing on cultural fit in the questionnaire showed the strongest results in this study in relations to the general life satisfaction (GLS) subscale. The items used in CF communication are focused more on the ability of the individual's integration into the community rather than raw language skills. This is not to say language is an unnecessary skill. It may show language plus specific traits need to be at play to score higher on the life satisfaction scale. This positive correlation does quantify the relationship of CF communication with GLS, making it an interesting topic for future research.

The CF frustration composite proved to be strongly negative when related to general life satisfaction (GLS). The negative score with GLS is compounded by a negative result with language ability, creating a few points of focus. Improving language ability would also deter low GLS, but for those who have already learned to live without the language, it may be difficult to go back and study it. (O'Keefe 2015)

The final pair of hypotheses presented in this study examined correlations between discrimination and microaggressions with the cultural fit sub-scores.

Both hypotheses were shown to have the expected correlations. CF communication tested negatively against both discrimination and microaggressions. This possibly shows that people who found ways to express themselves have also found ways to deflect or work around any cultural problems that may be labeled as discriminatory. Misunderstandings will also most likely decrease with language ability. Those who find themselves frustrated with cultural differences and often feel like a lone voice of reason in a sea of irrational thinking may feel more discriminated against. They may also be more sensitive to microaggressions than someone who has found their own communicative ways of dealing with those same situations. The results showing females scoring higher than males for both microaggression items was somewhat unexpected. This data is not specific enough to draw any conclusions to the disparities in these results but it does offer an interesting question for future research.

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日本に長期滞在する欧米人の生活満足度に関する 日本語能力と文化的適合要素との相関

オキーフ・グレゴリー

要旨

本稿は、日本に長期滞在する欧米人の生活満足度に焦点を当て、日本語能力や文化的適合性、もしくはその両方が、日本に長期間居住する欧米人の生活満足度の決定要素となりうるかについて検討することが目的である。

移民に関する日本に居住する欧米人を対象とした研究の多くは、社会経済的レベルが高い背景を持つ対象者であり、その点において本調査は従来の調査と異なる。2014年8月に全国規模の質問調査 (n=306) を実施した。回収したデータは、回答者は広く北海道から九州に亘り、都心部および農村部に居住している点で多様性を持っている。また、これら回答者の全員が、調査実施の時点で10年以上継続して日本に居住している点が、本データの特徴である。

生活満足度と相関が強いのは、日本語能力より文化的適合性であると仮説を立て、生活満足度を要素として日本語能力と文化的適合との関係をピアソンの相関係数により測定した。分析にあたり、差別やマイクロ・アグレッション等の項目も考慮し、生活満足度との相関関係を調べた。

本調査の結果について議論し、今後、日本に長く滞在する欧米人のハイブリッド・アイデンティティに関する主要な研究の一つとして本調査を活用する。