THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED ACCULTURATION ATTITUDE ALIGNMENTS UPON U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONS

ABSTRACT

Facing stringent competition in the global economy and a shifting demographic balance towards a "gray" population, Japan appears to be accelerating efforts to internationalize its workforce. However, acculturation of such incoming groups can be contentious. For example, many American residents of Japan critically perceive that the Japanese will not completely accept them as core members of work organizations. Rather than support or refute this view, this study began with the assumption that the compatibility between the acculturation attitudes of the Japanese and their foreign workforce may play an important role in shaping such perceptions. Moreover, by clarifying how such acculturation attitudes diverge, gaps between them can potentially be bridged, leading to smoother integration of foreign workers into Japanese organizations.

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program has invited thousands of Americans to teach English in Japan's schools since 1987. As it provides a setting for sustained intercultural contact, JET Program participants ("JETs") were chosen as potentially revealing informants about sojourner-perceived compatibility of acculturation attitudes between Americans and Japanese host nationals. Through content analysis of semi-structured interviews, this heuristic study attempted to understand how American JETs characterized their own expectations for acculturating in Japan, how they perceived fellow Japanese faculty as sharing or

diverging from their acculturation attitudes, and the effects of the alignment of these perceived acculturation attitudes on relations between JETs and their coworkers. According to criteria inductively constructed from the data, JET social and professional acculturation attitudes, as well as those perceived by JETs among their colleagues, were differentiated according to Berry's model of acculturation attitudes. Then, an original model of four acculturation attitude alignment profiles was used to assess how various combinations of acculturation attitudes tend to impact intercultural relations between American JETs and Japanese teachers. Many of the JETs interviewed reported an incongruous alignment of acculturation attitudes with their coworkers, which had negative effects upon their collegial relationships. However, subjects who fit the profile of "Intercultural Synergy" provided a potential model for effective intercultural coworker relations which actualizes the original goal of the JET Program: to facilitate positive intercultural exchange.

INTRODUCTION

Pressed by a dwindling birthrate and a demographic shift towards the predominance of advanced age groups, it is commonly accepted in many Japanese government and corporate circles that Japan needs non-Japanese workers to help it maintain fiscal strength and compete in business globally (Edwards, 2003; French, 2003; Horwich & Karasaki, 2000; Outside chance, 2003). Such developing awareness, along with recent annual growths of twenty to thirty thousand registered foreign residents (French; Outside chance), is creating an increasingly multicultural labor force. A result of this influx is the *acculturation* of non-Japanese into

Japanese society, or according to Berry (1990), "the changes in individual behavior that are related to the experience of two cultures . . . com[ing] into continuous first-hand contact" (p. 232).

Acculturation attitudes (alternatively acculturation "orientations" or "preferences") are this study's focus. They were defined by Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, and Obdrzalek (2000) as "attitudes that the members of the acculturating groups have . . . towards the way in which the acculturation process should take place" (p. 2). A comparison of acculturation attitudes of Japanese and American residents of Japan can illuminate not only the nature of Japanese acceptance of such sojourners, but also why many American residents of Japan critically perceive that the Japanese will not completely accept them as core members of work organizations (Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching [AJET], 1996; French, 2003; Horwich & Karasaki, 2000; Kopp, 1994; Life, 1993; McConnell, 2000). Moreover, by clarifying how such acculturation attitudes diverge, gaps between them can be more easily bridged, leading to smoother integration of foreign workers. Therefore, this paper analyzes the acculturation orientations among Japanese and Americans towards American sojourner acculturation in Japanese work organizations using John Berry's model of acculturation attitudes (Berry, 1980 & 1990; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzalek, 2000), the best-known model of the acculturation process (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, & Schmitz, 2003).

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program provides a fruitful context for exploring the alignment of acculturation attitudes between dominant and nondominant groups. Established by the Japanese Ministry of Education in 1987, it has brought tens of thousands of non-Japanese to teach foreign languages and foster

positive international relations in Japan's schools for terms of one to four years. The program promotes internationalization primarily through two means: (a) nurturing oral communication skills in foreign languages (predominantly English) among primarily junior high and high school students, and (b) admitting a large expatriate population (6,273 people in the 2002-2003 school year) from thirty-eight countries (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, 2002) into the country's educational institutions.

Since the Japanese government is planning to encourage immigration of people with specialized knowledge or skills in order to make up for projected labor shortages in coming decades, acculturation of such "elites" in a variety of fields and industries will likely become increasingly common in Japan (French, 2003). By exploring the quality of intercultural relations between JET Program participants (referred to herein as "JETs") and their Japanese colleagues, one lens is created through which to view Japan's journey towards a more multicultural society. Moreover, the JET Program—the largest personnel exchange program in the world (McConnell, 2000)—constitutes a revolutionary social experiment and serves as a case study in intercultural relations when citizens who embrace profoundly different cultures, including assumptions about the acculturation process, attempt to work together on a sustained, daily basis. As globalization continues and expands, so will instances of acculturation; therefore, the management of conflicting acculturation orientations within work organizations is relevant for all countries that are seeing and will witness increases in their multinational workforces.

In this study, the following research questions were asked: 1. What primary acculturation attitudes do JET Program participants possess towards Japanese

teachers at the schools where they are employed? 2. What primary acculturation attitudes do JETs perceive Japanese teachers having towards the JETs themselves? According to various scholars (Berry, 1980 & 1990; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003; Piontkowski et al., 2000), the more compatible the acculturation orientations of interacting cultures, the less conflict; conversely, the more divergent they are, the greater the discord. Consequently, this research question was also posited: 3. How does the alignment of these perceived acculturation attitudes affect the quality of intercultural relations between American JETs and their Japanese colleagues? Responses to these research questions were sought through analyses of semi-structured interviews conducted with American JETs.

Note that JET *perceptions* of Japanese colleagues' acculturation attitudes, rather than the Japanese acculturation attitudes as reported by the Japanese themselves, were compared with JET acculturation preferences. This is because research suggests that sojourners' subjective interpretations of their host culture's primary acculturation orientation play a prominent role in sojourner mental health (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003; Van Oudenhoven, Prins, and Buunk, 1998). Therefore, the relationship between JET acculturation orientations and those perceived among their colleagues was thought to play a major role in JET acculturation processes—a role that needs to be better understood.

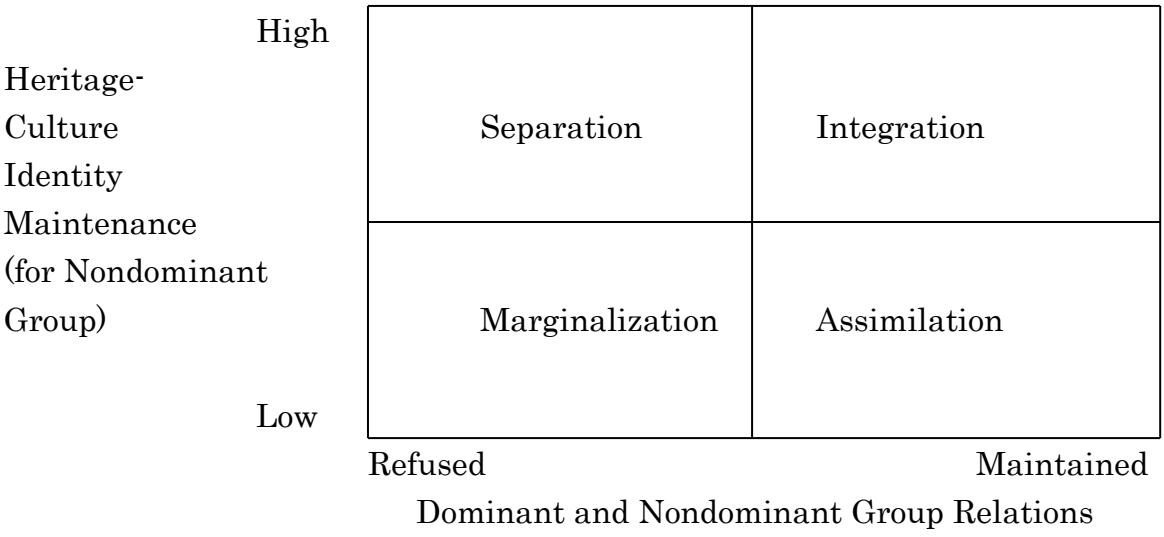
The Berry Model of Acculturation Attitudes

Berry's (1980 & 1990) model of acculturation attitudes focuses upon maintenance of one's heritage of cultural identity and the maintenance of relationships with other groups, which are treated as dichotomous dimensions,

generating four acculturation orientations: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, as depicted in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

The Berry Model of Acculturation Attitudes



According to Piontkowski et al. (2000), as members of the dominant group, integrationists accept that nondominant group members both maintain their heritage culture and "become an integral part of society by partaking in relations with them" (p. 2). As nondominant group members, they want to maintain their own identity but are concurrently interested in forging relations with the dominant group. Dominant group members with an assimilation orientation support relations and societal participation of the nondominant group, but do not accept the maintenance of their cultural identity. Nondominant group assimilationists pursue close relations with the dominant group through renouncing their heritage culture. Separationists in dominant groups do not want nondominant group members to

engage in relations with their group members but concurrently accept the maintenance of a distinct heritage culture. Nondominant separationists also renounce relationships with the dominant group while maintaining their own culture. Finally, dominant group members who have a marginalization attitude accept neither relations with nondominant group members nor maintenance of their cultural heritage. Marginalization among nondominant group members implies a refusal of relationships with the dominant group as well as renouncing one's culture. Overall, power plays an intimate role in this process: the dominant group's acculturation orientation largely determines how thoroughly the nondominant group may participate in mainstream society and maintain their heritage culture (Berry, 1980 & 1990; Piontkowski, et al., 2000). Nondominant group acculturation attitudes come into play as its members monitor and sanction each other's behavior.

These patterns are summarized in Figure 2:

FIGURE 2

Summary of Key Features of Berry Acculturation Attitudes

Attitude	Supports Relations Between Acculturating Groups	Supports Maintenance of Nondominant Heritage Culture
Integration	Yes	Yes
Assimilation	Yes	No
Separation	No	Yes
Marginalization	No	No

Previous research about the JET Program (Komisarof, 2001; McConnell, 2000) suggested that the degree to which JETs are able to gain collegial acceptance as members of their school faculties is a primary concern among many JETs and has a great impact on the quality of coworker relations—more so than the extent to which JETs feel accepted by colleagues as fellow Japanese. Therefore, this study attempts an assessment and comparison of acculturation attitudes on the organizational (i.e., towards JET school cultures) rather than the national level (i.e., towards Japanese culture). However, the two are difficult to completely dissociate because acculturation to Japanese organizations involves acculturation to norms pervasive in both the organization as well as the broader national culture. Participants in this study recalled acculturation to norms unique to Japanese junior high and high schools (such as supervising after-school club activities), as well as to more pervasive Japanese social norms (such as speaking Japanese). The key is that JET acculturation as a faculty member—not as a fellow Japanese—is the topic explored in this study. Therefore, broader cultural norms are considered only to the extent that they affect JET organizational acculturation.

It is also important to note that JET Program participants constitute a unique type of acculturating group—sojourners—or voluntary, temporary migrant workers that differ from immigrants, ethnic groups, native peoples, and refugees in their mobility, voluntariness of contact, and permanence (Berry, 1990). Such characteristics can affect a group's common acculturation attitudes as well as the adaptation process itself. Accordingly, the acculturation attitudes held by JET participants, as well as those that they perceive among their Japanese colleagues, cannot necessarily be generalized to other American groups acculturating in Japan.

Factors Affecting Acculturation Attitudes

Piontkowski et al. (2000) postulated four factors to distinguish acculturation orientations that were utilized in this study to analyze JET acculturation attitudes and those perceived by JETs among their colleagues. These factors are: 1. *Contact*. This indicates the degree of contact sought or avoided between acculturating groups. 2. *Ingroup bias*. The more that people identify with their cultural group, i.e., possess a strong ingroup bias, the more likely they are to use that identity for their definition of self, strive for a positive and distinct social identity based on group membership, and protect the distinctiveness of their group. Those who identify less with their culture have a low ingroup bias and use categories other than their cultural group to create their social identities. 3. *Similarity*. Perceived similarity of an outgroup in terms of background (e.g., race, ethnicity, occupation, or age), attitudes, values, and/or personality traits during acculturation leads to greater acceptance, while perceived dissimilarity works to the contrary. 4. *Permeability*. This term refers to the extent that a dominant group's boundaries are perceived as porous or not, i.e., that new group membership can be achieved.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The subjects were generated from a network sample of American JETs living in the Tokyo area. The sample size was twelve people, all of whom were current JETs. The network sample yielded eight females and four males, including ten European Americans, one Japanese American, and one Korean American.

The data were gathered through interviews that lasted sixty to ninety minutes each, and all questions were tested for reliability as well as face and content validity by conducting interviews in a pilot project. The questions were open-ended and the interviews semi-structured. This elicitive method was preferred due to the heuristic, exploratory nature of this research. Participants were questioned about the types of experiences which have made them feel included and excluded among their coworkers and why. JET expectations were elicited for depth of belonging in their work organizations and what behavioral strategies they utilized (in terms of compliance with Japanese or adherence to American cultural norms) to actualize such expectations, thus revealing their preferences related to Berry's two dimensions of relationship and identity maintenance, respectively. Moreover, JET perceptions of predominant collegial preferences regarding JET identity and relationship maintenance were discussed. Interviews were then fully transcribed (yielding over two hundred pages of text) and responses to the research questions were formulated through informal content analysis.

RESULTS

This section consists of three parts: first, the inductively-constructed criteria are outlined for categorizing JET acculturation attitudes, as well as those perceived among their colleagues. Next, the distribution of such acculturation orientations is presented for each subject. Finally, patterns are described in acculturation attitude alignments of JETs and those perceived among coworkers.

Categorization Scheme for Analysis of Subject Interviews

JET acculturation attitudes and those attitudes perceived among their colleagues were differentiated into two types: professional and social. This dual approach was conceptualized and utilized by the author because acculturating individuals may, depending upon the professional or social context, employ varied acculturation strategies or experience different acculturation orientations from the dominant group (Berry, 1990). Professional acculturation refers to JET involvement in the activities that make up the professional duties of a Japanese teacher and serve as essential rituals in the process of gaining and maintaining membership status in the collective of teachers at Japanese junior high and high schools—such as doing collaborative administrative and educational projects with other faculty members, teaching classes, attending faculty meetings, and coming to school events that are mandatory for faculty (e.g., culture festivals, school excursions, and field days) (Komisarof, 2001; LeTendre, 1998; Sato & McLaughlin, 1998; White, 1987).

Social acculturation refers to JET attendance at social events that are not officially required as part of a teacher's job but facilitate the entry into and maintenance of membership in the faculty collective, such as attendance at parties ("enkai" in Japanese), trips with select groups of faculty friends, gatherings at peoples' homes, and social interactions between teachers during school hours (Komisarof, 2001; Sato & McLaughlin, 1998). Social acculturation also refers to the degree that JETs follow and are expected by their colleagues to participate in a Japanese lifestyle both in the workplace and at gatherings outside, specifically by practicing common customs and etiquette (e.g., eating traditional Japanese food or

using chopsticks). In addition to the distinction between professional and social acculturation, acculturation attitudes were categorized into assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization orientations through criteria that are described below and were constructed inductively during the content analysis of the interview data.

Assimilation

JETs who expected to take the same roles as Japanese teachers in social and professional contexts were categorized as assimilationists. "Social assimilationists" actively attempted to penetrate collegial group boundaries by maximizing opportunities for coworker interaction—accomplished by initiating conversations, showing interest when approached by others, and regularly attending social gatherings. These JETs tried to follow Japanese etiquette and customs, attempting to participate in such gatherings in the same manner as their colleagues, such as eating the same foods at restaurants, singing along at karaoke bars, and speaking Japanese as much as their ability permitted. "Professional assimilationists" wanted to do the same work as Japanese teachers by engaging in collaborative projects and administrative tasks with colleagues. Japanese who expected and encouraged such professional and social participation were also placed in the assimilation profile.

Assimilationist acculturation orientations were operationalized in this study according to adherence to Japanese role behavior, not the psychological adoption of Japanese identity. According to Alba and Nee (1997), assimilation is often construed in sociological literature as "the disappearance of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it" (p. 863). However, Alba and Nee deride as unrealistic this notion of identificational assimilation, or the extinction of

any form of ethnic identity as a sign of assimilation. Kim (2001) similarly argued against the possibility of "complete assimilation" among sojourners. Therefore, in this study, assimilation was not conceptualized as the erasure of all signs of American ethnic origins, but rather the conformity to Japanese membership norms among junior high and high school faculty, which were catalogued by Komisarof (2001). In other words, JETs were considered assimilationists not because they perceived themselves as having a Japanese cultural identity, but rather because they tried to act in the same social or professional roles as Japanese. Moreover, colleagues were categorized as assimilationists because they were perceived to expect Japanese role behavior from JETs—not because they considered JETs to be Japanese.

Integration

JETs were integrationists professionally if they described themselves as willingly fulfilling the requirements stipulated by their job descriptions while also negotiating different professional roles from their colleagues. In other words, they performed duties for which they were uniquely qualified as native English speakers (such as recording listening comprehension tests for the English department), yet unlike assimilators, they readily accepted exemptions from tasks required of other teachers which they felt unable to execute due to their lack of Japanese linguistic or socio-cultural expertise (e.g., discussing issues in Japanese at staff meetings or advising students on college applications, respectively). Japanese colleagues whom subjects described as expecting such distinct professional roles were categorized as integrationists. For example, one Japanese English teacher allowed a JET to act as his assistant in coaching the tennis team and to assume greater responsibility as his

grasp of the coaching duties and ability to execute them in Japanese grew.

JET social integrationists made regular efforts to attend and actively participate in social events in order to develop coworker relationships. However, they typically relied on their non-Japanese status to receive particularistic treatment, e.g., speaking in English with colleagues. Others expected relaxation of common Japanese social norms. For example, despite sanctions against confrontational disagreements with senior staff members in Japanese organizations (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994; Lebra, 1976; Tezuka, 1992), one JET described her tacit permission to engage in this atypical behavior: "I am accepted within the group [of other teachers] as being the American who says outlandish things but can get away with it because I am funny." Japanese were categorized as social integrationists who modified cultural norms for interactions with JETs. The JET just quoted detailed such collegial attitudes: "If I were exactly like a Japanese woman then I wouldn't be accepted as much. . . . Because I am loudmouthed, question teachers, debate with them, drink with them, laugh, and smoke a cigarette now and again, I am more accepted." Social integrationists also appeared at ease talking with JETs no matter which language they utilized to communicate. As one subject articulated, "The teachers seem *comfortable* [author's italics] trying to speak with me, either in English or simple Japanese. That makes me feel included."

Separation

JETs were categorized as either social or professional separatists if they made little effort to learn Japanese cultural norms for social interactions or in carrying out professional duties. They generally behaved as they would in America, and save in

the most perfunctory manner withdrew from social contact and/or involvement in work-related tasks with their colleagues. Japanese were considered separatists professionally if they were perceived by JETs to avoid collaborative work (for example, refusing to team teach English classes with JETs) and/or forbid JETs to attend events required of full-time faculty (such as school excursions or English faculty meetings).

JET perceptions of separation attitudes in professional matters among their colleagues were likely complicated by their lower status as *assistant* full-time teachers, rather than regular faculty members. This status difference, rather than nationality, may influence Japanese expectations for limited JET professional involvement—making it a potential confounding factor when assessing Japanese acculturation attitudes. In practice, however, this distinction is not so clear. When the data for this study was collected, Americans could not become full-time public servants—a title held by public school teachers in Japan. Therefore, the limitation to assistant status was a function of nationality and unchanged by teacher certification in the U.S. (possessed by two subjects), Japanese language fluency, or any other factors that might have enabled JETs functionally to serve in the capacity of teachers. Therefore, subjects usually perceived obstacles in their professional acculturation resulting from their assistant status as a consequence of being non-Japanese. Future research that directly surveys acculturation attitudes among Japanese teachers should differentiate acculturation expectations that are based on JETs' nationality vs. their status, but the interrelation of JETs' nationality and their immutable assistant status also merits consideration when analyzing such data.

Japanese social separatists were perceived to minimize daily contact with JETs by failing to extend invitations to private social events such as staff parties and

trips. They were also thought to avoid workplace interactions with JETs, usually citing their inability to speak English. As one subject recalled, "I once sat down next to a teacher at my desk for the first time and he nervously said to the teacher next to him, 'I don't speak any English.' I thought, 'Oh no, not again.'" Many subjects experienced this pattern, which effectively precluded communication in English or Japanese; ironically, JETs who reported this dynamic often described themselves as conversational in Japanese and regularly demonstrated such ability by speaking Japanese with coworkers.

Other Japanese separatists, rather than avoiding contact altogether, were perceived as reducing JETs at gatherings to passive bystanders with only a "token" presence by not enabling them to participate. One JET recounted a party that featured faculty skits as entertainment, yet she had not been included in rehearsals beforehand, so she was the only person present who could not perform. Still other Japanese separatists were described as interacting perfunctorily with JETs in highly formal, restrained manners, thus keeping them at a polite distance. A subject related: "My colleagues can never relax around me. When I walk in a room, it seems like the conversation stops—men who are smoking hold down their cigarettes. They seem uncomfortable and worried that I'll disapprove."

Marginalization

Marginalist JETs would have theoretically expected themselves to behave according to Japanese norms while avoiding or minimizing collegial contact. Since none of the subjects fits this profile, however, this category's parameters remain conjectural. Japanese colleagues were categorized as marginalists professionally if

they expected JETs to follow Japanese norms for executing their jobs, yet avoided working with them (e.g., by refusing to team-teach) and devalued their unique capabilities as Americans, i.e., expertise in American culture and English. For example, the Korean American JET reported that she was typically expected to follow Japanese workplace norms due to her shared East Asian features, but her status as a native English speaker, and hence a reliable authority on native English usage in America, was doubted by her colleagues, who sometimes double-checked her answers to their questions about English with European-American JETs. Japanese who were marginalists socially, on the other hand, expected JETs to follow Japanese customs and etiquette, yet avoided or minimize contact with them during social events or in daily workplace interactions. The Korean American JET described this dynamic: she was rarely invited to gatherings and often left alone at her desk for long stretches, but also felt pressure to "act Japanese" around most coworkers.

Distribution of Acculturation Attitudes Among JETs and Their Colleagues

Figure 3 summarizes the social and professional acculturation orientations of each subject, as well as their perceptions of collegial acculturation attitudes. Only the predominant orientations are included; most participants described ancillary attitudes among their coworkers and/or within themselves. Two acculturation orientations are listed only when both appeared with almost equal frequency during the subject interviews. In the final column, these orientations are compared; if the social and professional acculturation attitudes differed either for JETs or their colleagues, then both are listed, but if they are the same, then only one set of symbols

appears.

FIGURE 3

JET and Collegial Acculturation Attitudes as Perceived Among JETs

Subject	JET Attitudes		Japanese Attitudes		Alignment
#	Soc	Prof	Soc	Prof	JET-Japanese Teachers
1	I	I	S, M	S, M	I---S, M
2	A	A	S	S	A---S
3	S	S	S	S	S---S
4	I	A	S	S	I (Soc)---S
					A (Prof)---S
5	A	I	A	I	A (Soc)---A
					I (Prof)---I
6	I	A, I	I	I, S	I (Soc)---I
					A, I (Prof)---I, S
7	A, I	A, I	A, I	A, I	A, I---A, I
8	A, I	A, I	A, I	A, I	A, I---A, I
9	I	I	I, S	I, S	I---I, S
10	I	I	I	I	I---I
11	I	I	S	M	I (Soc)---S
					I (Prof)---M
12	A	A	A, I	A, I	A---A, I

Note: In this figure, the abbreviation “Soc” is used to indicate social acculturation

attitudes and "Prof" is utilized for professional ones. "A," "I," "S," and "M" refer to the acculturation orientations of assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization.

The alignment of acculturation orientations between JETs and Japanese teachers listed in Figure 3 can be categorized in four ways: first, JETs demonstrated either assimilation or integration acculturation orientations, and saw their coworkers as the same—a match that encouraged deep penetration into the teachers' collective. Subjects 5, 7, 8, and 10 fit this profile, as did subjects 6 and 9 when their colleagues were perceived as integrationists and subject 12 when her colleagues were perceived as assimilationists. Second, JETs were either assimilationists or integrationists while their colleagues were viewed as separatists or marginalists—reflecting a discrepancy between JETs who desired deep organizational penetration and their colleagues who did not (i.e., subjects 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, and 11). Next, both JETs and their coworkers were thought to hold separatist attitudes—neither party expected or desired group boundary permeability (i.e., subject 3). Finally, separatist JETs saw their colleagues as assimilationists or integrationists, indicating a gap between the distance that JETs desired from their colleagues and coworker expectations of greater ingroup penetration. While this final pattern was not experienced predominantly by any of the JETs interviewed, subjects 6, 9, and 11 described it as an ancillary dynamic of their overall experiences.

DISCUSSION

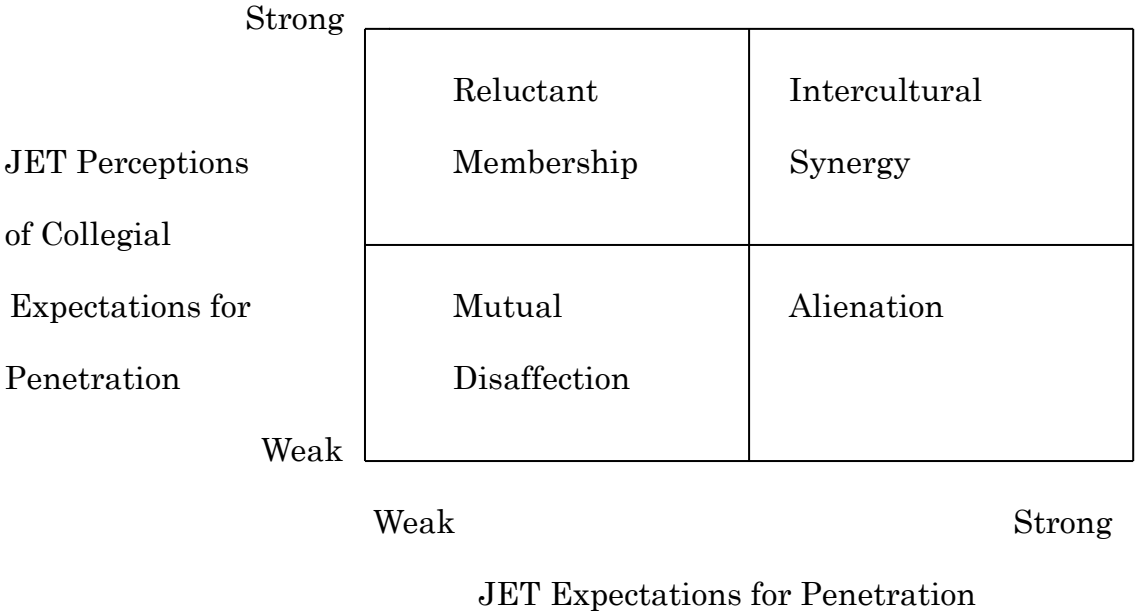
As previously stated, research (Berry, 1980 & 1990; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003; Piontkowski et al., 2000) indicated that the alignment between the acculturation attitudes of interacting groups has a powerful effect on intercultural relations: the greater the difference between the two, the more conflict is likely. In this section, a model of four alignments of acculturation attitudes is proposed to address this central, yet rather undifferentiated tenet of acculturation theory. In order to develop this model and clarify its ramifications for intercultural communication, the effects of such alignments on JET-Japanese intercultural relations are described.

Alignment of JET and Japanese Acculturation Attitudes: A Typology

The four previously described patterns of acculturation attitude alignments can be visualized through the following diagram, which was conceptualized by the author when reviewing the data. JET expectations for their penetration into the teachers' collective and collegial expectations for such penetration are conceived of as dichotomous dimensions, generating four acculturation profiles. Each profile has its own unique characteristics in terms of the predominant dynamics in the intercultural relationships between JETs and Japanese teachers.

FIGURE 4

Alignment of Expectations for Social Penetration Between JETs and Colleagues



Based on the perceived acculturation attitude alignments listed in Figure 3, subjects can be divided into the following acculturation attitude alignment profiles:

FIGURE 5

Acculturation Attitude Alignment Profiles for Study Participants

Subject #	Gap: JET-Japanese	Alignment Profile
1	I---S, M	Alienation
2	A---S	Alienation
3	S---S	Mutual Disaffection
4	I (Soc)---S	Alienation

	A (Prof)---S	Alienation
5	A (Soc)---A	Intercultural Synergy
	I (Prof)---I	Intercultural Synergy
6	I (Soc)---I	Intercultural Synergy
	A, I (Prof)---I, S	Intercultural Synergy (for I-I combination)
		Alienation (for other combinations)
7	A, I---A, I	Intercultural Synergy
8	A, I---A, I	Intercultural Synergy
9	I---I, S	Intercultural Synergy (for I-I combination)
		Alienation (for I-S combination)
10	I---I	Intercultural Synergy
11	I (Soc)---S	Alienation
	I (Prof)---M	Alienation
12	A---A, I	Intercultural Synergy (for A-A combination)
		Alienation (for A-I combination)

Note: In this figure, the abbreviation "Soc" is used to indicate social acculturation attitudes and "Prof" is utilized for professional ones. "A," "I," "S," and "M" refer to the acculturation orientations of assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization.

While most subjects predominantly fit one acculturation attitude alignment profile, the intercultural relations of some were characterized by two—as indicated in Figure 5. In this figure, alignments between ancillary acculturation attitudes are not listed. If such ancillary attitudes and their consequent alignments are

considered, then JETs also had specific relationships or sporadic interactions with colleagues that fit profiles other than their dominant one(s).

In the next subsections, each acculturation attitude alignment profile is detailed. First, the entailed social and professional acculturation attitudes of JETs are explained, followed by the corresponding acculturation attitudes perceived among Japanese colleagues. All acculturation attitudes are described in terms of Piontkowski et al.'s (2000) concepts of *contact*, *ingroup bias*, *similarity*, and *permeability* (herein noted by italics) in order to provide a more trenchant analysis of the intercultural dynamics observed within each profile.

Intercultural Synergy

JETs who reported a match between their own assimilation or integration orientations and those of their colleagues (i.e., subjects 5, 7, 8, and 10, as well as 6, 9, and 12 contextually—as previously described) belong in the Intercultural Synergy profile. Although their preferred degree of identity maintenance varied, they expected and desired *penetration* into their faculty collectives and felt included by their colleagues' matching acculturation orientations, which resulted in positive intercultural relations. These JETs regularly attempted to engage professionally and socially in their organizations: they frequently worked collaboratively with coworkers on a variety of tasks and also shared duties with teachers at school events (e.g., school excursions and field days). They actively attended social gatherings (e.g., private parties and trips) and also participated in activities once present.

JETs in Intercultural Synergy actively sought *contact* through the aforementioned professional and social involvement. Assimilators saw themselves

as *similar* to their coworkers, sharing both the same occupation and organizational membership, which led them to presume similar treatment, rights, and duties as other teachers (thus indicating a minimal *ingroup bias*). One JET described such expectations and her feelings when they were confirmed:

> I go to work and just have a regular day. You know, there isn't anything too eventful that makes me feel stigmatized that I am a foreigner. . . . I just go, do my work, chitchat with people, and go home when the day is done. That makes me feel accepted. It isn't anything special. It's not like they give me gifts or that people are especially nice to me.

Integrationists, on the other hand, accepted particularistic treatment based on cultural background in some situations but still saw themselves as accepted faculty members—reflecting a contextual sense of *similarity*. As subject 8 explained, "One of my conclusions about my colleagues is that I can trust them because they accept and respect my differences and I do the same for them. I think they understand and appreciate that." Integrationists also exhibited more of an *ingroup bias* than assimilators, as they relied on exemptions from some duties required of their Japanese colleagues. However, since they tried to contribute regularly to their schools as faculty (i.e., a shared trait) in unique ways as native English speakers, such ingroup bias was moderate.

Conversely, JETs in the Intercultural Synergy profile also reported that the majority of their coworkers typically encouraged their efforts to seek out frequent *contact*, which made them feel accepted in the faculty collective. These JETs described regular, active involvement in social activities and tasks required of faculty, which resulted in perceptions of low *ingroup bias*, high *similarity*, and *permeable*

group boundaries among the Japanese teachers, since these colleagues encouraged such participation and seemed to accept the JETs as organizational insiders regardless of nationality. Such collegial perceptions were encapsulated by this assimilationist JET:

> I had duty where I had to make sure the kids weren't being rambunctious [on our school excursion]. I was assigned a position just like all of the other teachers and the students had to check in with me, just like they did with all of their regular teachers. So that made me feel a part of the group, instead of having to deal with the attitude, "You're the JET, so you don't have to do this."

Alienation

General characteristics.

JETs who desired penetration yet felt denied ingroup status were placed in the Alienation profile, as they typically reported feeling alienation as a result of such disappointed expectations. These subjects (i.e., 1, 2, 4, and 11 in both social and professional contexts as well as 6, 9, and 12 in limited ones—as detailed previously) typically held assimilation or integration attitudes, yet they encountered separation or marginalization orientations among faculty. Subject 12, however—an assimilationist—described coworkers mostly as integrationists and assimilationists, an alignment which differed from other Alienated JETs. When she perceived colleagues as assimilationists, she fit the Intercultural Synergy profile, but when she saw them as integrationists, her experiences were better characterized by Alienation.

The common theme among all JETs in Alienation is that they expected greater penetration into the faculty collective—concluding that they were excluded

from full participation because they were not Japanese. Specficially, they reported limited professional roles as assistant teachers and social ostracism. As Berry (1990) elucidated, "To the extent that acculturating people wish to participate in the desirable features of a larger society. . ., the denial of these may be cause for increased levels of acculturative stress" (p. 249). Consequently, Alienated JETs typically reported high levels of frustration and disappointment due to the perceived denial of social acceptance and professional involvement stemming from the gap in acculturation orientations. Although the population for this study was small, the large number of subjects whose experiences were partially or predominantly characterized by Alienation suggests that this profile's travails may be widespread—a dilemma that potentially undermines the JET Program's aim to promote positive intercultural exchange.

Perceptions about social acculturation.

In terms of social acculturation, JETs in Alienation typically described themselves actively seeking coworker *contact* through attending both school events and social gatherings. They demonstrated relatively little *ingroup bias,* as they primarily categorized themselves as friends to colleagues or as fellow faculty (i.e., shared traits), rather than as members of their cultural group (i.e., exclusive traits). Their sense of shared occupation and organizational membership contributed to a relatively high sense of *similarity*.

Alienated JETs often described colleagues who avoided or limited *contact* with them because of their foreign status, sometimes attributing such behavior, as indicated previously, to a lack of English proficiency. The JETs attributed such avoidance to Japanese views of Americans as face-maintenance threats; assuming

that they had to speak English with all Americans despite the JETs' claimed proficiencies in conversational Japanese, Japanese coworkers feared embarrassment from making grammar mistakes or failing to understand spoken English when talking with JETs.

JETs also perceived their colleagues as holding strong *ingroup biases,* identifying strongly as Japanese and trying to protect the distinctiveness of their group through frequently differentiating themselves from Americans by various forms of particularistic treatment of JETs—most commonly codeswitching from Japanese to English and compliments on JET abilities to follow Japanese customs. Particularistic treatment was commonly seen as a distancing mechanism, reflecting low *similarity* and low *ingroup permeability* among Japanese, as membership among teachers seemed inaccessible to foreigners. One subject explained why she felt excluded by having her foreign status marked through particularistic treatment, "Because you're being singled out. You know you're not being treated just as a person for who you are but more just because of the place that you come from."

JETs interpreted such particularistic treatment as exclusive when they were offered help with matters in which they perceived themselves as self-sufficient, i.e., linguistically and culturally competent. Conversely, when they received assistance to accomplish tasks that they could not accomplish on their own (e.g., making complex requests in Japanese), JETs usually felt appreciative. However, as they achieved greater linguistic and cultural competence during their sojourns, their desire to be "treated like everyone else" grew markedly.

JETs negatively construed codeswitching when colleagues spoke English to them in contexts where Japanese was the linguistic norm and the JET was

communicating competently in Japanese. One subject described when she was conversing in Japanese with a group of teachers and suddenly was joined by an English teacher:

> Someone told me in Japanese, "It's still raining out." And the English teacher said in English, "It's still raining out." I think that's offensive because I was actively engaging with another Japanese teacher in Japanese, so I obviously understood, but she still made a point of translating.

Also negatively interpreted were compliments about JET abilities to perform everyday functions in Japan, such as sitting in the traditional Japanese position of "seiza" (i.e., on one's knees with hands folded), speaking elementary Japanese, using chopsticks, or eating food widely considered by Japanese to be inedible among Americans due to their peculiar tastes, such as pickled plums ("umeboshi"), fermented soybeans ("natto"), or exotic seafood. One participant summarized why such compliments bothered her, "With these comments, even though they're small, they never let me forget that I'm a foreigner and that their expectations for me are different." In other words, since Japanese would not compliment each other on their ability to speak Japanese, use chopsticks, or eat Japanese food, many subjects interpreted these utterances as distancing mechanisms since they violated their expectations for universalistic treatment.

Perceptions regarding professional acculturation.

Alienated JET reports of their own professional acculturation attitudes shared many themes—although minor variations could be seen between integrationists and assimilationists. For example, while all Alienated JETs frequently attended mandatory events for regular faculty, assimilationists (subjects 2,

4, and 12) maximized *contact* by going whenever possible, but integrationists (subjects 1, 6, 9, and 11) avoided those where they felt unable to contribute (e.g., due to limited Japanese proficiency) or that had little relevance to their daily work. *Ingroup bias* appeared minimal among Alienated assimilationist JETs, as they tended to categorize themselves more saliently as school staff (a shared trait) than as Americans. Integrationists demonstrated more ingroup bias as they often accepted special privileges due to their foreign status, such as exemptions from meetings.

Both assimilationists and integrationists described feeling high *similarity* (i.e., as teachers) when they initially arrived in Japan, which afterwards diminished in response to perceived collegial separatist attitudes. JETs made such attributions based on perceived exclusion from collaborative educational undertakings (e.g., cooperatively preparing team-taught lessons) and administrative projects (e.g., committee work and event planning). As one subject reflected:

> I am definitely the foreigner limited in my roles. . . . For example, I just don't have much of a voice in what goes on in the school. . . . I can talk to the other teachers about issues, but I don't have a vote, so I can't enact any real change. . . . That makes me feel excluded.

JETs felt that exclusion from full professional involvement was intentional in some cases and unconscious in others, with the result being colleagues either avoiding or unwittingly discouraging *contact*. As a result of such role limitations, JETs perceived colleagues as having high *ingroup bias*, reserving the privilege of full participation in the organization only for Japanese regular-status teachers. They also described low *group permeability,* as faculty did not admit the JETs as full members, and low *similarity,* since teachers differentiated themselves from JETs

based on national membership and assistant status.

Caveat about JET interpretations of collegial behavior.

One caveat is necessary regarding Alienated JETs' interpretations of the intercultural encounters described in this section. Had Japanese colleagues been interviewed, they may have explained quite differently their motivations for the behaviors reported. As this study attempts to identify JET-perceived acculturation attitude alignments, a discussion of alternative interpretations of the same events among Japanese coworkers is beyond the scope of this paper. For a review of such explanations offered in the literature, readers can refer to Komisarof (2001).

Mutual Disaffection

The separatist JET (i.e., subject 3) who perceived her colleagues as separatists was placed in the Mutual Disaffection profile. Although JETs in Alienation also perceived mostly separatism among colleagues, the disappointment and desire for greater outgroup penetration expressed by Alienated JETs was not evident in Mutual Disaffection. Rather, since both parties tacitly agreed that *contact* and *group penetration* would be minimal, the status quo was distant, dispirited relations.

In social matters, subject 3 felt low *similarity* with coworkers due to perceived cultural and linguistic barriers, which she reasoned limited her opportunities to have gratifying relationships. Therefore, she typically attempted to minimize *contact*, showing little desire for *group penetration*. She explained, "I don't feel overly included by the other teachers, but I'm not terribly bothered by it because I'm not so attracted to spending a lot of time with them outside of the workplace." Also, in

terms of professional acculturation, she minimized *contact* by avoiding involvement in collaborative tasks. As she reflected, "There are certain things that . . . [I'm] happy to be excluded from, like attending the regular Thursday meeting. Very little would apply to me, and I'd have to have it all translated." She also described a low sense of *similarity*, as she did not identify as an educator with similar professional obligations as her colleagues.

Japanese colleagues were characterized as wanting little social *contact*—rarely initiating conversations or extending invitations to social gatherings, which resulted in low group *permeability*. Their sense of *similarity* seemed low, which the subject ascribed primarily to distinctions based on her American identity, blonde hair, and Caucasian features. In professional matters, coworkers were seen as having high *ingroup biases*, reserving the right to fully participate in the organization only for Japanese regular teachers, as well as low *similarity*, since they differentiated themselves from JETs based on such regular status. They were also perceived to limit professional *contact* by refusing to schedule or frequently canceling team-taught classes. Such behavior was interpreted as evidence of exclusion from the teacher ingroup, indicating low group boundary *permeability*.

Reluctant Membership

Typically, JETs who desired separation yet faced integration or assimilation orientations among their colleagues belong to the Reluctant Membership profile—in other words, those who faced greater collegial expectations for group penetration than they desired themselves. Although none of the participants in this study were categorized as such predominantly, subjects 6, 9, and 11 described limited experiences

of this dynamic. They had various reasons for withdrawing: subject 11 resented his colleagues' separation and marginalization attitudes, so on the rare occasions when they asked him to engage in collaborative work or join social functions (i.e., acted as integrationists), he either agreed reluctantly or refused to participate at all. Subjects 6 and 9 valued private time with their families and sometimes found these needs in conflict with expectations that they attend social gatherings or work late.

JETs in the Reluctant Membership profile had low desires in both professional and social matters for outgroup *contact* and *penetration*—opting to withdraw. They also felt little *similarity*, as they did not identify as full-time teachers and thus felt free from the same obligations as their colleagues to participate in organizational life. These JETs perceived themselves as exempt from such involvement due to their foreign status, thus demonstrating high *ingroup bias*. Socially and/or professionally, Japanese colleagues in Reluctant Membership were perceived to have moderate to strong desires for mutual *contact* and for the JET to *penetrate* their group. Japanese integrationists were perceived to feel medium *similarity* and *ingroup biases*, as they desired JET organizational involvement while concurrently recognizing that intercultural differences would both enable and limit it. Assimilationists, on the other hand, were perceived to feel high *similarity* and low *ingroup biases*, expecting the JETs to contribute like other Japanese teachers.

Synthesis

In this section, responses to the original research questions are encapsulated and the implications, for JET-Japanese coworker relations, of the response to the third inquiry are expounded on. The research questions included:

1. What primary acculturation attitudes do JET Program participants possess towards Japanese teachers at the schools where they are employed?

2. What primary acculturation attitudes do JETs perceive Japanese teachers having towards the JETs themselves?

3. How does the alignment of these perceived acculturation attitudes affect the quality of intercultural relations between American JETs and their Japanese colleagues?

Regarding the first question, JETs almost exclusively perceived themselves as assimilationists or integrationists—thus expecting deep penetration into their organizations, but differed on the degree to which they desired to assimilate to the role of a regular-status Japanese teacher. As for the second question, while some colleagues were perceived by JETs as assimilationists, more frequently they were seen as either integrationists or separatists—suggesting (if such perceptions are accurate) that coworkers commonly expected JETs to maintain roles distinct from the Japanese full-time teachers. However, colleagues were perceived to differ in terms of how much they expected Americans to penetrate into the organization, ranging from superficially to deeply.

Finally, regarding the final research question, analysis revealed that JETs and their coworkers most commonly fit either the Alienation or Intercultural Synergy profiles. Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2003) found that stress and perceptions of discrimination are rife among assimilationist sojourners living in predominantly separatist societies—an alignment of acculturation attitudes which parallels Alienation. Although the population in this study was small, as previously noted, many participants described their collegial relations with the qualities of Alienation.

This suggests that many JETs may be experiencing an incongruous alignment of acculturation attitudes with Japanese coworkers, which is having a negative impact upon intercultural relations.

On the other hand, the positive collegial relations and active organizational involvement described by JETs in the Intercultural Synergy profile mirror the findings of Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987), who reported among various sojourner groups the greater the participation with the host community, the lesser the sojourner stress. Berry et al., Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2003), and the results of this study all suggest that a key factor in reducing sojourner stress and maximizing positive affect towards the host culture is *involvement* in the host culture. Intercultural Synergy provides a potential model for intercultural collegial relations—one in which Americans and Japanese negotiate an active professional and social role for the sojourner, leading to a mutually comfortable degree of inclusion. Consequently, it is not surprising that JETs in Intercultural Synergy consistently demonstrated the most positive affect towards their colleagues of any other profile and appeared to actualize a primary goal of the JET Program: to promote positive intercultural exchange.

Limitations of this Study and Recommendations for Further Research

While the focus of this study was upon JET-perceived acculturation orientations among Japanese colleagues, future research also needs to assess Japanese acculturation attitudes as reported by the Japanese themselves. This would allow researchers to understand how closely Japanese and JET perceptions

about Japanese acculturation orientations align. If a disparity exists, then the perceptual miscues causing this need to be identified to reduce such misunderstandings. Moreover, in constructing future instruments to assess the acculturation preferences of Japanese teachers, differentiating when JETs are rejected due to their non-Japanese cultural identity or other factors unrelated to Japanese acculturation orientations is recommended. For example, according to McConnell (2000), some Japanese colleagues avoid team-teaching with JETs—not because of their separatist or marginalist acculturation attitudes, but rather due to the extra time that is required to plan such lessons. Finally, future studies should survey larger populations, and also examine the influences of race and gender on the acculturation process, as some studies have suggested that Japanese acculturation attitudes toward sojourners vary according to these factors (Bell, 1973; Komisarof, 2001; Life, 1993; McConnell, 2000).

CONCLUSION

This study has provided a snapshot of a small group of Americans in one field where sojourners with specialized knowledge and skills (i.e., the type that the Japanese government is targeting to compensate partially for future projected labor shortages) are acculturating into Japanese organizations. Studies with larger populations of JETs, as well as foreign workers from diverse fields and nationalities, are necessary to further assess progress in the acculturation of such skilled sojourners. Nonetheless, the data in this study clearly indicated that the relational dynamics inherent in the profiles of Alienation, Mutual Disaffection, and Reluctant Membership engender foreseeable travails that limited JET capacities to contribute

to their schools to the detriment of all organizational members—Americans and Japanese.

Intercultural Synergy provides a more productive alternative. However, in order to actualize such dynamics, mutual efforts are critical. On one hand, it is essential that Japanese move beyond separatist or marginalist acculturation attitudes to allow JETs deeper organizational penetration. But to accomplish this, integration or assimilation *attitudes* among JETs are insufficient. Even with the expectation to integrate or assimilate, without the necessary socio-cultural tools, i.e., mastery of behavioral and sociolinguistic norms that the Japanese themselves follow in order to integrate or assimilate into work organizations, then sojourner abilities to do so will be limited. Only through such mutual efforts at building inclusive relationships will intercultural communication improve between American JETs and Japanese teachers.

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THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED ACCULTURATION ATTITUDE ALIGNMENTS UPON U.S.-JAPANESE RELATIONS

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Dear Journal of Intercultural Communication Editors:

I have enclosed my manuscript, "The Impact of Perceived Acculturation Attitude Alignments Upon U.S.-Japanese Relations," for re-submission to the upcoming issue of your journal. If there is anything else that you need related to this paper, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information on the cover page of my manuscript.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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