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Peers' perceptions of Japanese returnees

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Abstract

Many studies have examined the reentry process of Japanese children raised abroad. Results suggest that “feeling different” is a key factor in describing their experiences. These studies, however, were based only on self-reports of returnees. The current study examined returnees' peers' perceptions and the factors that affected them. Results indicated that the returnees' peers' perceptions could be summarized by two factors: “advantage” and “difference/disadvantage.” Those who had studied abroad and who had known many returnees had a balanced perspective of the returnee experience. Women were more likely to perceive advantages while those who were older were more likely to perceive differences/disadvantages. © 2003 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

Returnees have become the focus of many studies (e.g., Gaw, 2000; Gerner & Perry, 2000; Useem, 1993), and Japanese returnees, in particular, have been studied extensively (e.g., Enloe & Lewin, 1987; Kanno, 2000; Kidder, 1992; Kobayashi et al., 1978; Minoura, 1988; Moriyoshi, 2001; White, 1988; Yoshida et al., 2002). Studies to date have been based on returnees' self-reports, and have shown that “feeling different” is a key factor in describing the returnee experience (e.g., Kidder, 1992;

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Yoshida et al., 2002). Although researchers have acknowledged the importance of the host group (Kanno, 2000; Kim, 1998), Japanese returnees' peers have yet to be studied. This article examines how Japanese returnees' peers perceive returnees and the factors that affect their perceptions. Below we summarize what we know about Japanese returnees' experiences, examine the literature on societal perceptions of Japanese returnees, and describe the current study.

1.1. What we know about Japanese returnees' experiences

Transition back to Japan has been a challenge for Japanese returnees (e.g., Minoura, 1988; Moriyoshi, 2001). Although returnees on the whole adjust to everyday life within a year (Kobayashi et al., 1978), many struggle with lasting adjustment and identity issues (Minoura, 1988). At the core is a sense of "feeling different" from mainstream society with respect to their physical appearance, behavioral signs, interpersonal styles, and manners of speaking (Kidder, 1992). Returnees, especially those who lived in Western cultures, are often more assertive and individualistic compared to their peers (Minoura, 1988), and returnees' deficiency in their Japanese language skills is perceived as a "potentially crippling handicap... more than offsetting the supposed benefits that accrue from knowing a second language. And their acquisition of foreign patterns of behavior alienates them from their peers and teachers, and from themselves" (Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 225). Most recently Yoshida et al. (2002) found nine factors that described the returnee experience, with "feeling different" emerging as a key factor.

Because all studies to date have been based on self-reports, it is unclear whether returnees' peers and society actually saw returnees as being different, or whether this feeling was self-imposed. We know of no study that has examined returnees' peers although a few have examined returnees' teachers' and mass-media's portrayal of returnees. These will be discussed in the following section.

1.2. Research on societal perceptions of Japanese returnees

1.2.1. Mass media's portrayal of returnees

Yanagida (as reported in Sato, 1997 and JOES, 1993) analyzed headlines of articles on returnees in popular magazines and newspapers published between 1975 and 1993 in Japan and found that mass media's portrayal of returnees has changed over time; from perceived disadvantages, advantages, to unfair advantages. Until the mid-1980s, returnees were depicted as victims with Japanese language and culture handicap. With the emergence of special quotas for returnees at prestigious universities in the mid-1980s, returnees were portrayed as cosmopolitan individuals much needed in the international workforce. In the 1990s, the tone of the articles changed once again, describing returnees as those with easy entry into prestigious universities and companies.

1.2.2. Returnees' teachers

Teachers felt that returnees differed from their peers in their lifestyle, values, manners/behaviors, and reactions to strict school regulations (Hoshino & Niikura,

1983). Many teachers saw these differences as negative, causing problems with peers. Some felt that learning the “Japanese way” was necessary to fit in while others disagreed.

Although limited in scope, these studies suggest that mass media and teachers’ perceptions of returnees overlap with those returnees have of themselves; difference seems to be a key factor, leading to advantages as well as disadvantages. This study examines whether returnees’ peers have similar views.

1.3. Goals of this study

The first goal was to examine how non-returnees perceived returnees. Based on previous studies (e.g., Kidder, 1992; Yoshida et al., 2002), being different was hypothesized to be a key factor leading to advantages as well as disadvantages.

Research Question #1: How do non-returnees perceive returnees?

Hypothesis 1. Non-returnees perceive returnees as being different from themselves.

Hypothesis 1a. This difference is perceived as a disadvantage.

Hypothesis 2. Non-returnees see returnees as receiving special advantages.

The second goal was to examine factors that affected host receptivity. Based on a literature search of variables effective in reducing stereotypes and fostering a better understanding of an outgroup, two were selected: intergroup contact and empathy (Oskamp, 2000).

1.3.1. Intergroup contact

Allport’s (1954/1979) “Culture Contact Hypothesis” suggests that personal contact with an outgroup, under certain conditions, can lead to liking and respect of that group. This hypothesis has been widely researched with varying results, ranging from positive feelings to a magnification of prejudices (see reviews by Amir, 1976, 1969; Harding, Proshansky, Kutner, & Chein, 1969; Hewston & Brown, 1986; Katz, 1970; McClendon, 1974; Riordan, 1978; Simpson & Yinger, 1972). Numerous studies have examined the effects of particular conditions on specific subjects (see Cook, 1978, 1984 for reviews). Pettigrew (1971) elaborated on the hypothesis stating that the individuals must be of equal status and working cooperatively in pursuit of common goals. Brewer and Miller (1984) added that to reduce stereotypes, differentiation and personalization were necessary; differentiation referred to the ability to see outgroup members as distinct individuals while personalization was the development of close personal relationships with outgroup members.

In this study, the number of returnees the respondents had known was examined to test the contact hypothesis (Hypothesis 3). We expected that those who had known very few returnees would see stereotypes while those with numerous returnee acquaintances would have a more comprehensive understanding.

1.3.2. Empathy

Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle's (2001) study showed that empathy was negatively correlated with "social dominance orientation"; those with empathy for a particular group were less inclined to dominate that group. It was also found that experiencing similar situations, for example, through simulations such as "Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes," could lead to empathy and a reduction in prejudice (Breckheimer & Nelson, 1976; Weiner & Wright, 1973). Batson et al.'s (1997) research has also shown that empathy can improve attitudes toward stigmatized groups (e.g., AIDS victims, homeless persons, and murderers).

In this study, "study abroad" was examined to see whether similar experiences could reduce stereotypes. Thus, Hypothesis 4 predicted that those who had participated in a short-term "study abroad" or "homestay program," through experiencing reentry themselves, might have a better understanding of the returnee experience. These individuals were, however, differentiated from "returnees" as they had not lived abroad with their parents for more than two years between the ages of 5 and 18.

Research Question #2: What factors predict non-returnees' perceptions of returnees?

Hypothesis 3. Those who have known many returnees are likely to have a better understanding of the returnees' situation.

Hypothesis 4. Those who have studied abroad are likely to have a better understanding of the returnees' situation.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Four hundred and eighty-six non-returnee respondents (male = 198; female = 287; 1 was missing data) between the ages of 15 and 24 (mean = 17.63; $sd = 2.45$) were recruited from 4 high schools and 3 universities in the Kanto area in Japan. As it was essential that the respondents had returnee acquaintances, schools with moderate numbers of returnees were selected. To ensure that only non-returnees filled out the forms, an item was included at the beginning of the questionnaire to identify returnees; returnees were requested not to fill out the questionnaire. Returnees were defined as those who had lived abroad with their parents for at least 2 years between the ages of 5 and 18.

Of the 486 non-returnee respondents, 188 had traveled abroad while 160 had participated in a short-term "study abroad" or "homestay program." Those who had studied or "homestay" abroad differed from returnees in the intensity, quality, and length of their sojourn experience. The remaining (with the exception of 2 whose data were missing or invalid) 136 had never left Japan. On average, the respondents knew 19.34 returnees ($sd = 26.46$) with the minimum being 1 and the maximum being 100; the median and the mode were both 10.

2.2. Instrument

A 2-page, 17-item questionnaire was employed. Four items were included as predictors while 12 measured non-returnees' perceptions of returnees. A final item asked what it meant to be an "international person" but was not included in the analyses as it did not pertain directly to this study. The 4 predictor items were based on previously cited experiential and demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, overseas experience, and number of returnees with whom they interacted). "Overseas experience" was dummy coded into two variables: Q3 Travel (coded 1 = traveled abroad; 0 = others) and Q3 Study (coded 1 = studied or homestay abroad; 0 = others).

The 12 dependent variables were also based on previous studies and were organized around the following three categories: difference, perceived advantages and perceived disadvantages (see Appendix A for items). Six of the items were on an ordinal (4-point) scale, which was anchored (1) no (*ie*) (2) a little (*sukoshi*) (3) quite a bit (*kanari*) and (4) very (*hijooni*). This was chosen to counterbalance a possible Japanese tendency to avoid extreme responses and gravitate toward the mid-point (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995; Iwawaki & Cowen, 1964; Zax & Takahashi, 1967). The remaining 6 items were open-ended questions asking the participants to elaborate on the previous item when applicable.

2.3. Procedure

Packages containing the questionnaires were sent to schools and universities in spring of 1998. The packets contained: (1) a cover letter that introduced the purpose of the study and ensured confidentiality, (2) the questionnaire, (3) a self-addressed stamped envelope, and (4) a small white envelope. Subjects were instructed to complete the questionnaires at their leisure and return them in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. To receive their small token of appreciation (a 500 yen telephone card) they were requested to write their name and address on the small white envelope. Alternatively, students could return the questionnaires directly to their instructors in exchange for the telephone card.

3. Results

The data were analyzed in five stages. First, to provide a preliminary examination of the relationships between and among the independent and dependent variables, correlation coefficients were computed among all the variables. Second, to examine RQ2 (What factors predict non-returnees' perceptions of returnees?), multiple regression analyses were conducted on each of the six dependent variables. Third, to examine RQ1 (How do non-returnees perceive returnees?) and to create more reliable constructs for the dependent variables, a factor analysis was performed on the dependent variables. Next, RQ2 (What factors predict non-returnees' perceptions of returnees?) was once again examined using the resulting factor scores using

simultaneous multiple regressions. Finally, to examine *how* returnees' peers perceived returnees, the open-ended items were examined.

3.1. How do the items relate to each other?

Correlations among all the independent and dependent variables showed that 15 of the 30 correlations were statistically significant (see Table 1). Intercorrelations of the dependent variables (see Table 2) revealed that 10 of the 15 correlations were statistically significant, while intercorrelations among the independent variables showed 5 of the 10 correlations to be statistically significant (Table 3).

3.2. What factors predict non-returnees' perceptions of returnees? (RQ2)

Simultaneous multiple regressions showed that all 6 dependent variables were significantly predicted by the independent variables (see Table 4). The number of returnee acquaintances predicted the greatest number of dependent variables, followed by age, study abroad, and gender. Short visits abroad did not predict any of the dependent variables.

Table 1
Correlations among independent and dependent variables

	Q1 Age	Q2 Sex	Q3 Travel	Q3 Study	Q4 # of ret. Acquaintances
Q5—Do you think that the returnees' way of thinking is different from yours? No 1234 Very	0.206**	-0.023	-0.115*	0.138**	0.014
Q7—Have you ever been perplexed when interacting with returnees? No 1234 Very	0.073	0.031	-0.041	0.052	0.161**
Q9—Do you feel that you have gained anything from interacting with returnees? No 1234 Very	-0.107*	0.091*	-0.029	0.091*	0.161**
Q11—Do you think that being a returnee has advantages? No 1234 Very	-0.109*	0.082	-0.026	0.045	0.159**
Q13—Do you think that being a returnee has disadvantages? No 1234 Very	0.146**	-0.018	-0.115*	0.161**	0.067
Q15—If you had children and were to sojourn abroad, would you like to take your children with you? No 1234 Very	0.039	0.204**	-0.004	0.114*	0.070

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2
Intercorrelations of the dependent variables

	Q5	Q7	Q9	Q11	Q13	Q15
Q5—Do you think that the returnees' way of thinking is different from yours? No 1234 Very	—					
Q7—Have you ever been perplexed when interacting with returnees? No 1234 Very	0.337**	—				
Q9—Do you feel that you have gained anything from interacting with returnees? No 1234 Very	0.099*	0.116*	—			
Q11—Do you think that being a returnee has advantages? No 1234 Very	0.061	0.050	0.182**	—		
Q13—Do you think that being a returnee has disadvantages? No 1234 Very	0.231**	0.246**	0.162**	0.081	—	
Q15—If you had children and were to sojourn abroad, would you like to take your children with you? No 1234 Very	0.008	-0.114**	0.216**	0.269*	-0.067	—

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3
Intercorrelations of the independent variables

	Q1	Q2	Q3 Travel	Q3 Study	Q4
Q1 Age	—				
Q2 Sex (1 = Male, 2 = Female)	-0.076	—			
Q3 Travel (Those who had traveled abroad were coded as "1" while others were coded as "0".)	-0.091*	-0.011	—		
Q3 Study (Those who had studies abroad were coded as "1" while others were coded as "0".)	0.153**	0.205**	-0.560**	—	
Q4 How many returnees have you interacted with?	-0.309**	0.078	0.016	-0.027	—

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

3.3. How do non-returnees perceive returnees? (RQ1)

We computed a maximum likelihood factor analysis with oblimin rotation on the dependent variables. One advantage of maximum likelihood extraction is that it provides a statistical test of the number of factors extracted. Two factors were retained ($\chi^2 = 6.856$; $p = 0.144$). The non-significant χ^2 suggested that two factors were sufficient in describing the relationships between the items and their underlying dimensions. The factors were only weakly correlated (0.164) suggesting that they

Table 4
Regression analyses summary for dependent variables

Variable	Q5—Do you think that the returnees' way of thinking is different from yours?			Q7—Have you ever been perplexed when interacting with returnees?			Q9—Do you feel that you've gained anything from interacting with returnees?			Q11—Do you think that being a returnee has advantages?			Q13—Do you think that being a returnee has disadvantages?			Q15—If you were to sojourn abroad, would you like to take your children with you?		
	β	SE	<i>b</i>	β	SE	<i>b</i>	β	SE	<i>b</i>	β	SE	<i>b</i>	β	SE	<i>b</i>	β	SE	<i>b</i>
Q1 Age	0.205*	0.014	0.059	0.129*	0.012	0.033	-0.073	0.019	-0.028	-0.077	0.019	-0.030	0.153*	0.013	0.040	0.056	0.019	0.022
Q2 Gender (1 = M, 2 = F)	-0.037	0.066	-0.053	0.020	0.059	0.025	0.056	0.092	0.109	0.063	0.090	0.121	-0.050	0.061	-0.066	0.177*	0.093	0.352
Q3 Travel	-0.047	0.078	-0.067	-0.019	0.070	-0.025	0.019	0.108	0.037	-0.014	0.107	-0.027	-0.027	0.073	-0.036	0.062	0.111	0.124
Q3 Study	0.093	0.083	0.139	0.019	0.075	0.026	0.111+	0.116	0.225	0.054	0.114	0.110	0.137*	0.077	0.189	0.112*	0.117	0.230
Q4 # of returnee acquaintances	0.081	0.001	0.002	0.201*	0.001	0.005	0.132*	0.002	0.005	0.129*	0.002	0.005	0.120*	0.001	0.003	0.070	0.002	0.003
<i>R</i> / <i>R</i> ² / Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.249	0.062	0.052	0.209	0.044	0.034	0.209	0.044	0.033	0.195	0.038	0.028	0.238	0.057	0.047	0.234	0.055	0.044
	<i>F</i> (5,473) = 6.228 <i>p</i> < 0.001			<i>F</i> (5,473) = 4.342 <i>p</i> < 0.005			<i>F</i> (5,463) = 4.229 <i>p</i> < 0.005			<i>F</i> (5,472) = 3.736 <i>p</i> < 0.005			<i>F</i> (5,467) = 5.612 <i>p</i> < 0.001			<i>F</i> (5,460) = 5.321 <i>p</i> < 0.001		

+ *p* < 0.06. * *p* < 0.05.

represented distinct constructs. Together they explained 50.90% of the total variance.

Items with factor loadings > 0.30 were retained in the final factor solution (see Table 5). The items associated with each factor suggested the following names: Difference/Disadvantage (Factor 1) and Advantage (Factor 2). These two factors coincided with returnees’ self-perceptions as well as returnees teachers’ and mass-media’s portrayal of returnees.

3.4. *What factors predict non-returnees’ perceptions of returnees? (RQ2)*

To examine the predictability of the two factor scores, simultaneous multiple regressions were performed on the two scores (see Table 6). Those who were older, those who had known many returnees and those who had studied abroad scored higher on Factor 1 (Difference/Disadvantage). Women, those who had studied abroad, and those who had known many returnees scored higher on Factor 2 (Advantage).

It is interesting to note that those who had studied abroad and those who had known many returnees scored higher on both factors. This suggested, but not demonstrated, that they understood both advantages as well as disadvantages of being a returnee. Once again, short visits abroad did not appear as a significant predictor for either factor. The fact that older respondents scored higher on “Difference/Disadvantage” was consistent with general speculation.

3.5. *How do peers perceive returnees?*

As outliers represent unusual exceptions to a usual pattern and hence provide additional insight to the data, we listed the top and bottom 11 responses to the open-ended questions that followed the items in each factor (see Tables 7–9). Because the

Table 5
Pattern matrix for maximum likelihood factor analysis

	Item	Factor 1	Loading 2
Q5	Do you think that the returnees’ way of thinking is different from yours? No 1 2 3 4 Very	0.508	0.057
Q7	Have you ever been perplexed when interacting with returnees? No 1 2 3 4 Very	0.630	-0.070
Q9	Do you feel that you have gained anything from interacting with returnees? No 1 2 3 4 Very	0.171	0.356
Q11	Do you think that being a returnee has advantages? No 1 2 3 4 Very	0.053	0.416
Q13	Do you think that being a returnee has disadvantages? No 1 2 3 4 Very	0.436	0.013
Q15	If you were to sojourn abroad, would you like to take your children with you? No 1 2 3 4 Very	-0.219	0.688

Table 6
Multiple regression analyses on factor scores

Variable	Factor 1: Difference/Disadvantage			Factor 2: Advantage		
	β	SE	<i>B</i>	β	SE	<i>B</i>
Q1 Age	0.178*	0.015	0.055	0.033	0.014	0.010
Q2 Gender (1 = male, 2 = female)	-0.024	0.071	-0.038	0.158*	0.068	0.236
Q3 Travel	-0.044	0.084	-0.068	0.038	0.081	0.058
Q3 Study	0.101+	0.089	0.163	0.150*	0.087	0.234
Q4 # of returnee acquaintances	0.207*	0.001	0.006	0.151*	0.001	0.004
<i>R</i> / <i>R</i> ² /Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.272	0.074	0.064	0.275	0.076	0.066
	<i>F</i> (5,474)	= 7.566	<i>p</i> < 0.001	<i>F</i> (5,474)	= 7.778	<i>p</i> < 0.001

Note: + $p < 0.07$. * $p = 0.05$.

open-ended questions were conditional upon affirmative response to a preceding question, many of those with the lowest scores in the preceding questions did not answer the open-ended items. In terms of Factor 1 (differences/disadvantages), none of those with the lowest scores answered any of the subsequent open-ended questions.

Three of the most commonly mentioned differences/disadvantages (Factor 1) were their foreignness, their language competency (in another language) or lack of it (in the Japanese language), and their tendency to be too direct. These findings coincided with returnee self-reports (e.g., Enloe & Lewin, 1987; Kidder, 1992; Minoura, 1988). In terms of Factor 2 (Advantage), the acquisition of a foreign language and exposure to a foreign culture were mentioned most often.

4. Discussion and conclusion

One of the main goals of this study was to examine how non-returnees perceived returnees. Results indicated that returnees' peers' perceptions overlapped considerably with those returnees had of themselves. The peers' perceptions were represented by two factors: advantage and difference/disadvantage. In other words, returnees were perceived to be given certain advantages (e.g., easy entry into prestigious universities and companies, acquiring a second language) while, at the same time, having a different interaction style (e.g., directness, lack of proficiency with the Japanese language) from their peers served as a disadvantage. Hypotheses 1 (Non-returnees perceive returnees as being different from themselves.), 1a (This difference is perceived as a disadvantage.) and 2 (Non-returnees see returnees as receiving special advantages.) were thus confirmed.

It is interesting that "difference" was associated with "disadvantage" and not "advantage"; this reinforces teachers' observations that differences were negative in that they caused problems with peers (Hoshino & Niikura, 1983). It should, however, be noted that the word for "different" (*chigau*) used in one of the items can

Table 7

Open-ended responses by those with the highest scores on factor 1 (difference/ disadvantage)

Q5—Do you think that the returnees' way of thinking is different from yours? No 1 2 3 4 Very Q6—If so, elaborate.	Q7—Have you ever been perplexed when interacting with returnees? No 1 2 3 4 Very Q8—If so, elaborate.	Q13—Do you think that being a returnee has disadvantages? No 1 2 3 4 Very Q14—If so, elaborate.
There's something "American" about them. They probably dislike Japan. (1)	Differences in opinions emerge. (1)	As I mentioned in response to Q8, some returnees are unable to learn even one language properly. As an aside, I would like to mention that that person felt that because he/she could not speak any language properly, it was OK to be below average on everything else. (1)
They seem to be a little more positive than me (and my friends). (1)	They say their thoughts too directly. (1)	I don't think they experience any disadvantages at our high school (because we have many returnees)—with the exception of language arts (kokugo) class. (1)
There's something different about them but I can't express it in words. (1)	They don't understand the (Japanese) language. (1)	Some returnees don't understand the Japanese way of thinking and, therefore, have problems understanding other Japanese. (As for returnees who understand the Japanese way of thinking, I don't think they have any special disadvantages.)
They seem to be placing a lot of importance on their future and their family. They seem very mature. They seem to have a very clear sense of what they want and they are able to express this clearly to others. (1)	Their way of thinking was different. I didn't like the way they seemed so foreign. (1)	They have very few local friends. (1)
I know someone who used to do things, if he/she thought it was the "right" thing to do, no matter what others thought of him/her. Compared to other Japanese, a few of them seem more rough and restless. One returnee (whether it was intentional or not I'm not sure) never did anything bad to me. (This does not hold true of any of the non-returnees.) (1)	When they get drunk, they start speaking in English. (1)	They were unable to attend elementary school in Japan. (1)

Table 7 (continued)

<p>Q5—Do you think that the returnees’ way of thinking is different from yours? No 1 2 3 4 Very Q6—If so, elaborate.</p>	<p>Q7—Have you ever been perplexed when interacting with returnees? No 1 2 3 4 Very Q8—If so, elaborate.</p>	<p>Q13—Do you think that being a returnee has disadvantages? No 1 2 3 4 Very Q14—If so, elaborate.</p>
<p>They have a different standard of what is good and what is bad. They sometimes think of things I would never even think of. (They seem to have a different perspective.) They are confident about their opinions (and are unwilling to change them.) (1)</p> <p>They have the good points of Japan as well as other countries. (1)</p> <p>They say things directly. I would like them to learn what it means to have humility. (1)</p> <p>They have a different culture. What they believe is “common sense” is completely different from most Japanese. (1)</p>	<p>I know someone who lived in England and France before entering elementary school until the primary grades of elementary school. This person could not speak English, French or, for that matter, Japanese well enough. It was, therefore, very difficult communicating with him/her. (1)</p> <p>I tend to become a little too conscious (that they are returnees). (1)</p> <p>What we believe to be “common sense” is completely different. Their way of thinking is different. (1)</p> <p>Many of them have loud voices (with a few exceptions); I didn’t like the way they would draw attention to us. (1)</p> <p>It is hard to do things as a group. They don’t understand difficult Japanese words. (1)</p> <p>Language is an issue. Even if I understand what they are saying, I am unable to express my thoughts in a language they understand so we are unable to communicate effectively. Another issue is that they constantly say what they are thinking and so I don’t know how to interact with them. Another issue is that they continue to act the way they did when they were abroad here in Japan. As a result, it is very difficult for the rest of us, because we have to adjust to the returnees. (1)</p>	<p>If they can’t speak Japanese well, it is difficult for them to communicate with the Japanese. (Especially if the Japanese person they are trying to communicate with cannot speak English.). (1)</p> <p>When they are unable to communicate effectively in Japanese. (1)</p> <p>They seem to have difficulty communicating with the Japanese. (1)</p> <p>Because I think it is difficult to get used to the Japanese way of thinking (e.g., it is good to be the same as everyone). (1)</p>

Table 8

Open-ended responses of those with the lowest scores on factor 2 (advantage)

Q9—Do you feel that you have gained anything from interacting with returnees? No 1 2 3 4 Very	Q11—Do you think that being a returnee has advantages? No 1 2 3 4 Very	Q15—If you were to sojourn abroad, would you like to take your children with you? No 1 2 3 4 Very
Q10—If so, elaborate.	Q12—If so, elaborate.	Q16—If so, elaborate.
No response (10). They are assertive and carefree.(1)	No response (8) They can speak English. (1) They can speak other languages such as English. (1) They can speak another language. (1)	No response (6). I want to enjoy it by myself. (1) Because I want to live by myself. (1) Because I want my children to learn mainly about Japanese culture. I don't want my children to primarily identify with a foreign culture. (1) I don't want to change my children's lives just because of my own job. I will ask my children what they want to do. (1) There's no point in taking them. (1)

also mean “wrong”—this conflation might have affected the data in some way. At the same time, it should also be noted that the other 2 items that composed the construct for “difference” did not contain that word, which suggests that such effects may not have occurred or were minimized.

The responses to the open-ended questions suggested that acquisition of a foreign language and exposure to a foreign culture were most salient to those who scored highest on Factor 1 (Advantage). The returnees’ foreignness, their language competency (in a foreign language) or lack of it (in Japanese), and their tendency to be direct were the top three differences/disadvantages noted by those who scored highest on that factor. It is interesting to note that language and foreignness appeared as both advantages as well as differences/disadvantages. While their unique backgrounds differentiated them advantageously from their competition when entering universities or companies, the differences served as a handicap when interacting with their peers. This reinforced [Enloe and Lewin’s \(1987\)](#) observations that returnees’ “mild deficiencies in the Japanese language is perceived as a potentially crippling handicap” (p. 225). The returnees’ tendency to be too direct concurred with [Minoura’s \(1988\)](#) findings.

The second purpose of this study was to examine the factors that predicted the peers’ attitudes. Multiple regression analyses showed that those who studied abroad and those who knew many returnees perceived more advantages as well as differences/disadvantages. Both groups, therefore, went beyond a stereotype and saw both aspects of the returnee experience. Thus, for this population, both studying abroad and intergroup contact helped dispel stereotypes, confirming Hypotheses 3

Table 9

Open-ended responses of those with the highest scores on factor 2 (advantage)

Q9—Do you feel that you have gained anything from interacting with returnees? No 1 2 3 4 Very	Q11—Do you think that being a returnee has advantages? No 1 2 3 4 Very	Q15—If you were to sojourn abroad, would you like to take your children with you? No 1 2 3 4 Very
Q10—If so, elaborate.	Q12—If so, elaborate.	Q16—If so, elaborate.
I learned that there are people like this. (1)	(Although it is because the returnees themselves are trying very hard) They are fluent in a language other than Japanese. Because of this, they have an advantage when entering high school and university. (1)	1. I want them to expand their horizons and enrich their lives by coming in contact with people who see things differently from the Japanese. 2. Because I want them to learn another language. (1)
After becoming very close we started corresponding with each other. I was able to learn that returnees have a different way of thinking. Compared to before, I am now better at saying what I want to say. (1)	They can speak (at least) two languages. They are familiar with a world that is unknown to me. (1)	I want them to learn various languages. This is because I can't speak English and I am envious of my friends who are bilingual. (1)
I was able to be in contact with the English language and culture. (1)	In entering the business world, it is an advantage to be able to speak another language. They are also used to dealing with "differences." (1) They can speak English or another language. (1)	I think it's important to be in contact with many different types of people. I would like my children to see various cultures. (1) Because I don't want to be apart from my family. (1)
I was able to hear about and learn from the returnee's experiences abroad. (1) I was able to hear about what it was like to go to school abroad. Season sports, schoolwork. (1)	Just because they can speak English, they get celebrity treatment. (1)	It is important for the family to be together. And, I want my children to experience many things. I want foreign countries to be more than a spot on the map; especially because they have a chance to actually experience life abroad. (1) I think it is a very good experience to learn about other cultures through living there in one's childhood. (1)
I learned about foreign cultures. (1)	People who can speak English can go to many countries and understand what is being said. (1)	

I learned many things. (1)

They can experience various cultures. Although they probably experience many hardships, it is good to have many experiences while one is young. (1)

I think it is easier for returnees to get into college. (1)

I changed. My English pronunciation improved. (1)

Even though we have been alive for the same number of years, they can speak two languages (this, however, depends largely on how old they were when they went abroad). (1)

Because children have more potential to adapt and absorb information. They are also more curious. (1)

Because they have to work really hard at adjusting to the language spoken as well as lifestyles overseas as well as back in Japan, they have had to endure many hardships as children. As a result, they don't give up easily and are very perseverant. I was very impressed by this. (1)

Since our high school mainly caters to returnees and international students, I think they are given many advantages especially in terms of university entrance exams. They end up getting differential treatment. For example, even if they have bad attitudes, they do not get reprimanded. (1)

I want them to learn that there are many types of people, ways of thinking and a different world out there. I don't want them to think that the Japanese are the only ones on earth. So, I want them to interact with lots of different people and expand their horizons. (1)

It really made me realize that no one is the same. (1)

Their (English) pronunciation is completely different from ours because they grew up with native speakers of English. This makes them attractive to companies. They see foreigners as "regular people" and don't get especially nervous when interacting with them. (1)

By interacting with people from other cultures, it is possible to reexamine the Japanese culture. (1)

Because they are very direct, it helps avoid misunderstandings. (1)

Even though it might have been forced upon them, the fact they were able to learn about foreign languages and cultures. That they were able to learn about the culture and the state of things outside of Japan. That they were able to expand their horizons. (1)



(Those who have known many returnees are likely to have a better understanding of the returnees' situation.) and 4 (Those who have studied abroad are likely to have a better understanding of the returnees' situation). This might be because returnees' peers, more or less, fit the additional conditions posited by Pettigrew; they were of equal status and were working cooperatively in pursuit of a common goal (i.e., attaining an education).

Results also suggested that women were more likely to perceive advantages. A possible interpretation is that, because Japanese companies and society continue to discriminate based on sex, having additional skills (i.e., language skills) makes even more difference for women than it does for men. It should, however, be noted that maternal values might have confounded the results as the factor "advantage" contained an item that asked whether they would like to take their children with them if they were to be assigned overseas in the future. Gender differences may, however, be an interesting and fruitful question to explore in future studies.

Age is another factor that is worth further exploration. Although our results suggest that older respondents were more likely to see disadvantages and differences, our findings are limited by our sample. A wider age-group and/or a longitudinal study may reveal important trends.

A major limiting factor to this study is the instability and potential lack of validity of single item measurements. Although factor scores were created for the dependent variables, only individual items were used to measure the independent variables. Multiple measures of the independent variables should lead to more reliable measurements of them, which in turn should produce more reliable findings in future studies on this topic.

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Appendix A. Dependent variables

- Q5 Do you think that the returnees' way of thinking is different from yours?
- Q6 If so, please elaborate.
- Q7 Have you ever been perplexed when interacting with returnees?
- Q8 If so, please elaborate.
- Q9 Do you feel that you have gained anything from interacting with returnees?
- Q10 If so, please elaborate.
- Q11 Do you think that being a returnee has advantages?
- Q12 If so, please elaborate.
- Q13 Do you think that being a returnee has disadvantages?
- Q14 If so, please elaborate.

Q15 If you had children and were to sojourn abroad, would you like to take your children with you?

Q16 If so, please elaborate.

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