Dissertation

Japanese Sentiment Toward Foreign Workers

in a New Age of Immigration:

A Case Study of the Seafood Processing Industry in Rural Japan

技能実習生に対する日本人労働者の受け入れ意識に関する研究

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Abstract

This study investigates the sentiment of Japanese workers toward their foreign co-workers.

A case study methodology using qualitative research methods was employed to explore the

attitudes of thirteen Japanese workers working alongside foreign technical intern trainees in

the seafood processing industry in a rural area of northern Japan. A three-pronged theoretical

framework using the concepts of intergroup contact, intercultural competence, and host

society acculturation expectations was adopted to analyze how Japanese workers feel about

their foreign co-workers, both in the workplace and as community residents. The study

aimed to illuminate the feelings of the participants toward their trainee co-workers, the

nature of their relationships with the trainees, and how they expect foreign residents to adapt

to work and life in Japan. It was found that attitudes toward the trainees differ according to

life domain, and that tension is felt regarding relations between trainees and community

members. A delicate balance of loyalties is forming among the participants as they navigate

the multiculturalization of their workplaces and communities. As such, the findings offer

micro-level, qualitative data on how the foreign trainees are being received. The findings of

the study also provide a rare snapshot of intercultural attitudes currently developing among

Japanese blue-collar workers. This study raises questions about how the social integration

of migrants is currently understood in rural communities and the implication of the changing

status of the technical trainees and offers recommendations for education bodies to address

the growing numbers of foreign residents in Japan.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

This dissertation would not have been possible without the kind cooperation and warm support of the following people, to whom I express my most sincere gratitude.

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Introduction

Background Context

In global terms, Japan is not typically viewed as a nation of immigrants. Unlike traditional immigration nations such as the United States, Canada and Australia, immigration has not been used as a pillar of nation-building in Japan to date, and as such, both immigrant numbers and the extent of the immigration debate have been limited. There has been little public debate in Japan on either immigration policy or the social integration of migrants. Japanese politicians have traditionally avoided such topics in public discourse, even while *de facto* immigration policies exist (Koido & Kamibayashi, 2018; Komine, 2014; Roberts, 2018). Scholars have pointed to sensitivity to negative public opinion as the reason for successive administrations' ambivalence towards announcing an official immigration policy (Davison and Peng, 2021). This is generally attributed to the assumption that the Japanese public opposes any increase in the number of immigrants accepted into the country. This reticence to expand the number of foreign residents is also reflected in the markedly low number of people recognized as refugees in Japan (Japan Association for Refugees, 2022). The lack of an official immigration policy and as a result, the unusually small size of the foreign population, has led to Japan being called a "closed immigration country" (Komine, 2018, p.107).

Despite perceived negative public opinion and the continuing taboo of immigration policy, the recent severity of labor shortages in key industries has ultimately pushed the government to officially open the country's borders to unskilled workers. The introduction of the Revised Immigration Act in April 2019 established a new visa that effectively opens up an official route to unskilled foreign workers for the first time in the postwar period. By the end of 2020, the number of foreign residents in Japan exceeded 2.8 million people.

While the impact of the coronavirus pandemic brought this number down by 1.8% from the previous year, increases were still seen amongst groups that account for a significant portion of the foreign population overall, including technical intern trainees (*gino jisshusei*). The number of foreign workers in Japan is now at a record high, reaching 1.72 million people as of October 2020. Of this number, technical intern trainees are the fastest-growing group, rising from 1.7% of foreign workers in 2010 to 23.3% in 2020. They are the second-largest group of foreign nationals by status of residence (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2021c).

Figure 1

Changes in the number of foreign workers and technical intern trainees in Japan
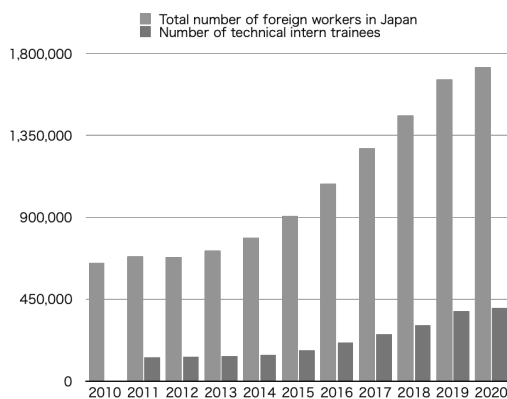
(Source: created by the author using data from *Gaikokujin Koyo Jokyo no Todokede Jokyo Matome (Summary of registration of foreign national employment status)*, Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare, 2020).

Demographic challenges are driving Japan's growing dependence on foreign workers. Population aging and decline are proceeding at an alarming pace: the total population is forecast to drop from 127 million in 2015 to 88 million by 2065, with the working-age population also set to fall from 60% in 2015 to around 50% of the total population in 2065 (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2017). Following the current baseline of labor participation by female and elderly Japanese residents, the

government forecasts that an average of over 300,000 foreign workers need to be added every year to support Japan's current economic level (Ministry of Land Infrastructure Transport and Tourism, 2019). With no foreseeable end to the present population cycle, government projections indicate that the size of the foreign population will rise from 2.3% in 2019 to over 12% of the total population in 2065, for a total of over 13 million foreign workers at that time (Ministry of Land Infrastructure Transport and Tourism, 2019). The industries most in need of foreign workers include nursing, manufacturing, construction, agriculture and the hospitality industries (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare, 2018). Not coincidentally, these match the industries being targeted by the Technical Intern Trainee Program (Organization for Technical Intern Training, 2020).

The Technical Intern Trainee Program (TITP), initially launched in 1993, has both grown in significance and become a target of criticism both domestically and overseas over the nearly three decades that it has been in operation. The program was originally established for the purpose of skills transfer to developing nations (Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice Human Resources Development Bureau, & Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare, 2017). It is now recognized that the TITP has been widely used and abused as a source of relatively cheap labor by small and medium size businesses suffering from serious labor shortages (Koido & Kamibayashi, 2018). While the amendment of the Immigration Act in 2009 was an attempt to address the gap between intent and reality of the TITP and confer workers' rights to the trainees (Kamibayashi, 2018), legal, systemic and human rights-related issues are still frequent targets of criticism (Ibusuki, 2020; Komine, 2018). The government's recognition of this situation was behind the Revised Immigration Act in 2019 and launch of the new Specified Skill Worker visa, which offers potential permanent residency for workers in selected industries (Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of Japan, 2019). More recent moves by the Japanese government indicate that a new age of more openly acknowledged immigration may be about to start. In November 2021, it was reported in the Japanese media that the government is considering expanding the Special Skill Worker visa, to allow foreign workers in up to fourteen industries to apply for permanent residency and bring their families to live in Japan (The Japan Times, 2022, July 29). This low-key announcement was significant, as it means that an increasing number of temporary foreign workers may settle as permanent residents in Japan with their families.

Despite this ongoing growth of Japan's foreign population, micro-level studies on the opinions of the Japanese public toward migrants are surprisingly rare. Based on national public opinion surveys conducted for the past two decades, the Japanese public is typically thought to have a negative stance toward increases in the foreign population (Gentry & Branton, 2019; Green & Kadoya, 2013; Japan Cabinet Office, 2004; Mazumi, 2015, 2016; NHK, 2019; Nukaga, 2006). Recognizing the impact of public opinion on social cohesion, research has also been conducted on methods that may be adopted to influence public opinion, such as information campaigns (Facchini et al., 2022) and more open discussion of previously taboo topics such as how migrants may contribute to Japanese society (Menju, 2014). Unfortunately, such studies are still few in number. In terms of public surveys, the Japanese Government's Cabinet Office survey in 2004 (Japan Cabinet Office, 2004) and the national broadcaster NHK's survey in 2019 (NHK, 2019) both identified largely negative attitudes toward the increase of foreign residents and concerns about the adverse impact of increased immigration on Japanese culture, crime and safety. However, while such large-scale surveys provide a picture of general trends in public opinion and

general perceptions, they do not shed light on the rationale or thinking behind the responses given.

Studies and circumstances in traditional immigration nations indicate that there are several reasons why it is important for Japan's leaders to understand the deeper sentiment and reasoning behind more general public attitudes toward foreign residents. Firstly, it has been widely acknowledged that attitudes toward migrants and level of tolerance of non-native customs and practices can greatly impact both social cohesion (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007) as well as migrant health and wellbeing (IOM, 2020; also reported in Japan by Miller et al, 2020; Takenoshita, 2015). Secondly, feelings about migrants have the potential to materialize as the ultranationalist, xenophobic and racist sentiment currently causing social disruption in other countries and regions; there is no guarantee that it will not do the same in Japan. Thirdly, social integration is commonly defined as a two-way process, determined by the behavior and attitudes of both the immigrant and host community groups (OECD & EU, 2018). Lack of attention toward the thinking and behavior of the majority toward migrants runs the risk of leading to a type of 'assimilative social integration' (Morita, 2014) that places the onus for adaptation solely on the shoulders of the minority, rather than encouraging understanding and acceptance of difference by both sides.

Statement of the Problem

In summary, the number of foreign nationals employed in unskilled work is steadily increasing and forecast to continue to grow as a response to Japan's labor shortages. The challenges of a declining birthrate and shrinking workforce have exacerbated labor shortages in Japan, leading to an ever-growing dependence on foreign labor. Foreign

workers are becoming an increasingly visible presence in day-to-day life. Japan is dependent on such labor to support the economy, social security system, and depopulation of rural areas. As the Japanese government moves to grant permanent residency to more foreign workers, workplaces and communities are facing the need to interact with a larger and more diverse group of foreign co-workers and residents.

Despite this rapidly changing situation, immigration policy remains a taboo in Japan. As a result, open discussion on the integration of foreign workers has made little progress. Unskilled foreign workers such as those who enter the country on a technical intern trainee visa are typically seen as temporary workers who return to their home countries in a few years, positioned as 'guests' rather than permanent community members. However, as the government moves to increase both the number and the length of stay of the trainees, their status as 'guests' is likely to change. For this reason, there is an urgent need to investigate how this group of foreign workers are being received by host communities and identify potential challenges they may face in terms of integration into Japanese society. This dissertation focuses on one aspect of integration: host society sentiment toward migrants. Research in traditional immigration nations (Ager & Strang, 2008; Spoonley & Tolley, 2012) indicates that the way that migrants are received and treated by host society members is an important factor for facilitating social integration and creating an attractive immigration destination. However, there is currently a lack of micro-level insight into how specific sections of the Japanese public feel about the foreign workers in their midst. This study aims to address this gap in research on host society sentiment toward foreign workers in Japan.

The scope of the study is more concretely defined to focus on the sentiment of Japanese workers employed at the same workplaces as technical intern trainees. A case study

methodology was used to investigate the feelings and attitudes of workers in the seafood processing industry in a selected rural area of Japan toward their technical trainee co-workers.

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of feelings do Japanese workers have toward their technical intern trainee colleagues?

2. What kind of relationships do Japanese workers have with their technical intern trainee colleagues at work and outside of work?

3. How do Japanese workers expect foreign residents to adapt to life in Japan?

The overarching purpose of this research is to understand whether Japanese workers employed in the fisheries industry in a rural area of Japan have welcoming or non-welcoming attitudes toward their technical intern trainee co-workers.

It is important to note from the outset that the phrase 'outside of work' is defined in this research as any time outside of working hours. As the trainees live in dormitories on or in close proximity to the worksite, there is not a clear physical boundary between 'at work' and 'outside of work'. For this reason, the distinction is defined using time, not place. The research themes examined in this study are conceptualized in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Concept map of research questions
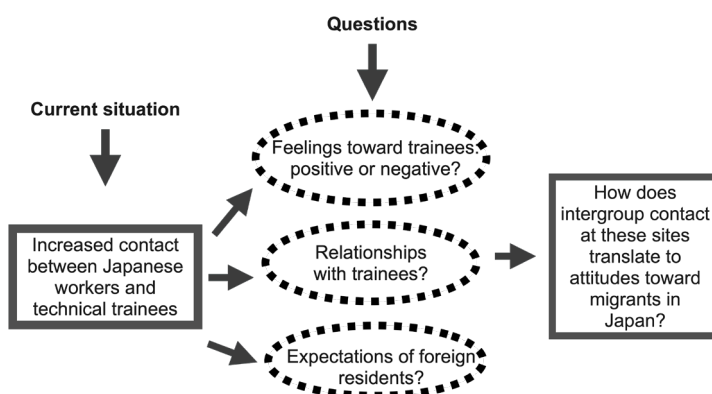
This study also aims to understand how feelings toward trainee co-workers are translating to sentiment toward the broader foreign community in Japan. As such, the study represents a preliminary exploration of the impact that occupational contact may have on intercultural attitudes in the context examined here. It is hoped that by illuminating the sentiment of Japanese workers toward technical intern trainees, the findings from this research will contribute to the development of social integration policies for the growing numbers of trainees in communities throughout Japan. The study also aims to illuminate gaps in knowledge regarding the nature of the intercultural relations being formed at blue-collar workplaces.

Methods

This research uses a case study methodology, adopting qualitative research methods. The study focuses on Japanese workers employed at blue-collar worksites alongside technical intern trainees. The region of Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture was selected due to previously established connections and the relatively high proportion of foreign trainees in the area. Data was collected at four seafood processing companies in a region of Oshika Peninsula. A two-pronged data collection method was employed. Data was initially collected from participants using a questionnaire survey on the participants' acculturation expectations of foreign residents in Japan. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with each participant, to probe further into responses given in the questionnaire as well as gain understanding of the participants' feelings toward and relationships with their technical intern trainee colleagues. A total of thirteen Japanese employees participated.

The definition of the case, methods used in the study, and research context are discussed in detail in **Research Approach and Methods** (p.66).

Conceptual Framework

Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis is used as a conceptual base for the study, providing the premise that day-to-day contact between Japanese workers and foreign technical intern trainees, under conditions aligned with those proposed in Allport's hypothesis, is contributing to the development of positive attitudes toward foreign co-workers. Prior research on host community sentiment using the contact hypothesis is reviewed in **Research Approach and Methods** (p.66).

Data collected in the study was analyzed using the theories shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Theories used in analysis
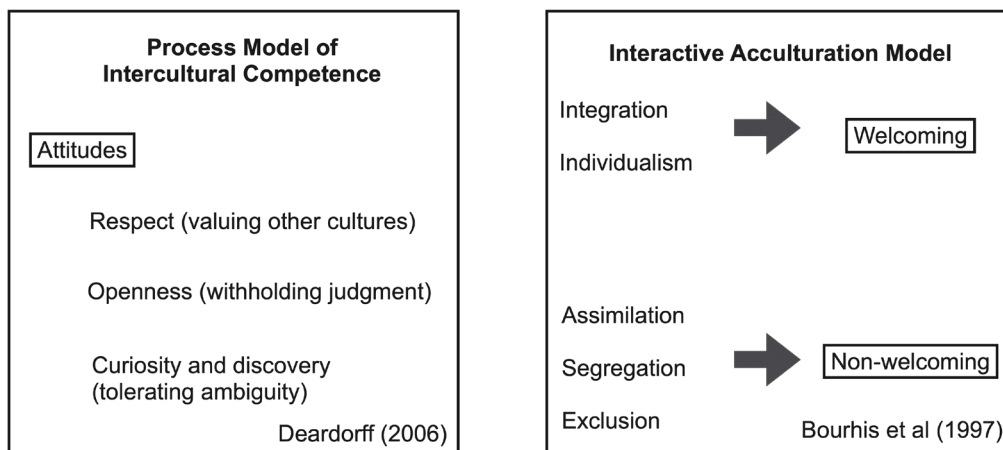
Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence was used to examine the attitudes of the participants toward their foreign co-workers at the interpersonal level. Specifically, data was analyzed to identify instances of respect (valuing other cultures), openness (withholding judgment), and curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity) as

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proposed in the Deardorff model on the left of Figure 3. The second element of the

analytical framework is Bourhis et al's (1997) interactive acculturation model (IAM)

displayed on the right. This is proposed as a tool to understand the Japanese participants'

perceptions of the cultural impact of migration and their attitudes toward foreign residents

in Japan. The model is particularly relevant for this study as it explores host society

expectations of migrants and their adaptation in the host society. Questionnaire surveys

were designed based on the IAM and completed by participants, with the aim of

ascertaining the acculturation expectations of the Japanese workers toward foreign

residents. This analytical framework is fully described in **Conceptual and Analytical**

Framework (p.37).

This project aims to contribute to the growing body of research on host community

acculturation orientations (Matera et al, 2011; Grigoryev et al, 2018; Gonzalez & Brown,

2017), intergroup contact in the workplace (Schutze, 2020; Pecoraro & Ruedin, 2020;

Gentry & Branton, 2019; Asada, 2000; Mazumi, 2016; Gong & Wang, 2021; Nagayoshi,

2017), and host society sentiment toward migrants in Japan (Green & Kadoya, 2013;

Mazumi, 2015, 2016; Nukaga, 2006).

Significance of the Study

Academic Contribution

The primary significance of this study is to make a preliminary contribution to a more

in-depth understanding of the thinking of Japanese blue-collar workers toward foreign

workers. As noted in **Background Context** (p.1), most research on Japanese attitudes on

immigration to date has been comprised of large-scale opinion surveys; consequently,

there is a lack of data on the thought processes and reasoning that may be behind the

responses given in such surveys. The case study described here complements prior

quantitative studies on public opinion by adding in-depth qualitative data on the reasons

and background behind attitudes and opinions toward technical intern trainees. The data

presented here depicts differences in sentiment according to work and life domain and

provides valuable insight into the delicate intercultural relationships being developed in

communities. The study targets blue-collar work sites, an important location of ongoing

contact between Japanese and foreign workers. Micro-level, qualitative studies

investigating blue-collar workers in Japan are rare. Importantly, prior research in Japan and

elsewhere has indicated a possible association between a lower education level and blue-

collar work and negative attitudes toward immigration (Facchini et al, 2022; Mazumi,

2016; Mellon, 2019; Nagata, 2013; Nagayoshi, 2008; Nukaga, 2006; OECD & EU, 2018).

It is for this reason that this research examines such work sites, as they clearly constitute a

crucial point of increasing contact between Japanese and non-Japanese workers.

This dissertation also fills a gap in research on technical intern trainees. Studies on the

trainees to date have predominantly focused on systemic issues, trainees' working

conditions, Japanese language issues and specific industry trends. While some scholars

have begun investigating individual aspects of integration (Iimure, 2019; Tsujimura, 2020;

Yuyama & Shitara, 2020), there has been little attention on how the trainees are expected

to adapt to life in Japan. This study aims to contribute to a greater understanding of how

the trainees are received and perceived in host communities.

Social Contribution

The conventional conceptualization of the trainees as temporary or 'guest' workers may

soon become outdated as more trainees are given the opportunity to settle permanently in

Japan. By positioning the trainees as potential permanent residents and by investigating Japanese employees' acculturation expectations of the trainees, this dissertation aims to encourage debate on the social integration of the trainees. The thinking of host community members is highlighted here as a crucial factor in how the trainees are defined and accepted in Japanese society. In this way, it is hoped that the study will contribute to the development of social integration policies for the technical intern trainees as a group. Such policies will become increasingly important as more workplaces and communities become sites of intercultural relations between Japanese and foreign workers, and as such workers are given the option to settle permanently in Japan.

Educational Contribution

From the perspective of education, this study offers a rare preliminary examination of the intercultural competence attributes of Japanese blue-collar workers, a section of the population that typically does not proceed to higher education. The findings indicate a certain level of intercultural competence attitudes among the workers studied. Recommendations are offered on educational outreach programs that may target this group and facilitate greater understanding of the cultural background and needs of the technical intern trainees.

The intercultural relations examined here are also significant from the perspective of future educational initiatives for the trainees and their families. The status of the technical intern trainees described in this research is currently in a state of flux. As larger numbers of the trainees are offered the opportunity to settle permanently in Japan, they may also be joined by their families and create their own families in the future. The educational needs of this group will be significant at all levels of education. This research looks toward that

not-too-distant future and aims to encourage greater attention to the trainees from an educational perspective. Regional studies such as this one, examining the nature of intercultural relations in workplaces and communities, will be urgently required, to ensure that education policy measures for the trainees and their families are based on reality.

Definition of Key Terms

The definitions of key terms in the study are as follows.

Migrant

The term 'migrant' is not as commonly used in Japan as in other more traditional immigration nations, due to a historic reticence on the part of the Japanese government to openly discuss immigration as a policy. In particular, the technical intern trainees discussed in this dissertation have not been able to apply for permanent residency, a typical implication of the term 'migrant'. Following the example of Nagayoshi (2021) in her quantitative work on immigrant integration in Japan, this study adopts a broad definition of 'migrant' to refer to a person living in Japan who was born or brought up in a different country or region. Kosaki and Sato (2019) also adopt a broad definition of 'migrant', as someone who has temporarily or permanently changed the location of their daily living environment. They categorize migration as labor migration, family migration, and refugees, and further divide labor migrants into "high-skilled" and "lower-skilled, unskilled" groups (Kosaki and Sato, 2019; p.8). The trainees who are the subject of the current research would be thus defined as lower-skilled or unskilled labor migrants. The term 'migrant' as used here incorporates the term more commonly used in Japan, 'foreign

resident' (*zainichi gaikokujin*), and includes in its definition technical intern trainees, specified skill workers, and other foreign workers.

Integration

While the term 'integration' is frequently used in migration studies of traditional immigration nations, the application of this term to the situation of the technical intern trainees in Japan is currently problematic, given its inherent implication of permanent residency. Moreover, the concept of migrant integration typically includes political rights and the possibility of naturalization (OECD & EU, 2018), both of which are currently not available options for the technical intern trainees. The term is used in this study with an understanding of the dynamic situation of the trainees in Japan and based on their potential ability to settle in Japan in the near future. The conceptualization of migrant integration in the Japanese context is discussed further in **Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees, and Migrant Integration** (p.17).

Acculturation

Acculturation was originally defined as 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups' (Redfield et al, 1936, p.149). Following Berry's conceptualization of bidimensional acculturation (Berry and Sam, 2016), Bourhis et al (1997) later developed the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM), to express the intersection between immigrant acculturation preferences and host community acculturation expectations. The IAM is used in this dissertation to indicate whether attitudes to migrants are welcoming or otherwise, in addition to host community

members' expectations of how they expect migrants to live and adapt in the host society. Prior research on host society acculturation expectations is reviewed in Conceptual and Analytical Framework.

Organization of the Dissertation

The second chapter, **Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees, and Migrant Integration** (p.17), sets the scene for the dissertation by providing an historical review of labor migration in Japan and identifying the position that the technical intern trainees occupy in this trajectory. This chapter covers past experience accepting unskilled workers from the Korean Peninsula and South America, clarifying salient similarities and differences with the situation of the trainees. The Technical Intern Trainee Program (TITP) is described in detail here. The chapter explains the significance of examining host society attitudes toward the trainees and clarifies the need for the current research from the perspective of migrant integration.

The third chapter, **Conceptual and Analytical Framework** (p.37), defines the conceptual framework used for analytical work in the study. The three-pronged framework using Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence, and Bourhis et al's (1997) Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) is adopted to enable examination of attitudes in both interpersonal relationships as well as attitudes and expectations toward foreign residents in general. This chapter draws on findings from research on these models to present a case for their use in examining sentiment toward the technical trainees and other foreign residents in Japan. This chapter defines the research gap that the study aims to address.

The methods used for the research are explained in the fourth chapter, **Research Approach and Methods** (p.66). The case is defined, together with a description of the study sites in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture. Qualitative research methods were used as part of a case study methodology to answer the research questions. This chapter also describes other methods used to triangulate the interview and survey data and outlines the process used for implementing a questionnaire-based survey on acculturation expectations prior to the semi-structured interviews with the research participants.

The data obtained from the interviews and surveys are presented in the fifth chapter, **Findings** (p.104). This is followed by a critical discussion of the findings in the sixth chapter, **Discussion** (p.154). This chapter focuses on insights gained from the data that contribute to a greater understanding of Japanese attitudes toward foreign co-workers, and implications for policy and education in Japan. Recommendations are offered for future research on host society sentiment toward trainees; emerging competitive threat toward trainees; and the practical, cultural, and emotional needs of migrants in Japan, as well as the crucial role of education bodies in ongoing social integration initiatives. The contributions and limitations of this study are discussed in the final chapter.

Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees,
and Migrant Integration

In order to contextualize the current study and the position of the foreign technical trainees, this chapter reviews the Technical Intern Trainee Program (TITP) as part of the trajectory of acceptance of foreign workers to Japan since the pre-WWII period. After providing a brief overview of the history of foreign workers in Japan, I examine the circumstances behind the establishment of the TITP and review key literature on how the system has been utilized and reformed, including the most recent announcements by the government. Amid continued calls for the abolishment of the system, and a gradual shift of focus to the Specified Skill Worker status, the TITP is in the midst of a process of change. Nonetheless, demographic challenges, ongoing labor shortages, and a government now willing to openly import foreign unskilled labor all signify that the trainees as a group will continue to grow in significance as foreign workers in Japan. The second part of the chapter explores the role of public attitudes in migrant integration and the rationale for investigating host society sentiment toward the technical trainees.

Foreign Workers in Japan: A Brief Overview

The number of foreign residents in Japan exceeded 2.9 million people in 2022 (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022b). According to the most recent official figures on the number and nationalities of foreign residents in Japan, current in June 2022, the proportion of foreign residents who had obtained permanent residency was around 28.6% of the total at that time. This number is mainly made up of Korean and Chinese nationals and their descendants who moved to Japan in the wartime or postwar period, as well as the descendants of Japanese emigrants to Brazil and Peru (*Nikkeijin*) who were

admitted to Japan in the 1990s after they were granted Special Status, giving them the right to settle permanently without restrictions on work activities (Ministry of Justice, 2015; Takenoshita, 2016). The technical intern trainees account for around 11% of the total number of foreign residents. They are the second-largest group of foreign residents in Japan by status of residence (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022b).

To further breakdown the number and composition of foreign workers in Japan, of the 2.9 million foreign residents in Japan in 2022, 1.7 million were engaged in some form of employment. Looking at the trends in the numbers in the period from 2010 (the start of figures for the Technical Intern Training Program) to 2019, the greatest growth of all categories is shown in the technical intern trainee group, which increased from 1.7% of foreign workers in 2010 to 23.1% in 2019. Once again, the technical intern trainees are the second largest group of foreign workers after those Residents Based on Status (comprising mainly Japanese descendants from South America, other permanent residents, and spouses and children of permanent residents) (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2021c).

Foreign workers in Japan have a complicated history. Japan is not typically viewed as a nation of immigrants, and with numbers of foreign residents significantly lower than many advanced nations, the image of Japan as a culturally homogenous state has been perpetuated, both at home and abroad. Nonetheless, foreign workers have been a presence in Japanese society since before the Second World War. It is important to understand how foreign workers have been received in Japan to date, both as workers and as residents, as a foundation for the current study on how the technical intern trainees are being received today. Kondo (2002) divides Japan's immigration history into six different periods: (1) 1639-1853: zero immigration (2) 1853-1945: large-scale emigration and colonial immigration (3) 1945-1951: strictly controlled immigration and emigration (4) 1951-1981:

strictly controlled immigration for economic growth (5) 1981-1990: acceptance of refugees and improvement of foreigners' rights, under strict immigration restrictions (6) 1990-2002: ethnic repatriates (*Nikkeijin*) and irregular immigration, under strict immigration restrictions. We may add a 7th phase from 1993 when the Technical Intern Trainee Program (TITP) was established. The TITP is described in detail in the latter part of this chapter. First, I review two of the groups of foreign workers that have had a significant impact on Japanese society to date.

Korean Workers in the Pre- and Post-war Period

Korean nationals recruited from the colonized Korean Peninsula to work in Japanese mines, factories, and farms prior to and during World War II still have a considerable presence in Japanese society today. Together with Chinese workers who came to Japan at the turn of the 20th century and remained, such Korean residents are commonly referred to as 'oldcomers'. While many of these workers returned to Korea when it was liberated from Japanese control at the end of the war, around 500,000 remained in Japan. They and their descendants are not designated as Japanese citizens, due to the revision of the Japanese Nationality Act in 1950, which designates nationality by ethnicity (*jus sanguinis*) (Komai, 2000). As a result, those who remained in Japan as well as their children and grandchildren born in Japan, are designated as foreigners (although with special permanent residency status) and have been subject to the same strict immigration controls as other foreign nationals (Takenoshita, 2016).

Relations between oldcomer Koreans and Japanese nationals are complex, based on deep-rooted feelings on both sides. A detailed commentary is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I will therefore highlight two points that are pertinent to the current study. The

first is concerning the treatment and status of oldcomer Koreans during and after the war. Treatment of the Korean workers during the World War II period was notoriously poor and has been documented in extensive research (Komai, 2000; Lee, 2018; Underwood, 2004). At the same time, the Korean workers were conferred with rights as Japanese colonial citizens, and subject to strong expectations of assimilation. Scholars have noted that this policy may have been driven by the fact that the colonized people were physically very similar to the Japanese (Ryang, 2000). Working conditions for the Korean workers, including the work content, salary, and living quarters, were maintained at a low level, creating a situation where Koreans in Japan held the status of Japanese citizens but at the same time were clearly second-class citizens in the social hierarchy at the time, and subject to persistent institutional discrimination (Takenoshita, 2016).

The second point regarding Korean workers and their descendants concerns the depth of negative feeling between the two groups. Japan's colonization of the Korean peninsula started with its annexation in 1910, and from the beginning encountered fierce anti-Japanese movements (Kosaki & Sato, 2019). Although Korean workers were recruited to come to Japan to work, those who remained after the end of the war were said to remain unwillingly, faced with the untenable option of returning to a country split in two and rife with political and social instability. The number of Korean nationals in Japan in 2022 is around 412,000 people (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022b); this includes Korean oldcomers and their descendants living in Japan today, commonly known as *zainichi* Koreans. Many have adopted Japanese names and do not disclose their ethnicity. This is understandable, given the state of hate crimes and anti-Korean movements in Japan, centering on the right-wing ultranationalist group Zaitokukai (Association of Citizens Against the Special Privileges of the Zainichi) (Ishibashi & Narusawa, 2017). Diplomatic

relations between the two countries have also been fraught (Nishino, 2022). In summary, *zainichi* Koreans are a group of 'foreigners', physically very similar to the native Japanese population, who carry a history of negative experiences and social stigma in Japan but at the same time are settled as long-term residents.

The circumstances and history of Korean oldcomers are very different from the current situation of the technical intern trainees, Japan's latest foreign imported labor. The antagonism between Korean and Japanese citizens is deep-rooted and based on the specific context of Japanese imperialism and colonialism around World War II. Importantly, the technical intern trainees have chosen to work in Japan, a major difference with the situation of Korean workers at the time. However, there are also some similarities between the two groups. Like the original Korean workers, the trainees are employed in unskilled work in factories, farms, and other blue-collar work sites. The fact that such work is positioned as low-status work in Japanese society is also likely to impact the way the trainees are positioned and treated. Additionally, many of the trainees originate from countries in Asia, and thus are more physically similar to Japanese people than migrants or expats from Western countries, for example. It may be reasonable to hypothesize that there may be higher expectations for such trainees to assimilate to Japanese ways than there would be for foreign employees who are not physically similar, such as those from Europe or the United States.

Nikkeijin Workers Since the 1990s

The revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990 marked the start of acceptance of second and third generation descendants of Japanese emigrants (*Nikkeijin*), mainly from Brazil and Peru. Officially positioned as an opportunity for

Nikkeijin to reconnect with the Japanese homeland, the law established a new visa of 'long-term resident' for them. In practice, the law aimed to address economic and social issues that had emerged during the previous decade, including labor shortages in blue-collar businesses and an increase in unauthorized immigrant workers (Takenoshita, 2016). In other words, the *Nikkeijin* were imported as a source of flexible, unskilled labor to replace illegal immigrants in jobs that highly educated Japanese graduates were no longer attracted to. This represents a key similarity with the situation of the technical intern trainees, who are also employed at unskilled work sites to fill positions that can no longer be filled by Japanese workers. A key difference between the two groups is that while the *Nikkeijin* are permitted to work without restriction and may transfer between workplaces and industries, trainees are currently not allowed to do so.

Kosaki and Sato (2019) see the acceptance of 'newcomer' migrants from Brazil and Peru as a major turning point in Japan's immigration history, placing Japan on a path to experience various effects of immigration in the same way as other Western nations have experienced to date. *Nikkeijin* workers from Brazil today number around 207,000 people (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022b). They tend to live in concentrated areas near industrial centers such as Nagoya, Gunma, and Shizuoka Prefectures (Kosaki and Sato, 2019). Ethnic communities of Latin American *Nikkeijin* and their families have formed around these areas; the impact and significance of such communities is debated. Komai (2000) for example postulates that with ethnic-language shops, restaurants, housing, and employment services available in such communities that cater to *Nikkeijin* residing and working in the area, there is little need to interact with Japanese residents and this may be contributing to the isolation of *Nikkeijin* communities. The Japanese language ability of Nikkeijin is also said to be on the decline. Komai wonders whether the peaceful

relations seen between Japanese and ethnic communities are 'born out of indifference' toward *Nikkeijin* (Komai, 2000; p.322). The hostility seen in relations between Korean and Japanese residents is not evident here; nonetheless, the status of the *Nikkeijin* as unskilled labor working in blue-collar jobs inevitably reinforces the image of foreign workers as second-class citizens, an image forged through the experience of Korean conscripted workers and potentially continued with the arrival of the technical trainees.

A further common point between the *Nikkeijin* workers and the technical trainees may be seen in their treatment by the mass media. Both groups have been subject to mainly negative news reportage focusing on crime. For example, Hamada (2013) conducted an extensive review of Japanese attitudes to Brazilian workers living in residential communities and suggests that the way the workers are reported in the media has a strong influence over host community members' sentiment toward immigrants in general. Hamada found in particular that at the time of the study (2013), perception of Brazilian workers was shifting from 'foreign workers' to 'community members who may cause public safety issues.' He surmised that media reports on crime involving Brazilian workers had a significant impact in creating the latter image (Hamada, 2013). Media stories on the technical trainees have been similarly negative. In particular, since the coronavirus pandemic there have been numerous media reports of crimes committed by former trainees (for example, Asahi Shimbun, 2020). Circumstances leading to such crimes, such as unlawful dismissal, loss of income and housing, and the inability to return to the home country, are often omitted from such reports. Like the Brazilian workers before them, the trainees too are potentially transitioning to a more permanent position in Japanese society; the past experience of the Brazilian workers is likely to be instructive.

Technical Intern Trainee Program (TITP)

Overview of the TITP

The Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) was launched in 1993 as a training program for foreign nationals, predominantly in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Over the nearly three decades that it has been in operation, the program has both grown in significance and become a target of criticism both domestically and overseas. The program was originally established for the purpose of skills transfer to developing nations (Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice Human Resources Development Bureau, & Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare, 2017). It is now recognized that the TITP has been widely used and abused as a source of relatively cheap labor by small and medium size businesses suffering from serious labor shortages (Koido & Kamibayashi, 2018). While the amendment of the Immigration Act in 2009 was an attempt to address the gap between intent and reality of the TITP and confer workers' rights to the trainees (Kamibayashi, 2018), legal, systemic, and human rights-related issues are still frequent targets of criticism (Ibusuki, 2020; Komine, 2018). The government's recognition of this situation was behind the Revised Immigration Act in 2019 and launch of the new Specified Skill Worker (*tokutei gino*) visa, which offers potential permanent residency for workers in selected industries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2019).

As of 2022, the total number of technical intern trainees in Japan was 327,689. The nationality mix in 2022 was 53.5% from Vietnam, 13.3% from China, 12.6% from Indonesia, 7.5% from the Philippines, and the remainder from Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Mongolia and others (OTIT, 2022). As noted above, technical intern trainees are currently the fastest-growing group of foreign workers in Japan. This growth is attributed to a number of factors. Pull factors driven by Japanese demographics are

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discussed in further detail below. Other factors include economic circumstances in sending countries. For example, the growth of the Chinese economy and high unemployment in Vietnam have resulted in significant changes in the nationality mix of the trainee group: the number of trainees from China dropped from 108,252 to 79,959 between 2011 and 2017, while trainees from Vietnam increased from 13,789 to 104,800 over the same period (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of Japan, 2018a). As noted above, Vietnamese trainees now account for the largest portion of all trainees.

An overview of the TITP and specified skill worker status of residence is provided in Table 1. As this shows, the maximum length of residence for technical intern trainees is five years, after which time they may apply for the specified skill worker visa. The specified skill worker status has two stages: Specified Skill Worker (1) visa, with a duration of five years, and Specified Skill Worker (2) visa, where applicants earn the right to apply for permanent residency and bring family members to Japan from their home country. The Specified Skill Worker (2) visa is currently open only to workers in the construction and shipbuilding/ship machinery industries. At the time of writing, there is only one person in Japan holding this visa (The Japan Times, 2022, April 14). However, large numbers of technical trainees already in Japan are shifting to the Specified Skill Worker (1) visa as noted below, including a number of the trainees interviewed for the current research, showing a significant level of interest among trainees in extending their stay in Japan.

Table 1

Technical Intern Trainee Program and Specified Skill Worker visa status

Status of residence	Technical Intern Training Program			Specified Skill Worker	
	Technical Intern Trainee (1)	Technical Intern Trainee (2)	Technical Intern Trainee (3)	Specified Skill Worker (1)	Specified Skill Worker (2)
Aim	Training			Work	
Length of residence	1 year	2 years	2 years	Maximum 5 years	No duration specified
Family reunion	No	No	No	No	Yes
Wages	Equivalent to Japanese workers				
Requirements to proceed to next level	Written and skills test	Skills test	Skills test	Skills test	
Industries	14 industries (nursing care; building cleaning management; construction; machine parts and tooling; industrial machinery; electric, electronics and information; shipbuilding and ship machinery; automobile repair and maintenance; aviation; accommodation; agriculture; fishery and aquaculture; food and beverage manufacturing; food service)				Construction, shipbuilding and ship machinery*
Other restrictions	Cannot change employers				

Note. Adapted from 'Guidelines on Allowance for Training, Wages, and Management Expenses in the

Technical Intern Training Program' (Japan International Training Cooperation Organization, 2012), and

'Initiatives to Accept New Foreign Nationals and for the Realization of Society of Harmonious Coexistence'

(Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022a).

Applicants are required to pass skills tests at each stage of the program. It is also

possible to apply for the Specified Skill Worker (1) visa from outside of Japan, without

having undertaken the technical intern trainee program, by passing a skills test and

Japanese language exam. However, of the 64,730 specified skill worker (1) visa holders in

Japan as of March 2022, as many as 58,217 (89.9%) were former technical intern trainees;

only 10% were applicants from outside of Japan (Immigration Services Agency, 2022b).

The trends in numbers of technical intern trainee and specified skill worker visa holders

are shown in Figure 4. According to the latest data at the time of writing, the number of

technical intern trainees was 351,788 in October 2021, a drop from the previous year due

to the global coronavirus pandemic. They account for around 20% of all foreign workers in

Japan (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2021). The number of specified skill

worker visa holders increased significantly in the short period from December 2019 to

March 2022, from 1,621 to 64,730. However, given that the government projected 345,000

applicants by 2023 when launching the Specified Skill Worker visa in 2019, these numbers

fall far short of initial expectations (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022a).

Figure 4

Changes in the number of foreign workers and technical intern trainees in Japan (left) and

specified skill worker visa holders (right)
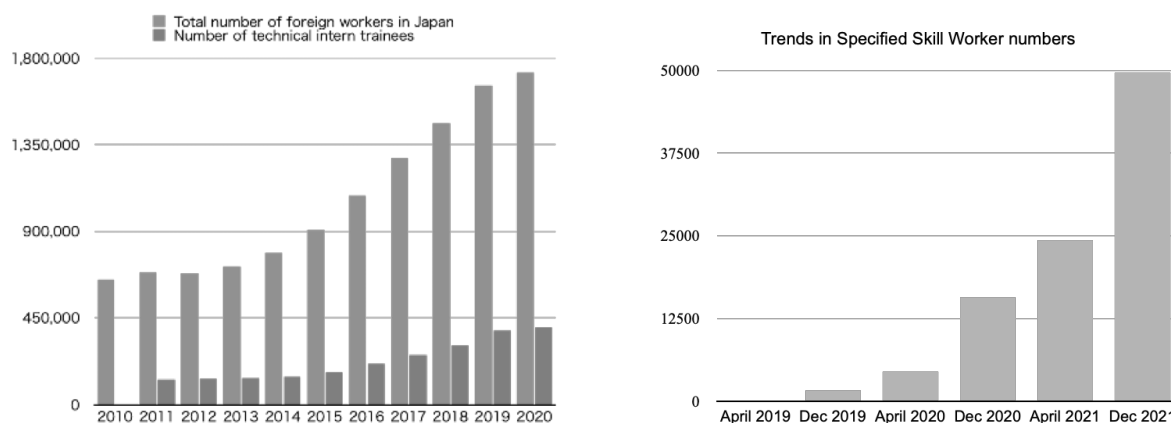
Note. Created by the author using data from *Gaikokujin Koyo Jokyo no Todokede Jokyo Matome (Summary*

of registration of foreign nationals' employment status), Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare, 2020; and

Tokutei Gino Seido no Unyo Jokyo (*Operation Status of Specified Skill Worker System)*, Immigration

Services Agency of Japan, 2022b).

Recent changes to the TITP

There have been two recent developments worthy of note in relation to the TITP. In

November 2021, the Japanese government announced that it is considering a revision of

the specified skill worker (2) visa status, to expand the number of industries where

permanent residency is an option (Kyodo News, 2021). If this becomes an official policy

change and is put into practice, it will mean that specified skill workers in all fourteen

eligible industries will potentially be able to apply for permanent residency should they

succeed in proceeding to the specified skill worker (2) visa. The second development was

an announcement by Japan's Justice Minister (at the time) Yoshihisa Furukawa in July

2022 that the government is planning to review and possibly overhaul the TITP, in

recognition of the disjunct between the program aims and its operation, as well as

widespread human rights abuses, unfair labor practices and other systemic issues (The

Japan Times, 2022, July 29). Such issues have long been recognized by researchers within

and outside of Japan (for example Kamibayashi, 2018; Siu & Koo, 2021), but official

recognition by the government has been rare. Considered in combination with the

shrinking working-age population, continuing labor shortages, and the government's

intention to allow more foreign workers to apply for permanent residency, it seems that the

government is gradually paving the way for a more open and officially recognized

immigration policy.

Research on Technical Trainees to Date

Criticism of the TITP. Since its inception, a large number of significant and

persistent issues have arisen regarding the TITP, and these are the subject of an ever-

growing body of research. Systemic issues include the restrictions placed on the trainees:

they are not permitted to bring family members to Japan, and do not have the freedom to

change their place of employment (Komine, 2018). Exorbitant introduction fees paid to

sending agencies in home countries prior to coming to Japan have meant that many of the

trainees face great debts, effectively prohibiting them from speaking out against

unreasonable and unlawful treatment at work (Ibusuki, 2020). Workplace issues are

numerous. Documents released by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare show that in 2018, there had been infringements of the Labor Standards Act by 5,160 employers of technical intern trainees, a figure that has consistently risen annually. Of this number, working hours infringements accounted for 23.3%, safety standards issues 22.8%, and problems related to overtime payment accounted for 14.8%. Other infringements included issues related to health standards, minimum wage payments, and standards for accommodation (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2018b).

In addition to the issues described above, a common criticism of the program is that the way it functions does not match with the program's original aims. As described above, the stated aim of the TITP is to accept foreign workers for the purpose of technical skills transfer to their home countries. However, a wide range of scholars claim that it has become a *de facto* labor supply network, used to provide under-resourced small-to-medium sized businesses with greatly needed unskilled labor (see for example, Kamibayashi, 2018). It was the recognition of this aspect of the TITP, combined with the pressing need to secure more labor to respond to the country's demographic issues, that were factors leading to the establishment of the new Specified Skill Worker system. Nonetheless, the TITP is still operating in its current form and scholars continue to critique the system. This mismatch between official aims and the reality of program operation is an aspect that the TITP shares with the acceptance of *Nikkeijin* workers in the 1990s: both programs were used as de facto tools to secure flexible blue-collar workers in labor-scarce industries, through a 'back door' that prevented open public debate about the integration of such workers.

Other trends in research topics. In addition to the legal/systemic issues

discussed above, there has also been much TITP-related research on the themes of specific

industry issues and trends (Asato, 2020), trainees' perception and attitudes (Shibuya,

2020), and Japanese language education/communication issues (Makisato, 2019). Many of

these themes are interconnected and the issues discussed often involve a range of complex

factors. A relatively large number of studies have been conducted on specific industry

issues, significantly weighted toward the agriculture and care sectors (Noda & Murakami,

2020; Onaka, 2019). Other research has been conducted on sending country/organization

issues, predominantly about issues related to China and Vietnam, reflecting the two largest

groups of trainees (for example Era, 2018). The amount of research published since 2018

on specific industry issues and trends and trainees' perceptions and attitudes has grown

significantly and seems to reflect the increased public debate on immigration in general

and technical intern trainees in particular, and a growing interest by researchers from a

range of fields pertaining to changes in Japan's social makeup and possible solutions to

labor shortages. This increase has likely been driven by the Revised Immigration Act, as

noted above. Research on social networks, a possible indicator of the social inclusion and

social participation of the trainees, is currently not widely researched. There has also been

little research to date on host society attitudes toward the trainees.

In summary, there is a growing body of rich academic work on various aspects of the

technical intern trainee system and its implementation at the local level. The large number

of papers on issues and initiatives in specific industries and regions indicates that many

local municipalities are gaining valuable and meaningful experience and knowhow in the

actual implementation of the Japanese government's multicultural coexistence policy. In

terms of thematic trends, it is also encouraging to see that research investigating the

perception and attitudes of the trainees themselves is increasing, showing that a significant number of researchers are concerned with the way that the trainees are experiencing their time in Japan. On the other hand, there is a significant vacuum in research on host society sentiment toward the trainees, which is a crucial element of their integration into Japanese society. This is discussed in further detail in the following section.

Migrant Integration and the Role of Public Attitudes

Due to the importance of contextual factors, social integration has proved difficult to define. In traditional immigration nations, integration typically includes migrant employment, education, political participation, health, family reunion and social inclusion, in addition to the possibility of naturalization, and permanent residency (Solano and Huddleston, 2020). The importance of migrant integration has been highlighted in numerous studies, both from the perspective of social cohesion (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007), as well as migrant health and wellbeing (IOM, 2020; Miller et al, 2020; Takenoshita, 2015). Against the backdrop of Japan's labor issues and related social change, the government's lack of a social integration policy for the growing numbers of unskilled foreign workers is concerning. Technical intern trainees, in particular, have been viewed as temporary labor, both in terms of way they are positioned in TITP objectives, as well as from the perspective of receiving industries in Japan. For this reason, little attention has been paid the issue of how the trainees are to adapt to life in Japan in the long term. However, with the possible expansion of the specified skill worker program to open the doors to larger numbers of foreign workers as permanent residents, it is clear that the social integration of these workers needs to be addressed at both the national policy and local implementation levels.

This dissertation focuses on one aspect of social integration: host community sentiment. Research in traditional immigration nations has showed that host community sentiment toward migrants is an important factor for facilitating social integration and creating an attractive immigration destination (Ager & Strang, 2008; Spoonley & Tolley, 2012). The sentiment of the Japanese public toward foreign workers is significant from both a macro and a micro perspective. At the macro level, Japanese government sensitivity to public opinion on immigration has arguably led to its consistent denial of immigration policy, and consequently, its inability to develop a social integration policy (Komine, 2018). This politically sensitive issue clearly has electoral implications, and for this reason public opinion has had a significant impact on public debate (or lack thereof) on immigration and social integration issues. At the micro level, Japanese public feelings toward foreign workers such as technical intern trainees may form the base for discriminatory behavior, racist actions and hate speech. There are fortunately many reports of positive relations with trainees (JITCO n.d.). At the same time, there have also been numerous infringements of labor laws by employers (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2019) and media stories of discriminatory actions by employers and co-workers (Matsumuro, 2022). Incidents in other countries and regions (for example, Healy 2016; Aarons, 2019) have shown that feelings about migrants can materialize as ultranationalist, xenophobic and racist sentiment; there is no guarantee that such social disruption will not occur in Japan.

Surveys and research on public opinion toward immigration using Japan General Social Survey (JGSS) data have consistently indicated that around 60% of the Japanese native population oppose any increase in the number of immigrants accepted into the country (Gentry & Branton, 2019; Green & Kadoya, 2013; Japan Cabinet Office, 2004; Mazumi, 2015, 2016; NHK, 2019; Nukaga, 2006). The fact that the latest labor intake, in the form of

technical intern trainees and specified skill workers, is largely employed in unskilled work is another pertinent factor in Japanese public opinion. The term 'unskilled' is traditionally problematic in Japanese political discourse, reflecting the perceived opposition by the Japanese public to the import of unskilled foreign labor. As noted in **Introduction** (p.1), the government has consistently denied the existence of a policy to accept foreign unskilled labor. To this end, the Revised Immigration Act of 2019 stipulated that those trainees who wish to extend their stay by applying for the specified skill worker visa status may do so only on the condition that they pass designated skills tests, demonstrating proficiency in "skills which need considerable degree of knowledge or experience belonging to a specific industrial field" (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022b). Scholars have noted that this condition has likely been adopted to allow the government to create the impression that 'skilled' workers are being imported, rather than the more politically contentious 'unskilled' group (Oishi, 2020).

Studies in Japan and elsewhere have found that unskilled work and a lower education level are associated with negative attitudes toward migrants (Facchini et al, 2022; Mazumi, 2016; Nagata, 2013; OECD & EU, 2018). It has been suggested that native unskilled workers may have a more heightened sense of threat of labor market competition (LMC) both toward migrants employed in the native's own occupation, and toward unskilled migrants overall (Mellon, 2019). Recent findings also show that natives in unskilled work are more likely to overestimate the number of immigrants in the country and consequently hold more negative attitudes toward migrants (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2020). In this way, the fact that growing numbers of foreign technical intern trainees are being employed in unskilled work may have important implications in terms of social cohesion in a country that has long viewed itself as culturally and ethnically homogenous.

Issues Addressed by This Study

There are three aspects of Japan's current situation that are potentially problematic, given what we have learned from immigration-related issues in other countries and regions.

Possible Emergence of Competitive Threat

The first is the potential impact of economic factors on public attitudes toward migrants. It has been reported that native populations will tend to see migrants as a greater threat during times of economic recession, both in terms of cultural and national values, and in the more immediate arena of jobs (Heizmann & Huth, 2021). While Japanese unemployment rates are relatively low, recent government surveys have found that income levels for people in Japan aged from their thirties to their fifties are lower today than they were thirty years ago, by over 1 million yen per year ('Sanjudai nakaba,' 2022). The government's huge financial outlays for measures related to the coronavirus pandemic may also be creating a sense of unease. In political terms, too, it has been observed outside of Japan that the acceptance of large numbers of unskilled migrants can lead to anti-migrant sentiment in the form of nationalism by the sections of the native population that experience the largest inflow of such migrants (Mayda et al, 2022). As Japan's foreign worker population grows, research is needed on what kind of impact the country's economic issues are having on the mindset of Japanese people toward foreign workers and residents.

Lack of Comprehensive Integration Policies

The second concerning aspect of the current situation is the current lack of national political support for the integration of migrants in Japan. The development of related policies has been indicated as a crucial condition for the successful integration of foreign nationals. In the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) 2020 (Solano and Huddleston, 2020), Japan is labeled as an 'immigration without integration' nation. In other words, the fact that Japan denies that it accepts immigrants means that such migrants to Japan are not supported by policies or legislation. MIPEX notes that this situation potentially leads to migrants being viewed as 'subordinates and not neighbors' by the general public. It is also important to note that Japan scores particularly unfavorably for anti-discrimination policies, falling to the bottom three out of the 56 nations surveyed (Solano and Huddleston, 2020). The Japanese government does encourage the treatment of foreign residents as fellow community members (*seikatsusha*) (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2021a); however, such terminology is not necessarily being backed up by concrete integration policies and related legislation. An open and official policy of social integration based on thorough public debate of the related issues is urgently needed, both to secure the rights of foreign workers and to adjust the mindset of the general public. As a first step, it is crucial to explore and understand the public mindset toward foreign workers during this critical time, in order to be able to develop integration policies at both the national and local levels.

Cultural Impact of Increased Immigration

This leads to the third salient point in relation to the acceptance of larger numbers of foreign workers: the question of Japan's national identity. Despite a long history of acceptance of foreign residents in Japan, de facto assimilationist policies toward migrants have helped to create a cultural mindset that differentiates the country from more prominently multicultural societies abroad, such as the United States, Canada and Australia (Morita, 2014). Japan has been viewed as a closed, insular country that strives to protect its homogeneous culture (Komine, 2018; Oishi, 2020). The relatively small size of the foreign population in Japan has undoubtedly also contributed to the maintenance of this self-image: Japan's intake of migrants has been significantly lower than the levels seen in most other advanced nations. Immigration has not been used proactively for nation-building and given Japan's background, it is not unreasonable to say that the notion of Japan as a multicultural society is not yet part of the national cultural mindset. Encouragingly, much effort is being made at the local government level to encourage intercultural understanding and acceptance of foreign residents and cultures (for example, Miyagi International Association n.d.). At the macro level, the impact of growing numbers of trainees and other foreign workers settling in communities remains to be seen. Government estimates indicate that by 2065, 12% of the population will be foreign-born (Ministry of Land Infrastructure Transport and Tourism, 2019). As acceptance of technical intern trainees and specified skill workers continues to rise, there may be a need to revisit traditional conceptualizations of nationhood, lifestyle, and identity, as growing numbers of communities become inevitably more multicultural. It is necessary to understand how cultural changes brought by migrants are understood and accepted by receiving communities.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter positioned the technical intern trainees within the trajectory of foreign worker migration in Japan and identified the problem that this research addresses: that there is a lack of knowledge on how Japanese workers in unskilled jobs feel about and relate to their foreign co-workers, and that this lack of knowledge may adversely impact the social integration of such foreign workers as their number continues to grow. The issue is a complex one with multiple salient factors. Amidst this complexity, the conceptual and theoretical framework described in this chapter is used to clarify the focus of this study. In keeping with the interpretivist approach used in this research, theory is viewed as a lens through which we may hope to make sense of the world as we observe and experience it (Coe et al, 2017). In other words, the models used to form the theoretical framework here are seen not as theories to be tested or proven, but rather as tools through which to interpret the phenomena observed and the data gathered. In the case of this study, the subject of observation is intercultural relations at blue-collar work sites in a rural area of northern Japan.

Intercultural workplace relations have been the subject of research from various perspectives, including linguistic (Byram et al, 2013), business management (Holtbrugge, 2022), conflict resolution (Brett, 2018), identity (Martin & Nakayama, 2015), and intercultural effectiveness (Pedersen, 2010). In other words, scholars have identified a number of factors that are seen as important in attempting to understand the nature of such relations. By contrast, there is a lack of research (particularly in Japan) on intercultural contact in unskilled workplaces, and the impact that such contact may have on attitudes and expectations of migrants. The current research positions contact between Japanese and non-Japanese workers as a key element in the development of sentiment and adopts a

combination of theories on intercultural contact, acculturation expectations, and intercultural competence to examine the relational and attitudinal aspects of intercultural workplaces. The models used here were selected for their relevance to understanding the issue at hand and providing answers to the research questions.

The framework described in this chapter offers a form of 'scaffolding' to address the research questions. The aim is to provide both a conceptual foundation to clarify the main focus of the study, as well as a theory-based guide to facilitate the analysis of the data collected. The framework has also been designed to clarify how this research is positioned in the field and serves to illuminate the contributions of the study to prior research. In this chapter I first provide a review of the three models that comprise this framework – Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Hypothesis, Bourhis at al's (1997) Interactive Acculturation Model, and Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence - and then describe how they have been combined to form the framework for this research. The chapter reviews key findings on each of the three models used, their strengths and limitations vis-à-vis this research project, and the rationale for their selection. I conclude with a visual depiction of the framework.

Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

This study is premised on the idea that meaningful contact between people belonging to different groups is a significant factor in the formation of sentiment toward members of the other group. The significance of intercultural contact is derived from Allport's Intergroup Contact Hypothesis (1954) (also commonly referred to as 'contact theory'), a model from the field of psychology, which proposes that contact between two groups under certain conditions may potentially reduce prejudice toward members of the other group. The

'groups' in Allport's original hypothesis were the white majority and black minority groups in the United States of the 1950s. The two groups in this study are Japanese workers and foreign technical intern trainees employed in the seafood processing industry in a rural area of northern Japan; in the same way as majority and minority groups, the two groups in this study are defined by the differing cultural backgrounds of their members. The conditions posited by Allport for intergroup contact to produce favorable relational outcomes are that the groups are of equal status; they are required to cooperate; they share a common goal or objective; and they enjoy support from authority or an overseeing body (Allport, 1954).

Allport's hypothesis has been applied and investigated with positive results in various fields (Pettigrew, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Wagner et al, 2008), including a growing body of research on the benefits of extended and indirect contact (Vezzali & Stathi, 2017). The social and political climate at the time of Allport's hypothesis led him to believe that without the presence of the stipulated four conditions, contact between different groups could lead to the worsening of prejudicial attitudes. However, research suggests that the conditions identified by Allport did not necessarily need to be present for outcomes to be favorable (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), finding that positive contact generally leads to the reduction of prejudice and that Allport's conditions 'augment its beneficial effects' (Dixon, 2017; p.174).

The theory has also been critiqued. Koike and Sakai (2010) reviewed a broad range of attempts to verify the theory and found that while much research suggests intergroup contact has a positive impact on prejudicial attitudes, in some cases no benefits were found, and in others results were significantly impacted by the measurement indicators used. Scholars have also noted that the designation of 'in-group' may be ambiguous, given

the possibility of multiple affiliations and fluidity of group identity (Dovidio et al, 2005). Others argue that the effect of prejudice reduction is to weaken participants' motivation to join collective action for social change, a contention that is still debated (Dixon, 2017). Graf and Paolini (2017) call for scholars to redress the lack of attention to negative intergroup contact in the literature. They say that there has been a predominant focus on the positive effects of intergroup contact, at the expense of further insights into contact that results in negative consequences. Their study of five Central European countries used methods that succeeded in identifying more instances of negative contact than reported in prior research. They did conclude, however, that positive contact experiences generally outnumber negative contact experiences, upholding the findings from meta-analyses of contact theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

In summary, contact theory has been widely cited as valid. It is used in this study as a conceptual foundation for the significance of contact between Japanese workers and their foreign technical trainee co-workers. Three of the conditions recommended in Allport's hypothesis - the existence of common goals, the need to cooperate, and support from authority - are interpreted here as conditions that translate to the working environment observed in the companies studied. It should be noted that the remaining condition of equal status between group members is not applicable in the case of the Japanese management members and is inconclusive in the case of the Japanese and foreign trainee workers. Following is a review of major findings in research on intergroup contact in the workplace, and an explanation of the significance of the use of contact theory in the current research.

Contact Theory in the Workplace: Key Findings

A major finding of the vast body of research on contact theory to date is that cross-group friendships play a particularly important role in the development of positive intergroup relations (Pettigrew et al, 2011). Consequently, a significant number of studies have focused on the nature of such friendships and how they develop. Intercultural relationships within the workplace may form an initial stage of that process. While the vast majority (94% of 515 studies, according to Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) have found that greater contact is associated with reduced prejudice, studies investigating the impact of contact in the workplace have produced inconsistent results. On the one hand, it has been found that increased intercultural contact in the workplace may lead to more welcoming attitudes toward migrants in general, supporting the contact hypothesis (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). On the other hand, Stephan and Stephan's (2000) integrated threat theory proposes that higher numbers of foreign workers may cause heightened feelings of anxiety and threat toward members of the outgroup, leading to more prejudicial and negative attitudes toward migrants and opposition to increased immigration. In other words, integrated threat theory posits that fear will lead to prejudice towards outgroup members. Stephan and Stephan propose four types of threat: realistic threats (threats to health or material wellbeing), symbolic threats (perceived threats to traditional values and beliefs), intergroup anxiety (discomfort and fear toward the outgroup), and negative stereotypes (negative expectations of outgroup behavior) (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

A large body of research has compared the effects of contact with the competitive threat model (Gentry & Branton, 2019). For instance, Abrams and Eller (2017) examine the intersection of intergroup contact and intergroup threat in their proposal of a new model to understand the effects of both. Focusing on the dynamic nature of attitude development,

they argue that the temporal context must be considered to understand and counter the effects of contact and threat on the development of prejudicial attitudes. Pecoraro and Ruedin (2020) conducted a quantitative study in Switzerland on the correlation between exposure to foreigners in the workplace and attitudes toward foreigners. They focused on competitive threat theory, assuming that foreign workers will be perceived negatively by native workers in cases where their skills are substitutable. The findings of their study showed that attitudes toward foreigners did become more negative when the number of foreign workers in the workplace increased, indicating that threat was felt. However, native workers not at risk of unemployment showed more positive attitudes toward foreign workers, implying that foreign workers are a welcome presence during labor shortages. The mixed results of Pecoraro and Ruedin's study reflect the complexity of sentiment toward foreign labor influx into the labor market and the inconclusive impact of occupational contact. Lefringhausen et al (2020) conducted a quantitative study on the role of personal characteristics (self-protection and growth) in the interplay between positive intergroup contact and negatively-perceived intergroup threat. Using a combination of contact hypothesis, integrated threat theory, and acculturation models, they recommend further studies on negative experiences resulting from involuntary intergroup contact, and research on interventions to improve the outcomes of such contact.

Turning to Japan, the number of studies adopting contact theory is relatively small compared with other regions. As Nishioka (2022) notes, while there is some prior research using contact theory to examine university initiatives or interaction with foreign students, research outside of the field of education is limited. This may be a reflection of the relative lack of contact to date between native and foreign residents in Japan: in other words, it is more difficult to obtain significant data compared to other regions where there are more

intercultural contact opportunities on a day-to-day basis. The International Labour

Organization (ILO) reported on the results of its 2019 study comparing attitudes toward

migrant workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (ILO, 2019). The study

found that frequency of interaction with migrant workers was significantly lower in Japan

than in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, with 53% of Japanese respondents saying that

they have no interaction with migrant workers, compared with 5% in Malaysia, 8% in

Singapore, and 11% in Thailand.

Against this backdrop, a number of scholars in Japan have examined contact theory in

the limited Japanese context. Large-scale survey data has been used to examine the

interplay between competitive threat and contact theories of attitude development, with

mixed results. Asada's study of Brazilian workers indicated that the way foreign workers

interact with each other in the workplace can lead to misunderstandings and the formation

of a negative image of those workers, proposing that the contact theory has limitations in

such settings (Asada, 2000). Nukaga (2006) conducted a quantitative inquiry into the effect

of education on xenophobia, concluding that the effect is more attributable to contact

theory than competitive threat theory. Nagayoshi (2008, 2017) has also conducted

extensive quantitative studies on possible causes of xenophobia, exploring both contact

theory and competitive threat theory. She finds that contact theory is supported even in

cases where contact is superficial; and that while contact theory can be used to explain

xenophobia as a phenomenon, it cannot be used to explain the rise in xenophobia seen in

recent years. Gentry & Branton (2019) produced mixed results on the correlation between

increased contact and support for immigration. They found that while contact with foreign

residents did lead to support for more immigration, such support diminished in the

prefectures where the foreign population was larger. They suggest that the intergroup contact and threat theories may function in a complementary way.

Mazumi (2016) also compared contact theory with competitive threat theory, finding that while workplace contact generally leads to positive attitudes toward immigration, competitive threat theory is supported for unskilled workers, who had more negative attitudes toward migrants. This is corroborated by findings elsewhere that suggest that labor market competition may be a heightened threat among native unskilled workers, both toward migrants employed in the native's own occupation, and toward unskilled migrants overall (Mellon, 2019). On the other hand, Nagata failed to find a correlation between lower-paid jobs and xenophobic feelings (Nagata, 2013). In summary, as seen elsewhere, in Japan the findings on contact and competitive threat are mixed. They reflect the complex interplay of factors involved in intercultural contact between co-workers who may also be rivals for jobs. As noted in the second chapter, Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees, and Migrant Integration (*Possible emergence of competitive threat*), this balance between the benefits of intercultural contact in the workplace and the development of negative feelings of competitive threat toward the foreign trainee co-workers is positioned as a key theme in this research. It is explored in greater detail in Discussion.

Rationale and Significance of Contact Theory for This Study

Much of the research looking at the effects of intercultural contact to date has been conducted in experimental settings. Scholars have noted that there has been a lack of contact theory studies in real-world situations to examine the impact of intergroup contact in a variety of contexts (Palluck & Green, 2009; Vezzali & Stathi, 2017). Dixon (2017)

calls for more studies conducted in everyday settings where contact may not necessarily be a positive experience, to move away from 'a somewhat idealistic and at times self-congratulatory narrative in the recent literature' (Dixon, 2017; p.178). This echoes critiques of a positivity bias in contact theory research, by Asada (2000) and Graf & Paolini (2017), among others. Additionally, many of the studies described above were conducted using quantitative methods; as a result, there is a lack of rich, qualitative data on the impact of contact on individuals. Park et al (2022) call for more in-depth, individual-level studies on intercultural contact in the Japanese context to better understand how the majority population is addressing multiculturalism.

The current research does not aim to verify or test the contact theory; nonetheless, using contact theory as the conceptual framework for this research, I hope to make a preliminary contribution to address the lack of studies in real-world contexts. The participants in the current research have found themselves in an intercultural environment for reasons outside of their control: they have not chosen to participate in intercultural interactions, but nonetheless are required to do so. In other words, the study is conducted in a 'natural' setting that scholars have claimed is lacking in contact theory research. The data gathered here thus offers a small but valuable glimpse of intercultural contact as it is experienced by many Japanese citizens in similar situations. The qualitative nature of this inquiry adds to its value in the field of contact theory-based research.

A second reason for the significance of the contact theory in the current research lies in the nature of the workplaces being examined. The sites of this research are predominantly unskilled workplaces. Most of the workers interviewed have not undertaken higher education. This implies that they have not had opportunities to learn about or experience foreign cultures through university education, on-campus interaction opportunities, or

study abroad. In global terms, Japan has a relatively small number of foreign residents, at around 2% of the population compared with 18% in Italy and 23% in the United States, for example (Ministry of Land Infrastructure Transport and Tourism, 2019). Combined with the Japanese government's restrictive immigration policies, this means that Japanese citizens have had considerably fewer intercultural contact opportunities than people in other nations. However, amidst the native population shrinkage and the concomitant social change of recent years, an increasingly large number of Japanese people employed in unskilled jobs are finding themselves working alongside foreign workers. The experiences at such workplaces offer a valuable opportunity to examine and understand the impact of such contact on the attitudes and behavior of members of the host community. It is also important to note that competitive threat toward migrants has been observed among blue-collar workers with low education levels (Facchini et al, 2022; Mazumi 2016; Melon, 2019; Nagata 2013; OECD & EU 2018).

Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM)

The focus of this research is the attitudes and sentiment of majority-group members in Japan when they experience intercultural contact with their foreign co-workers. Bourhis et al's (1997) Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) was selected as a tool for understanding one aspect of such sentiment: that is, the expectations that the Japanese participants hold toward their foreign trainee co-workers as the latter navigate life in Japan. Acculturation was originally defined as 'those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups' (Redfield et al, 1936, p.149). Adaptation to the host culture was seen as a unilateral process undertaken by immigrants,

ultimately resulting in their assimilation into the host society. This understanding of

acculturation changed with Berry's bidimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997),

which posited that the host society may also be impacted by the presence of immigrants.

Refining and extending Berry's model, the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM)

developed by Bourhis et al (1997) introduced the concept of adoption of the host culture by

immigrants. This constitutes one of the major differences between the two models: while

Berry's model addresses the maintenance of immigrants' culture and the extent of their

expected contact with majority-group members, Bourhis at al's IAM looks instead at the

extent to which immigrants are expected to adopt the host culture (Van Acker &

Vanbeseleare, 2011). Bourhis et al also recognized the role played by state policies,

identifying five possible ideologies: pluralist, civic, assimilationist, ethnist, and nativist.

Japan is categorized as an ethnist ideology state, signifying that ethnicity is the defining

and excluding feature when determining who may be citizens of the state (Bourhis et al,

2010). Above all, the IAM recognizes the interplay between immigrant acculturation

preferences and host community acculturation expectations. It proposes that different

combinations of the two will lead to either consensual, problematic, or conflictual relations

between immigrants and host society members.

Figure 5 depicts the IAM, showing migrant acculturation preferences on the left and

host community preferences for migrant acculturation on the right.

Figure 5

Key elements of the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM)

| Migrant acculturation preferences | ←————→ | Host community preferences for migrant acculturation |

| Integration
Assimilation
Separation
Anomie
Individualism | Combinations may lead to **consensual**, **problematic** or **conflictual** relations | Integration
Assimilation
Segregation
Exclusion
Individualism |
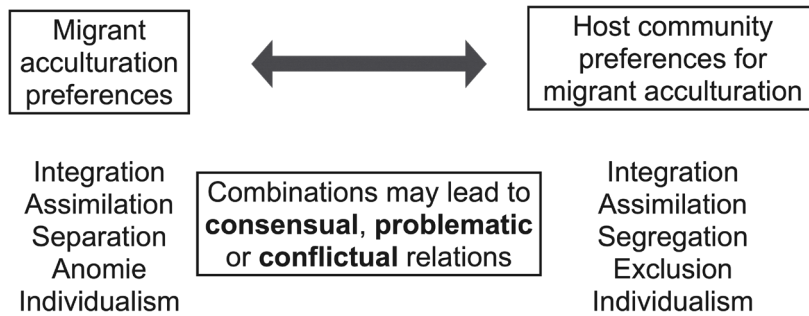
Note. Adapted from Bourhis et al (1997).

Table 2

Definitions of host community preferences for migrant acculturation proposed by Bourhis

et al (2010)

Integration	Accept that immigrants maintain parts of their own culture and adopt key aspects of host community culture; value stable biculturalism/bilingualism.
Assimilation	Expect that immigrants will give up their linguistic and cultural identity to adopt the host community's language and culture; traditional concept of absorption of immigrants.
Segregation	Accept that immigrants maintain their own culture as long as they do not 'contaminate' the host culture; prefer no intergroup contact.
Exclusion	Reject the right of immigrants to adopt host community culture or. maintain their own culture and customs; believe that integration of immigrant culture with host culture is impossible.
Individualism	Reject group categories such as 'immigrants' or 'host community'; interact with immigrants based on personal qualities and individual achievements.

Note. Adapted from Bourhis et al (2010).

The host community preferences (integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion, and individualism) defined in Table 2 are explored in the current research. The *integration* and *individualism* preferences are generally said to signify a welcoming stance toward immigrants, while the *assimilation*, *segregation* and *exclusion* orientations are thought to be non-welcoming. The purpose of using the IAM in this study is to explore whether

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participants' attitudes to migrants are generally welcoming or otherwise, and to gain some

understanding of how they expect migrants to adapt to life in Japan.

Host Society Acculturation Expectations Using IAM: Key Findings

Most acculturation research to date has focused on the acculturation orientations of

immigrants, focusing on two aspects: (1) to what extent do they wish to maintain their own

culture and identity and (2) to what extent do they wish to adopt the host culture (Bourhis

et al, 1997). It has been found that immigrants typically choose *integration* as their

strategy. This signifies that they aim to maintain their own culture while at the same time

seeking contact with and adopting parts of other cultures including the host culture

(Haugen & Kunst, 2017). However, despite the fact that classic acculturation models

dating from Berry (1997) have been conceptualized as bidimensional models, there has

been relatively little researcher attention on host society members.

One area that has been investigated over the past two decades is the acculturation

expectations of host society members toward immigrants. For example, Montreuil et al

(2004) found that integration and individualism were the migrant acculturation orientations

most strongly favored by majority-group undergraduate students in Quebec and Belgium,

but that the same participants favored the non-welcoming orientations of assimilation,

segregation and exclusionism for immigrants seen as belonging to 'devalued' immigrant

groups. Taking a different perspective, Maisonneuve & Teste (2007) looked at how the

impressions of immigrants on French university students are affected by what the French

students perceived to be the acculturation strategies of the immigrants. Their quantitative

studies found that the French students preferred the strategies of integration and

assimilation, the latter an expected result given the assimilation policy in France. Berry

(2006) used the lens of multicultural ideology to review past studies looking at the acculturation expectations of majority-group members toward immigrants in Canada, finding an overwhelming majority endorsing the integration orientation. Conversely, Grigoryev & Vijver's (2018) study on the acculturation expectations held by the Russian majority found far greater heterogeneity in responses, with an almost equal number of respondents choosing the integration orientation as those who selected assimilation. More recently, intercultural psychology scholars are starting to explore the impact that the presence of immigrants has on host society members. In other words, majority-group acculturation is also developing as a field of research. As noted by Haugen & Kunst (2017) in their study of majority members' acculturation in Norway, "studying acculturation from the viewpoint of majority members is an entirely new field and we still do not know much about their experiences" (Haugen & Kunst, 2017; p.68). Lefringhausen & Marshall (2016) propose the Locals Bidimensional Acculturation Model (LBAM) to investigate how host society members may maintain their host culture while at the same time adapting to other cultures present in the community. Kunst et al (2021) also explore the majority-group perspective, arguing for 'mutual acculturation' to achieve more harmonious intergroup relations as societies find themselves home to more diverse cultures. Park et al (2022) argue that understanding the acculturation attitudes of majority-group members is just as important as the acculturation of immigrants, as both dominant and minority groups are experiencing intercultural situations together.

Given that acculturation is said to take place when members of different cultures interact, the model has a strong conceptual connection with contact theory. Unsurprisingly, there is a significant body of research exploring the intersection between these two models. Van Acker & Vanbeseleare (2011), for instance, used the concepts of acculturation and

contact to investigate the acculturation expectations of majority-group high school students in Belgium toward Turkish immigrants. They found that positive contact experiences and the perception that Turkish immigrants are willing to participate in intergroup contact were associated with a more positive view of the immigrants and lower demand for the immigrants to adopt the host culture. In their extensive study of acculturation and intergroup relations, Brown & Zagefka (2011) explore the question of how acculturation preferences impact contact experiences, and vice-versa. They review multiple studies on the interplay between acculturation preferences of minority-group members, the expectations of majority-group members, and intergroup contact between the two. Their findings indicate that there is a mutual influence between intergroup contact and acculturation preferences, and that intergroup contact is generally associated with the *integration* orientation: that it, greater desire for maintenance of immigrant culture and further contact with immigrants. Brown is at the forefront of the contact-acculturation field, contributing to a significant body of work exploring the connection between the two models and their implications (see also Abu-Rayya & Brown, 2021; Gonzalez & Brown, 2017; Matera et al, 2011). More recently, Te Lindert et al (2021) conducted a study on four immigrant groups in the Netherlands, finding that frequent intergroup contact had a positive effect on both the adoption of the host culture and the maintenance of immigrant culture, signifying the *integration* acculturation orientation.

Turning to Japan, acculturation research to date has mainly examined the acculturation strategies of foreign residents, with very little knowledge on majority group acculturation expectations toward the growing foreign population. One of the earliest studies adopting the acculturation model was conducted by Inoue and Ito (1993), who used Berry's model to identify adjustment issues experienced by 316 foreign residents in Tokyo. Other studies

have investigated the acculturation orientations of foreign residents from Myanmar (Sumlut & Isozaki, 2021); Korea (Lee & Tanaka, 2018); the Philippines (Maeda, 2018); and China (Jiang et al, 2017). Komisarof (2009, 2018) proposed a new framework for acculturation in the workplace that focused on the concept of 'belonging'. His study of Japanese and American co-workers working in white-collar Japanese organizations looked at how the perception of belonging to a cultural out-group impacted occupational intercultural relations and work. His 2018 study was unique in that it captured the perceptions of both Japanese and American counterparts as 'acculturating' members of an intercultural workplace, and also addressed the existence of 'native-like' members of both groups.

A recent study by Park et al (2022) calling for more research on Japanese people's views on immigrant acculturation is most relevant to the current research. Park et al use Berry's three hypotheses on intercultural relations – the multiculturalism hypothesis, the contact hypothesis and the integration hypothesis – to investigate the role of national identity in the acculturation expectations of 210 Japanese adults. Relevant to the current research, they posited that there would be greater support for multiculturalism (*integration* or *individualism* acculturation orientations) among participants who had more frequent intercultural contact. Among other results, this quantitative survey found that contact had no impact on the extent of support for multiculturalism; however, it was recognized that the questions on contact may have been inadequate, as the participants were only asked about the number of foreign friends and frequency of meeting with them. They call for further qualitative, in-depth studies to provide a more complete picture of the impact of contact on intercultural relations and acculturation expectations in the Japanese context.

Acculturation research also has its critics. Scholars working in mature multicultural societies claim that current acculturation models do not capture the complexity of some multicultural environments and need to be further refined to be useful for different domains and local contexts (Doucerain et al, 2013). Others state that the common acculturation models focus on strategies alone, neglecting any exploration of how such strategies may be linked to behavior. Navas et al (2005), for example, distinguish between acculturation strategies adopted as an ideal and those implemented in reality, also further extending previous acculturation models by differentiating between domains. One of the more recent criticisms of acculturation research is that it has tended to focus predominantly on the acculturation of immigrants. This may lead to the misapprehension that minority group members are the only ones required to change and are therefore solely responsible when issues arise (Haugen & Kunst, 2017). This may be unfortunately reinforced by studies on the acculturation expectations of majority-group members toward immigrants, as the onus for adapting to intercultural situations once again seems to be placed on immigrants. As noted above, although a growing number of studies are being conducted on how majority-group members are affected by and adapt to intercultural relations, such studies are still far outnumbered by research on acculturation by immigrants.

Rationale and Significance of IAM for This Study

One of the main reasons that the IAM was judged useful for this research was its focus on culture and the fact that it looks at majority-group members' expectations toward immigrants and how they adapt to the host culture. In the second chapter I reviewed prior research on host attitudes toward migrants in Japan, noting the important role of both cultural concerns and economic pressures. Japan's population is known to be relatively

homogeneous. Although the number of foreign residents has grown to over 2.8 million people (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2021a), this level is low compared to other advanced nations. Consequently, the presence of people of different cultural backgrounds is still a relatively new phenomenon in Japan. In the rural areas where many technical trainees work and live, the trainees are the first foreign nationals to move into the community. From this perspective, scholars have suggested that cultural threat, rather than economic threat that is seen in other traditional immigration nations, may be an important focus for investigations on host society sentiment towards foreign residents and workers in Japan (Kage et al, 2021).

When considering how to use the IAM in this research, the maturity and experience of Japan as an immigration nation was a key concern. The research participants are working in a community that has had very little contact with people of different cultural backgrounds prior to the arrival of the technical trainees. Although there was an influx of foreign volunteers at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, their presence was temporary and short-term. Additionally, most of the participants in the current research have had little contact with foreign residents in their daily life outside of work. There were concerns that the concepts used in the IAM may be unfamiliar and unclear. For these reasons, various methods were considered for the IAM-based questionnaire to be conducted prior to the interviews, including providing a pictorial depiction of the questions, to ensure that the participants clearly understood the situations that were being described. However, it was decided that the ability or inability of participants to envisage the settlement of foreign nationals, and how settlement might impact the community, would itself be an important finding of the research. The questionnaire was therefore

designed using the same wording and concepts as used in IAM-based surveys conducted in prior research elsewhere (Montreuil et al, 2004).

With an understanding of the strengths and limitations of acculturation theory noted above, the IAM is judged to be useful and appropriate for use in the current research. It is important to note that the aim of this research is not to test the IAM as has been the case in numerous quantitative studies elsewhere. Rather, the IAM is used as a lens through which to try to interpret and understand the attitudes of the Japanese participants toward their foreign trainee co-workers. As reviewed above, there is little acculturation research conducted in Japan to date and as far as the researcher knows, no studies looking at the acculturation expectations of Japanese workers toward their technical trainee co-workers. It is hoped that this qualitative study will provide a preliminary glimpse into the potential for further in-depth studies in this field in the future.

Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

To answer the research questions in this study, it was necessary to identify a theory that could form the basis for an analysis of the participants' attitudes toward their foreign technical trainee co-workers at the individual level. In other words, while the Interactive Acculturation Model is used to analyze the participants' expectations of the trainees (RQ3), a different model was required to attempt to understand the feelings toward the trainees (RQ1). Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence was selected for this purpose. As with the other theories that comprise the theoretical framework for this research, Deardorff's model is used to provide conceptual scaffolding through which to understand the attitudes of the research participants and answer the research questions.

Intercultural competence has been the subject of studies in various countries and regions for at least fifty years, much from the Western perspective (Deardorff, 2009). Despite the decades of research in this field, however, there is still debate amongst scholars on the following areas: (1) what are the core elements that comprise intercultural competence, (2) how does intercultural competence function and what kind of psychographic and demographic factors influence its development, and (3) how can intercultural competence be measured? In other words, how is it expressed in real-world situations? (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009). Reflecting this disparity of opinion, a large number of different terms are used to refer to the concept, such as global competence, intercultural understanding, and cross-cultural awareness, among others (Dalib et al, 2014).

Numerous models have been proposed to express various aspects of intercultural competence: what it is comprised of, how it functions, and how it develops among individuals. Spitzberg & Changnon (2009) broadly categorize intercultural competence models into five different types (Table 3).

Table 3

Intercultural competence models

Model type	Characteristics	Examples
Compositional	Describe components of competence, without proposing connections between components	Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (2006)
Co-orientational	Focus on the communication process, and how understanding is achieved in intercultural interactions	Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (1997)
Developmental	Assume that intercultural interactions and relationships are dynamic and change over time	Bennett's Developmental Intercultural Competence Model (1986)
Adaptational	Focus on the process of adaptation thought to occur through intercultural interactions, including acculturation	Navas et al's (2005) Relative Acculturation Extended Model
Causal path	Propose a linear process defining antecedent and other influencing factors, leading to outcomes	Ting-Toomey's Multilevel Process Change Model of Intercultural Competence (1999)

Note. Adapted from Spitzberg & Changnon (2009).

Compositional models take the form of lists of the individual characteristics, traits or skills that are deemed to make up intercultural competence. Such models are not designed to examine how the listed traits or skills function or interact with one another. Co-orientational models, on the other hand, have a greater focus on the process of communication and the formation of shared meaning between communication interactants. Developmental models, such as Bennet's (1986) well-known Developmental Intercultural Competence Model, conceptualize the development of intercultural competence in the form of chronological stages through which a person progresses or matures to reach competence. Adaptational models differ in that they are premised on the concept of mutual adjustment among multiple communication participants, and the process of adaptation that occurs for each. Finally, causal path models aim to identify specific factors that influence and moderate the production of outcomes, in a theoretically linear system of communication competence development (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Scholars have generally reached consensus on the existence of three elements comprising intercultural competence: attitudes/motivations, knowledge, and skills; in other words, affective, cognitive, and behavioral factors (Holtbrugge, 2022). It is also widely accepted that there are degrees of intercultural competence, and that it progresses in stages, as indicated by Bennett's model (1986). Deardorff's well-known compositional model moves from 'Requisite Attitudes' at the bottom, through 'Knowledge & Comprehension' and 'Skills', to 'Desired Internal Outcome' and finally 'Desired External Outcome' at the top (Figure 6). Although this is not a developmental model per se, Deardorff posits that the degree of an individual's intercultural competence is decided based on the degree that each level is acquired. In other words, each level forms a prerequisite layer for the development of the next level. Following this logic, 'Requisite Attitudes', situated at the lowest level of

the model, are seen as the foundation for the subsequent acquisition of knowledge and

skills required for intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

Figure 6

Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence
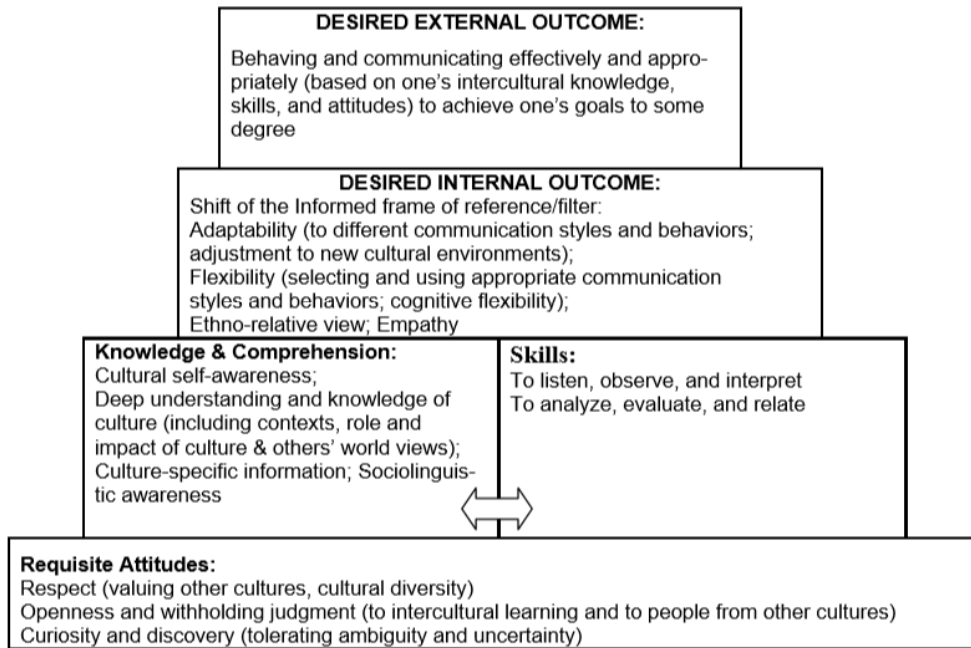
Note. Reproduced with permission from Deardorff, 2006. Copyright 2006 by D.K. Deardorff.

As the current research does not aim to assess the intercultural competence of the

participants, it was deemed that a compositional model such as Deardorff's is appropriate

as a conceptual and analytical framework to understand the sentiment of the Japanese

participants as they engage with their foreign trainee co-workers. Consequently, the

attitudes of 'Respect', 'Openness and withholding judgment', and 'Curiosity and

discovery' in Deardorff's model are used to guide the analysis of data gathered in this

study, as described in greater detail in **Research Approach and Methods** (p.66).

Following is a review of salient prior research on intercultural competence in the workplace, the closest field to the current research.

Intercultural Competence in the Workplace: Key Findings

Importantly for the current study, there is a general consensus amongst scholars on the *relevance* of intercultural competence in the workplace. For this reason, intercultural workplace relations and the competencies required to succeed in intercultural relations at work have been the subject of a significant body of research (Holtbrugge, 2022). Frequent intercultural interaction has long been known as "the reality of the 21st-century workforce" (Deardorff, 2009; p.xii). Japan is no exception as its society becomes more culturally diverse.

Prior studies on intercultural competence in occupational settings have predominantly focused on white-collar workplaces (Holtbrugge, 2022). In both Japan and elsewhere it seems that efforts toward understanding, developing, and attempting to measure intercultural competence have primarily taken place in higher education institutions and white-collar organizations. Understandably, there is a strong link made between higher education, study abroad opportunities, and the development of the attitudes, knowledge, and skills said to comprise intercultural competence. Goncalves (2020) surmises that the traditional bias toward white-collar work sites by researchers may be due to methodological issues; the relative difficulty of establishing contacts and networks at blue-collar sites; the fact that much blue-collar work is performed 'behind the scenes'; and/or the typically poor conditions of many blue-collar work sites: '*noise*, *dirt* and *discomfort'* (Goncalves, 2020; p.331). It should be noted that such issues were encountered in the current research, lending credence to Goncalves' claims.

The studies that have examined blue-collar sites have most often focused on communication and linguistic competencies. For example, Theodoropoulou (2020) used ethnographic methods to analyze the communicative practices in multilingual construction sites in Qatar, examining the interaction patterns of Western and Indian construction workers. Several studies have been conducted in multilingual, blue-collar work sites, looking at the communication practices, language study methods, language choice, and language proficiency of blue-collar workers in various settings (Goncalves, 2020). Communication practices and challenges in multicultural blue-collar work sites are also the subject of Goncalves and Kelly-Holmes' (2021) compilation of studies conducted in various countries and diverse work sites, including mining in Lapland, manufacturing in Saipan, and care work in Japan.

Turning to Japan, the intercultural competence field has been dominated by research on the development and assessment of intercultural competence among university students, reflecting the Japanese government's push to develop 'global human resources' and generally externally facing approach to the education of its citizens (MEXT, 2021). While the government has long grappled with the two issues of the shrinking population and the need to develop globally minded citizens, there is a contradiction in the measures proposed to address these challenges. On the one hand, universities are positioned as 'Centers of Community' (MEXT, 2021; p.161) that work with local governments and community organizations to solve regional issues. On the other hand, the skills development of university students is externally focused: study abroad and greater intake of international students are offered as the solution for the development of Japanese students' skills as 'global human resources' (MEXT, 2021). The development of intercultural competence that is suited to living and working in Japan's increasingly multicultural society is not

positioned as a priority in Ministry of Education policies and is underrepresented in intercultural competence studies.

Against this backdrop, research on intercultural interactions in occupational settings in Japan has been biased toward studies on former international students. In the same way as studies overseas, scholarship in Japan has also tended to concentrate on communication and cultural difference-related issues in white-collar workplaces, where former international students are generally employed. Kagami (2020), for example, focuses on the state of intercultural communication in workplaces employing former international students. She reports on extensive field surveys at such workplaces, finding in one survey, for instance, that Japanese employees tended to expect foreign employees to fully assimilate to Japanese practices in the workplace in cases where there were interactions with clients or other external facing work. Hirai (2021) explores the development of intercultural competency among Japanese managers working in companies in Japan with foreign employees who were formerly international students. Focusing on the importance of Japanese managers' intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills in creating a satisfying intercultural workplace, Hirai reports on a university initiative to enhance such competencies. Although conducted in white-collar companies, the communication and custom-related issues identified in these studies may also be applicable to blue-collar multicultural work sites.

As Japan has started to accept larger numbers of unskilled foreign workers, there are some recent studies in Japan on the nature of intercultural relations in blue-collar workplaces. Kanda (2019) notes the importance of both sides developing 'intercultural literacy' (p.63) as the number of foreign care workers and those with Specified Skill Worker status increases. Ogawa (2019) takes a different perspective, looking at the

challenges of cultural differences encountered in care homes for Japanese elderly people in the Philippines. It should be noted that while there is a growing body of quantitative research on the state of intercultural relations at blue-collar work sites in Japan, providing valuable data to form the foundation for further in-depth qualitative inquiries (for example, Kamibayashi, 2015; Korekawa, 2019; Kosaki & Sato, 2019; Nagayoshi, 2021), to the knowledge of this author, intercultural competence at blue-collar intercultural worksites, including those employing technical intern trainees, has not been the subject of research in Japan.

In summary, intercultural competence research in Japan has been dominated by studies on university students and white-collar workers; the relatively small number of studies on intercultural relations at blue-collar work sites are predominantly quantitative studies that do not provide micro-level, in-depth insights on the intercultural attitudes of workers at such sites. As far as the researcher is aware, no studies to date have used an intercultural competence model to examine worksites employing technical intern trainees.

Rationale and Significance for This Research

As with other intercultural competence models, Deardorff's model has been criticized for the fact that it focuses on the individual and disregards the interactions that inevitably become the site for the development of the requisite characteristics, traits, and skills. In other words, the *relationships* that form the basis of intercultural communication are neglected (Martin, 2015; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Moreover, taking a post-structuralist perspective whereby reality is fluid, and its meaning is said to be co-constructed by dual or multiple interactants (Coe et al, 2017), it is unclear how to define 'appropriate' as it is used in Deardorff's 'desired external outcome'. In other words,

'appropriate' appears as a static, one-way ideal, defined by one of the parties involved. The assumption that groups belonging to a certain culture are homogenous seems to be based on a fixed, static idea of culture that does not recognize multiple cultural identities or the fluid nature of culture itself (Martin, 2015). Other critics have questioned the recipe-like nature of models such as Deardorff's, where lists appear as steps to be followed to achieve a fixed goal (Martin & Nakayama, 2015).

As noted by Deardorff herself (2006), this model is based on Western ideas of intercultural competence, having been developed in a process of consultation and debate with primarily Western scholars and education professionals. This raises the question of whether it is appropriate to apply the model to non-Western actors and situations. For instance, Zaharna (2009) draws parallels between Middle Eastern and Asian approaches to communication culture and proposes that the relational and collective aspect of Arab and Asian societies must be considered in intercultural communication competence models. Panggabean, Murniati & Tjitra (2013) call for greater attention to non-Western contexts in their study of the intercultural competence of Indonesian employees working in multi-national business environments. Dalib et al (2014) also critique the Western bias in intercultural competence models. In their study of students at a Malaysian university they find that the relational aspect of intercultural relations is a critical factor in understanding how intercultural competence functions in non-Western contexts.

In the current study, Deardorff's model is not used to examine intercultural relations forming between Japanese and foreign trainee workers, but rather to explore the attitudes of the Japanese workers. The relational aspect is examined separately through semi-structured interviews and observations. Interpersonal attitudes toward the technical intern trainees in the workplace have been raised as an issue amidst reports of mistreatment and

discriminatory actions toward the trainees by Japanese co-workers (The Japan Times, 2022, July 29). Combined with the fact that little is known about intercultural competence of Japanese workers in blue-collar workplaces, Deardorff's model offers an optimal way to gain understanding of attitudes while at the same time exploring the potential for future research on intercultural competence among blue-collar workers. As unskilled work becomes the site for increasing intercultural contact in Japan, the current research aims to indicate avenues for further in-depth investigations of blue-collar work sites.

Framework Structure

The research questions in this study are restated here:

1. What kind of attitudes do Japanese workers have toward their technical intern trainee colleagues?

2. What kind of relationships do Japanese workers have with their technical intern trainee colleagues at work and outside of work?

3. How do Japanese workers expect foreign residents to adapt to life in Japan?

Figure 7 provides a visual depiction of how the conceptual and theoretical framework described here functions to answer the three research questions.

Figure 7

Conceptual and theoretical framework
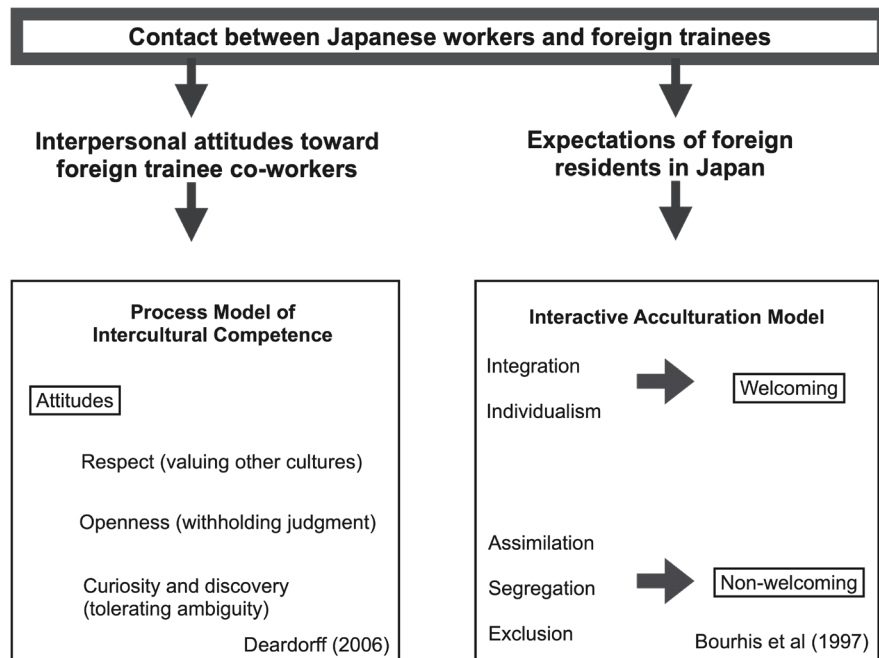
As the Figure 7 shows, the starting point for this research is contact between Japanese workers and foreign technical intern trainees: Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis thus forms the conceptual foundation for the research. It is assumed that such contact is leading to the development of both interpersonal feelings toward the trainees, and expectations of how they should adapt to life in Japan. To investigate these two facets of the participants' sentiment, Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (left) and Bourhis et al's Interactive Acculturation Model (right) are used as frameworks to analyze the data gathered and find answers to RQ1 and RQ3 respectively. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to a greater understanding of whether Japanese workers have welcoming or non-welcoming attitudes to their foreign trainee co-workers, which is the overarching purpose of this study.

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Research Approach and Methods

The nature of the current research is fundamentally exploratory and descriptive. Rather than developing and testing hypotheses with the aim of discovering generalizable principles that may be applied to wider populations, as is the case in typical quantitative research (Coe et al, 2017), the purpose of the current research is to understand the sentiment of a particular group and its constituent elements (research participants) at a particular point in time. This research aims to understand the subjective feelings and individual relationships being formed by the research participants; in other words, to explore the intercultural relationships being formed and the way they are being experienced and interpreted by the actors involved. In this light, the research takes a constructivist, interpretivist approach, whereby reality is assumed to be subjective and dynamic, subject to change depending on interaction with others, including the researcher (Coe et al, 2017). For this reason, the research adopts a qualitative mode of inquiry.

The current research aims to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of attitudes do Japanese workers have toward their technical intern trainee colleagues?

2. What kind of relationships do Japanese workers have with their technical intern trainee colleagues at work and outside of work?

3. How do Japanese workers expect foreign residents to adapt to life in Japan?

In this chapter, the methods used to answer these questions are described in detail, together with the rationale for using such methods for this research. Specifically, the case study methodology was adopted. The principles and conditions for the use of the case methodology are first described in detail. This is followed by an explanation of how and why this methodology was employed in the current research.

Research Approach: Case Study as Methodology

Definition of Case Study Methodology

Decisions on the overall methodological approach and mode of inquiry for a research

project need to be made carefully, considering the research questions and goals. Maxwell

(2013) differentiates between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in terms

of variance theory and process theory. While quantitative research tends to examine the

statistical relationships between different variables, qualitative research is more concerned

with the processes connecting people, situations, and events. Maxwell notes that

qualitative methods are suitable for research projects aiming to understand the subjective

meaning of a certain situation for participants, the context of their actions, or the process of

events or actions (Maxwell, 2013). As such, the research questions posed by the researcher

serve as a guide to choosing the appropriate research methodology. Yin (2018) also uses

the research questions as a guide to help the researcher decide when to use different

research methods such as experiments, surveys, and case studies. He proposes three

conditions for a decision on research methods: the form of the research question, whether

the study focuses on contemporary events, and the extent of control the researcher needs to

exert over the events being studied. He suggests that if the research questions take the form

of 'how' or 'why' questions, the study concerns contemporary events, and the researcher

does not need to exercise control over the behavior or actions of the participants, then a

case study is suitable (Yin, 2018; p.9). The case study approach is defined as "a look at the

particular", "an in-depth examination of a particular case or several cases" (Lichtman,

2013; p.90). Merriam & Tisdell (2016) note that qualitative case studies, in particular,

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incorporate "the search for meaning and understanding" with "the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (2016; p.37).

The positioning of case study research in relation to other qualitative research is debated. While case study research may be defined as a subset or type of qualitative research, Yin (2018) posits that case study research as a methodology may be defined separately from other qualitative research, given that it incorporates its own set of procedures. Yin distinguishes between case studies used in non-research fields (such as those used in popular media or for instructional purposes in business, law, or medicine) and case studies that are conducted as part of research activities. In the latter, case study research is pursued as a mode of inquiry or *methodology*, with the case study (or studies) then conducted as a *method* of such inquiry (Yin, 2018; pp.xx-xxi).

Rationale for Use of Case Study Methodology in the Current Research

The research questions posed in the current study are predominantly focused on how the participants feel toward their foreign co-workers, and how they relate to those co-workers in and outside the workplace. Yin (2018) proposes that such *how* questions tend to point to explanatory studies and are suited to case studies or histories. Following the two other conditions given by Yin, the current study examines a contemporaneous situation, and does not require any control by the researcher over behavior or events. The sentiment of the research participants and their relationships with the foreign trainees are being investigated as they exist in the present time, with no manipulation or experimentation by the researcher. The current research thus aims to explore and describe. As such, the case study methodology was deemed appropriate to answer the research questions.

A further reason for the selection of qualitative methods as part of a case study for the current research was to differentiate the current research from prior studies. As noted in the second chapter, Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees, and Migrant Integration, much prior research on public sentiment toward foreign workers and residents in Japan has been based on large-scale quantitative surveys (for example, Nagata, 2013; Nakata, 2017; Nukaga, 2006). While such research has often used a single question in the Japan General Social Survey (JGSS) to examine levels of acceptance of increased immigration and determinants of Japanese attitudes toward immigrants, there is now more extensive quantitative data being produced on such topics as types of public attitudes (Kage et al, 2021), the integration of migrants in Japan (Nagayoshi, 2020, 2021), and the entry of foreign workers into the Japanese labor market (Korekawa, 2021), for example. These studies offer important insights into tendencies in attitudes among the Japanese public, and the current research leans heavily on the valuable data produced. However, by their very nature, such surveys do not necessarily shed light on the reasons for respondents' opinions, nor their thinking on the related issues. For this reason, the current study employs qualitative methods based on a case study methodology, as a means of providing "both descriptive richness and analytic insight into people, events, and passions as played out in real-life environments" (Yin, 2005; p.xiv). The current research has followed these principles, and consequently strives to achieve the methodological rigor, validity, and transparency required for the case study methodology.

This case is defined as an exploratory and descriptive case that aims to be revelatory in its findings: in other words, it investigates a previously unexplored case. Unfair and inhumane treatment of technical intern trainees by their employers and co-workers has been reported by the media and continues at the present time (Matsumuro, 2022). News

stories on abuse by employers are corroborated by data on the number of companies that have received notices for improvements from the authorities (OTIT, 2021). Despite this situation, there has been minimal researcher attention toward the feelings and attitudes of Japanese employees and managers at such companies. This study aims to address this gap and illuminate the sentiment of a group that has not been examined to date; it is a rare in-depth examination of host society sentiment in a particular industry and region of Japan. For these reasons too, the case study methodology is justified (Yin, 2018; p.50).

Definition of the Case

Case Definition in Case Study Methodology

The definition of the case is the first step that needs to be taken by the researcher when commencing the research design. Classic case studies in medicine and psychology have traditionally focused on individual patients as separate cases. However, scholars agree that the subject of a case study may also be a phenomenon, a community, an educational program, or an institution, among others; the condition is that the 'case' in the study is defined with clear boundaries delineating the content of the case with elements that exist outside of the case, to create a "bounded system" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; p.38). Smith (in Coe et al, 2017) emphasizes the need for the researcher to clarify what the case in question is a *case of*. This must be defined together with the rationale for selecting the case. Yin (2018) defines case study types according to two elements: (1) single-case or multiple-case, and (2) holistic or embedded cases, leading to four types of case study design. Yin suggests five possible conditions that would indicate that a single-case study is appropriate: the critical case, the unusual case, the common case, the revelatory case, or the longitudinal case (Yin, 2018). Relevant to the current study, a revelatory case is

defined as a study where the researcher is observing and describing a person, group, or phenomenon that has not been previously studied; in other words, "the descriptive information alone will be revelatory" (Yin, 2018; p.50). Additionally, Yin (2018) recommends the use of theory in the case study research design: the researcher must take account of any theoretical propositions considered in the research when deciding on the appropriate bounding of the case.

Definition of the Case in the Current Research

The overarching question of this research is whether attitudes and behavior toward technical intern trainees in the industry and region studied are welcoming or non-welcoming. As explained in the Conceptual and Theoretical Framework chapter, Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis proposed that positive intergroup relations (relations between two groups of different cultural backgrounds, for example) could be formed if four conditions are met. The four conditions proposed by Allport were that the two groups have equal status, that they receive institutional support, that they are required to cooperate with each other, and that they share common goals (Allport, 1954). It should be noted that the extensive body of research on the contact hypothesis since has found that positive relations may be expected even when not all four of the conditions are met (Pettigrew et al, 2011). While the company owners interviewed for this research may not fulfill all of these conditions, it was judged that the Japanese co-workers and foreign technical trainees are in a situation that largely meet the conditions of the contact hypothesis. Consequently, a proposition was made that there would be largely positive relations forming between the Japanese workers and their technical intern trainee co-workers. This proposition was examined through the collection and analysis of data. Given this theoretical proposition,

the following elements were defined as the boundaries of the case: an industry in a region

in which multiple companies are located that employ both Japanese workers and foreign

technical intern trainees. The sentiment of Japanese blue-collar workers who work

alongside technical intern trainees in the seafood processing industry in rural Japan has not

been the subject of in-depth, qualitative research. As such, the current study is defined as a

single revelatory case, with multiple embedded units of analysis. The embedded units of

analysis in this case are defined as Japanese workers who have regular contact in the

workplace with foreign technical intern trainees (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Definition of the case
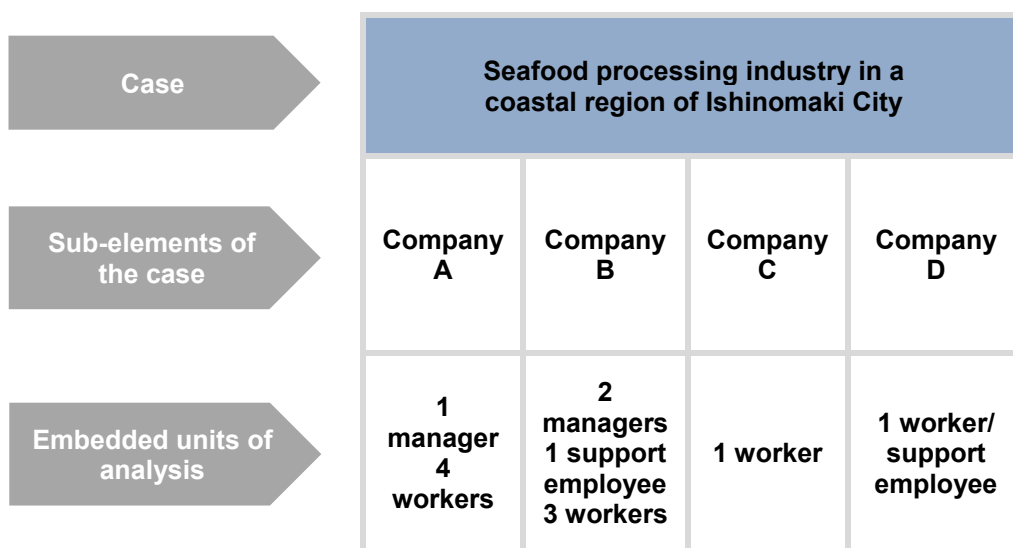
The option of a multiple-case study was also considered in the current research: should

the individual workers each be treated as separate cases, as part of a multiple-case study

design? The decision to treat the seafood processing industry in this small region as a

single case was made based on two expectations: (1) that there would not be a large

amount of variance between the sentiment expressed by the individual participants, and (2)

that the sentiment towards and relationships between the Japanese workers and their

technical intern trainee co-workers would be largely influenced by the features of the industry and region. The decision to conduct a single-case study was also based on the challenges encountered in accessing individual participants and obtaining an equal amount of detailed information from all participants, some of whom were more accessible than others. For companies where there were fewer participants available, such as Company C and D, separate measures were taken to compensate, including meeting with the participant at Company D for a longer period and more than once, and spending time with the manager and trainees at Company C on several occasions. As a single-case study, the overarching goal of the research – to examine whether attitudes toward technical intern trainees are welcoming or non-welcoming – is viewed in a holistic manner.

Description of the Case

In this section I review the defining parameters of the case, and the features that make it worthy of selection for this particular study. The case is described below according to the following five elements: the Japanese participants; the foreign technical intern trainees; the region; the industry; and the companies.

Japanese Participants

Considering the aim of this project to investigate the sentiment of Japanese workers toward their foreign trainee co-workers, the main criterion for selecting the project participants was whether they were in contact with technical intern trainees in the workplace on a regular basis, to examine the relationships they were developing with the trainees both at work and outside of work. A theoretical sampling method (Patton, 2002) was adopted, whereby participants were selected on the basis of their potential to

demonstrate or embody the theoretical proposition of the study, namely Allport's (1954) hypothesis that meaningful contact between the members of two groups will lead to positive relations. During the fieldwork trips, decisions were made to take advantage of opportunities that arose to interview additional participants: in other words, emergent sampling (Patton, 2002) was also used.

There were three types of Japanese participants who fulfilled this criterion: company owner/managers, Japanese company employees (those employed in fishing work and seafood processing work), and Japanese support staff. Gender balance was not considered when selecting participants. Reflecting the fact that most employees in Companies A, B and D are male, the research participants were also predominantly male. Conversely, Company C is a solely seafood processing company, with no fishing work. At this company, most of the Japanese and foreign trainee workers are female. Consequently, the research participant from this company was also female. The participants are not representative of the general composition of the fisheries industry. Profiles are provided in Table 4.

In addition to the criterion described above, there were other important factors in the choosing participants for this research. Above all, the participants' selection was highly dependent on approval by respective company owner/managers. Initial contact was made to the head of the ward in which the companies are located. The ward head contacted the manager of each company, who then provided the names of possible participants. For this reason, the possibility of bias toward the selection of workers who would be more likely to make positive statements about the company and relations with technical intern trainee workers cannot be ruled out.

Table 4

Research participant profiles

Company	Participant	Gender	Age	Years of employment	Previous experience working with foreign workers	Position
A	A1	M	52	38	No	Owner/manager
A	A2	F	56	10	No	Dining hall and dormitory management
A	A3	M	41	13	No	Fishing and seafood processing work
A	A4	M	50	15	No	Fishing and seafood processing work
A	A5	M	59	16	No	Fishing and seafood processing work
B	B1	M	49	30	No	Owner/manager
B	B2	M	45	26	No	Owner/manager
B	B3	F	50	4	No	Office administration
B	B4	M	45	3	No	Fishing and seafood processing work
B	B5	M	38	5	No	Fishing and seafood processing work
B	B6	M	45	6	No	Fishing and seafood processing work
C	C1	F	50s	2	Yes	Seafood processing work
D	D1	M	43	10	Yes	Fishing and seafood processing work, trainee instruction and management, document support

Availability of participants was also a factor influencing the frequency and depth of

questioning in the semi-structured interviews. It was difficult to secure adequate time for

interviews when field trips coincided with busy fishing seasons. Additionally, some

potential research participants were unavailable for additional interviews due to illness or

the fact that they had moved elsewhere. While most of those approached willingly accepted to be interviewed, some declined, including the owner/manager of Company D. The importance of spending time to develop relationships with research participants was keenly felt through this research project and was reflected in the depth of knowledge and insights gained from respective participants.

There is a persuasive argument for exploring the viewpoint of unskilled Japanese workers - a seemingly small section of the Japanese public. Fig.9 provides a comparison of the current composition of the labor force in Japan (on the left) with the trends in the number of foreign workers in each industry (on the right).

Figure 9

Comparison of Japanese and foreign working populations by industry
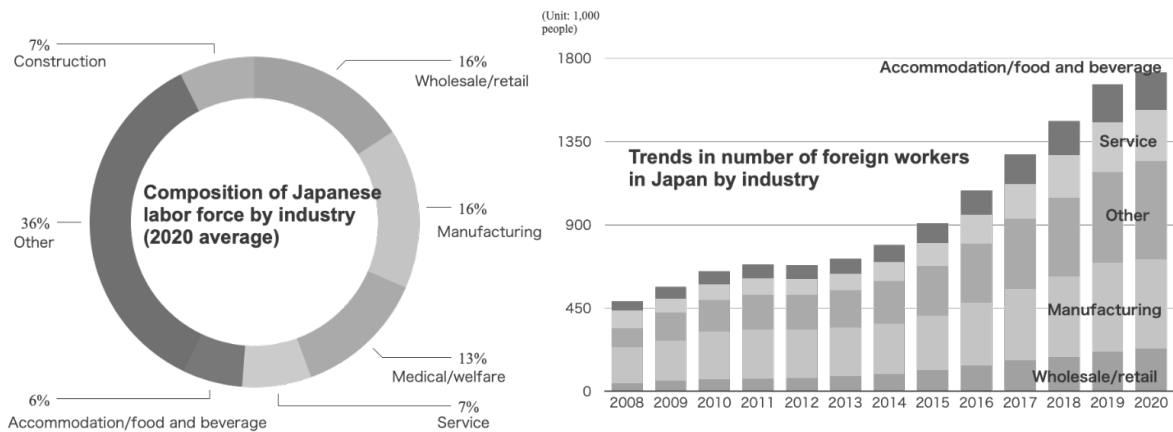
Note. Created by the author using data from *Gaikokujin Koyo Jokyo no Todokede Jokyo Matome (Summary of registration of foreign nationals employment status)*, Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare, 2020; and *Sangyo-betsu shugyoshasu* (Number of persons employed by industry, 2020 average), Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training.

The top six industries in terms of native working population are wholesale/retail, manufacturing, medical/welfare, construction, service industries, and accommodation/food services, industries that include many unskilled job types. The industries with the highest

numbers and continuous growth in foreign workers largely coincide with the industries with the highest numbers of native workers: manufacturing, service industries, wholesale/retail and accommodation/food services. These four industries account for 45% of the Japanese workforce, a considerable number. The relative lack of contact to date between native and foreign residents in Japan has been flagged as a factor in negative attitudes toward migrants, including seeing migrants as a drain on the economy, a threat to Japan's culture and heritage, and a reason for increased crime (ILO, 2019). It is for this reason that this research examines unskilled work sites, as they clearly constitute an important location of increasing contact between Japanese and non-Japanese workers, including technical intern trainees.

As noted above, a lower education level and unskilled work have been associated with negative attitudes toward migrants (Facchini et al, 2022; Mazumi, 2016; Nagata, 2013; OECD & EU, 2018). Given the changing composition of Japan's unskilled workforce noted above and lack of studies on this section of the population to date, workers at unskilled work sites in Japan are proposed here as a potential source of rich and useful data on the feelings of Japanese employees toward foreign workers.

Foreign Technical Intern Trainees

The background behind the establishment of the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and subsequent developments of the program were reviewed in the second chapter, **Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees, and Migrant Integration** (p.17). As noted there, the trainees have been predominantly seen as temporary workers in Japan. As a result, there is little research on subjects related to the settlement of the trainees in Japan, such as their social integration, or their acculturation to Japanese society.

By the same token, it may seem that there is limited value in understanding Japanese worker sentiment toward technical intern trainees, given their current non-permanent status and the fact that they are not necessarily viewed as 'immigrants' as the term is commonly understood in traditional immigration nations (for example IOM, 2020). However, there are several reasons why the technical intern trainees are an important target for research on feelings toward migrants. Firstly, the establishment of the Specified Skill Worker status in 2019 means that a growing number of technical intern trainees may potentially transfer to the new status and ultimately apply for permanent residency in Japan. Secondly, even while the trainees remain temporary residents, the serious labor shortages in many industries have led to a situation where the presence of the trainees as a group is becoming a long-term phenomenon in many communities. Individual trainees may leave, but the presence of trainees as a group is constant. Thirdly, regional competition over itinerant workers such as the technical intern trainees is becoming increasingly fierce. There is thus a need to ensure that Japan is seen as an attractive destination for workers who may have the option to select neighboring countries instead. In addition to the urgent improvements in the trainees' working conditions so often reported, it is also crucial to investigate the way that the trainees are being received by fellow workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have further exacerbated the situation of the trainees, as some employers possibly facing economic hardship brought on by the pandemic have terminated trainee contracts. Trainees who no longer have a place of employment, no legal right to seek employment elsewhere, and no immediate means to get back to their home country, have been stranded in Japan (Tran, 2020). In some cases, widely reported in the media, such trainees have committed crimes including theft and illegal commercial activities as a means of survival while still in Japan (Asahi Shimbun,

2020). This is now combined with the issue of disappearing trainees - those who leave their place of work without notice or completion of their traineeship, possibly in response to unlawful employment practices noted above (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Media reporting over the past year on the technical intern trainees has generally focused on such criminal incidents and disappearances, possibly impacting public reception of immigrants in general. It is crucial to understand, therefore, how such public reception is developing in host communities.

Region

The four companies surveyed in this study are located in a coastal region formerly known as Oshika, in Miyagi Prefecture in northern Japan. This district was incorporated into Ishinomaki City in 2005 (Ishinomaki City, n.d.). Miyagi Prefecture is one of the six prefectures comprising the Tohoku region of Japan. The four companies surveyed are all located within a roughly 10-kilometer area, approximately thirty kilometers from Ishinomaki City center, where the nearest shopping center is located (Figure 10). The area examined here is considerably remote and isolated. The only place to obtain daily living commodities in the ten-kilometer radius is a single convenience store. Several of the Japanese participants made comments referring to the fact that the area is remote, and that there is little contact with people from outside the area. They commented that community members are typically not open or welcoming to 'outsiders' because of this situation. The current research does not include a survey of community attitudes, which is outside the scope of the project. However, these comments are noted as they signify that the remote location is a salient feature of the region.

Figure 10

Location of Ishinomaki City (left) and the companies (A, B, C, D) surveyed (right)

Note. Maps from Geospatial Information Authority of Japan. https://www.gsi.go.jp/tizu-kutyu.html

As a result of Japan's aging population and shrinking birthrate, the Tohoku region is facing serious labor shortages in primary, secondary, and service industries. The shortages were further exacerbated by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, which accelerated the trend of depopulation and critical labor shortages in predominantly small to medium sized businesses. Ishinomaki City is one of the areas in Miyagi Prefecture suffering from depopulation and further population shrinkage following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami (Ishinomaki City, 2021).

The employment of foreign workers has been proactively addressed as a solution to such challenges. Comparing the six Tohoku region prefectures, Miyagi Prefecture has accepted the largest number of foreign workers, accounting for 35.4% of the total in the Tohoku region (Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) & IC Net Limited, 2021). The number of technical intern trainees in Miyagi Prefecture increased by more than ten times

in ten years, from 380 in 2011 to 4,316 by the end of 2020 (Immigration Services Agency

of Japan, 2021c). Ishinomaki City has followed a similar trend. Figure 11 shows the

foreign population in relation to the total population of the city.

Figure 11

Change in ratio of foreign population of Ishinomaki City
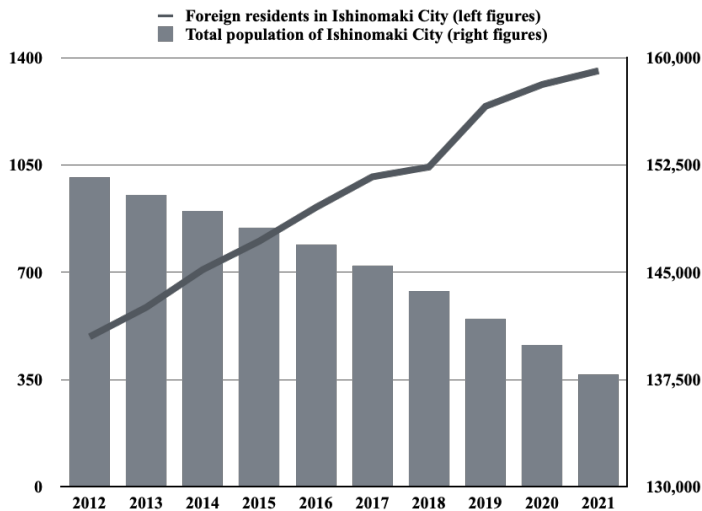
Note. Adapted from data from *Tokeisho* (Statistics Report), Ishinomaki City, 2021.

The ratio of foreign residents in Ishinomaki City has been growing significantly over the

past ten years, yet still falls short of the number by which the population is decreasing

annually. In other words, the influx of foreign workers is not yet keeping pace with the rate

of population decrease. Oshika Peninsula, where the businesses in this study are located,

has a notably high concentration of foreign residents: 87 of the 2,149 residents, or 4%, are

non-Japanese (Ishinomaki City, 2021). Considering that the ratio of foreign residents in the

total population of Japan is currently just over 2% (Immigration Services Agency of Japan,

2021a), this represents a high figure in very small communities. Technical intern trainees

and specified skill workers account for the largest proportion of foreign residents in

Ishinomaki City: as of December 2021, of a total of 1,244 foreign residents in Ishinomaki

City, 50% (623) were working as technical intern trainees or specified skill workers (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022b). Based on this relatively high concentration of foreign residents and workers, this area was selected for this study as a microcosm of multicultural communities that are likely to increase in rural areas in the future.

The impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 is another defining feature of Ishinomaki City. The total population of Ishinomaki City was around 160,000 people at the time of the disaster; of this number, almost 4,000 people died or remain unaccounted for. Just over 20,000 homes were completely destroyed, and a further 33,000 were half- or partially destroyed in the disaster (Fire and Disaster Management Agency, 2014). The earthquake and tsunami arose as a topic of conversation in most interviews conducted for this research: participants tended to recall past events in terms of 'before' or 'after' the disaster, and it featured in discussions on the way that foreign residents are viewed in the region.

Industry

The fisheries industry in Japan in general is experiencing overall shrinkage in the size of the industry, as well as the labor shortages seen in other industries. In addition to population decline caused by low birthrates, young people are leaving fishing villages to pursue higher wages, more favorable employment conditions, and better living environments elsewhere (Sasaki, 2020). As a result, it is becoming chronically difficult to find workers. Figure 12 shows the number of people employed in the fishing industry by age. According to the 2021 Fisheries Industry White Paper, those aged 55 and over

accounted for 59% of people employed in the industry in 2020. This ratio has generally remained at the same level for most of the period since 2013 (Fisheries Agency, 2021).

Figure 12

Number of people employed in Japanese fisheries industry, 2013 - 2020, by age
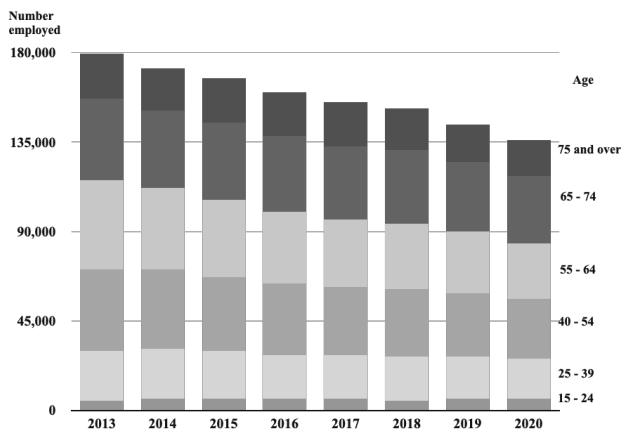
Note. Adapted from data from '*2021 Suisan Hakusho*' (2021 Fisheries Industry White Paper), Fisheries Agency, 2021.

The higher-than-average aging rate in fishing villages combined with a lack of successors in family fishing businesses (Sasaki, 2020) have become push factors for businesses to turn to foreign workers to resolve their labor needs. According to the 2018 Fisheries Industry Census, the number of foreign workers employed in seafood processing work throughout Japan rose from 13,458 to 17,336 from 2013 to 2018, accounting for 10% of total employees in the industry (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2018). The technical intern trainee program has been used by operators to source foreign labor to perform various types of fishing work as well as duties in seafood processing plants. While most technical intern trainees in the fisheries industry were Chinese when the program was first adopted by the industry in the 1990s, a stronger Chinese economy has led to a downturn in Chinese trainees. Replacing them are trainees from mainly Vietnam and

Indonesia, countries where unemployment levels are high, and wages are low relative to Japan (Sasaki, 2020).

The seafood processing industry was selected for this study due to its central role in the economy of the region. Ishinomaki Port is one of the largest fishing ports in Miyagi Prefecture, and the area is supported by the fishing and seafood processing industries. Landing volumes at the port dropped dramatically after the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami and have not returned to pre-disaster levels. Monetary income from hauls into Ishinomaki Port was gradually recovering until around 2018, when smaller hauls led to drops in monetary income (Ishinomaki City, 2021). As has been seen in the fisheries industry as a whole, the fisheries industry in the region surveyed here is also experiencing difficulties in securing Japanese employees, a lack of successors, and a subsequent dependence on foreign labor, mainly Vietnamese and Indonesian technical intern trainees. As such, it was selected for this case study as a regional industry that typifies many of the issues being faced by fisheries operators in other regions in Japan. The successful employment and integration of foreign trainees will potentially have a great impact on the economy and livelihood of large number of Ishinomaki's citizens in the future. For this reason, the industry was judged to be an appropriate and important subject for the current case study.

Companies

The companies surveyed in this study (Table 5) were selected based on convenience, using connections that had been previously established by research collaborators. The four companies are all small businesses employing fewer than 50 employees. They were

selected for their employment of technical intern trainees, and their willingness to participate in surveys and interviews.

Table 5

Profiles of companies visited during fieldwork

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
No. of technical trainees	15	7	17	11
Type of work	Fishing and seafood product processing	Fishing and seafood product processing	Seafood product processing	Fishing and seafood product processing
Start of employment of trainees	2010	2016	2000	2008
Nationality of trainees	Indonesian	Vietnamese	Chinese, Myanmar	Indonesian

Anecdotally, access to companies employing technical intern trainees has been raised as an issue by scholars. It was therefore fortunate that companies were found that were willing to cooperate in this study. At the same time, it should be noted that the fact that these companies were willing to participate does indicate that selection of participants was inevitably biased towards companies that are experiencing favorable relations with technical intern trainees. The rationale for the selection of the companies studied here is that they exhibit a dependency on foreign labor that is being seen in increasingly large numbers of small-to-medium sized businesses in Japan. It therefore seems evident that identifying the situation and tendencies in sentiment toward foreign trainees at these companies will provide useful insights for both policymakers and researchers in this field.

Sources of Data and Collection Methods

Qualitative data collection methods were employed in this study, in keeping with the aim of the study to illuminate the sentiment and understand the subjective perceptions of

the research participants, while at the same time exploring connections with the wider context. The case study methodology necessitates collection of data from multiple sources, to ensure that sufficient depth of insight is achieved, and to corroborate data that has been obtained from different sources, in a process of triangulation (Yin, 2018). The main source of data on the sentiment of the research participants was interviews. These were complemented by data collected through a questionnaire survey, interviews with technical intern trainees, interviews with union and local government officials, and observations recorded in field notes.

Semi-structured Interviews with Japanese Workers

Rubin & Rubin (2012) define a 'responsive interview' as one that contains detail, depth, vivid descriptions, nuanced responses, and richness of themes. They propose that the responsive interviewer conducts the interview through a set of stages: an introduction of the researcher and topic; a series of easy, nonthreatening questions that demonstrate the researcher's empathy; a series of more difficult or sensitive questions that probe more deeply into key issues; a return to less stressful questions; and closure of the interview in a way that leaves open the possibility of future contact (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This process was followed in the interview stage of the current project. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted at four seafood processing companies in a small coastal district of Oshika Peninsula, Ishinomaki City, during three field trips: in June and August 2021, and July 2022. A total of thirteen Japanese workers and managers were individually interviewed. Most of the interviews were conducted on site in the offices of the companies being studied. One of the companies (Company C) asked for interviews to be conducted at a community center close to the company. Interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to

two hours. Follow-up interviews were conducted to confirm the content of previous discussions and ask additional questions. Profiles of the Japanese interviewees are provided in Table 4 (p.75).

The interviews were conducted in Japanese by the researcher, and audio recorded. The recordings were then transcribed and translated into English by the researcher. English translations were checked by professional translators to ensure that there were no errors in interpretation of the content. This was particularly important given that most of the research participants spoke in a relatively rare Japanese dialect. The main areas covered in the interviews were the participant's background, their thoughts on working with the foreign trainees, interactions and relationships with the trainees outside of work, any issues encountered related to the trainees, and the participant's thoughts on how the trainees need to adapt to life in Japan. The detailed interview protocol is provided in Appendix A, with consent forms provided in Appendix E.

Questionnaire Survey of Japanese Workers

The **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework** chapter (p.37) provided a discussion of Bourhis et al's (1997) Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM), and the relevance of this model to understanding the sentiment of Japanese workers toward their foreign co-workers. For the current research, a simple questionnaire survey was made to this end. The questionnaire was designed based on previous studies where such surveys were given (Montreuil et al, 2004) and thus judged appropriate for use here. It was made up of a total of six multiple-choice questions. The first five questions asked the respondents to choose the response closest to their own opinion, on topics related to how they believe foreign residents should adapt to living in Japan. The topics of the questions covered foreign

residents' language use, practice of religious and cultural traditions, and formation of friendships. The five possible responses to each question were designed to correspond to the five categories in the IAM: integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusionism, and individualism. The responses were then tallied to indicate which preferences were exhibited by how many participants. The final question asked respondents about their opinion on further increases in foreign residents living in Japan. The purpose of this question was to understand how the participants felt more generally about the increase of foreign residents in Japan. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

The questionnaire was conducted prior to each interview, and as such, it provided a base for supplementary questions during the interview. Participants were asked to provide further detail on the responses given to the questions in the questionnaire. In this way the questionnaire was also used as a tool to further probe the participants' feelings and expectations toward foreign residents in the realm of life outside of work. The questionnaire was also useful in understanding how much thought the participants had given toward the possible impact of larger numbers of long-term foreign residents. These insights are further explored in **Findings** (p.104).

Semi-structured Interviews with Technical Intern Trainee Co-workers

To confirm and corroborate statements made by the participants in this research, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 20 technical intern trainees working at the companies surveyed, who are the co-workers of the Japanese participants in Table 4 (p.75). Different procedures were adopted for the interviews with trainees, depending on their work situation and the preferences of the management of the company concerned. Table 6 provides an outline of the procedures used and details of the interview process.

Table 6

Technical intern trainee interview descriptions

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
No. of trainees interviewed	4	6	8	2
Nationality of trainees	Indonesian	Vietnamese	Chinese (5), Myanmar (3)	Indonesian
Interview location	Company cafeteria	Company office	Community center	Company office
Interview style	Group interview	Individual interviews	Group interviews	Group interview
Language used	Indonesian	Vietnamese	Japanese	Indonesian
Interpreter present	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Management present	No	Yes	No	No
Average time of each interview	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes	1 hour

As Table 6 shows, group interviews were conducted at Companies A, C and D, and individual interviews at Company B. Each trainee was interviewed once, either in the individual or group format. The location and format of the interviews with the trainees was carefully planned to ensure that the trainees felt at ease enough to answer the interview questions freely and honestly. The first interviews with trainees were conducted at Company B. Each interview was conducted by the researcher, using a Vietnamese interpreter, in the presence of research collaborators and a member of company management. As noted below (9. Language Considerations), measures were taken to relax the trainees. Nonetheless the presence of the owner/manager seemed to cause tension in the interviewees. For these reason, later interviews with trainees at Companies A, C, and D were conducted in groups, without management members present. The interviews with the trainees were made up of questions on their reasons for coming to Japan, background in their home countries, their thoughts on their work and life in Japan, relationships with

Japanese people, and any issues they had encountered while in Japan. The detailed interview protocol is provided in Appendix C.

Semi-structured Interviews with Other Related Parties

In keeping with the principles of the case study methodology, this study attempted to obtain primary data from multiple sources, to ensure sufficient depth of analysis and adequate insight (Yin, 2018). While the interviews with the foreign technical intern trainees were used to triangulate the data obtained from the Japanese research participants, other interviews were conducted with relevant parties to provide further background information on information pertaining to the research topic. The two additional interviews are outlined below. The interview protocol for these two interviews is provided in Appendix D.

(1) Trade union officer

An in-depth, semi-structured interview of approximately 90 minutes was conducted with an officer of a trade union located in Ishinomaki City. The interview was held at the offices of the trade union. The purpose of this interview was to obtain background information on relations between Japanese workers and technical intern trainee co-workers from a third-party perspective. This trade union manages 21 companies in the two cities of Ishinomaki and Shiogama; the companies had received a total of 765 technical intern trainees from China and Vietnam in the period from 2004 to 2021. In addition to handling issues that arise involving the trainees, this union provides language, safety, and Japanese culture training to the trainees upon their arrival in Japan; regular Japanese classes; interpreting support for communication between Japanese employees and the trainees when required;

the organization of outings and events involving the trainees; and volunteer activities to promote interaction between the trainees and community members. The interviewee in this case spoke about his assessment of the factors that tend to influence the development of positive or negative relations with trainees, speaking particularly of the important role of Japanese worker and management attitudes. Findings from this interview formed important background data for this research.

(2) Miyagi Prefecture government official

An in-depth, semi-structured interview of approximately 60 minutes was also conducted with an official from the Miyagi Prefecture administrative body responsible for the promotion of exchange activities with foreign nationals living in the prefecture. As a part of that work, this organization is currently placing particular focus on raising public awareness of technical intern trainees, who tend to work in jobs that are not visible to the general public. The organization organizes community events as well as providing Japanese language lessons and other support services for trainees. The aim of this interview was to obtain greater understanding of the situation of the trainees outside of their workplaces and the way that they are perceived and received by community members. The interview was also useful in understanding how the trainees are positioned in relation to other foreign residents in the prefecture.

Field Observations

Yin (2018) cites direct observations as one of the possible data sources to be used when conducting a case study. The fact that the case takes place in a real-world setting means that such observations may complement other data sources such as interviews or

documentary information in important ways. Three field trips were conducted for the current study, in June 2021, August 2021, and July 2022, for 5 days each. This allowed for the gradual development of relationships between researcher and participants, and numerous opportunities for observing the participants and their environment. During the interviews on site, it was possible to observe interactions between Japanese workers and technical intern trainees. Field notes were also used to record observations on the atmosphere in interview sessions with each party, as well as nonverbal communication cues by participants. This was particularly important in sessions conducted with the trainees in the presence of company management (noted below in 9. Language Considerations). Observations were compared and discussed with research collaborators on the occasions when they were also present on site. Findings from the observations made during the field work trips are combined and reported with the other findings from the interviews and surveys.

Data Analysis Methods

Coe et al (2017) discuss the "logic of enquiry" of a study, which they define as "the way in which the empirical evidence will be used to draw conclusions" (Coe et al, 2017; p.26). They emphasize that the logic of enquiry must match with the overall research design. The current research is defined as a contemporaneous intensive case study, with the objective of describing the subject at a point in time. Analysis of the data in this case involves a comparison of the embedded units in the study, which is then used to reach conclusions on the central unit of the study – the case. The process used for analysis of the current case was an explanation-building process, where data is analyzed to develop an explanation about the case (Yin, 2018). In comparison with other possible case study analytical

methods, such as pattern matching or logic models, it was concluded that an explanation-building approach would be most suited to the descriptive and revelatory nature of the current case study. Yin (2018) offers four general principles to ensure high-quality analysis: (1) attention to all evidence gathered (2) investigation of all possible interpretations, including those that conflict with the researcher's initial interpretations (3) focus on the most important element of the case study and (4) thorough knowledge of prior research and thinking on the topic. These principles were followed in the analysis of the current case.

Recognizing that the ultimate purpose of the data analysis stage is to answer the research questions, those questions are reiterated here:

1. What kind of attitudes do Japanese workers have toward their technical intern trainee co-workers?

2. What kind of relationships do Japanese workers have with their technical intern trainee co-workers at work and outside of work?

3. How do Japanese workers expect foreign residents to adapt to life in Japan?

There were three stages of data analysis in this study: inductive analysis of interview data, deductive analysis of interview data, and analysis of responses to the acculturation expectation questionnaire survey. The analytical process used for each of the respective stages, and the connection between the process and the research questions is described in greater detail below. Interview protocols are provided in Appendices A, C and D, and the questionnaire survey is provided in Appendix B.

Inductive Analysis of Interview Data

Data obtained from the interviews with the Japanese participants was first analyzed in an inductive manner in order to identify themes connected to all three research questions. Interview content was transcribed verbatim and coded using MAXQDA computer assisted qualitative data analysis software. In keeping with the interpretative, inductive nature of the project, codes were identified through repeated readings of the transcripts during the coding process, based on loosely defined categories set to ensure responsivity to the research questions. Drawing on Merriam & Tisdell's (2016) proposed analysis process, this stage of the analytical work followed an iterative process of assigning codes to the data and identifying themes, which were then sorted into categories that reflected the patterns observed among the responses of the Japanese interviewees. Some time was spent refining the identified categories, to ensure that they were responsive to the research questions, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, intuitively labelled, and conceptually congruent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These findings were combined with field notes, interviews with foreign trainees, and other observations, which either corroborated or contradicted the findings from the main interviews. The findings are presented in the fifth chapter, Findings.

Deductive Analysis of Interview Data

A classic deductive analytical approach is typically used in quantitative or qualitative research where a hypothesis or theory is being tested, and data is examined as evidence of the hypothesis or theory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The current research is not aiming to test an experiment or prove a theory and is predominantly descriptive. Nonetheless, Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence was used as a theoretical framework for this second stage of analysis, the aim of which was to identify the attitudes

of the research participants from an intercultural competence perspective (discussed in detail in Conceptual and Theoretical Framework). For this reason, I have labeled this stage of analysis 'deductive': in contrast to the inductive approach used in the first stage, here the data collected from the interviews with the Japanese participants was coded using the concepts in Deardorff's model. Three codes were established for this stage of the analysis: one each for 'Respect', 'Openness and withholding judgment', and 'Curiosity and discovery' that comprise the 'Requisite Attitudes' layer of Deardorff's model (Deardorff, 2006). In contrast with the inductive process used in the first stage of analysis, in this stage the data was examined to find instances of the elements in Deardorff's model and help to understand how the attitudes of the participants may be conceptualized in terms of intercultural competence. This process was used primarily to answer research question 1. When making interpretations and inferences from the data, various principles are applied to ascertain the validity of the researcher's conclusions, depending on the nature of the research. Coe et al (2017) recommend avoiding the term 'validity' in qualitative research, as it has strong associations with quantitative research principles. They suggest terms such as "credibility, authenticity, trustworthiness, transferability" (p.44) as applicable in assessments of claims made in qualitative studies. The current research has used the following methods to establish the reliability of the findings presented: accountability for researcher subjectivity and bias; transparency of data collection and analysis methods; data triangulation; and consultation with research collaborators. Given the fact that this is a single case comprised of a small number of embedded sub-units, the findings are not generalizable. The significance of the case lies in the fact that it provides a potentially instructive exposition of micro-level sentiment toward foreign workers among a section of society that has received minimal researcher attention to date.

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses

The analysis of responses to the questionnaire was conducted to answer research question 3. As explained in Conceptual and Theoretical Framework, the purpose of using the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) in this study was to explore whether participants' attitudes to migrants are generally welcoming or otherwise, and to gain some understanding of how they expect migrants to adapt to life in Japan. For this reason, the responses to the questionnaire were analyzed in the same way as methods used in prior research (Montreuil et al, 2004), where each of the possible responses to the survey questions was aligned with one of the categories in the IAM. For the purposes of clarity, those categories are restated here (Table 2, reproduced from **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**, p.48).

Table 2

Definitions of host community preferences for migrant acculturation proposed by Bourhis et al (2010).

Integration	Accept that immigrants maintain parts of their own culture and adopt key aspects of host community culture; value stable biculturalism/bilingualism.
Assimilation	Expect that immigrants will give up their linguistic and cultural identity to adopt the host community's language and culture; traditional concept of absorption of immigrants.
Segregation	Accept that immigrants maintain their own culture as long as they do not 'contaminate' the host culture; prefer no intergroup contact.
Exclusion	Reject the right of immigrants to adopt host community culture or maintain their own culture and customs; believe that integration of immigrant culture with host culture is impossible.
Individualism	Reject group categories such as 'immigrants' or 'host community'; interact with immigrants based on personal qualities and individual achievements.

Note. Adapted from Bourhis et al (2010).

The multiple-choice questionnaire responses were initially tallied to indicate the number of responses for each category in the IAM, then cross-tallied to provide data by question, and by participant. This quantitative data was used for initial analysis, then cross-analyzed

with interview data on the same topics, to check and verify responses and identify contradictions between qualitative and quantitative data. This exercise proved to be useful in itself, as contradictions were found and it became clear that the combination of the two types of data was crucial in understanding not only the expectations of the Japanese participants toward the foreign trainees, but also the thinking behind those expectations. This is reported in detail in the following chapter.

Research Collaborators

The current research was conducted with the support of multiple collaborators, who fulfilled the roles described below:

・Observers: on each of the three field trips I was joined in whole or part by my supervising professor, who observed interviews and with whom I was able to discuss and confirm observations and findings. Other university graduate school students also joined interviews during the first and second field trips (June and August 2021) and fulfilled the same role.

・Interpreters: interpreters were employed for interviews with Vietnamese trainees during the first fieldtrip (June 2021) and Indonesian trainees during the second fieldtrip (August 2021). The same interpreters were also employed to provide written translations of the transcripts of the trainees' interviews into Japanese.

・Dialect checker: a Japanese native speaker from the region studied here was employed to provide clarifications and checks of translations from the local dialect into standard Japanese.

・Translation accuracy checker: a Japanese-nationality professional translator was employed to check all translations made by the author from Japanese to English, to ensure accuracy of the translations. This native check was conducted for all interview transcripts.

Researcher Positionality

In this research I follow the thought process of Lichtman (2013), who maintains that it is neither realistic nor possible to expect to be able to limit bias and subjectivity in qualitative research, since "the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (Lichtman, 2013; p.21). Maxwell (2013), too, encourages the exploration and understanding of the personal goals driving a research project, to assess their potential impact on choice of topic and methods used. My personal interest in the topic of intercultural relations in Japan is informed by my upbringing in Australia. I spent the first half of my life as a member of the majority in a multicultural society in an urban area of Australia, amidst friends, relatives, and classmates of various cultural backgrounds. As such, I observed first-hand the light and shade of a multicultural society: where the presence of people of different appearances, cultural practices, and languages is treated as a natural matter of course, yet at the same time race-based discrimination and prejudice are also ever-present. By contrast, I have spent the past 25 years as a member of a small yet well-treated minority in Japan. While my personal experience as a migrant in Japan has been largely free of discrimination or prejudice, the position of migrants in Japan in less fortunate positions than myself (most often non-white migrants) concerns me, in view of the way minorities have often been treated in Australia. This concern guided me toward the selection of this research topic.

During the project, I realized that I was carrying assumptions and expectations toward the research subjects that were based on my background as a member of a multicultural society. While it was not difficult for me to engage with the Japanese workers interviewed, there were clearly stark differences between our lived experiences. These differences became most evident in questions hypothesizing the social changes that could occur with

further increases in foreign workers and residents. I was surprised by the unexpected answers I received to such questions but realized that I had been viewing the participants through the lens of my own experience and expectations, rather than being open to their interpretation of the situation. For this reason, I spent time exploring my unconscious assumptions and as a result, revisiting my analysis.

I was also aware that my position as a member of a white-collar, knowledge-industry profession may constitute an invisible barrier between myself and the research participants, all employed in blue-collar work and the majority not having proceeded to higher education. I was cognizant of the status that may be accorded to members of the academic profession and concerned that it may lead to some hesitation or feelings of distance in interactions with participants. As I proceeded with interviews and observations, I became aware of the fact that the workers I was interviewing may feel a greater affinity (and have more contact) with fellow blue-collar workers of different nationalities (namely, the foreign trainees) than they would feel with fellow Japanese citizens who belong to white-collar industries. In this light, it became clear that there may be just as much distance between my Japanese colleagues (other university teachers) and the Japanese participants as there was between myself and the participants. Fortunately, the participants in the current research showed little interest in the world of academia or its positioning in Japanese society, and interacted with me in a generally forthright, open manner. The extremely low level of contact with and exposure to researchers and other white-collar workers possibly worked in favor of this research, in that the participants seemed to hold few assumptions or preconceptions about people in my line of work.

My identity as a foreign resident in Japan was another pertinent element of the data collection process. Although I conducted all interviews in Japanese and was able to

communicate smoothly with the participants, I was concerned that my identity as a foreign resident may have influenced the way that the participants responded to my questions on foreign residents in Japan. Respondents assured me that this was not the case, and that they were speaking openly with me. In fact, accompanied by collaborators who were Japanese yet had come from outside the region, I felt that there was more of an invisible boundary felt as a person from outside the community, than there was as a foreigner. My nationality was rarely commented on by the participants. It is possible that the daily interaction that the research participants had with foreign workers led to a sense of familiarity with foreign residents such as myself. Nonetheless this aspect of my identity and its potential effect on participants must be noted.

I attempted to rigorously monitor my subjectivity and positionality described above and remain aware of how my personal feelings on this topic are influencing the research. Inevitably, the analysis and conclusions reached here are affected by this background.

Ethical and Public Health Considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethics regulations of Kobe College, my university of employment. The project proposal was submitted to and approved by the Kobe College Research Ethics Committee prior to the start of the project in April 2020. All participants were provided with an explanation of the project prior to the collection of data. The written project explanation included an outline of the background of the project, the project aims, and the methods to be used. The consent form to be signed by the participants provided details on recording of interviews, data management, and consent procedures. The participants were given the option of withdrawing from the project should they feel

the desire or need to do so. The project explanation and consent form are provided in Appendix E.

Both the project explanation and consent form were written in Japanese and checked by a native speaker for clarity and errors. They were also verbally explained to the participants prior to the interview and survey. The explanation to non-Japanese participants (technical intern trainees) was provided using an interpreter.

The data collected during the field trips for this project comprises audio recordings of interviews, transcripts of interviews, hard copy questionnaire responses, and consent forms. The hard copies of questionnaire responses and consent forms have been scanned and stored in an encrypted hard drive. The audio recordings and transcripts of interviews are also stored in an encrypted hard drive. Hard copies of original documents have been destroyed. There was no email correspondence with participants.

The current research project was conducted during the global Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, the utmost precautions were taken to ensure the safety and peace of mind of all participants and collaborators during the three field trips to the survey sites. Facial masks were used during all contact with research participants; 'masks' appearing in some of the quotes in this paper are referring to the masks used during the pandemic. Interviews were conducted in large, open-plan rooms to enable adequate social distancing. Field trips were scheduled paying consideration to the latest coronavirus case data for the region and rescheduled when there was a rise in cases and when there was a request to do so by participants.

Language Considerations

Japanese was used for all written and verbal communication in conducting this project, including interviews with Japanese participants, follow-up telephone calls with participants, and written questionnaire surveys. Having attained proficiency in the Japanese language through my own position as a long-term resident and employee, I was able to conduct all interviews and communication with the Japanese participants myself. I felt strongly that my proficiency in Japanese and my long experience as a resident in Japan helped me to develop relationships and a certain sense of mutual trust with the Japanese participants, despite our very different backgrounds. I also feel that my own previous experience as a student of Japanese and former employee of Japanese companies helped me to understand the position of the trainees. One challenge in communication was the dialect used by the Japanese participants, which is not commonly used in other parts of Japan nor heard on television. For this reason, it was difficult to understand at times, depending on the participant. I received support from a student who grew up in the region, for the transcription of one of the interviews and to confirm that my understanding of the participants' Japanese was correct.

Special care was taken in language use for the interviews with the technical trainees. At Companies A, B and D, an interpreter was used. Although some trainees have achieved a certain level of proficiency in daily Japanese conversation, I felt it was important that they had the freedom to express themselves in their mother tongue, and that doing so would encourage more detailed answers to my questions. Interviews with the Vietnamese trainees at Company B were conducted in the presence of one of the company owner/managers, creating a certain tension during the interviews. To encourage the trainees to answer my questions openly and honestly, their answers were not interpreted back from Japanese to

Vietnamese verbally by the interpreter at the time of the interview. Rather, their responses were recorded and later transcribed and translated in written form by the Vietnamese interpreter. The aim of this process was to prevent the trainees from feeling pressure from the company owner/manager in the room.

Interviews with trainees from Company C were conducted in Japanese, as no Chinese or Myanmar interpreter was available. The trainees at this company have differing levels of Japanese proficiency. The more senior trainees, who had been in Japan longer, tended to answer most of the questions and interpret for the other trainees with less developed Japanese skills. These interviews were inevitably simplified in content and there was some uncertainty of whether questions and answers were accurately understood on both sides. The experience in these sessions underscored the importance of using interpreters, translators, or any other tools available to ensure that communication is smooth, accurate, and satisfactory for both parties.

Findings

This chapter reports on the findings obtained from analyzing the data gathered through 13 semi-structured interviews with Japanese workers; 13 questionnaire survey responses from the same workers; third-party interviews with 20 technical intern trainees; 1 trade union officer and 1 Miyagi Prefecture government official; and observations made during three field work trips. The findings are organized to respond to each of the three research questions, which are reiterated below:

1. What kind of attitudes do Japanese workers have toward their technical intern trainee co-workers?

2. What kind of relationships do Japanese workers have with their technical intern trainee colleagues at work and outside of work?

3. How do Japanese workers expect foreign residents to adapt to life in Japan?

The profiles of the interviewees are provided in Table 4 (p.75), in **Research Approach and Methods**.

Table 7 provides an overview of how the data was organized in the initial phase of analysis.

Table 7

Initial organization of Japanese participant interview data.

Facts (re trainees, employment process etc)
Anecdotes
Issues
General issues
Language issues
Expectations of trainees
Outside of work
Trainees' work
Labor shortages
Feeling toward trainees
Community feelings
General feelings
Personal relationships
First impressions

Following this initial organization process, the data was then analyzed according to the themes of the research questions: attitudes, relationships, and expectations. The findings of this process are reported in detail below.

Attitudes

In Conceptual and Theoretical Framework, I explained the content and mechanism of Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence. The way the model is used in this research was reviewed in Conceptual and Theoretical Framework. As the aim of this study is to illuminate the attitudes of the research participants toward their technical intern trainee co-workers, the findings reported here concentrate on the 'attitudes' layer of Deardorff's model: specifically, 'Respect', 'Openness and withholding judgment', and 'Curiosity and discovery' (Deardorff, 2006). These terms were used as codes, labeled 'Valuing other cultures', 'Withholding judgment', and 'Tolerating ambiguity' respectively.

These labels reflect the way the attitudes are defined by Deardorff (2006) and were also deemed to be more intuitive for use in the coding process for this project.

The coding process revealed significant individual variation among the participants. Although the same base questions were used for each of the semi-structured interviews, the content of the discussion with each participant varied widely. The differing backgrounds, experiences, and personal traits of the participants dictated the direction that each interview took. Consequently, while some participants spoke at length about the technical trainees, revealing their thoughts and feelings in relation to the Deardorff model categories, others seemed to be in the process of forming their thoughts on the subject, and therefore had less to say. It is possible that the questions asked in the questionnaires and interviews were unexpected and puzzling to some participants who had never given the subjects any thought, and therefore found them difficult to answer.

Some participants were also more accessible than others in terms of time available to participate in interviews. For example, D1 was willing to spend a significant amount of time speaking about the trainees. Additionally, D1's past employment as a union employee, his experience of foreign cultures, and his strong personal feelings toward the trainees as colleagues meant that he seemed to have spent considerable time forming opinions about the trainees, at both the individual and the systemic levels, and was ready to answer my questions with insightful and detailed answers. On the other hand, participant A5, for example, was less forthcoming with his personal opinions on the trainees and did not seem comfortable discussing the situation of the trainees beyond the workplace. Participant A5 was also noticeably less talkative than other participants; consequently, the data obtained from A5 was significantly less than other participants such as D1.

In this way, the personal traits, accessibility, background, and disposition of the participants were important defining factors in the acquisition of meaningful data. Such variations were also reflected in a simple tally of the number of instances of the attitudes found in the interview data, coded in a deductive approach using the categories in the Deardorff model. 'Instances' refers to the number of times that a participant made a comment that could be interpreted as one of the three attitudes: valuing other cultures, withholding judgment, and tolerating ambiguity. The results of this count are shown visually in Figure 13, to highlight the differences between the participants.

Figure 13

Individual comparisons of instances of attitudes
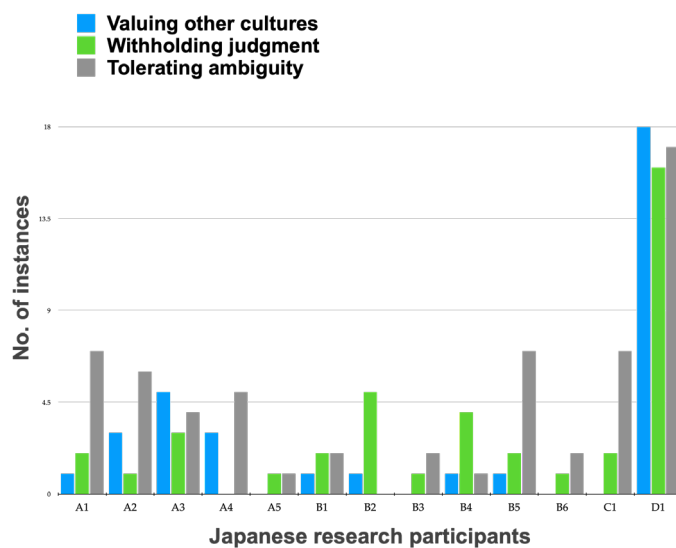
As noted in previous chapters, one of the main aims of this qualitative study is to provide depth and background on the thinking behind responses given in quantitative surveys, which have been the main way used to measure host society sentiment in Japan in much research to date. While reference is made to the number of instances of each attitude found in the data, qualitative analysis of the content of the semi-structured interviews forms the central part of the findings presented below.

Respect: Valuing Other Cultures

Apart from participant D1, 'valuing other cultures' was the attitude seen most infrequently among the participants. There were significant individual differences in the level of interest shown by the participants in foreign cultures in general, and the cultures of the technical trainees in particular. For instance, the two comments below provide an illustrative contrast. Both of the following participants were involved in the selection of technical trainees to be employed by their respective companies, which entailed traveling to Indonesia to interview prospective trainees.

> I wanted to know what kind of place they come from, so [when I was in Indonesia] I asked if there was a mosque nearby that I could visit, even though I'm not Muslim. And someone took me to a mosque. I just really wanted to experience the local culture. (D1)

On the other hand, when asked if he had learned anything about the trainees' country, participant A1 replied "No. I went to Indonesia to select them. So, I don't really have anything else that I want to know about Indonesia."

As with the other attitudes examined here, D1 was an outlier, expressing a strong interest in foreign countries and cultures that was not evident among other participants. When asked if they had learned anything about their trainee co-workers' language or culture, it seemed that such learning is limited to the more overt religious practices of the trainees.

> The biggest thing is religion […] They have to say prayers, and they fast […] I didn't know about any of that, so working together with them, that was surprising

[…] Japanese people aren't very religious, so it made me realize that it's different

in different countries. (A3)

A4 said "I guess I've learned some Indonesian words. I can't really say anything though,"

while B5 commented on language, saying "Vietnamese is difficult. I can't say anything

[…] They say some words to me sometimes, like 'This is how you say this.' But I can't

remember it."

Although some of the participants, in particular those working at Company A, seemed to

have learned a few words of the trainees' language and understood their religious

practices, for the most part cultural exchange seemed to flow in one direction, with the

trainees learning and absorbing the Japanese language and culture. It should also be noted

that most of the participants had limited experience of interaction with foreign nationals

prior to their current employment and said that they did not have foreign friends or

acquaintances in their daily life outside of work. It seemed that, perhaps for this reason,

awareness of the trainees' cultural background is currently limited to a superficial level,

centering on appearance, food, and religion, as indicated in the following comments:

"They [the Vietnamese trainees] try not to get tanned […] They're whiter than Japanese

people […] Apparently over there [in Vietnam] it looks better to have fair skin;" (B4) and

"For dinner, they [the Indonesian trainees] like to eat fried food. They put it all on one

plate and eat it with their hands." (A2)

Participant D1 also spoke about the trainees' religious practices:

It seems like there are different opinions about Ramadan […] Some of them don't

even drink water even if they're working. Apparently from sunrise to sunset, they

can't drink one drop of water […] We're wearing raincoats, and sweating, so I say

to them "Couldn't you just have some water as hydration?" but one of them

completely refuses. (D1)

This understanding of cultural difference was limited for most participants to overt

differences such as appearance and dietary and religious customs; this also appears as a

theme in **Tolerating Ambiguity** (p.116) and is explored further in **Discussion** (p.154).

Notwithstanding this limited awareness of the trainees' cultural background, the

participants were respectful of the more overt elements of the trainees' cultures, such as

food and religion. This was particularly evident among participants working with trainees

from Indonesia. These participants were understanding of the Indonesian trainees' dietary

and religious practices, including those that impacted their work. They were mindful of the

trainees' custom of praying five times a day, fasting during the Ramadan period, and

requiring a room to pray in the workplace. Some participants expressed curiosity in the

ambiguities they found in the level of observance of religious practices among the

Indonesian trainees. Participant A1 was amused by the fact that some of the Indonesian

trainees drink alcohol, and others eat pork, both of which were understood to be forbidden

in the Islam faith. Participant D1 also shared an anecdote on the same subject.

> One day I felt like eating *katsudon* [a Japanese pork dish] so I went and bought
>
> some. I knew they [the trainees] couldn't eat pork, and I knew they liked tempura,
>
> so I bought some tempura for them instead. I made a point of putting the tempura
>
> dishes on top, so that they would eat them, and I left, telling them that I had
>
> bought them lunch. When I came back, the tempura was still there, but my
>
> *katsudon* was gone [laughing]. (D1)

D1 implied that the trainees took his meal knowing that it contained pork and was amused at how the trainees seemed to decide whether or not to adhere to their religious customs as it suited them.

A few participants had also acquired an understanding of less overt elements of the trainees' culture. Participant B3, for example, was knowledgeable about and showed interest in Vietnamese thinking regarding marriage.

> Apparently in Vietnam it's customary for men to get married by age 25 or 26. Any older than that, then they lose their value…So the trainees who first came here are now at the age where they should be married, and they say [if they don't get married] they'll be past their use-by date. It's stricter for men there than for women. (B3)

This was a point of concern for participant B3. As office administrator at Company A, she showed a more holistic interest in the trainees that was not limited to their performance as laborers. This level of interest was also shown by participant D1. These two participants shared the common experience of being involved in administrative work related to the trainees, and consequently had a greater knowledge of the trainees' background and circumstances than the other participants, who interacted with the trainees primarily as co-workers.

The acceptance of religious and cultural traditions also came up in discussions with Indonesian trainees. They spoke openly about difficulties in adhering to Muslim dietary requirements. One trainee said "We're Muslim, and it's hard to find halal food […] but if we're hungry and there's no halal food, we just have to eat the [non-halal] food that's here." (Indonesian trainee, Company A).

There were also some discussions with Indonesian trainees about the culture shock experienced when they first arrived.

It was really surprising for us Muslims to see alcohol being sold at convenience stores […] because that would never happen in Indonesia, selling alcohol and porn magazines at a convenience store […] that was surprising, because those things are forbidden in Indonesian culture. (Indonesian trainee, Company D)

Apart from such surprises and challenges, the Indonesian trainees interviewed expressed satisfaction with the environment provided for prayers and other religious customs. The trainees at Company D said that the break times fortunately coincided with their prayer times, and they had no difficulty in adhering to their customs. They said that their meals at work were prepared by Japanese staff in accordance with their dietary requirements and expressed gratitude for the efforts made on their behalf. They also spoke about their anticipation of mosques being planned for construction in Ishinomaki City, and also possibly in an area not far from their worksite. The mosque was seen by the trainees not only as a place for prayers, but also a chance to meet with other people in a nearby location.

Openness and Withholding Judgment

The 'Withholding judgment' attitude was seen slightly more frequently in the interview data than 'Valuing other cultures.' For this trait also, there were considerable individual differences evident. The Japanese participants had worked with trainees for at least one year in all cases. Most had worked with them for from five to ten years. In other words, one could say that the participants in this case study had all had a significant amount of

time to get used to the trainees. Analysis and conclusions reached here are based on this assumption.

It was clear from the interviews that participants were making efforts to understand and accept the cultural differences that they perceived when working and interacting with the trainees. As noted in the section **Respect: Valuing Other Cultures** (p.108), many of the participants appeared to accept the Indonesian trainees' religious and dietary practices, even though they were not religious themselves. This was expressed by participant D1, who said "I don't really know anything about Islam, or religion. But I can tell it's important to [the trainees], so I would never tell them that they can't do it." (D1) Most of the participants also displayed an awareness of what might be termed the 'politically correct' way to answer questions on cultural differences. Discussions of trainee customs that were very foreign to the Japanese participants were discussed with respect and in most cases, a non-judgmental tone. Nonetheless, some participants phrased their comments on the trainees' cultural and lifestyle differences in a way that suggested that they may have certain opinions or judgments about the trainees and their cultural practices. Participant B4, for example, frequently emphasized that although he himself accepted the cultural differences, he imagined that it might be more difficult for other people to accept without judgment.

> They do things like cooking pigs, right? You know, it's on tv sometimes. I think that's fine. If it's in a rural area. Personally, I'm ok with it. It's just like a barbecue. But if they did something like that in the city […] And maybe they want to eat frogs. There might be Japanese people who eat frogs too, but it's rare. I don't want to eat them myself, but if someone wants to, that's ok. As long as it's in a rural

area. If they did it in the city, that would become news. And I don't think people would like it. (B4)

In this way, participant B4 tended to frame negative opinions of the trainees and their lifestyle as opinions perceived to be held by others, such as his family members or residents in the local community. He seemed to want to appear open and non-judgmental toward the trainees, but the fact that he raised certain behaviors of the trainees as open to criticism by others seemed to indicate that he may hold the same views.

The true feelings of participant A2 on the eating habits of the trainees were also slightly unclear: she spoke about how she had become used to their customs, but there was some ambiguity in her tone as she said "They eat with their hands. I guess that's more comfortable for them. They like that better than sitting here with everyone eating with chopsticks. They don't have a table; they just sit anywhere. Eating with their hands [laughing]." (A2)

In this part of the discussion, it was difficult to tell whether A2 was judging the trainees for this eating style, and to what extent she was accepting of this custom. She was clearly surprised by the different eating style of the Indonesian trainees, and as the person in charge of the company dining hall, this was a difference that had relevance to her work. She spoke of the fact that significant amounts of food that she had prepared were left uneaten at dinner in the dining hall because the trainees preferred to eat in their own way, in their dormitory rooms. Although she said that she did not raise this as an issue, her feelings on the subject were unclear.

Other participants spoke more openly about their disapproval of some of the trainees' cultural and lifestyle practices.

As soon as they finish work, they play music really loudly. It's fine here, but there must be some people who don't like it […] Personally I think it's ok. But I wouldn't like it if they did it near my house. (B4)

They really specialize in cooking oily food. So they use oil every day, filling up the frypan with oil, and they fry chicken and the oil goes everywhere. (B3)

Apparently in Vietnam they eat dogs and cats. When they first arrived, I told them that they can't eat pets here [laughs] That's the custom here. We don't eat our pets. (B5)

Discussions on the way the trainees look after their living environment in the company dormitories also were often openly critical. Grievances were expressed over daily living habits, including garbage disposal and the cleanliness of shared areas in the dormitories.

Keeping their room clean, that's the only problem. […] No matter how many times we tell them. […] It's not that they don't do it at all. They say 'Ok, ok'. But the office people have to keep telling them off about it. (B1)

Participant D1 also spoke about the way the trainees' looked after their living quarters, saying "I tell them – *you* might be okay with this, but you need to think about keeping it clean for the trainees coming after you. I say this, but I end up cleaning up after them anyway." (D1)

In relation to the many grievances raised by the Japanese participants about the trainees' need to follow social rules such as garbage disposal, one of the trainees made the following observation:

Before I came to Japan, I had an image of Japanese people as always following the law or the rules. But living here, I realized that's not the case. For example, people don't always throw the garbage out in the right way or in the right place.

Sometimes if there's no one around, they throw it all over the place. (Vietnamese

trainee, Company B)

The Japanese participants had different views on the reasons that the trainees did not

maintain clean and tidy living areas. Some assumed that it was due to cultural differences,

others thought that the fact that the trainees were male was the reason. Some expressed

their frustration in a forgiving tone; others were more openly exasperated. This was a

common issue that was raised in almost all interviews and was an area that showed that the

Japanese participants had different interpretations of the trainees' behavior. The fact that

the trainees in all cases were living in company-run dormitories meant that this was a

matter that could not be left unresolved. Consequently, company management and relevant

employees found themselves involved in observing and managing the daily lifestyle of the

trainees outside of work, and this seemed to lead to the formation of strong opinions on the

subject.

Tolerating Ambiguity

Compared with the other two attitudes of 'valuing other cultures' and 'withholding

judgment', the third attitude of 'tolerating ambiguity' is interpreted here as a more general

ability to accept difference; in this case, difference as represented by the presence of the

foreign trainees. Japan has a small foreign population with relatively little contact to date

between Japanese and foreign residents (ILO, 2019); for this reason, the ability to tolerate

situations where outcomes are not as predictable as they would be if only Japanese people

are involved may not be developed among large sections of the native population. As noted

above, while almost all Japanese participants had not interacted with foreign residents prior

to meeting the trainees, they had all been working with the trainees for a number of years.

It is assumed that a certain tolerance for ambiguity had been developed over that time. To gauge how this ability may have developed, the participants were asked about their initial impressions of the trainees when they first encountered them: many indicated that they had little knowledge or expectations of what kind of people the trainees may be: "My first impression…well, I hadn't really had any contact with foreigners before, so…I thought 'Oh wow' […] Meaning, like, 'Here they are' […] They really stood out." (B2) Participant A2 said "I thought they seemed kind of quiet […] They're a bit different from Japanese people." (A2)

Other participants also expressed their surprise at first encountering the trainees:

The first thing I thought is that they work really hard […] Maybe I was surprised. I thought they were tough […] Most of them had never worked before they came here, right? So I think this was probably their first job. But they're really fast learners. (B4)

I didn't know anything about Indonesia. I knew about China or South Korea, but I didn't really have any idea about Indonesia […] They [Indonesians] used to be on big fishing boats. So I'd seen them before […] But I didn't have any chance to talk to them […] They looked poor. (A4)

During the interviews, the participants spoke about how they gradually became used to the trainees; in other words, how they had become accustomed to the difference and ambiguity caused by their presence in various ways. For example, participant A4 spoke about overcoming linguistic challenges in the workplace.

It was hard when they first came, but after about six months you get to know them, like, their personalities […] And the trainees who are senior know the work,

so I can say something in Japanese to them and they interpret what I said to the

new guys. (A4)

Other participants also talked about ways they handled the ambiguities inherent in the

multilingual workplace in the following comments: "When they first come, we

communicate using gestures. Then we just show them how to do the work;" (B6) "I think

we're able to communicate on the job […] I use gestures to make them understand." (A5)

Other participants shared various methods that they use to communicate: "I think the

foreigners are watching the expression on the Japanese people's faces. Because they can't

understand what we're saying […] So I try to always have a smile on my face,"(B5) with

some expressing mild frustration:

> They couldn't understand at first, so I would do things like write it in *katakana*
>
> [phonetic alphabet], or use gestures, or actually show them what I was trying to
>
> say. I'd bring it to them and say "This is dirty" […] Now they know the Japanese
>
> word for 'dirty' very well [laughing]. (B3)

Participant C1 also spoke of the adjustments she needed to make to communicate with the

trainees, compared with communication with other Japanese co-workers. She spoke at

length about the difficulties of interacting with the foreign trainees in her workplace.

> There are communication issues. For example, something that Japanese people
>
> would understand straight away, it's different when you're trying to communicate
>
> quickly [with the trainees] …If it was a Japanese person, you could say "You
>
> should do it like this, not like that" and they would say "Ok, like this, right?" […]
>
> But because we don't speak the same language, when you say to them [the
>
> trainees] "You do it like this" they think they're being told off. (C1)

Participant C1 had given the communication issues some thought, concluding that her advice was not welcome because the trainee in question had worked at the company longer than her. She was also keenly aware of the ease with which Japanese people are able to communicate with each other using vague expressions, based on what is assumed to be common understanding. This kind of linguistic self-awareness was also shown by participant A1, in comments about language difficulties when the trainees first arrived.

> Where we struggled was…the Indonesians come to Japan. And they study Japanese before they come. But they study *standard* Japanese. Everyone here speaks in a strong dialect, right? So, we *think* we're speaking in standard Japanese, but they have no idea what we're talking about [laughing]. (A1)

Participant A1 was impressed with the trainees in many ways, including their hard work on the Japanese language, but expressed frustration with the system that brought them to Japan, in that it did not fully prepare them for the linguistic challenge of a strong dialect. In this way, the ambiguity of the multilingual workplace was a common theme in the interviews. The Japanese workers had devised creative ways to overcome the linguistic barrier and all explained that there were no major language issues in the workplace at the current time, due to the methods they used and also the presence of senior trainees who could act as interpreters when required.

Language and communication issues also featured as an important theme in conversations with the trainees. As noted by Japanese participant A1, the trainees spoke about their struggles getting used to the Japanese spoken by the Japanese workers.

> In the first year, it's listening comprehension [that is difficult]. People here sometimes speak very fast, so we need to ask the senior trainees to translate what they said […] But even if listening gets better, it's still hard to answer people. I

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need to study more […] and dialects are difficult. Even after six months…

(Indonesian trainee, Company A)

I'm used to the work now, so that's ok, but I just can't speak Japanese. During

break time, I have no idea what everyone is talking about. I want to talk to people

about my life here, but I can't and that's a problem for me. (Vietnamese trainee,

Company B)

The Indonesian trainees at Company D also said that their Japanese study prior to coming

to Japan was not useful for understanding the regional dialect. Apart from Japanese

language issues, some trainees also spoke about the difference in communication styles.

One trainee said "Even when Japanese people have something they don't like or something

that they're dissatisfied with, they don't say so honestly. So it's hard to know exactly what

Japanese people are thinking. And that's a little scary." (Vietnamese trainee, Company B)

Separately from the language issues, participant B3 also spoke about her initial mindset on

accommodating the presence of the trainees in the workplace.

It was my first time working with foreigners, so I was very aware of the fact that

they are not Japanese and that they'll have different ways of doing things. So I

knew that we shouldn't have the same expectations of them as we have of Japanese

workers. Things will naturally take more time, for example. (B3)

This comment by participant B3 indicates cultural self-awareness: the ability to view

Japanese culture and customs in relative terms, and to accommodate the foreign trainees

accordingly.

Other participants made comments that indicated that while they recognize the

ambiguity and difference brought by the trainees, they do not necessarily accept it. For

example, participant B5 indicated that he saw his role as Living Guidance Instructor

(*seikatsu shidoin*) to teach the trainees the 'right' way to do things to fit in to life in Japan: "Their customs are different from Japanese people. So as expected, at first [there were issues with] cleaning, and walking inside with shoes on. That happened at first, but now they do things right" (B5). He also said:

> I look at all their posts on Facebook. As much as I can […] Not as part of my job, and not really like watching over them, but I just check so that I can tell them the right and wrong thing to do. (B5)

Related to this, the same participant B5 indicated a preference for 'Assimilation' in his responses to the questionnaire survey on acculturation expectations of the trainees (reported in detail in **Expectations**, p.137). This differentiation between the recognition of ambiguity on one hand and the acceptance of ambiguity and difference on the other was also observed among other participants. For instance, participant B3 used expressions to suggest that the trainees needed to 'fix' their daily living customs.

> From their perspective, I think getting used to the way we live in Japan was probably the hardest. Daily living customs are the most important thing for people so understandably, even when we tell them "This is the way we do things here", they just couldn't get it right for a long time. (B3)

As indicated above, participant B3 displayed cultural self-awareness, was understanding of the difficulties the trainees experienced in settling into life in Japan and was sympathetic toward the difficulties faced by the trainees. At the same time, she clearly felt strongly that the trainees needed to comply with the Japanese way of life because they were living in the company-owned dormitory, and it had to be looked after. At the companies surveyed, all trainees lived in company dormitories and for this reason their private lifestyle came under scrutiny by company management and the respective Living Guidance Instructors.

Discussions on daily living practices highlighted a clear difference in the level of tolerance for workplace behaviors, and the level of tolerance for behaviors outside of work. This is reported in detail in the **Expectations** section, p.137.

In summary, it was evident that all participants had changed and adjusted in various ways to deal with the ambiguities and difference caused by the presence of the foreign trainees in the workplace. For many of the participants this seemed to be understood as a natural matter of course that they had not necessarily thought about deeply until asked in the interview. Others, such as participant C1, were more aware of their own change. Participant C1 articulated her own internal process, indicating the clear changes in her mindset toward foreign trainees as time passed.

> I had some feeling in the back of my mind, not exactly discriminating against [the trainees], but I was thinking 'Should I be working with these people? From China? Myanmar?' I wasn't necessarily thinking that they were going to steal things or stab people or do bad things like that, but I was thinking 'Is it ok for me to be working with them?' So I had some kind of fear at the start, but there's been nothing like that here for years, so now I'm ok. (C1)

At the time of the interview, participant C1 had only been working with the trainees for one year. Her descriptions of changes in her thinking over that time, her feelings toward the trainees, and her wish to interact more with the trainees outside of work indicate that she had become accustomed to the presence of the trainees in both the workplace and the community. Participant D1 also expressed the following view on how the trainees are now seen by employers and co-workers: "I don't think the people employing the trainees see them as foreigners anymore. I think they're just seeing them as individual people." (D1)

However, at the same time, there were also indications that while some participants were comfortable with the ambiguity coming from the trainees who they know and work with, they are less comfortable with foreign residents or workers who are not trainees. Participant A3 mentioned that "I only know Indonesians, so I don't know what other [foreigners] are like […] That's different. I guess they act the same way but […] I haven't seen them so I don't know." (A3)

Participant B4 expressed his feelings more explicitly on the subject of different 'categories' of foreigners: "White foreigners are like 'rare *pokemons'*, from Japanese people's perspective […] Maybe we're intimidated by them. We stare at them. […] But if I see people from Vietnam when I go shopping, it's completely fine." (B4) Participant B4 said that he came across many Asian residents during shopping trips and felt comfortable in their presence. He contrasted this with the uncomfortable feelings he experienced when encountering small numbers of Western foreigners at the shopping center. While the 'rare *pokemon'* analogy was very amusing and was probably intended to be so, the contrast presented by B4 between his comfort with Asian residents and discomfort with Western residents seems to indicate that his contact and relationships with foreign residents are limited and that difference is predominantly interpreted at the superficial level of appearance. This is explored further in **Discussion** (p.154) in relation to Hall's (1976) Iceberg Model of Culture.

Participant C1 also spoke about the presence of foreign trainees outside of the workplace, in her residential area.

> Recently, wherever you go, whether it's shopping, or in the area I live, […] there
>
> are Chinese and Vietnamese people around. So I was already used to having

people like that around, and it didn't feel surprising or unnatural that they were at work. (C1)

Participant C1 explained how the number of foreign residents in her area had grown over the years, including foreign English teachers at her child's school and a relative who had married a foreign national. She said that compared to the past when people would stare at foreigners as a rarity, she now found that there were foreign residents within her immediate sphere of activity. While C1's descriptions of tolerating the ambiguity of foreign residents were framed in a more positive way than B4, it was evident that her experience and interpretation of difference was also limited to surface-level elements such as appearance.

Relationships

This study also aimed to understand what kind of relationships are being formed between the Japanese participants and their technical trainee co-workers, both at work and outside the workplace. This was based on the assumption that welcoming attitudes could lead to friendships, and vice-versa. Information on relationships was gathered through discussions with the Japanese participants and the trainees during their respective semi-structured interviews, and through observations made during the three fieldwork trips. Such observations were particularly useful for understanding how the Japanese workers and trainees interacted with each other, including the content of comments made to each other, the nature of the interactions, nonverbal communication cues used, and the general atmosphere of the workplace at such times. The data thus gathered is synthesized and presented here.

Relationships in the Workplace

The first noticeable feature of the relationships between the Japanese participants and the technical intern trainees was that there was a strong familial atmosphere. This was initially evident in the way that the participants referred to the trainees in the interviews, using the Japanese '*ko*', meaning 'child' or someone to whom one expresses affection or affinity. The other term commonly used in reference to the trainees by almost all participants was '*kawaii*', also indicating affection. Interviewees were asked about the reason for using such terms. One participant said "When you're with them all the time, you become attached to them. They really become like your own kids […] There's not something in particular that causes that feeling – attachment just naturally forms" (A1) while another explained that "It's because they're at the age where they could be my own sons. And on top of that they're living far from their own parents. I think that's why." (B3) The affection shown toward the trainees was often positioned in an understanding of the circumstances that had brought them to Japan and their current situation. Participant D1 commented that "They're putting up with a lot, working every day here, and then sending money back home […] we see them working really hard to fulfill their dreams." (D1) Participant C1 had also given their situation some thought, saying

> If they were back home, they wouldn't be experiencing any of the daily life issues they have here. The dormitory that they live in…they share the toilet and the bath, and they have to take turns cooking […] When we were their age, we didn't have to worry about things like that. They've come here to make a living, so I feel sorry for them. (C1)

The familial ties between Japanese employees and their trainee colleagues were not limited to the language used. In their discussion of the trainees and the way they live in

Japan, many of the participants seemed to adopt a 'parental' stance. This was particularly pronounced among the participants who are involved in overseeing the dormitories where the trainees live, and more noticeable among female participants. This parental stance also included negative opinions on the way the trainees look after their living quarters. The complaints aired by many of the participants on the lack of cleanliness of the trainee dormitories was noted in the section **Openness and Withholding Judgment** (p.112).

At the same time, participants also seem to be adopting a 'protective parent' role toward the trainees. This was observed in three streams of conversation during the interviews. The first was in reference to recent media reports of crimes committed by technical intern trainees elsewhere in Japan. Participants demonstrated an understanding of the background factors that may have led to such crimes and expressed frustration at what they viewed as unfair reporting in the media on matters related to the trainees. They expressed their frustration with the media, saying "I think there must be people who get a negative view (of the trainees) just because of (what they see on the news)" (B4) and

> When people on television make a big deal about something to do (with the trainees), older people who see that believe it. […] The media needs to report on the background first before they talk about some trainee running away. Otherwise, it just seems like the trainees are always in the wrong. (B3)

Media reports of crimes committed by other trainees elsewhere also came up in interviews with trainees. Most of the trainees said that such reports had no impact on them or their relations at work. However, there were some conflicting opinions on this point. While one trainee commented that "As a Vietnamese person, it's embarrassing. Because it affects other Vietnamese people who've done nothing wrong" (Vietnamese trainee, Company B), another said "I don't think [the media reports] impact us here. Sometimes when Japanese

people at work talk about Vietnamese people doing bad things, I point out that there are bad Japanese people too. But we're just joking around." (Vietnamese trainee, Company B) Another trainee was more specific about the damage caused by such reports:

> If the Japanese people find out about things like that, it's embarrassing […] Trainees come from all different regions, like Cirebon, or Subang, or Bandung, so for example say a trainee from Subang steals something, the school in Subang could be blacklisted, and Japanese will stop accepting trainees from that school […] That could happen. So that would mean that trainees coming later also suffer. (Indonesian trainee, Company D).

The sense of protectiveness toward the trainees was also shown in comments related to reports of inhumane treatment of trainees elsewhere. Participants expressed disbelief at such treatment and empathy toward the trainees involved. Participant A1 had difficulty in understanding how people could treat the trainees inhumanely, saying "I think it's natural to develop affection for the trainees. I cannot understand how those people [in media reports] could act like that. I just don't get it." (A1)

The third area where participants seemed to take on the role of protective parent was in relation to negative attitudes toward the trainees by members of the wider community. There was willingness by some participants to come to the defense of the trainees in the face of seemingly unwarranted opposition to their presence in the local area.

> Around two years ago, someone came and told us that they (the trainees) had been trampling on their garden. So I said to them, if that happens again, please take a photo of the shoe print. Then I'll check to see if it matches with our trainees' shoes. They never contacted me again. (B3)

Participant D1 also said that "There's really only a small number of trainees who actually do anything wrong. Other than that, I feel like there are a lot of cases where the Japanese side are misunderstanding the situation." (D1) Participant B3 explained how the company needed to defend the trainees from negative community attitudes:

> When they [the trainees] go to the convenience store now, the shop people talk to them. So everyone's used to each other. But there were many times before where we [the company] had to stand in front of them with a barricade to protect them from the community. Because people were saying things like "We're anxious, we don't want foreigners here, we don't want them to take things". Each time, we had to say "They're not the kind of people who do things like that". (B3)

In this way, there was evident tension about how the trainees are viewed and treated by community members, with participants taking on a protective tone yet at times also expressing concern about trainees' behavior. This was particularly noticeable in the conversations with B3 and D1, quoted above, who related various anecdotes of incidents where they felt the need to protect the trainees from antagonistic community members. It is important to note that many of the participants said that relations with the community have now significantly improved, as community members have evidently become more accustomed to their presence. Compared with other participants, B3 and D1 spoke at length about the need to look after the trainees as people, rather than treating them as simply labor. These two participants also provided concrete examples of incidents where they had defended the trainees. Other participants had more general comments, either because they had not been personally involved in incidents or were reticent to talk about it. This tension between trainees and the community, and the role of Japanese co-workers in mediating such tension, is suggested as a topic requiring further exploration.

The other noteworthy aspect of the relationships between the Japanese participants and the trainees was the difference in how the relationships were described and reported according to gender. Of the four companies surveyed, only Company C employs female trainees. The Japanese participant C1 from Company C is also female. Participant C1 spent much time describing trainee co-workers with whom she had experienced workplace conflict, in addition to speaking about conflict that she had observed between the trainees themselves.

> They have differences of opinion when they're working. Or something happens at the dorm, and it becomes a fight, and then they bring that to work. There were two girls who were getting along when I first started, they used to talk to each other, then […] all of a sudden […] I don't know why, but now they refuse to talk to each other. (C1)

As Company C was the only one of the four companies surveyed this time employing female workers, and as I was only able to interview one employee from this company, it is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding gender differences in relationship-building in this context. It should be noted that one of the Vietnamese trainees at Company A whose wife is also a trainee commented that relations between female employees tended to be complex and problematic. For participant C1, it may also be the case that she felt comfortable opening up to someone of the same sex, and that the male participants were either not in the habit of complaining about their co-workers, or not comfortable doing so. Participants were not asked about this point and questions about gender have therefore not been confirmed. More extensive data and analysis is required to further explore this aspect in greater depth.

Relationships Outside of Work

Relationships with the trainees outside of the workplace had clearly been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of the interviews, large-scale work events or dinners had been stopped. Participants spoke about three main types of interaction with the trainees outside of work: work-related events/parties, smaller dinners, and shopping trips. While workplace events involving management and employees tended to be held once or twice a year as a New Year's party, for example, some participants spoke about more casual dinners with the trainees outside of work, such as "We go once or twice a month. I have to take them shopping anyway. So we go [to dinner] quite a lot." (B5) Others also spoke about social outings:

> Before (the pandemic) I used to go out in Ishinomaki with one of the trainees. He's not here anymore […] There were a couple of them that I used to go out with […] But it wasn't that often. They were here for three years, and we only went out once or twice during that time. (A4)

> On days off I take about five of them out to dinner. That's how many will fit in the car […] We usually go to *yakiniku* [beef restaurant] […] Actually I'd rather take them to a ramen shop…but they always say "we want to eat meat", so what can I do? And it's always me that pays [laughing]. (A3)

It seems that there are one or two Japanese workers at each company who tend to associate with the trainees outside of work. This includes taking them shopping, to the doctor when required, or driving them to Ishinomaki City to meet other friends. Looking after the trainees in their day-to-day life is officially the role of the 'Living Guidance Instructor' (*seikatsu shidoin*); participants A2, A3, A5, B5, B6, and D1 hold this position. These were also the participants who spoke about interacting with the trainees outside of

work. In some cases, it was difficult to tell whether the participants were spending time with the trainees for friendship, or as part of their job. Participants A3 and B5, for example, both spoke about taking the trainees out for dinner after shopping trips or visits to the doctor.

In terms of life outside of work, many of the trainees spoke about the fresh air and quiet countryside, comparing it favorably to the 'noisy' environment they were used to in their home countries. Several trainees also commented on the inconvenience of the location and the need to depend on Japanese co-workers to go shopping or travel outside the immediate area. For example, a Vietnamese trainee gave the following response to explain why he would prefer to live in an urban area:

> [In the city] there are many ways to get around and various different foods, so I could buy anything I want by myself. Here, transportation services aren't convenient and if we want to get something to eat, we can't go by ourselves, we need to ask a Japanese person, and it takes about an hour [to get to the shop], so it's really inconvenient. I don't like having to ask Japanese people favors all the time either. (Vietnamese trainee, Company B).

This comment indicates that while the Japanese participants interviewed spoke about taking the trainees shopping as a natural matter of course and part of their job, from the trainees' perspective the lack of independence in this situation may be uncomfortable.

In addition to the pandemic, there seemed to be other factors preventing the development of relationships with the trainees outside of work. Participant C1, for instance, expressed concern about the trainees' group dynamics.

> Say I want to go shopping, and say I invite one of the trainees because she's easy to talk to, if I ask just one of them to go with me, in the end all the other trainees

might end up bullying that one trainee that I invited. So, sometimes I really want

to ask them out or ask one of them to come shopping with me, but I try not to do

that. (C1)

Given the large number of trainees at Company C and the communication and relationship

issues that C1 was already aware of, it seemed that she hesitated to build any relationships

outside of work for fear of the impact it would have on the trainees themselves and the

work atmosphere. C1 expressed regret about this situation but at the same time displayed

sensitivity toward the trainees' friendships and relations in general at work.

Another factor preventing the development of relationships was evidently the family

situation of some of the Japanese participants. This was expressed by participant B4. He

spoke about the fact that he felt sorry for the trainees and would like to spend more time

with them outside of work if he could.

I don't really see the trainees outside of work. If I bump into them in Ishinomaki

maybe…[…] Sometimes I take them shopping in my car, but not very often. Or I

might ask them to go fishing on our day off […] Because I feel sorry for them.

They probably came to Japan expecting to make Japanese friends. So if all they do

is work, you feel sorry for them right? I'm sure they thought they'd make lots of

Japanese friends. But Japanese people aren't really like that, are they? They kind

of keep to themselves. (B4)

Participant B4 also mentioned that the fact that he has a family means that he cannot spend

very much time with the trainees outside of working hours. This also seemed to be the case

for all the owner/managers interviewed, who said that they did not socialize with the

trainees outside of work except for large company-wide events. It also seemed that the

position of the managers precluded them from developing close relationships with the trainees, in terms of the hierarchical structures of the companies.

Interviews with the trainees also indicated that the trainees do not currently have frequent interaction with Japanese people outside of work. The Vietnamese trainees interviewed spoke of meeting with Vietnamese friends working at other companies, taking trips together, and communicating via social media. However, apart from one Vietnamese trainee and one Indonesian trainee who have made some Japanese friends in Sendai City, almost all trainees said that they did not have any other Japanese friends. Some trainees attributed this to the remote location of the workplace, saying "If it was the city, there are lots of people, so there would be many chances to communicate with people." (Vietnamese trainee, Company B) Another commented that:

> Our work is at sea, and we rarely get to go to other places. We're a little far away from everywhere. When we're at work we speak in Japanese, but when we come home from work we speak in Indonesian, and only see Indonesians (Indonesian trainee, Company A)

Another trainee at Company B said that it was hard to make Japanese friends because there was no-one of the same age as the trainees in the company. He also recognized the importance of developing relationships to improve Japanese language skills, saying "It's important for trainees to talk a lot with Japanese people outside of work, so that we can improve our Japanese." (Vietnamese trainee, Company B)

A trainee at Company D had also thought about the connection between relationships with Japanese people and language skills; he described Japanese language proficiency as a gateway to a more independent life in Japan, where he could communicate with people, understand Japanese law, and start a business. This trainee had made some Japanese

friends introduced to him by Indonesian friends. However, to meet with those friends he needed to travel to Sendai, approximately two hours away. This trainee was motivated to study Japanese and had already passed a lower level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. He was frustrated by the distance and difficulty of meeting with his Japanese friends and used social media to keep in contact with them.

Observations on the cross-cultural relationships forming at the survey sites were informative, but at the same time differed greatly depending on the site. It was not possible to observe Japanese workers and trainees together at all sites, due to timing and the availability of the trainees. The location of the interviews was also a factor. Interviews at Company A, for example, were held in the company cafeteria, in close proximity to staff dormitories. This meant that various employees were passing through the location during the interviews. In contrast, the interviews at Companies A and D were held in the company offices, and Company C requested that interviews be held at the local community center. The variety in interview environments reflects the complexity of conducting surveys of workplaces on site.

Notwithstanding the differences in environment, it was possible to gain some idea of the nature of the relationships between the Japanese participants and the trainees. Company A employs the largest number of trainees of the four companies surveyed, and most of the trainees were present in the cafeteria in which interviews were conducted. There was evidently a friendly camaraderie between the Japanese and foreign workers, shown in the lively and casual atmosphere. They joked with each other, interrupted each other as they spoke, and there was a generally relaxed atmosphere. The Indonesian trainees seemed to tease one of the Japanese participants who was trying to use an Indonesian word they had taught him, for example. By contrast, the first stage of interviews at Company B were

conducted in a relatively tense atmosphere. Although the trainees smiled as they spoke, it

seemed that they were choosing their words carefully and were very aware of the close

presence of their employer, who chose to stay in the room during the interviews.

Unfortunately, there was little opportunity to observe the Japanese and foreign workers

together at Company B, although research collaborators later reported that they observed

the trainees working with other Japanese part-time employees, chatting and making jokes

in a very familiar and friendly manner. Interviews with the Japanese workers at Company

C and Company D were also conducted separately from the trainees, and in the same way

they could not be observed interacting together.

Role of Management in Relationships with Trainees

Management members from Company A and Company B were interviewed as research

participants. Company C's owner/manager was also interviewed to obtain company

information and triangulate data obtained from company employees and trainees. The

owner/manager of Company D was not available to be interviewed. Discussions with

management members and observation of their relations with both Japanese workers and

trainees were helpful in understanding how relationships between these two groups

develop. It became clear that, having employed trainees for a significant period of time,

some of the manager/owners had developed thoughts about the role of the trainees in the

company as well as opinions on the way the trainees should be treated. Participant A1

stated that "I think we have good communication here. No-one has any strange prejudices;

they just treat the trainees in the same way as they would any Japanese junior worker."

(A1) Participant A1said multiple times that he did not feel that the trainees should be

treated any differently from Japanese workers. He expressed shock at media reports of

poor treatment of trainees, saying "It must be the kind of company it is, and the personality of the owner. Because when you're with [the trainees] all the time, you get attached to them. They become like your own kids." (A1)

Participant A1 had a clear policy of treating the trainees with good humor and kindness. Another employee at Company A told me that A1 instructed her to buy ice-cream for the trainees in the hot summer, for instance. Participant A1 did not show any particular interest in the trainees' background or culture, but his policy of fair treatment was clear. As he noted himself, the personality of the owner/manager may be a key factor in the development of relationships with the trainees. A charismatic leader, with a propensity to make jokes, participant A1 seemed to have created a company culture that valued the trainees and made them feel like equal team members.

Company B provides an illustrative contrast, showing how much the atmosphere of a company may be impacted by the stance of the managers. Company B is owned and operated by two brothers, participants B1 and B2. Administration work is conducted by B3, and B5 and B6 are Living Guidance Instructors. Compared with participant A1, participants B1 and B2 did not articulate any particular thoughts on how the trainees should be treated or their position in the company, although they clearly valued them highly as much-needed labor. Participant B1 in particular was cautious in his responses in his first interview. He was wary of answering questions on immigrants in general and insisted on remaining present for many of the interviews with other Japanese workers and the Vietnamese trainees. Consequently, as noted above, the first round of interviews was conducted in a relatively tense atmosphere, with many of the interviewees giving non-committal answers to questions on worker relations and other matters related to the trainees. Company B also seemed to monitor the trainees' dormitory life more strictly than

Company A – this was a major topic of conversation with B3, for example. In subsequent visits to Company B, participants B1, B2 and B3 became more forthcoming and open in their answers. Compared with Company A, it took longer to develop relationships of trust with participants from Company B. Once again, the personality of the managers seemed to be a significant factor.

Interviews with trainees at Company C also tended to be less open than those at Company A. Discussions with trainees from Company C were held at the nearby community center, mainly while the owner/manager was present. These group interviews were conducted in Japanese, as at least one trainee in each group was proficient enough to answer questions and translate for the other trainees. In the same way as Company B, there was some tension felt in interviews with trainees from Company C, who provided cautious answers to my questions. At times it seemed that the Chinese and Myanmar trainees were consulting with each other in their native language on the best way to answer the questions. The owner/manager of Company C was initially hesitant about being interviewed for this project and would not allow me to record our first interview. Although he was happy to have the trainees participate, it took until the third field trip in July 2022 before he consented to a recorded interview. As with Company B, developing relations of trust took a significant length of time. Nonetheless, the trainees were observed talking in a relaxed way with the owner and participant C1 described company relations as 'like a family'.

Expectations

The third question posed in this research is: how do Japanese workers expect foreign residents to adapt to life in Japan? The intention of this question was twofold: to

understand the acculturation expectations of the participants in general, as well as to explore whether the participants have different perceptions toward foreign residents in general compared with the foreign technical trainees they work with. For this reason, the questionnaire used to collect data for this section referred to 'foreign residents' rather than 'technical intern trainees'. It was thought that if there were differences in responses given in the interviews (when the participants were asked about trainees) and the questionnaires (when they were asked about foreign residents), this may indicate that the Japanese participants held different attitudes and expectations toward the trainee co-workers than they did toward foreign residents in general.

Although efforts were made to ensure that the participants understood that they were being asked about their expectations of foreign residents in the questionnaire, it was unclear whether their responses referred to foreign residents, or to trainees. As shown in Table 4 (p.75), the contact that the Japanese participants had with foreign nationals to date was almost solely with the technical intern trainees with whom they currently work. Inevitably, this means that it is likely that the participants were imagining the trainees when answering questions about foreign residents. It is not possible to confirm whether this was the case, and upon reflection this is a flaw of the current survey, in that the original intention was not necessarily achieved. Nonetheless, whether the participants were referring to trainees or to foreign residents in general when answering the questionnaire, they did provide valuable information on how they expect foreign residents to behave and adapt when living in Japan. The findings are reported below.

Expectations as Residents

As described in Conceptual and Theoretical Framework, the questionnaire was designed based on Bourhis et al's (1997) Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM). This model was selected because it examines the acculturation expectations that host society members have towards migrants in addition to the acculturation preferences of migrants. In the questionnaire, participants answered questions on foreign residents' language use, practice of religious and cultural traditions, and intercultural friendships. In response to questions on these topics, they were asked to select the statement that most closely matched their own personal viewpoint, from five choices. The questionnaire was designed so that each of the choices corresponds with one of the acculturation preferences in the IAM, namely: integration, assimilation, segregation, individualism, and exclusionism. The final question (Q6) asked the participants whether they support the increase of foreign residents in their residential area. The results of the questionnaire are provided in Table 8, which shows which category of response each participant selected for each question.

Table 8

Acculturation expectations questionnaire responses*

Partici-pant	Q1*	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
A1	Exclusion	Individualism	Individualism	Individualism	Integration	Yes
A2	Assimilation	Assimilation	Individualism	Assimilation	Individualism	N/A
A3	Integration	Individualism	Individualism	Individualism	Individualism	Yes
A4	Integration	Integration	Integration	Integration	Integration	N/A
A5	Integration	Assimilation	Integration	Assimilation	Integration	Yes
B1	Individualism	Individualism	Segregation	Individualism	Individualism	N/A

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
B2	Integration	Individualism	Individualism	Individualism	Individualism	Yes
B3	Integration	Integration	Integration	Assimilation	Integration	Yes
B4	Exclusion	Individualism	Individualism	Individualism	Individualism	Yes
B5	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation	Yes
B6	Integration	Integration	Individualism	Integration	Integration	Yes
C1	Assimilation	Assimilation	Integration	Assimilation	Integration	Yes
D1	Integration	Individualism	Integration	Individualism	Integration	Yes

*Question topics (full questionnaire is provided in Appendix B):

Q1: language use (Japanese/home language)

Q2: home language use (public/private)

Q3: practice of religious and cultural customs (Japan/home culture)

Q4: practice of religious and cultural customs (public/private)

Q5: friendships (monocultural/intercultural)

Q6: support for increase in foreign residents

The IAM was explained in detail in **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework** (p.37). As noted there, Bourhis et al (1997) define the 'Integration' and 'Individualism' expectations as welcoming attitudes toward migrants. Conversely, the 'Segregation', 'Assimilation', and 'Exclusionism' expectations are defined as non-welcoming attitudes. In the light of the aim of this research to explore whether the attitudes of the Japanese participants are welcoming or non-welcoming to foreign trainees and foreign residents, here I compile the results in accordance with these designations.

As may be seen in Table 8, the Integration and Individualism expectations accounted for the largest number of responses, at 36.9% each. This result is in line with prior research on

host society acculturation expectations, which have tended to find that Integration and Individualism are common preferences among host society members (Montreuil et al, 2004; Te Lindert et al, 2021). These were followed by Assimilation, at 21.5% of responses. Responses corresponding to the Exclusion and Segregation expectations were 3% and 2% respectively.

To understand the ratio of welcoming responses versus non-welcoming responses for each question, the responses associated with the Integration and Individualism (welcoming) expectations were aggregated, and then compared with the aggregation of responses associated with the Assimilation, Segregation, and Exclusionism (non-welcoming) expectations. The results are shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14

Ratio of welcoming to non-welcoming responses
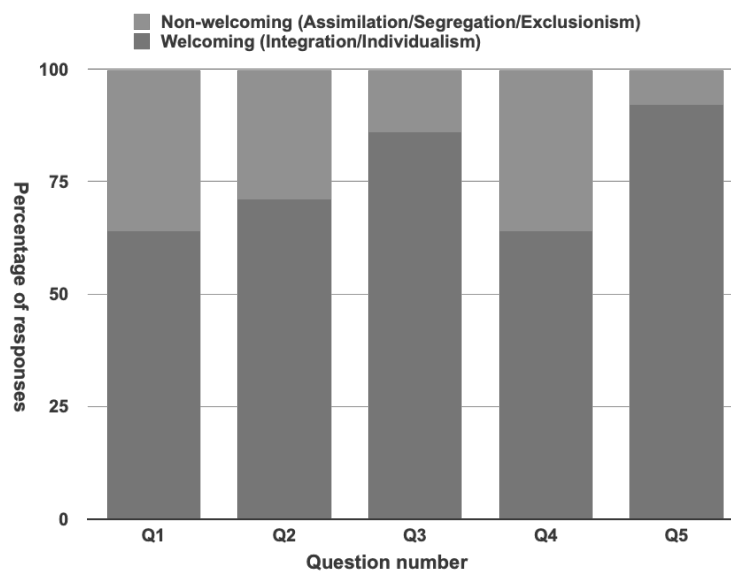
Although there is a wide range (64-92%), it was found that the majority of participants had welcoming attitudes for all of the questions. Non-welcoming attitudes were indicated for a minority of the participants, ranging from 8-36%, depending on the question. An examination of the responses for each question shows that the largest number of non-

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welcoming responses were for Q1 and Q4. Q1 asked the participants for their views on the language proficiency of foreign residents, to find out whether they expected foreign residents to be proficient in Japanese, or their home language, or both. In response to this question, two of the participants selected the option corresponding with Exclusionism, which stated that they did not believe foreign residents could ever attain proficiency in the Japanese language. Three other participants selected the option corresponding with Assimilation, which indicated that they thought that it is more important for foreign residents to be proficient in the Japanese language than their home language.

These results were generally corroborated by findings in the semi-structured interviews, where some of the participants expressed concern about the Japanese language skills of the trainees. Many of the participants said that communication was not a crucial issue in the workplace, due to the use of gestures and senior trainees acting as interpreters for trainees with little Japanese language ability. However, when asked further about their responses to the questionnaire on this topic, it became clear that, understandably, the further development of Japanese language ability was seen as crucial to workplace communication and relations with the trainees. Moreover, for some of the participants, lack of Japanese language ability seems to present a barrier toward acceptance of the trainees outside of work. For example, a participant who selected the Assimilation response said "(I think they shouldn't use their home language) because I don't understand them. I can't speak Indonesian. And I want them to speak in Japanese." (A5)

One of the participants who chose the Exclusionism option was firm in his belief that it would be impossible for the trainees to develop their Japanese to a proficient level:

> I think it's impossible (for the trainees to become fluent in Japanese). It might be
>
> possible if they lived in the same dorm as the Japanese workers […] but they live

all together in the Indonesian dorm and they speak in Indonesian. And we don't

understand Indonesian. (A1)

Participant B4, who also chose Exclusionism for this question, had a fatalistic attitude

toward the language skills of the trainees.

I thought that we wouldn't be able to communicate with them, but they study

Japanese, so there's no major problem. But actually, there are times when they

really just don't understand […] and at those times I give up […] There are things

that we just can't communicate, like subtle nuances. (B4)

Participant B4 said that it was frustrating for him when his Japanese could not be

understood by the trainees.

The other question with a relatively high ratio of non-welcoming responses was Q4.

This question asked the participants for their opinion on the practice of foreign residents'

cultural and religious customs; specifically, whether they thought it was acceptable for

foreign residents to practice such customs in public, or whether they should be kept to the

private sphere. In answer to this question, five of the participants selected the Assimilation

option, indicating that they believe foreign residents should only practice their religious

and cultural traditions in private while in Japan. This result contrasted with the findings

from the interviews, where most of the participants expressed understanding and

acceptance of the Muslim trainees' religious customs, even in cases where the practice of

such customs took place at work. In fact, in the interview discussions, it seemed that many

of the participants had not thought deeply about the long-term impact of the settlement of

foreign residents in the region. For instance, when asked a hypothetical question about a

mosque being built in the neighborhood, two of the participants immediately answered:

"Sure, I don't see why not, as long as it's not hurting anyone" (B2) and "I think it's fine. I don't think we'd discriminate against that." (B5)

These two participants answered this question in a very quick, casual way that conveyed the impression that their response was automatic and not carefully considered. It seemed that it may have been the first time that either of these participants had thought about the possibility of the long-term residency of foreigners such as the trainees, and what kind of impact this could have in the community. It also seemed likely that it was difficult to imagine the significant cultural change that could result. It was unclear if these participants had been able to form a specific image of what the area might look like with a mosque; when this question was asked, they did not spend time trying to imagine the situation. There were other contradictions between the responses given in the questionnaires and data collected from the semi-structured interviews. On this point, it is instructive to look at the questionnaire data organized by participant (Figure 15).

Figure 15

Ratio of welcoming and non-welcoming responses by participant
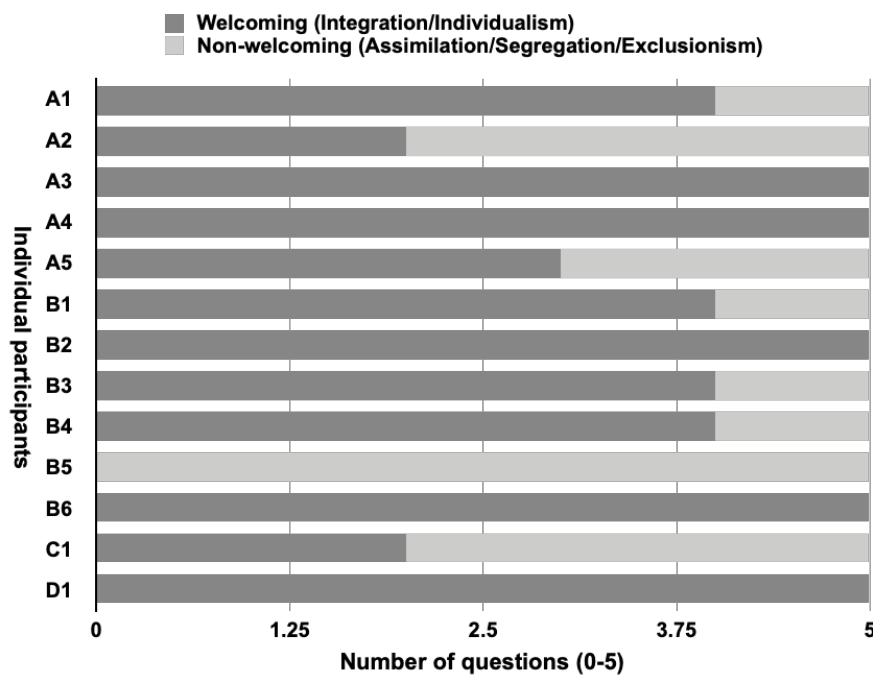
For example, Figure 15 shows that participant A4 indicated a welcoming attitude in his response to all the questions. However, he declined to answer the final question regarding increases in foreign residents in his residential community. When asked about this, he said that there had been some crimes attributed to trainees that had occurred in his local area the previous year, and for this reason he could not support the increase of foreign residents in his area. Another case of contradictory data is provided by participant B5. Figure 15 shows that this participant gave non-welcoming responses in the survey, choosing the Assimilation response for all questions. Actually, participant B5 was observed to have the closest relations with the trainees at Company B. He fulfilled his role as Living Guidance Instructor by ensuring he was in close contact with the trainees on social media and took them shopping, but also joined the trainees in social events such as birthday parties and held strong views on the importance of maintaining friendly communication between Japanese workers and the trainees. His opinions of the trainees also indicated a welcoming attitude, and he repeated a number of times that he tried to create a friendly work atmosphere for them, to facilitate good communication. Participant B5 was very protective and supportive of the trainees, and it is possible that he felt that a strategy of assimilation would be in the trainees' best interest in their life in Japan.

Such contradictions in the questionnaire data and interview findings may in fact indicate that some of the participants held different expectations of the trainees than they do of foreign residents in general. It is also possible that the participants were not prepared to answer questions on topics to which they had given little thought, and as a result their responses vacillated. The questionnaires were given prior to the interviews, and may indicate that the participants were feeling nervous, but were able to speak in a more relaxed and comfortable manner during the course of the interview. Above all, this

discrepancy between survey responses and answers give in the interviews demonstrates the limitations of quantitative data. If the participants had not been probed for an explanation of their survey responses, their intentions may never have been known. This point is explored further in **Discussion** (p.154) and **Conclusion** (p.177).

Expectations as Labor

The findings from analysis using the IAM focused on how the Japanese participants expect the trainees and other foreign residents to adapt to life in Japan. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews also revealed another strand of the expectations theme: expectations as labor. As may be assumed given the labor shortages in the industries concerned, the three owner/managers who were interviewed expressed their appreciation for the technical intern trainees as labor. The need to secure labor was the primary reason given for hiring the trainees. This was also recognized by other participants not in management positions, with all expressing overwhelming satisfaction with the trainees as high-quality labor. Participants frequently commented that the trainees work quickly and intelligently and perform work duties that Japanese employees will not. This was also evidenced in comments by almost all participants that the trainees are 'better' than Japanese employees, such as B1, who said that "[before hiring trainees] We just couldn't find people. Young people just don't come here. Older people might come, but there's a limit to what they can do, compared to young workers." (B1) Participant B2 praised the trainees, saying "If you teach them, they'll do any job […] They're better workers than the Japanese. Seriously. The smart ones are really smart." (B2)

Participant C1 gave specific reasons for the important role of the trainees in the workplace:

Japanese employees have to take days off for various reasons. They might have to

look after elderly parents or attend some family event. Or they might suddenly fall

ill themselves. But the trainees are basically here to work. So personally, that's

been really helpful […] Before, there weren't enough people to cover for me. (C1)

Some participants also referred to the contribution that the trainees are making to the local

economy, articulating an understanding that the trainees are needed not only for their labor

but also to help revitalize the depopulating region. For example, "I really don't think

anyone doesn't want the trainees here. They liven up the town" (C1) and "Japan doesn't

have enough workers, and it's convenient in that way because the trainees pay tax, so they

help the economy." (B4)

    Corroborating the findings from the interviews with the Japanese participants, the

trainees all had generally positive comments about their work. They expressed gratitude

for the guidance provided by Japanese co-workers and praised the Japanese workers for

their attention to detail and passion for their work. The Vietnamese trainees in particular

seemed to have given some thought to the differences between Japanese and Vietnamese

working styles.

> Japanese people are very particular about properly following a process, and they
>
> don't like making mistakes. Compared with them, Vietnamese people work more
>
> flexibly, thinking about how they can save their energy and try to finish their work
>
> as quickly as possible. (Vietnamese trainee, Company B).

Another trainee commented that "When Japanese people work, they put in 100% effort,

they work as hard as they can, and they work quickly. Vietnamese people work more

slowly, and they do other things while they're working." (Vietnamese trainee, Company

B).

Actually, other Japanese participants from Company B praised the Vietnamese trainees for their fast efficient work. The Indonesian trainees said that the hierarchical relations with co-workers were very similar to Indonesia, particularly in fishing work, and not unnatural for the trainees. Indonesian trainees at Company D also spoke about positive relations at work: "There's no discrimination. So we feel welcome. Japanese people make friends quickly, so we can get along with them like friends." (Indonesian trainee, Company D)

There were also some more nuanced views about the hiring of the trainees. Those participants involved in administration and company management spoke of the burdensome paperwork required for the hiring, reporting and management of trainee-related matters. The financial outlay required to hire the trainees - in other words, the question of whether they could be regarded as 'cheap' labor - was a subject of divided opinions. It was evident that employees who are not involved or aware of company management tend to assume that the trainees are cheaper to employ than Japanese workers; this was contradicted by company managers who maintain that total costs are almost the same. One participant expressed the concern that trainees may be prioritized over Japanese employees in the future, expressing a fear of competitive threat.

> I tell young people that if they keep working like they have been then they'll lose their jobs. I'm not sure if it gets through to them though […] If you have one Japanese worker and one Vietnamese worker who are both in their first year, I think, probably, (the Vietnamese) are young and they work hard. In the case of Japanese workers, once working hours are over they just go home. […] So when you compare them, I think the company owner would think that the Vietnamese are better. Because they're cheaper too. (B4)

This concern was contradicted by the following comment by one of the owners of the same company.

> Just because the Vietnamese trainees are better workers than the Japanese, doesn't mean we can just fire someone, it's just not the way we do things in this company. […] When I think about labor costs, it's true, there are probably some workers that we don't need. But we're not the kind of company to say to someone "You're not a good worker so you're fired". (B2)

The above response by B2 may be interpreted as a comment on the nature of the Japanese employment system, which has tended to protect workers from dismissal. B2 suggested that employee welfare takes precedence over rising labor costs; it seems reasonable to assume that other businesses may not be able to afford to protect their Japanese employees in this way. In any case, it seemed that participant B4 quoted above had given some thought to the presence of the trainees and what that presence may mean for the Japanese workers. It became clear that the remaining participants, on the other hand, had not yet formulated thoughts on this topic.

In relation to the high expectations expressed by the Japanese participants toward the trainees as labor, the trainees were clear on their motivations for being in Japan. Almost all trainees stated that they were in Japan to earn money, either to send to their family in their home country, or to bring home with them to start a business upon their return. While many of the Japanese owner/managers who were interviewed expressed a wish for the trainees to stay longer than the typical five years, it was clear that the participants did not view the trainees as permanent workers. This seems to align with the future plans of many of the trainees. Of the twenty trainees interviewed, only one expressed the desire to apply for permanent residency. The trainee in question appeared to have a Japanese girlfriend.

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The majority of the other trainees had a girlfriend or spouse in their home country and spoke of their plans to return after they had saved money in Japan, to marry and start a business or work for their family business. The current temporary status of the trainees appears to match with the expectations and plans of both the Japanese employers and the trainees themselves. The implications of this and other key findings are discussed in the next chapter.

Analysis of the semi-structured interviews also showed that while the Japanese participants were glowing in their praise of the trainees as workers, they were decidedly more hesitant to express approval of the trainees' life outside of work. This was indicated firstly in overtly disapproving descriptions of the trainees' lifestyle in the company dormitories (described in 5.2 Attitudes). Further discussion revealed concern by some participants about the way the trainees socialize or conduct themselves outside of work, including walking around in groups, and playing loud music. For example, one commented that "When there are holidays, they play this Indonesian music really loudly, from speakers. I wonder if that's not going to cause problems." (A3) Others also expressed concern:

> I think they need to follow the road rules. They're not elementary school students, but they need to be told that around here you need to walk in single file, or that in some places you're not supposed to ride your bicycle. There will be lots of different people living here in the future, so I think someone needs to tell them these things, because if someone hits them with their car it's going to be the driver's fault. (C1)
>
> Even though we're in the pandemic, they go out without masks. I tell them when I see them, but I think other people must hate that. […] People who don't know

them at all. People must hate to see them walking around in a group with no masks on. And the trainees we have now don't do this, but the trainees we had before would walk right in front of people's houses, off the road. People used to complain about that a lot. (A2)

It should be noted that such issues were commonly expressed as concern about how such conduct would be received by the wider community. Most participants were eager to emphasize that they themselves accept and understand the way the trainees live and spend their time outside of work but are worried about how it is viewed by other residents. Nonetheless, female participants, in particular, voiced their own personal concerns about trainees living close by, seeming to express a general sense of unease that was not necessarily grounded in any actual incidents. For example, participant A2 stated that she had joined other community residents in opposing the construction of a new dormitory for the trainees in her residential area. Participant C1 also related an anecdote portraying trainees as community members who did not fit in and were the subject of rumors and discussion among Japanese community members. Crime and safety were not explicitly raised as concerns at the present time, but participants referred to trainee-related incidents in the past when trying to explain why they feel a sense of unease, indicating that their concerns are based on fears that the presence of the trainees will adversely impact community safety.

Summary of Findings

Attitudes

Analysis of the attitudes of the Japanese participants toward the technical intern trainees showed that while there are individual differences in terms of awareness of the trainees'

language and culture, there are a number of common trends that were seen across most participants. Respect and tolerance for the trainees' religious customs was uniformly present among participants. The participants also showed wide acceptance for ambiguity in the workplace, as represented by communication challenges, and a willingness to take creative measures to overcome such challenges. Tolerance for ambiguity as represented by the presence and behavior of the trainees in the community, on the other hand, was an area where opinions were less positive. At the same time, the findings indicate that the Japanese workers play an important role as defenders of the trainees in the face of community opposition and negative media reports.

Relationships

The difference in attitudes toward the trainees depending on domain (work vs private) seems to be leading to the formation of complex intercultural relationships. It was evident that some of the Japanese participants find themselves in the delicate position of needing to defend the trainees for behavior outside of the company that they themselves are not always entirely comfortable with. Female participants in particular demonstrated a tendency to distance themselves from the trainees outside of work; male participants were less critical of the trainees' private living customs but nonetheless had limited relationships with the trainees after work beyond responsibilities such as taking the trainees on shopping trips. This lack of social interaction with the trainees outside of the workplace was highlighted in the data from both the Japanese and trainee participants. The development of intercultural friendships that go beyond work relations seem to be curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, the family situation of Japanese workers, and possibly by the

significant age gap between the Japanese workers and the trainees. Several of the Japanese workers interviewed expressed regret at this situation.

Expectations

The discussions on expectations toward the trainees as they navigate life in Japan centered on daily living practices such as cleaning and garbage disposal. Female participants expressed discomfort about the behavior of the trainees outside of work. There was some evidence that expectations of the trainees were modified to a certain extent by the assumption that the trainees are temporary residents in Japan. Moreover, it seemed that the Japanese participants had, for the most part, not thought deeply about the possibility of long-term residency by foreign trainees in the region, understandably, as this is a relatively new development. It was evident that many of the participants still view the trainees as 'guests' in Japan, and for this reason, special allowances were made. The impact of long-term residency by foreign trainees with specific religious and dietary needs may have been difficult for some of the Japanese participants to imagine, especially those who do not work with trainees with such needs (such as those from Indonesia).

Discussion

The current research has explored host society sentiment toward technical intern trainees. Specifically, the overarching aim of this research was to understand whether Japanese workers employed in the fisheries industry in a rural area of Japan have welcoming or non-welcoming attitudes toward their technical intern trainee co-workers. This chapter reflects on the meaning and significance of the findings reported in Findings. Having presented answers to the three research questions in the previous chapter, this chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the interpretation and implications of the findings for the broader issue of host society sentiment toward migrant workers and the role of such sentiment in the integration of migrant workers in Japan. Three key themes were identified as themes that are most pertinent and relevant to these topics:

1. Warmly welcomed as guest workers, but for how long?
2. Migrant integration in Japan: the need for a common understanding
3. Social ties: an opportunity for higher education institutions (HEIs)

The chapter has three aims: to discuss the above themes and their relevance for the topic of host society sentiment and migrant integration; to explain how these themes may be positioned in the existing body of literature; and to offer suggestions for future research and in this field. Recommendations are also offered for educational bodies. The limitations and contributions of this research are discussed in the final chapter.

Key Themes

Warmly Welcomed as Guest Workers, But for How Long?

From the outset of the interviews, it was clear that the trainees at the companies examined here are warmly welcomed for their greatly needed labor. They were

consistently described in positive terms, the participants expressing their gratitude for the trainees' hard work, sincerity, and resourcefulness at work. Owner/managers in particular stressed that the trainees were indispensable and highly valued workers and expressed the desire to continue hiring trainees for the foreseeable future. At the same time, many of the participants displayed a certain sense of Japanese-style hospitality toward the trainees that is typically accorded to guests. There was a keen awareness of the fact that the trainees are not permanent. Owner/managers who were interviewed expressed a desire to extend the stay of the trainees; however, it seemed that permanent residency was not seen as a realistic option because of the trainees' desire to return to their home countries. The treatment of the trainees as 'guests' also seemed to originate from the strict regulations imposed by the TITP system regarding the duties and responsibilities of companies employing trainees. Owner/managers and other participants involved in administrative work for the trainees (A1, B1, B2, B3, D1) showed a strong awareness of how they are required to 'take care' of the trainees, including providing clothes and meals, and taking measures to prevent injury in the workplace. Many of the participants displayed a willingness to defend the trainees from negative sentiment in the community: this may also be seen as a type of 'hospitality' extended to the trainees.

At the same time, this willingness to defend the trainees may also be interpreted as an expression of the in-group/out-group dichotomy that is a feature of Japanese society and culture. Grounded in the collectivistic Japanese culture, in-group and out-group thinking in Japan means that membership of a group such as a family, organization or community is a defining feature of communication norms (Osaki, 2008). In other words, awareness of whether or not a person belongs to one's same group tends to dictate how people communicate and relate to each other. The positioning of the trainees as members of the

same group contradicts their position as 'guests' and complicates the relationships between the Japanese workers and the trainees. The protectiveness that the participants expressed toward the trainees may signify that they identify the trainees as members of their own group (in this case, the company), and thus feel a strong affinity and sense of responsibility toward the trainees working at their company in relation to other companies or the community at large.

This in-group, out-group dichotomy seemed particularly evident in the way participants perceive how the trainees are received in the wider community. Many of the interviewees were quick to defend the trainees against both criticisms from local community members, and against negative reports about trainees elsewhere. Comments on this topic indicated that relations between the trainees and members of the wider community were a cause for concern. Some participants expressed discomfort at unwelcoming sentiment in the community, hypothesizing that the antagonism toward the trainees from community members occurs because such people do not have direct relations with the trainees. In-group membership here is defined as belonging to the company and therefore having direct interaction and experience with the trainees. This membership was made complex for some participants (A2, B3, D1) by the fact that they also seemed to be able to personally relate to feelings of unease and disapproval expressed in the wider community. In other words, the feelings toward the trainees when they do not behave in the same way as other in-group members when outside the company seems to be complicating some Japanese workers' feelings and attitudes toward them. There was clearly a delicate balance between protective feelings toward the trainees and tension felt toward the presence of the trainees in residential communities. Ongoing research will address this aspect and the two-sided

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nature of relationships with the trainees, on the one hand seen as guests, and on the other as family – similar, perhaps, to relatives who have come to visit?

The view of the trainees as guest workers seems to be generally aligned with the intentions of the trainees at this point in time. In fact, one participant (B4) inferred that this non-permanent situation was the most convenient situation for both sides. The overwhelmingly majority of the trainees interviewed expressed no intention to settle permanently in Japan and stated that their aims for being in Japan were primarily to save money for themselves or their family. Many of the trainees had a girlfriend or spouse in their home country; others had a spouse working elsewhere in Japan. Working in Japan seemed to be positioned as a means to an end: a way to earn money to provide for their family or start a business upon their return. While some of the trainees expressed a wish to extend their stay, only one spoke of a wish to obtain permanent residency.

In this way, in this study it was found that the status of the technical trainees as temporary workers is currently satisfactory for both the trainees and the receiving companies and workers interviewed. There was recognition among a small number of the Japanese participants that the presence of the trainees is a long-term phenomenon and that their number may further increase; this was positioned as a situation that they accept and are now generally comfortable with. At the same time, as noted in the previous chapter, one participant (B4) expressed a concern over trainees taking the jobs of Japanese workers: an example of competitive threat that has been the subject of numerous studies elsewhere (Gentry & Branton, 2019; Pecoraro & Ruedin, 2020; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). One other participant (C1) also noted that she had previously unable to find a job because positions had already been taken by foreign workers. The remaining participants did not express feelings of competitive threat toward the trainees when asked indirectly about this topic. In

other words, of the thirteen participants, two expressed concern that the trainees may pose a threat for Japanese workers in the future. While this number is too small to be significant, it is the belief of the author that this is a point worthy of investigation in future studies, especially given the fact that prior research has indicated that a lower education level and unskilled work may be associated with negative attitudes toward migrants (Mazumi, 2016; Mellon, 2019). This is a field that is subject to much ongoing research elsewhere in the world (for example, Abrams & Eller, 2017; Pecoraro & Ruedin, 2020). As Japan shifts to open and expanded immigration of unskilled workers, more fieldwork in Japan on this topic is greatly needed, to illuminate the sentiment of the blue-collar workers working alongside the foreign trainees, as well as the community members in regions the trainees live.

It may be instructive here to examine, as a comparison, the situation regarding immigration in Germany. Various similarities with Japan have been observed, the first of which may be that postwar German leaders were adamant that Germany would not become an immigration nation (Cornelius et al, 1994). As noted in **Introduction** (p.1), this has also long been the stance of successive Japanese governments. Nonetheless, since the acceptance in Germany of guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s, the size of the foreign population has continued to grow. Foreign residents accounted for 13.1% of the German population in 2021, numbering 11.8 million people in total. When residents who have one or more immigrant parent are included, this number rises to 22 million people (Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2022). A review of German immigration policy as a whole is beyond the scope of this dissertation; the postwar German guest worker program is most pertinent to the current research. Postwar industrial demand and the need to secure labor led the German government to conclude agreements with Italy, Spain, Greece, and

Turkey for the recruitment of foreign workers in the period from 1955 to 1961, with subsequent agreements with Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia. This led to an influx of 2.6 million guest workers from these nations by 1973 (Bosswick, 2008). It is evident that both the German population and the migrants themselves viewed their status in Germany as temporary at that time. Germany had a history of rotating foreign agricultural workers from Poland during the pre-war period, and the postwar guest workers were likely positioned in a similar way. However, as these migrant workers were employed in industries that were not attractive to native German workers, their presence was in high demand by employers (Cornelius et al, 1994). This positioning as 'in-demand economic migrants' and temporary 'guest workers' mirrors the current positioning of the technical intern trainees described in this dissertation.

Subsequent policy measures taken by the German government aiming to control the unexpectedly large number of foreign workers and manage the emerging social conflict with the native population resulted in the unintended outcome that many of the guest workers not only chose to stay in Germany, but also to bring their family members to the country as part of the family reunion program. By the 1980s, Germany had thus become a 'reluctant' immigration nation (Bosswick, 2008, p.113). The key question relevant to the current research is how such guest workers have subsequently been received by the German public, and how they have integrated into German society. Reports indicate that migrants from Turkey, comprising the largest group of migrants in Germany, experience significant levels of discrimination. Givens et al (2021) note that since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, Turkish migrants have been increasingly referred to "Muslim immigrants," indicating the growing prominence of religious and cultural rhetoric among sections of host nation policymakers and politicians (Givens et al, 2021, p.180). Abali (2009) also

reports on surveys that indicate that the cultural difference between Turkish and native German residents seems to lead to a feeling of social distance by Germans toward Turkish migrants, with the Muslim faith of migrants raised as a key factor in the perceived poor integration of Turkish migrants into German society (Abali, 2009).

The German example depicts the result of 'reluctant' immigration policies that led, inadvertently, to significant settlement of migrant workers. Guest workers became permanent residents as a result. In the sense that the Japanese government is gradually considering offering permanent settlement opportunities to larger numbers of technical intern trainees (as specified skill workers), the result in Japan may be similar, although the policy process differs. The findings from field work in the current study indicated that the host communities and companies that are receiving the trainees are as yet unprepared, culturally, emotionally, and practically, to accept trainees as 'settled' and permanent members of their community. Rather than rejection of the trainees, there seemed to have been little thought given to such an eventuality. The fact that there were more negative opinions expressed about the behavior of the trainees in the community, outside of work, indicates that expectations in this area are high, and that considerable mindset change may be required to accept non-Japanese cultural and daily living practices as a permanent part of community life. The words of Frisch (1995) that "We asked for workers, but human beings came" (in Strausz, 2019, p.1) seems as true for Japan today as it has in the past for many previous countries and regions accepting foreign workers.

The German example also provides insight into the dichotomy of the economic and cultural value of immigration. The guest workers accepted into Germany in the 1950s and 1960s were welcomed by blue-collar companies in industries that could no longer secure native German workers. As with the trainees in the current research, these foreign workers

were valued highly for their contribution to the economy. The findings in the current study largely corroborate the results of the study by Kage et al (2021), who found that a significantly larger number of Japanese respondents place importance on the economic value of immigrants, rather than their cultural contribution. They define this group as 'exploiters' (Kage et al, 2021). While all participants in this study demonstrated respect for the trainees' religious and cultural customs, it was evident that the trainees' greatest value was their labor: their hard work and their willingness to do jobs that Japanese workers would not do. There was superficial awareness of the trainees' culture or language; the temporary nature of the trainees' employment may be preventing Japanese workers from involving themselves more in the trainees' lives or learning more about their background. In ongoing research, it will be important to build upon findings on the treatment of guest workers in other countries such as Germany, clarify similarities and differences with the Japanese context, and explore how the Japanese public is positioning the growing number of foreign trainees in their workplaces and communities.

It is also essential for researchers and local governments to devise new ways to obtain access and data from a wide range of companies, to monitor changes in the mindset of receiving companies as the trainees' status changes. If more of these foreign trainees choose to extend their stay in Japan and eventually apply for permanent residency, they will no longer be temporary 'guests' that companies are required to look after, but permanent residents who are entitled to the same pay and working conditions as Japanese workers. It seems inevitable that the dynamics of relations with these workers will also change, along with the attitudes of Japanese co-workers who will be then competing with the trainees for jobs on a more level playing field. Prominent scholars in the field such as Nagayoshi (2021) and Korekawa (2019) have produced valuable quantitative data on the

challenges of integrating larger numbers of foreign residents into Japanese society. More in-depth, qualitative studies into the changing mindset of receiving companies and communities are crucial at this important juncture in Japan's immigration history.

Migrant Integration in Japan: The Need for a Common Understanding

The findings in this study indicated that the Japanese participants have high expectations of the trainees in the area of daily life: how they live and conduct themselves outside of work. A number of the participants indicated that they would like the trainees to behave in the 'right' way in their daily life in Japan. This assimilationist type of thinking was evident in the interviews with the Japanese participants in this study. The research participants were uniformly respectful and caring towards the technical trainees, cognizant of their cultural practices and willing to accommodate their religious and cultural needs. At the same time, there seemed to be an unquestioned belief that the trainees held responsibility for adjusting their behavior to do things the 'right' way while in Japan, especially in the way they lived outside of the company. It is important to note that the Japanese participants in this study seemed to see assimilation – or doing things in the same way as Japanese residents - as the best way for the trainees to do well and live problem-free during their time in Japan. In other words, assimilating to Japanese social norms is possibly understood as the option that is in the best interest of the trainees. The lack of experience of the participants living in a different culture also indicates that they may be unaware of the burden placed on migrants in general as they try to adapt to daily life and work in a foreign culture.

As an emerging immigration nation, with a relatively small foreign population and a history of avoiding debate on immigration, Japan lacks the experience in migrant

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integration policies and practices that have been gained by other nations and regions over many decades. The sheer difference in ratio of foreign residents between Japan and a country like Germany means that the proportion of the Japanese native population that actually lives and works in close proximity with foreign residents is markedly different. For this reason, it is understandable that many of the participants in this study had not thought beyond the practical needs of the foreign trainees, nor the long-term impact that their presence may have. The data collected in this study indicated that it may be difficult for people who have lived their lives in a mono-cultural environment to imagine the social and cultural adjustment needs of trainees who choose to settle in Japan in the future. The general lack of knowledge or awareness of deeper elements of the trainees' cultural background - such as communication practices, values, or relationship norms, for example - seen in the findings here may be due to the fact that most of the Japanese participants in this study, having not proceeded to higher education, have had little or no experience of foreign cultures or intercultural education such as that typically offered at universities. It was evident from the interviews that the presence of the trainees was initially opposed by members of the local community and that the trainees had initially been treated with distrust and in some cases fear. This demonstrates that, compared with traditional immigration nations such as Canada or Australia, the presence of large groups of foreign residents is still a relatively recent phenomenon in rural areas of Japan. As a result of this lack of experience, it seems that there may be limited awareness of what the social integration of migrants entails.

Migrant integration is notoriously difficult to define, and there is no clear consensus. Givens et al (2021) provide a list of the data sets that are often used by governments to measure the level of integration of their foreign populations. These include labor market

participation, education, and health, as well as social inclusion, cultural inclusion, and public opinion (Givens et al, 2021). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines integration as "a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live" (IOM, 2020, p.190). This two-way aspect of migrant integration is a common feature of definitions in mainly Western scholarship (OECD & EU, 2018). The IOM (2020) summarizes the three main models of migrant inclusion – assimilation, multiculturalism, and integration - in terms of (a) the degree of adaptation by migrants and (b) the degree of accommodation by the host society. According to this conceptualization, assimilation requires high adaptation by migrants and low levels of accommodation by the host society, while the balance is reversed for multiculturalism, with low adaptation by migrants and high levels of accommodation to migrants required for the host society. Integration is positioned in between these two poles, with medium levels of adaptation and accommodation respectively (IOM, 2020, p.189). In Japan, scholars have suggested that there is a strong assimilationist tendency (Morita, 2014), where the burden of adjustment is predominantly thought to be the responsibility of the migrant.

This calls into question the concept of social integration of migrants and how it is understood and practiced in the Japanese context. As noted in the **Introduction** and elsewhere in this dissertation, the technical trainees are not commonly viewed as migrants due to their temporary status. Indeed, heightened global mobility today means that significant numbers of migrants do not settle permanently, but spend extended amounts of time in multiple destinations (Liu-Farrer, 2020). Nonetheless, given the increasingly intense labor shortages in Japan, it is likely that the trainees and other foreign workers will be a continuous presence in the country for the foreseeable future. Additionally, with the

Japanese government's recent moves to extend permanent residency rights to these workers (Kyodo News, 2021), there is an urgent need for public debate on how they may be integrated into Japanese society in a way that is satisfactory for both host community members and the new migrants and their families.

'Multicultural coexistence' (*tabunka kyosei*) is the national government's long-standing policy to deal with the growing number of foreign residents living in local communities. The term came into wide use from the 1990s, spurred on particularly by efforts to support foreign residents after the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in January 1995 (Kashiwazaki, 2016). The policy represents the Japanese contextualization of the concept of multiculturalism and recognizes the possibility of permanent residency of a growing number of foreign workers and their presence in Japanese communities. In particular, the latest iteration of this policy, released in September 2020, emphasizes the idea that the new migrants are contributing members of Japanese society who should share in the building of multicultural communities (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2021a). Diversity and inclusion are the key terms used in the government's recognition of the need to construct communities that facilitate connections and collaboration between community members, who are dealing with common challenges including the post-Coronavirus society. The plan also recommends incorporating the viewpoint of foreign residents in efforts to revitalize and globalize local communities (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2021a).

At first glance, the Multicultural Coexistence policy seems to recognize the two-way nature of migrant integration as defined by the IOM and other scholars (IOM, 2020). However, the vague terminology and ill-defined nature of the policy - including who it refers to when mentioning 'foreign residents' - means that it is difficult to implement in a uniform manner at the local level. Multiculturalism as a concept has been extensively

debated among Western scholars, centering on (1) the perceived failure of governments to develop policies that can adequately manage the challenges of multicultural societies and (2) the notion that the accommodation of diversity has resulted in the weakening of previously dominant values and ways of thinking (Kymlicka, 2010). As noted by Kymlicka (2010), "ideas about the legal and political accommodation of diversity have been in a state of flux for the past forty years around the world" (2010, p.32). Alternative conceptualizations such as interculturalism reflect the reality that societies are dynamic and that migrant populations are not on a linear trajectory with an end goal of assimilation; the overriding idea of interculturalism is that of a 'shared society' (Cantle, 2012, p.88). Cultural pluralism, as practiced in Canada for example, expresses a situation where the cultural identities and practices of minority groups in a society are recognized and accepted alongside the dominant culture, as long as they do not conflict with the laws and values of the society as a whole. This contrasts with multiculturalism, in that in cultural pluralism a dominant culture is recognized (Carens, 2000). In the midst of this dynamic debate among longtime immigration nations, it seems that the time is ripe for a re-examination of a sustainable integration vision and policy for Japan as its society faces the need to accept and recognize greater levels of diversity.

The challenges for the smooth integration of larger numbers of migrants in Japan are frequently debated among scholars. Chan (2019), for example, offers a useful comparison between Japan and South Korea, pointing out that both of these nations have a dependency on low-skilled migrant workers to support their economies; have in recent years started to discuss the concept of multiculturalism; and have a strong national concept of monoculture. Chan notes that "much of the social atmosphere and culture [in Japan] does not readily provide easy pathways for immigrants to assimilate" (Chan, 2019, p.420). Liu-

Farrer (2020) describes Japan as an "ethno-nationalist immigrant society" exhibiting the characteristics of "discursive denial of immigration", "anachronistic institutional practices", "pragmatism in immigration and the settlement process", and "possible (but difficult) national belonging, impossible national identity" (Liu-Farrer, 2020, pp.8-10). The long-held belief in the idea of a monocultural Japan is not aided by the lack of public debate on immigration and migrant integration.

As Japan's population and labor issues grow in severity, a more diverse future for Japan's society is likely to be near rather than far. There are a number of complex factors that will impact whether or not large numbers of technical intern trainees switch to Specified Skill status and eventually apply for permanent residency, including Japanese government policy, employment conditions in Japan, and unemployment levels in sending countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia. In any case, in light of Japan's current demographic challenges, it seems likely that Japan's foreign worker population will continue to increase. Moreover, the wishes and intentions of the government on the one hand, and business on the other, seem to be aligned in moves to extend the stay of such workers, even to the unprecedented step of offering eventual permanent residency. As the technical trainees and specified skill workers have not yet been granted permanent residential status, there has been little researcher attention paid to their cultural or emotional needs. As stated in **Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees, and Migrant Integration** (p.24), the Technical Intern Training Program has been the subject of harsh criticism both within Japan and overseas, predominantly for structural issues leading to exploitative and discriminatory practices (Ibusuki, 2020; Komine, 2018). As the government works to revamp the system for the import of foreign unskilled labor (The Japan Times, 2022, July 29), it is crucial that researchers work to gather wide-ranging

empirical data on the needs of the trainees already in Japan, and the expectations of those planning to come.

Moreover, if Japan is to attract adequate labor to meet the demands of labor-scarce industries, the country needs to be seen as a safe, secure, and attractive destination for migrant workers who have a choice of countries in the region. Potential migrants need to be able to envision the possibility of settling, including practicing their religion and other cultural traditions; availability of cooking ingredients from their home country; the ability to socialize with members of their own cultural group; convenient shopping and transportation services; and the ability to make friends (and potential partners) with Japanese people of their own age. Many of these needs are currently not being fulfilled for the trainees who were interviewed in this study. Research is needed that illuminates this situation in a variety of different regions and industries. As such, researchers in this field have an important role to play to build awareness of the situation where foreign trainees and specified skill workers are becoming an isolated and disadvantaged group in Japanese society.

Beyond the obstacle of the national narrative of a monoculture, the question of how to imagine and plan future diverse communities is also a practical issue. Unlike nations that have been built based on open immigration policies such as the United States and Australia, there are few examples of truly multicultural communities in rural Japan. It may therefore be understandably difficult for Japanese citizens living in rural areas to envisage a future where mosques sit beside temples, foreign food restaurants are commonplace, and languages other than Japanese are heard in the street. Even more than such overt changes, differences in the way people from different cultures communicate, spend their free time, and define the concept of community may be even more challenging and require greater

adjustment on the part of host community members. As noted in **Findings** (p.104), the Japanese participants in the current research demonstrated consideration for and understanding of superficial cultural differences such as the dietary customs and religious practices of the trainees. However, there was little evidence of more in-depth knowledge of the trainees' cultural background. This situation recalls Hall's (1976) Iceberg Model of Culture, where 10% of culture is said to be comprised of external elements such as appearance, traditions, and behaviors. The remaining 90% of one's culture is said to be hidden from immediate view, and comprises elements that are not explicitly learned, such as value systems, beliefs, biases, thought patterns, and gender roles (Hall, 1976). With little social interaction between the Japanese public and foreign trainees, it is evident that educational intervention is required to promote understanding of and consideration for the more implicit elements of the trainees' cultural backgrounds.

In this process of spreading awareness and understanding of cultural differences among those in contact with the foreign trainees, higher education institutions have an important role to play. At the start of this new era of immigration in Japan, it will be crucial to foster understanding among receiving companies and communities of the practical, social, and emotional needs of foreign workers who chose to make Japan their home, such as the trainees in the current research. Without such knowledge and understanding, the 'harmonious co-existence' in the government's Multicultural Coexistence policy (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2022a), where much-needed foreign workers are treated as community members rather than guests, will remain a vague and empty catchphrase. The role for educators in this work cannot be underestimated. The growing size of foreign populations in rural areas, like the one surveyed here, has highlighted the need for education and training of the managers, co-workers, and administrative staff who

are tasked with welcoming the foreign trainees and handling their day-to-day needs and concerns. Knowledge of trainees' respective cultures and understanding of communication practices and cultural tendencies at a deeper level - as indicated by Hall's (1976) iceberg model - could facilitate the social integration of trainees who are attempting to adapt to life in Japan. This could also help to make Japan a more attractive destination for the foreign workers that Japanese industry currently needs. The large numbers of international students currently enrolled in Japanese universities who originate from the same countries as the trainees (for example Vietnam and China) have a crucial role to play as cultural and linguistic support intermediaries.

It may also be fruitful for HEIs to implement outreach programs to offer training programs for staff at the unions and intermediary organizations that are in frequent contact with receiving companies. As part of the Technical Intern Trainee Program, companies receive support from intermediary companies for the recruitment, administrative work, and other support services such as interpreting, related to the employment of the trainees (Japan International Training Cooperation Organization, 2012). Training programs for such organizations that incorporate the more implicit elements of culture and the viewpoint of foreign workers trying to adapt to life in Japan, may be the first step in helping to define integration as a two-way process. Additionally, given that owner/managers of companies accepting trainees often set the lead for the treatment of the trainees by other workers, intensive, hands-on intercultural training courses for owner/managers could be one method to prevent the mistreatment and discriminatory acts by workers toward technical trainees reported in the media (Matsumuro, 2022).

Social Ties: An Opportunity for HEIs

Workplace relations between the Japanese workers and their trainee co-workers surveyed here were found to be friendly and positive. At the same time, the lack of social relations between the two groups outside of the workplace was a common finding from interviews with both the Japanese participants and the foreign trainees. It seems that the pandemic, the family situation of the Japanese workers, and age differences are adversely impacting the development of relationships outside of work. Beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a need to consider how to facilitate friendships between the foreign trainees and local community members. A number of the participants in this study commented that the trainees' Japanese language skills would not further develop unless they spent more time with Japanese people outside of work. Some also expressed pity for the trainees who they thought had probably assumed they would make Japanese friends in Japan. There is a high awareness of this issue among local government bodies: for example, Miyagi International Association (MIA) is proactively addressing the issue through events and community activities (Miyagi International Association, n.d.). The MIA official interviewed for this research spoke extensively about the fact that the trainees, due to the nature of their work, tend to be 'invisible' to the wider community, and rarely have opportunities to participate in international understanding education activities at schools in the area. The MIA official also said that the events and community outreach activities organized by MIA are often attended by Japanese volunteers who are typically significantly older than the trainees. It seems evident that there is a need for more opportunities for trainees to interact with Japanese people of their own age.

The issue of lack of social interaction between the trainees and host community members is connected with Allport's (1954) contact theory, positioned as the theoretical

foundation of this study. The current study has indicated that positive relations with the trainees may not necessarily develop in a positive or productive way without intervention. Workplace relations in this study were seen to conform to at least three of the conditions posited by Allport in his original contact hypothesis. From this perspective, the very structure and mechanisms of the companies studied here functioned as intervening forces, resulting in generally friendly and positive intergroup relations with a lack of prejudice. However, with no intervening forces working to promote relations outside of the companies, there was little development of relationships with either Japanese co-workers or members of the wider community. As noted in Conceptual and Theoretical Framework, the benefits of intergroup contact have been found in numerous studies over decades (Pettigrew et al, 2011). Contact between the trainees and community members, including those who are close in age to the trainees, promises to deliver significant benefits in terms of mutual understanding, learning, and acceptance. Such contact will be instrumental in the acceptance of the trainees not only as labor, but also as residents.

Prior studies indicate the importance of developing friendly ties between migrant groups and host community members for the formation of positive attitudes toward migrants (Green & Kadoya, 2013; Nukaga, 2006). Migrant enclaves have long been a feature of other long-term migrant communities in Japan, including Brazilian and Korean workers. The latter groups have been subject to negative media reports, hate crimes, and social isolation (Nagata, 2013; Takenoshita, 2016). This is also a common phenomenon in traditional immigration nations. There is a distinct difference between the Brazilian and Korean communities and the technical trainees: the former groups hold permanent residency, while the trainees do not. As noted above, the trainees' current status as 'guests' may be helping to maintain generally positive attitudes and treatment of the trainees, as

they are not viewed as permanent members of the community. There are concerns that this mindset may change if trainees stay longer, shift to permanent resident status, and become fixtures in local communities.

Developing friendships with the trainees is one way to reduce the possibility that they will be poorly treated. Proactive efforts are required to forge ties with local community groups, as well as creating opportunities for trainees to meet and interact with Japanese people of their own age group. Japan desperately needs the foreign labor that the trainees provide, but in order to attract and retain the trainees in the midst of regional competition, the ability to develop friendships and put down roots in local communities will be a crucial condition for such settlement. If the trainees are to be encouraged to settle in Japan, they need to have role models to look toward: former trainees who have successfully integrated into and connected with Japanese communities.

This is another area where higher education initiatives are required. The development of more multicultural communities represents an opportunity for higher education institutions (HEI) to fulfill their responsibility to contribute to society. The timing is opportune and perhaps overdue to revisit what intercultural education needs to offer and achieve as Japanese society changes. There has long been significant pressure from the government and the public on Japanese universities to 'internationalize' to be successful on the global stage (Stigger et al, 2018). In practice, the term 'internationalization' has been closely linked with English language education in Japan. Study abroad programs are typically at the forefront of a university's internationalization strategy and have mainly targeted English-speaking nations. Southeast Asian nations are also becoming popular destinations, but the programs offered are often in English. In terms of inbound student exchange, programs in English are used to attract international students, and a higher number of

international students contributes to the perception that a higher education institution (HEI) is 'highly internationalized' (Stigger et al., 2018).

While English skills are undeniably important for all university students, as Japanese society becomes more multicultural there is also an urgent need to equip Japanese university students with the intercultural skills to live and work in Japan after they graduate. Such skills are not necessarily related to English, as most foreign residents in Japan are not English speakers. Yet education policy is not reflecting such changes. The Japanese Cabinet Secretariat's Council for the Creation of Future Education made its first recommendation on the future roles for universities in May 2022. The recommendation's list of social issues to be addressed made no mention of increases in culturally diverse societies and the need for appropriately skilled human resources, nor the challenge of how to address the educational needs of Japan's growing foreign population (Cabinet Secretariat of Japan, 2022). Universities are positioned predominantly as educational bodies catering to the needs of the advanced knowledge society, in effect excluding those who may benefit from intercultural education greatly: those without access to HEI educational programs.

As the Japanese population diversifies, it seems evident that universities also need to ensure that students are prepared for work and life in a more multicultural society. The elements of intercultural competence examined in this study are also required for students at Japanese universities, most of whom will live and work in Japan. One of the main differences between Japan's policy of internationalization and its internal multiculturalism is the difference between the West and Asia: internationalization tends to focus on English-speaking Western culture, while the vast majority of the foreign population in Japan are Asian, and not English-speaking. The communication and intercultural competencies

required for each of these may be significantly different. There is clearly a need for universities to provide their students with opportunities to interact with and learn from foreign residents, from countries such as Vietnam, China, Korea, Myanmar, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It is true that some students at major universities benefit from contact with the large number of Asian students joining their campuses; on the other hand, students at smaller universities do not enjoy such opportunities. Outreach programs that connect university students with members of local foreign communities may be one method to redress this imbalance and provide students with hands-on opportunities to interact with and learn from foreign members of their local communities. Without HEI intervention, such opportunities may never arise, leading to isolated foreign communities and university graduates who are unaware of large sections of their own residential areas.

This imperative of serving society has not been a driving feature of higher education internationalization efforts to date, in Japan and elsewhere. Jones et al (2021) decry the competitive and capitalist tendencies of HEI internationalization strategies and call for greater attention to the "third mission" of higher education, to contribute to and engage with society (2021, p.332). They link this imperative with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and suggest initiatives for academics, students, and university support staff to engage more closely with local communities and share the benefits of international activities among a broader base, not limited to university stakeholders. The Internationalization of Higher Education for Society (IHES) thus discussed by Jones et al (2021) is greatly needed in Japan; the current study offers some insight into social groups and communities that may benefit from such initiatives. The majority of the participants in the current study have not received tertiary education and have had limited exposure to intercultural perspectives, including approaches to migrant integration and migrant needs.

Enhanced engagement by HEIs with such communities – through training, public lectures, and workshops – could play a crucial role in helping receiving companies and communities prepare emotionally and practically for greater diversity in the local population. This is also aligned with the catch cry of the UN's SDGs: that no-one be left behind (UN Sustainable Development Group, 2022).

Conclusion

This study of the seafood processing industry in a rural area of northern Japan found that the members of the four companies surveyed were overwhelmingly welcoming to the foreign technical trainees as much-needed labor. At the same time, while the trainees were uniformly treated with hospitality and understanding by their employers and co-workers, their behavior as residents in the company dormitories and as members of the community was less warmly welcomed and treated with concern by many of the Japanese participants. The study highlighted the fact that, compared with nations with a longer history of immigration and larger numbers of immigrants, foreign residents are a relatively new presence in such rural communities in Japan. Lacking education and training, experience, or government policy in integrating foreign residents, the companies studied were doing their best to meet the needs of the trainees while at the same time navigating negative sentiment toward the trainees by members of the residential community. The temporary status of the trainees appeared satisfactory and appropriate to Japanese participants and most of the foreign trainees at this time. Few envisaged a future where this status may change, nor the implications that such a change may have for their local community and way of life. This chapter closes the dissertation with a discussion of the limitations and contributions of the current research.

Limitations of This Study

The current research was a case study of the seafood processing industry in a rural area of Japan. The fact that the four companies agreed to participate in the study suggests that there were unlikely to be serious issues in relations or treatment of the technical trainees employed; this was subsequently found to be the case. For this reason, and due to the small

sample size, findings from this study are not generalizable. In fact, the case presented here may be a rare exemplary case, rather than a common one.

Another limitation presented by this case pertains to the collection of data. Access to the companies studied here was limited by successive waves of the coronavirus pandemic. Field trips were postponed and rescheduled in accordance with the wishes of company management members and the community leader who acted as a liaison. The small size of the community meant that there was high sensitivity among community members toward visits by people from outside of the area. Additionally, access to the thirteen research participants was limited in some cases due to field trips coinciding with irregular or busy fishing seasons, the illness of one research participant, and a work trip to a different region by another participant. In this way, it was difficult to obtain equal and uniform access to all participants during each field trip. Observations as well as interviews with technical trainees, local leaders, and officials from unions and related organizations were used to supplement the data obtained.

My limitations as a researcher are also noted here. My identity as a white foreign resident and member of a knowledge-industry profession are assumed to have influenced the responses of the participants as they discussed foreign residents. As noted in Research Approach and Methods, efforts were made to address my positionality and the impact of my identity in this research.

Contributions of This Study

With an understanding of these limitations, this study offers a rare and valuable glimpse into the attitudes and thinking of an under-researched group: blue-collar workers in Japan. The academic and social contributions of this research are discussed here.

Academic Contribution

The primary academic value of this dissertation is to offer qualitative data on the thought processes of Japanese workers toward their foreign trainee co-workers. As discussed in Foreign Workers in Japan, Technical Intern Trainees, and Migrant Integration, much research to date on attitudes toward immigrants and immigration in Japan has adopted quantitative methods, often using one or two questions regarding support or otherwise for increased immigration. While recent quantitative studies have provided more extensive and nuanced analyses of sentiment toward immigrants (Kage et al, 2021; Korekawa, 2019; Nagayoshi, 2021), the current study was an in-depth exploration of the reasons for responses and the thought processes of the participants. In other words, the study makes a preliminary contribution to address the lack of qualitative studies in real-world contexts. The value of using qualitative methods in the current research was demonstrated in a comparison of questionnaire and interview responses in Findings (*Expectations as residents*). The contradictions in the respective responses showed that the written questionnaire responses alone did not fully uncover the intentions and thinking of the participants. Access to blue-collar work sites to conduct such qualitative field work, particularly work sites employing technical intern trainees, is not easy. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the current research has demonstrated the value of such efforts.

This research also contributes to the academic debate on the impact of intercultural contact, a debate that centers on Allport's (1954) contact theory and the competitive threat theory proposed by Stephan & Stephan (2000). It was not the aim of this research to test these two theories. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that while contact between the Japanese participants and the foreign trainees was overwhelmingly positive, two of the

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thirteen Japanese participants had started to see the trainees as a potential threat in terms of employment. This number is small but worthy of further investigation.

A number of questions need to be explored: is competitive threat felt more or less in rural areas than urban areas? What kind of impact does company size have on such feelings? Is there a role for education or training bodies to offer educational programs that may facilitate positive relations and alleviate feelings of threat before they develop into prejudicial attitudes? How might the economic downturn impact sentiment toward the trainees? The large body of existing literature on contact theory, competitive threat, and prejudice reduction measures is likely to be highly instructive for scholars in Japan as this country moves into the next era of immigration. It is to be hoped that the current research has made a preliminary contribution to qualitative studies in contact-theory based research. It addresses a gap in the literature for studies conducted in 'real-world' settings (Vezzali & Stathi, 2017). The data gathered here thus offers a small but valuable glimpse of intercultural contact as it is experienced by many Japanese citizens in similar situations. The qualitative nature of this inquiry adds to its value in the field of contact theory-based research.

Social Contribution

This research addresses a gap in policy in Japan: social integration policy measures for unskilled foreign workers, specifically technical intern trainees and specified skill workers. Liu-Farrer (2020) points out that migration today is often temporary and filled with uncertainty. The conventional idea of making a one-way journey to a foreign land as a migrant or refugee and settling there for life is rapidly becoming outdated as global mobility and politico-economic uncertainty rises in many countries and regions throughout

the world. The trainees interviewed in this survey, with one exception, were reluctant to make firm statements on how long they planned to stay in Japan. Decisions are made depending on money saved, family situation in their home country, the existence of a clear future vision, and relationships developed in Japan during their stay.

Despite this uncertainty, the presence of the foreign workers studied here (in the form of technical trainees or specified skill workers) as a group is highly likely to continue into the foreseeable future, given that the employers interviewed in this research expressed uniform satisfaction with the trainees as employees and were fatalistic at the inability to secure Japanese workers. The current situation seems to have been accepted and, in the companies surveyed here, is functioning well.

Given that this is a long-term situation, and the fact that the government is considering extending permanent residency rights to these workers, the social integration of the trainees should no longer be avoided in public debate for the reason that they are 'temporary.' This study positioned the trainees as potential permanent residents, and investigated host society sentiment, a crucial element of social integration. Findings here indicated that workers and owners of receiving companies predominantly view the trainees as guest workers, and that their accommodation of the trainees was largely limited to the fulfilling of the trainees' practical needs. The significant efforts of the companies in this study and their members to fulfill such needs and support the trainees should not be underestimated. However, the difficulty of imagining the trainees as permanent residents, and a lack of knowledge and experience with migrant integration, mean that the trainees' cultural and social needs are being neglected. It is to be hoped that this research highlighted this disjunct and contributes to debate on how to support the integration of the

trainees more fully and thus help to make Japan an attractive long-term destination for such workers.

The other aspect of social integration is the situation of the receiving companies and workers. This research provided a rare exposition of the feelings and expectations of blue-collar workers in Japan. As noted in **Description of the Case** (p.73), Japanese workers in blue-collar industries account for around 45% of the Japanese workforce and are most likely to be in day-to-day contact with foreign workers such as the technical trainees. Such workers are therefore playing an important role in how the foreign trainees are perceived and received. The current study has contributed insight into the experience gained and challenges faced by these employers and workers as they adjust to multicultural workplaces. With intercultural contact among the Japanese population in general at a significantly lower level than other advanced nations (ILO, 2019), this experience and insight is invaluable as Japan moves to accept more foreign workers.

Additionally, it seems imprudent to ignore such a large section of the population when developing and implementing policy. The fieldwork conducted for this research clearly showed that individual feelings toward, relationships with, and expectations of the trainees are developed within the small microcosm that is the company, within a community. This very individual process of sentiment formation and intercultural competence development is far-removed from the political narrative of 'multicultural co-existence' and the media narrative of 'trainees commit crimes.' The Japanese workers whose words appear on these pages demonstrated wisdom and know-how in intercultural relations that can only be acquired through experience, reflection, and consideration of the trainees as human beings. If nothing else, it is hoped that this research illuminated this important competency of those working in multicultural blue-collar workplaces.

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Appendix A:
Interview questions for Japanese participants
(Japanese)

（背景）

・現在の会社での勤続年数は?

・(差し支えなければ)ご家族について教えてください。(結婚・お子さんの有無)

（技能実習生と働くことについて）

・技能実習生と一緒に働いている期間は?

・技能人実習生と一緒に行う仕事の内容を教えてください。

・技能実習生に対する第一印象は?

・技能実習生と日本人従業員の主な違いはどのようなところにあると思うか。

・技能実習生と働くことで、困ることはあるか。

（技能実習生との友人関係について）

・仕事以外での技能実習生との付き合いについて教えてください。

  （頻度：週何回・月何回）

  （内容：例えば終業後の飲み会／食事会、その他休日の付き合い、等）

・技能実習生とはオンラインでやり取りはしているか。

  （頻度：1 日何回・週何回・月何回）

  （内容：LINE、インスタグラム、FB、ツイッター、メール、その他）

・技能実習生とお付き合いする際に困ることはあるか。

（トラブル、懸念事項）

・技能実習生と接して問題が生じたことがあれば教えてください。

・技能実習生について懸念や気になることがあれば教えてください。

（文化変容）技能実習生の日本での生活についてお聞きします。

・技能実習生は日本で生活をする上で何が大切だと思うか。

（守るべき習慣や日本の文化、社会マナーはあると思うか）

・技能実習生の日本での生活について、思うことはあるか。

（改善してほしいところはあるか）

・（技能実習生とは別で）日本全体の在日外国人の人口が増えているがどう思うか。（お住いの地域で外国人人口が増加した場合、どう感じるか）

Interview questions for Japanese participants (English)

(Background)
• How long have you worked at this company?
• Could you tell me about your family background? (married, children?)
• How long have you worked with foreign trainees?
• Could you describe the work you do with the trainees?

(About working with foreign trainees)
• Tell me about your initial impressions of the trainees.
• Tell me about some of the main differences you noticed between the trainees and Japanese workers.
• Tell me about any ways that working with the trainees has affected you and your work.

(About friendships with the trainees)
• Tell me about any social occasions that you associate with the trainees outside of work. How often do you socialize with them?
  (drinks/meal after work, other occasions on holidays, etc)
• Tell me about any online connections you have with the trainees. How often do you contact each other?
  (Line, Facebook, Twitter, email, others)
• Do you have any difficulties in socializing with the trainees?

(Issues, concerns)
• Tell me about any issues that you have experienced with the trainees.
• Tell me about any concerns that you have about the trainees.

(Acculturation)
• How do you think foreigners should adapt to life in Japan? What are the most important things for them to do?
• Do you think that the way the technical intern trainees are living in Japan is acceptable? Are there any areas that need improvement?
• Do you have any requests for foreigners living in Japan?
• How do you feel about the number of foreigners in Japan? How would you feel if the number of foreigners in your residential area increased?

Appendix B:
Acculturation expectation questionnaire survey
(Japanese)

日本で生活をしている外国人についてお聞きします。
ご自分の考えに最も近い選択肢をお選びください。

（言語の使用）
☐ 在日外国人は、日本語と自国語の両方が流暢であることが好ましい。
☐ 在日外国人は、自国語より日本語が流暢であることが重要だ。
☐ 在日外国人は、日本語より自国語が流暢であることが重要だ。
☐ 自国語を使い続けるか日本語を学ぶのかは、在日外国人個人の選択だ。
☐ 在日外国人は、日本語を流暢に使いこなせることは難しいだろう。

（言語の使用－公的使用と私的使用）
☐ 在日外国人が公の場で自国語を話すことに異存はない。
☐ 私的な場であれば、在日外国人が自国語を話すことに異存はない。
☐ 来日後は、在日外国人は自国語を話すべきではない。
☐ 公私にかかわらず、自国語を使用するか否かは在日外国人個人の選択だ。
☐ 公の場で自国語を話す在日外国人は、うまく溶け込めないだろう。

（宗教や文化）
☐ 在日外国人が自国の宗教や文化的習慣を行うことに異存はないが、日本の文化も
学んで欲しい。
☐ 在日外国人は、自国の宗教や文化的習慣を行うよりも日本の文化を学ぶ方が重要
だ。
☐ 在日外国人は、日本の文化を学ぶよりも自国の宗教や文化的習慣を行う方が重要
だ。
☐ 自国の宗教や文化的習慣を行うか日本の文化を学ぶかは、在日外国人個人の選択
だ。
☐ 在日外国人は、日本の文化を学び、理解することは難しいだろう。

（宗教や文化－公的実践と私的実践）
☐ 在日外国人が公の場で自国の宗教や文化的習慣を実践することに異存はない。
☐ 私的な場であれば、在日外国人が自国の宗教や文化的習慣を実践することに異存
はない。
☐ 来日後は、在日外国人は自国の宗教や文化的習慣を実践するべきではない。
☐ 公私にかかわらず、自国の宗教や文化的習慣を実践するか否かは、在日外国人個
人の選択だ。
☐ 公の場で自国の宗教や文化的習慣を実践する在日外国人は、うまく溶け込めない
だろう。

（友人関係）
☐ 在日外国人同士で友人関係を持つことと同様に、在日外国人が日本人と友人関係を持つことは好ましい。
☐ 在日外国人は、在日外国人同士で友人関係を持つより、日本人と友人関係を持つ方が重要だ。
☐ 在日外国人は、日本人と友人関係を持つより、在日外国人同士で友人関係を持つ方が重要だ。
☐ 日本人と友人関係を持つか在日外国人同士で友人関係を持つかは、在日外国人個人の選択だ。
☐ 在日外国人は、日本人と友人関係を持つことは難しいだろう。

お住いの地域で外国人の人口が増えることについてどう思いますか?
☐ 賛成
☐ 反対
☐ その他(差し支えなければ具体的に:

Acculturation expectation questionnaire survey
(English)
A. Please choose the statement that is closest to your personal opinion:
(Language use)
1. It is acceptable for migrants in Japan to be fluent in both Japanese and their own language.
2. It is more important for migrants in Japan to be fluent in Japanese than in their own language.
3. It is more important for migrants in Japan to be fluent in their own language than in Japanese.
4. Whether migrants maintain their own language or learn Japanese is an individual choice.
5. Migrants in Japan can never achieve fluency in the Japanese language.

(Language use - Private vs public)
1. I think it is acceptable that migrants in Japan speak their own language in public.
2. I think it is acceptable that migrants in Japan speak their own language as long as they do it in private.
3. I think that migrants should not speak their own language after moving to Japan.
4. Whether migrants in Japan use their own language in public or private is an individual choice.
5. Migrants in Japan who speak their own language in public will never fit in.

(Cultural traditions)
1. It is acceptable for migrants in Japan to maintain their own cultural traditions but also learn Japanese cultural traditions.
2. It is more important for migrants in Japan to learn Japanese cultural traditions than to maintain their own cultural traditions.

3. It is more important for migrants in Japan to maintain their own cultural traditions than to learn Japanese cultural traditions.
4. Whether migrants maintain their own cultural traditions or learn Japanese cultural traditions is an individual choice.
5. Migrants will never be able to learn or understand Japanese cultural traditions.

(Cultural traditions - Private vs public)
1. I think it is acceptable that migrants in Japan practice their own cultural traditions in public.
2. I think it is acceptable that migrants in Japan practice their own cultural traditions as long as they do it in private.
3. I think that migrants should not practice their own cultural traditions after moving to Japan.
4. Whether migrants in Japan practice their own cultural traditions in public or private is an individual choice.
5. Migrants in Japan who practice their own cultural traditions in public will never fit in.

(Social participation)
1. It is acceptable for migrants in Japan to participate in social activities with Japanese people as well as social activities with other migrants.
2. It is more important for migrants in Japan to participate in social activities with Japanese people than social activities with other migrants.
3. It is more important for migrants in Japan to participate in social activities with other migrants than social activities with Japanese people.
4. Whether migrants in Japan participate in social activities with Japanese people or other migrants is an individual choice.
5. Migrants in Japan will never be able to participate in social activities with Japanese people.

B. Please answer the following general question about foreigners living in Japan:
1. Do you support or oppose an increase in the number of migrants living in your community?
   (a) Support
   (b) Oppose
Other (Please specify:)

Appendix C:
Interview questions for technical intern trainees
(Japanese)

（背景）

・いつ・なぜ来日したのか。

・(差し支えなければ)ご家族について教えてください。(結婚・お子さん)

・日本に来る前に自国で何をしていたか。

（日本での生活について）

・来日して驚いたこと・意外なところはあるか。

・日本の生活において好きなところ、慣れないところは？

・ご出身地と日本を比較したら、何が一番違う？

・日本語は勉強しているか？何が難しい？

・日本でうまく生活できるようになるには、何が重要だと思う？

（日本人と働くことについて）

・日本人と一緒に行う仕事の内容を教えてください。

・日本人従業員に対する第一印象は?

・日本人従業員と外国人(技能実習生)の主な違いは？

・仕事で困ることはあるか。

（日本人との友人関係について）

・仕事以外での日本人との付き合いについて教えてください。

　　　　（頻度：週何回・月何回）

　　　　（内容：例えば終業後の飲み会／食事会、その他休日の付き合い）

　　　　（その時の日本人は会社の同僚？地域の人たち？）

・日本人とはオンラインでやり取りはしているか？

　　　　（頻度：1日何回・週何回・月何回）

　　　　（内容：LINE、インスタグラム、FB、ツイッター、メール、その他）

　　　　（その時の日本人は会社の同僚？地域の人たち？）

・日本人とお付き合いする際に困ることはあるか?

（トラブル、懸念事項）

・日本人と接して問題が生じたことがあれば教えてください。

・日本で暮らしている中で、差別されていると感じたことはあるか。

　　　　　（職場でも職場以外のところでも）

（最後に）

・将来の夢は何？将来はどこに住んで何をしたいと思う？

Interview questions for technical intern trainees
(English)

(Background)

・When and why did you come to Japan?

・Please tell me about your family (married, children)

・What were you doing in your country before coming to Japan?

(About life in Japan)

・Surprising or unexpected things in Japan

・Things you like about life in Japan, things that are hard to get used to

・Biggest difference between Japan and your home country

・Do you study Japanese? How is it?

・What do you think is important in order to live in Japan?

(Working with Japanese people)

・Tell me what kind of work you do with Japanese co-workers

・First impression of Japanese co-workers

・Main differences between Japanese and foreign workers

・Issues at work

(Friendships with Japanese people)

・Tell me about your interactions with Japanese people outside of work
　　　　　(frequency: times/week, times/month)
　　　　　(activities: eg. eating/drinking after work, spending time on holidays)
　　　　　(spend time with Japanese co-workers? Or community members?)

・Online interaction with Japanese people
　　　　　(frequency: times/day, times/week, times/month)
　　　　　(tools: LINE, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, email, etc)
　　　　　(with Japanese co-workers? Or community members?

・Issues when interacting with Japanese people

(Problems, concerns)

・Any problems when interacting with Japanese people

・Have you ever felt discriminated against while in Japan? (at work or outside of work)

(Concluding comments)

・Future dreams? Where do you want to live, what do you want to do?

Appendix D:
Interview questions for third-party interviews
(Japanese)

（技能実習生の受け入れについて一般）

1. 技能実習生に携わるお仕事はいつからしていますか？

2. 今まで受け入れてきた技能実習生の人数と国籍を教えて頂けますか？

3. 技能実習生に携わる業務はどのようなことをしていますか？

4. 技能実習生の受け入れに関しての良い点は何ですか？

5. 技能実習生の受け入れに関しての課題は何ですか？

（技能実習生と日本人の接し方について）

6. 日本人と技能実習生の接し方についての良い点、改善すべき点はなんだと思いますか？

7. どの地域でも、外国人を快く受け入れる人とそうでない人はいますが、地域ぐるみで外国人をスムーズに受け入れるためには何が必要だと思いますか？技能実習生が地域社会の一員としてみなされるために何が必要だと思いますか？

（石巻市について）

8. 外国人が石巻市に来てもらうために何が必要だと思いますか？

9. 石巻にやってくる技能実習生は若者が多いと思いますが、石巻の魅力を若者目線でどうアピールすべきだとお考えですか？

10. 外国人技能実習生を受け入れることで、石巻市はどのように変わりましたか？

Interview questions for third-party interviews
(English)

(About accepting technical intern trainees)

1. How long have you been involved with technical intern trainees?

2. How many trainees have you been involved with? What nationalities?

3. What does your work with the trainees involve?

4. What are the positive aspects of accepting trainees?

5. What are some of the issues/challenges of accepting trainees?

(Interaction between trainees and Japanese people)

6. What are the positive aspects and challenges about the way the trainees and Japanese people interact with each other?

7. What is needed to ensure that foreign workers such as the trainees can be accepted into a community? How can they be seen as community members?

(About Ishinomaki City)

8. How can Ishinomaki City become more attractive to foreign workers?

9. Many of the trainees are young. What should Ishinomaki City do to appeal to young foreign workers?

10. How has Ishinomaki City changed since accepting the foreign trainees?

研究概要

プロジェクト題目： 東北地方における日本人従業員と技能実習生の関係について

このたびは、本研究プロジェクトにご参加いただき、ありがとうございます。以下、本プロジェクトの概要を簡単にご説明します。ご不明な点がございましたら、上記のメールアドレスまでお気軽にご連絡ください。

プロジェクト背景:

日本に住む外国人の数は近年急速に増加しており、2016 年には 230 万人に達しました。人口減少期にある日本では、中小企業の存続だけでなく、過疎化に直面している地域経済を支えるためにも、外国人労働者人口への依存度が高まっています。1993 年に導入された技能実習生制度は、人材不足の中小企業にとって重要な労働力供給ネットワークとなっています。同時に、技能実習生が地域社会での存在感を増していく中で、(1)日本での社会的統合、(2)日本の地域住民や同僚からの受け入れ状況を検証することも重要であると思われます。

研究目的:

本研究の目的は、日本人従業員が同僚である技能実習生に対して抱いている思いを調査することです。特に、日本人従業員が技能実習生の日本滞在中の生活についてどのように感じているのかを調査します。また、技能実習生には、日本での生活や日本人の同僚との関係についても聞く予定です。

研究方法:

このプロジェクトでは、2 つの方法でデータを収集します。まず、日本人従業員に簡単なアンケートを行い、技能実習生が日本でどのように生活し、行動すべきかについての意見を聞きます。調査の第 2 段階として、同じ日本人従業員に加え、技能実習生や統括組織のメンバーにもインタビューを行います。インタビューの所要時間は 1 回あたり 40 分程度を予定しており、参加者の都合の良い場所と時間帯に現地で実施します。コロナウイルスの感染を防ぐために、社会的な距離を置き、マスクを着用し、消毒剤を使用するなど、万全の注意を払います。

同意書

研究プロジェクト題目：　　　　　東北地方における日本人従業員と技能実習生の関
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　係について
研究者名前：　　　　　　　　　　神戸女学院大学・奥村キャサリン
研究者メールアドレス：
お名前：

研究参加に関する同意書

このたびは、上記研究プロジェクトへの参加にご協力いただきありがとうござい
ます。この同意書は、本プロジェクトの一環として行われるインタビューへの参
加条件に同意していただくためのものです。添付の「研究概要」をお読みにな
り、以下の内容に同意された上でご署名ください。

- インタビューの内容は記録と分析のために録音されます。
- インタビューの記録内容を確認し、必要に応じて修正する機会を設けます。
- インタビュー記録へのアクセスは、本プロジェクトの研究者である奥村キャサ
  リンと、彼女が共同作業を行う大学関係者に限定されます。
- 本研究の報告書（論文・学会発表含む）に使用されるインタビューの内容は、
  個人が特定できないように匿名化されます。
- このインタビューに参加することで参加者にとっての予見できるリスクや利益
  はありません。
- 本研究の成果を含む論文が発表される場合、その内容を参加者に通知します。
- 参加者は、インタビューへの同意書提出後でも、自由に参加辞退できます。

本研究の内容を理解した上で、上記の条件で調査に参加することを同意します。

氏名：　_____

日付：　_____

Project explanation and consent form for research participants
(English)

Project title: An Examination of Relations Between Japanese Workers and Technical Intern Trainees in the Tohoku Region

Thank you for your participation in this project. Following is an explanation of the project. Please contact me at the address provided should you have any further questions.

Project background

The number of foreigners living in Japan has been growing rapidly in recent years, reaching 2.3 million in 2016. The technical intern trainee system, introduced in 1993, has become an important labor supply network for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in need of human resources. In a country with a declining population, Japan is increasingly dependent on the foreign worker population not only to sustain small and medium-sized businesses, but also to support local economies facing depopulation. At the same time, as technical intern trainees increase their presence in the local community, it will be important to examine (1) their social integration in Japan and (2) their acceptance by local residents and co-workers in Japan.

Aims of this research

The purpose of this study is to investigate the feelings of Japanese workers toward their technical intern trainee co-workers. In particular, I will investigate how Japanese employees feel about the technical intern trainees' life in Japan. The technical intern trainees will also be asked about their life in Japan and their relationship with their Japanese colleagues.

Research methods

This project will collect data in two ways. First, a brief questionnaire will be administered to Japanese employees to obtain their opinions on how they feel technical intern trainees should live and behave in Japan. In the second phase of the survey, interviews will be conducted with the same Japanese employees as well as with technical interns and members of the supervising organization. Each interview is expected to take approximately 40 minutes and will be conducted on-site at a location and time convenient to the participant. To prevent the transmission of coronavirus, every precaution will be taken, including keeping social distance, wearing a mask, and using disinfectants.

<div align="center">**Consent Form**</div>

Research Project: An Examination of Relations Between Japanese Workers
and Technical Intern Trainees in the Tohoku Region
Researcher Name: Katharine Okumura
Research email address:
Participant's name: _____

Consent for Participation in Research/Interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the above research project.
This Consent Form is necessary to ensure that you agree to the conditions of your
participation in an interview as part of this project. Please read the accompanying Research
Explanation and then sign to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced.
- You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors.
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to Katharine Okumura as Researcher
  of this project and academic colleagues with whom she may collaborate as part of the
  research process.
- Any interview content, including direct quotations from the interview, that are used in
  any reports (academic conferences, journal publications) on this research will be made
  anonymous so that you cannot be identified. Care will be taken to ensure that other
  information from the interview that may identify you will not be revealed.
- There are no foreseeable risks or benefits of participating in this interview.
- Participants will be informed of the publication of any papers that include the results of
  this research, and given access to such papers.

I have read and understood the explanation provided by the Researcher, and agree to allow
use of the data according to the above conditions.

Name: _____
(signature of participant)

Date: _____