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<th>The career choice of cross-cultural individuals in Japan</th>
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論文題名

The Career Choice of Cross-cultural Individuals In Japan

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Cross-cultural individuals (CCIs) are people who have spent a significant part of his or her developmental years living in—or meaningfully interacted with—two or more cultural environments. Through these cross-cultural experiences, they are molded and shaped to have certain characteristics as a result of their cultural blend. The experience of being CCIs is one that provides them with rich material for learning on the one hand, and one which may bring confusion on the other. Previous research has described the experience of being CCIs may allow them to act as bridges, and alleviate the difficulties associated with cross-cultural communication which makes them good candidate of being expatriates.

In this study, we focus on the research on career choice of CCIs which was not studied a lot before. The findings show that CCIs tend to work in an international environment where they can exercise their skills, and become more willing to work under challenging environment with global mobility. Most interviewees said geographical location does not matter a lot for them, but corporate culture may matter, especially when the non-Japanese CCIs consider working in a Japanese company. The cross-cultural experience also makes them have more choices and more options than other people.

Keywords: cross-cultural individuals; career choice; Japan
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1. Introduction

As the improvement of the information and transportation technologies nowadays, the border between nations are becoming disintegrating. As a result, global mobility is becoming easier than before. At the same time, the cultural mixing of today’s world and the number of international careers are also increasing (Bell-Villada, Sichel, Eidse & Orr, 2011; Bonebright, 2009). According to the 2016 (46st) Survey of Overseas Business Activities (Ministry of Economy, 2016), the number of overseas affiliates of Japanese companies is increasing, which means that the need for managing international business is also be on the rise. In order to manage under an international environment well, the competition for international talent is getting severe in these years. (Beechler & Woodward, 2009)

In this study, we focus on a group of people who have international background due to the experience of living in multiple cultures, namely cross-cultural individuals (CCIs), and explore their career choice. Because of the experience of being CCIs makes them have some characteristics such as being able to speak multiple languages, or understanding the differences between multicultural.

The purpose of this study is to discover what criteria is being considered necessary for CCIs to make a career choice. The experience of being CCIs can make them good international talent for companies who have already hold businesses overseas or are trying to expand their businesses internationally. The findings in this study can provide information to these business organizations and hope to help make a good job match between CCIs and companies.

In what follows, I first review relevant previous literature on CCIs, experience of being CCIs, and their impact on work. Next, we introduce the methodology of study, which builds on interviews with twenty CCIs in Japan. We then explicate analysis and its results before moving on to discussion. Lastly, we present the implications and the limitation of this study.
2. Literature Review

Ang and Van Dyne (2008) mentioned that being in a foreign culture influences one’s behaviors, values, and ways of thinking in the workplace; leaders and followers of multinational organizations should have the competencies to interact with and support others from multiple cultures and countries. Hence, experience of growing up in a foreign culture or under a cross-cultural environment might have positive influence on individuals to work in multinational organizations.

In this part, I review the literatures that are relevant to CCI, the experience of being CCI, its impact at work, and the career theory. Before introducing CCI, it is necessary to understand Third Culture Individual (TCI) first. This is because the concept of TCI (Useem, 1963) came first before the concept of CCI was developed (Van Reken, 2009).

2.1 Third culture individual (TCI)
The concept of ‘third culture individual (TCI)’ was first introduced by Useem (1963). TCIs are children who travel with expatriate parents and spend significant portions of their growing years in a culture other than their home cultures. It was said that, rather than finding a sense of belonging in a place, TCIs’ sense of belonging lies within relationships to others of similar background (Pollock, 2009). TCIs are also referred to as ‘global nomads’ or ‘transcultural’ (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004) or being ‘internationally mobile children and adolescents’ (Gerber, 1992).

However, it also has been reported that the mobile lifestyle of a TCI can result in a clouded sense of identity (Murphy, 2003) or a confused identity (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008; Cottrell, 2006). It has been noticed that TCIs often do not experience full ownership of any one culture, which may make them feel rootless and restless. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001)

As the increase of the cultural mixing of today’s world and the increasing number of international careers, it is getting difficult to define individual as an ‘official TCI’ (Bell-Villada, Sichel, Eidse & Orr, 2011; Bonebright, 2009). As a result, the concept of ‘Cross-Cultural Individual (CCI)’ was introduced by Van Reken (2009).

2.2 Cross-cultural individual (CCI)
Van Reken defined CCI as “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years living in—or meaningfully interacted with—two or more
cultural environments.” (Van Reken, 2009). Based on The Cross-cultural individual (CCI) model (Van Reken, 2009), CCIs are individuals from a wider range of backgrounds including those born to parents from at least 2 cultures, TCIs, children of immigrants, refugees, international adoptees, etc. In my study, I focus on the CCIs who had lived at least in two different countries (including home country) during their developmental years and who now live in Japan.

Bell-Villada, et al. (2011) explain some features of CCIs as follows. Firstly, they are adaptable to various different cultures. Some CCIs can switch the ways frequently in which they related to the surrounding dominant culture. How they identify themselves with environment are relative to the dominant culture around them. Lastly, they could know how to have adequate responses to different environments.

Secondly, most CCIs can speak multiple languages. Growing up under a cross-cultural environment makes CCIs able to move between languages. Some CCIs are influenced by families and schools.

Thirdly, growing up in a cross-cultural or an international environment give CCIs have opportunity to see the world in person, and learn people’s mindset in various places and cultures. This may help them understand different points of view from others.

However, frequent international mobility also makes CCIs lose the connection with friends and family. Bicultural CCIs, who were born to parents from at least two races (Van Reken, 2009) may hard to become fluent in the original language of at least one parent. Educational CCIs, who may remain in their home country but are sent to a school with a different cultural base (Van Reken, 2009) can lose connection with their local community because of studying in a culturally distant world from their original one. There are not only positive features but also negative ones. However, CCIs tend to take these losses in a positive way, and make the losses to encourage themselves to move on (Bell-Villada, et al., 2011).

2.3 Experience of being CCI and its impact at work
In order to increase the level of success and effectiveness of international assignments, a large number of companies spend more time and money on cross-cultural training programs (Bennett, Aston & Colquhoun, 2000). CCIs’ cognitive complexity may work as strength to deal with ambiguity and conflicts linked to overseas assignments or to jobs that require cross-cultural interactions (McCall &
CCIs’ experience and highly integrated complexity may allow them to act as a bridge, to alleviate difficulties associated with cross-cultural communication (Tadmor, 2004). Selmer and Lauring (2002) predicted that expatriates who are TCIs (also CCIs) seem to be better adapted to cross-cultural environment than mono-culture expatriates. Commonly cited characteristics of an effective expatriate include good communication skills, open-mindedness, moderate extraversion, interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, linguistic skills, ability to handle stress and sociability (Caligiuri, 2000; Jordan & Cartwright, 1998; Selmer & Lam, 2004). This list includes some characteristics such as being able to speak multiple languages, or understanding the differences between multicultural that CCIs share. Some of these skills are hard to obtain through conventional cross-cultural training (Selmer & Lam, 2004). Jurtan (2011) mentions that CCIs can be an important source of talent in today’s globalized workplace and their experiences may provide great value to organizations.

2.4 Career choice
Frank Parsons is regarded as the founder of the vocational guidance movement (Jones, 1994). In 1909, Parsons developed the first principles and organized framework in career choice. Parsons (1909) states that career decision-making occurs when people have achieved the following: (1) a clear understanding of their own features and strength; (2) a knowledge of jobs and the labor market; and (3) objective judgement about the relationship between (1) and (2). This idea of matching individual characteristics with job factors was later developed into the trait-and-factor theory and is a base in most of today’s theories about occupation. (Brown, 2002).

In 1951, Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma proposed that career choice is a long-term developmental process. The original theory consisted of the three points: (1) career choice is a process; (2) the process is largely irreversible; and (3) compromise is an essential aspect of every choice (Ginzberg, 1972).

Holland (1997) stated that, in the career choice and development process, people tend to search for environments that would allow them to utilize their skills and abilities, and to express their attitudes and values toward career.
2.5 Research question

Although there are a few studies discussing that the experience of being CCI may help them work under a cross-cultural environment, research on what kind of organizations do CCIs want to work and what kind of job do they pursue is still little. My study will focus on the career choice of CCIs in Japan and set research questions as follows:

1. How does the experience of living in multiple countries in developmental period influence CCIs’ career choice?
2. What makes CCIs choose or not choose to work in Japan as they choose their careers?
3. Methodology

3.1 Research approach
In order to investigate factors of career choice of CCIs, I chose a qualitative method. Qualitative approaches focus on studying phenomena that occur in natural settings and allow researchers to generate descriptive data through the participants’ words and behavior (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). It is a method to know the participants deeply, and to observe how they define themselves through their personal experiences (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Participants provide detailed descriptions of social phenomenon and the meaning assigned to particular experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Because the study about career choice of CCIs is still little, especially in Japan, I attempted to explore how the experience of living in multiple countries influences the career choices of CCIs and what factors CCIs consider as they select their careers. As a result, an in-depth explorative research is essential in my study.

3.2 Participants and sampling

Criteria for Participants
The participants of this study were recruited through personal networks and a snowball sampling technique. Initially, I recruited current or former students of Keio Business School. After every interview, I asked the participants to recommend other CCIs who may be good candidates for my study. Participants mostly recommended their friends from schools and/or colleagues.

The participants of this study are CCIs who have lived in at least one other country, which is not of their origin, for at least one year before they reached the age of 22, and who now live in Japan. The criteria of living abroad for at least one year is to ensure that the individuals have spent enough time to become familiar with and to adjust to the foreign environment. The cut-off age of 22 was selected because the university life is considered important in this study. The university life comprises lots of social activities, which means people spent more time for themselves with friends. It would also be the first time for them to have left their families and lived by themselves.

Participants
Seven women and thirteen men were interviewed. Thirteen participants are Japanese, and the rest are from other countries, including South Africa, Romania, Canada, U.S.A, France, South Korea, Canada, Taiwan, and Switzerland. The participants were
between the age of 20 to 50, and the average age was 32.25. The age distribution of the participants is 55 percent from twenties, 20 percent from thirties, 15 percent from forties, and 10 percent from fifties.

Eleven participants initially moved abroad because of families’ work. The other nine participants initially moved abroad because of education purposes or their parents moved back to their home country. Six participants have lived in two countries before reaching the age of 22. Fourteen participants have lived in three or more countries before the age of 22. The greatest number of countries one has lived is seven. On average, the participants in this study lived in 3.15 countries before the age of 22.

There are 75 percent of participants having full-time working experience, and the average number of years worked is about 8. The longest is 27 years, and the shortest is one year. The remaining 25 percent of participants do not have full-time working experience but have the part-time working experience or internship. These participants were looking for jobs.

Among those who have industry experience, the participants have worked in different industries, including agriculture, hotel, finance, media, crisis/risk management, medical, aviation, and service industries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number of countries lived in</th>
<th>Number of years worked</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trading, Family Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Japan/USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>Agriculture, Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>Finance, Media, Risk/Crisis Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Taiwan/USA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Finance, Trading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aviation, Trading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Japan/Myanmar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Hotel, Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>IT, Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Service, Real estate, Sports, Family Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>France/Japan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Development, Diplomacy, Construction, Telecom, Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Aviation, Sports, Luxury, Beauty, EC retail, Life insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>Public/Non-profit Org, Tertiary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Canada/South Korea</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Data collection
The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. A participant information sheet (see Appendix A) was sent to each participant for them to fill in and to be returned to the researcher prior to the interview. In this way, the researcher was able to have the basic information about the interviewees’ experience and background when the interview was conducted. At the beginning of an interview, the participants were informed of the confidentiality and protection of their personal information and how the interview data was going to be managed. After receiving an approval from participants, I started each interview.

The interview consisted of three parts. The first part contained questions on participants’ experience of living in different countries. The second part contained questions on the career choice. Some questions were different depending on participant as some had working experience. The third part contained the discussion about Japan and their future career prospects. The list of interview questions is found in Appendix B.

Because all the participants speak multiple languages, and the researcher is trilingual (Mandarin Chinese, English, and Japanese), participants were offered to select a language which they felt most comfortable with or which they could express their views more precisely. However, after explaining the participants that the thesis would be written in English, most of them were willing to use English during the interview, apart from one native Japanese speaker and two native Chinese speakers.

The interviews lasted between 30 and 100 minutes. The average interview time was 61 minutes. Seventeen interviews were conducted face-to-face on campus or at a café which was quiet enough for recording and would not been disturbed by others. The rest were conducted as conference calls. All the interviews were audio-recorded. I also took hand-written notes. Some contents were transcribed into words in order to analyze them even further.

3.4 Method of data analysis
After all of the interviews, I listened to every recording and transcribed selected parts of audio into text. In order to avoid mistakes, I compared the transcripts and the notes which I took during the interview. The analyzed data include all the relevant information gathered via the interviews and participant information sheet (Appendix A).
Upon data analysis, I entered the all participants’ information into one Excel sheet in order to integrate interviewees’ backgrounds and created an index of interviewees’ information for this study.

There were two stages of data analysis. In the first stage, I generally scanned the transcript, which provided a broad idea of what the data contain. I then picked up key words which are related to the topic of the study. In the second stage, data and recordings were reviewed back and forth. Codes were categorized and then reviewed again for information relevant in answering the research questions (Saldaña, 2013). Table 2 shows an example of the coding and emerging themes.

Findings were also compared across interviewees from different age groups, nationalities, and gender in order to find similarity or difference between each group with different themes.

**Table 2. Example of coding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to challenge</td>
<td>Challenging environment</td>
<td>I only looking for overseas companies. They call them ‘Gaishi’….so I’ve been only looking for gaishi companies, because I want a really challenging atmosphere for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chance for growth</td>
<td>I don’t mind of working hard, but it has to be an environment continuous of growth. I want to be able to grow in the company, not just work hard every day…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunities one can gain in the organization</td>
<td>The corporate culture</td>
<td>……she said she did even try the Japanese-style job hunting for new graduates. She could not agree with the way that the job is assigned by company as you cannot choose the job you want to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercise personal skills</td>
<td>Working in Japanese companies gives more chance for him to learn and growth……he chose to stay in Japan and contribute himself to helping Japanese companies to go abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>So, it was time when the airline company expanded its international routes. And I think I can leverage my background and growth of internationalization of the airline company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>…whether there’s a place I can utilize my language skills is also my priority. Because it’s my strength, you need a place to express your strength…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Findings & Analysis

In this section, I outline what I found in the interview with the 20 participants. The content includes the experience of being CCI, and the criteria of interviewees’ career choice.

4.1 The experience of being CCI

Firstly, interviewees said the cross-cultural experience made them have ability to look at different issues in different perspectives and let them be more open-minded than other people who do not have this experience. Moreover, the experience of living in multiple countries made them have global mindset, and understanding of the diversity of people.

Secondly, they suggested that the experience made them have chance to compare different countries. They mentioned that living abroad gave them opportunities to see their home countries from different perspectives.

Thirdly, they learned how to keep good relationship with a diverse range of people. Interviewees in this study spent most of their developmental period living overseas, and most of them have lived in 3 or more countries before. Therefore, as they moved to a new place they needed to adapt to a new environment every time.

“Although it was tough at first, everything would get better after you made friends.” (Participant J)

Most interviewees found that they intend to make friends based on peoples’ personalities instead of nationalities or races. Knowing how to respect others and to get along with people who are different from their home cultures is also one of their strengths.

Fourthly, the interviewees said they faced difficulties when they lived overseas or even when they came back their home countries. Most of the difficulties were language problems. As they moved to a new place, they felt their language ability was not enough at first. However, they said they overcome them about 6 months or a year later. There were also some other interviewees who said they had been bullied as they came back to their home countries because they were different from other children. In sum, it is predicted that the overseas experience made them have a strong mentality.
4.2 The factors which CCIs consider when making career choices

*Opportunity to exercise personal skills*

17 interviewees said the opportunity to exercise their personal skills is very important for their career choices. Especially the skills they studied in school and the language skills they learned from their experience of being CCI.

“The airline company started its international routes in 1986, and I started to work in 1990. So, it was time when the airline company expanded its international routes. And I think I can leverage my background and growth of internationalization of the airline company.” (Participant R)

Table 3 shows the detailed information of interviews who commented “opportunity to exercise personal skills” is important for their career choice. The data were analyzed by each category (gender, age, and nationality). Based on the participants information, there was no significant difference between each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity to exercise personal skills</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Non-Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30s</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 40s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*International working environment*

There are 12 interviewees who considered the international working environment as one of the most important criteria for their career choice. They said working under international working environment can make them have opportunity to use their language skills. Some interviewees said the international working environment makes them feel more comfortable.

“…. I would say I may be not the person who actually fit in Japan. I feel easier with international environment…. whether there’s a place I can utilize my language skills is also my priority. Because it’s my strength, you need a place to express your strength…..” (Participant M)
Table 4 shows the detailed information of interviews who commented “International working environment” is crucial for their career choice. The data were analyzed by each category (gender, age, and nationality). Based on the participants information, we could say there was no significant difference between each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International working environment</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Japanese</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20s</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30s</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 40s</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opportunity for growth and development**

The opportunity for growth and development was considered important for 8 interviewees. All of them are interviewees from 20s and 30s. It is considered that living abroad made them overcome many obstacles, challenges and difficulties. It helped them build strong mentality and willingness to take on challenge, especially for interviewees who are in their 20s and 30s.

“…I don’t mind of working hard, but it has to be an environment continuous of growth. I want to be able to grow in the company, not just work hard every day… I prefer to use my skills and be able to improve myself.” (Participant A)

Some of them also said if there is a job which can provide opportunity for them to grow and become professional in the future, they do not really care about the geographical location of working place.

“As for location, I don’t have much on that preference…. For my first few years, I don’t really care where I go…” (Participant D)

Table 5 shows the detailed information of interviews who commented “Opportunity for growth and development” is important for their career choice. The interviewees in 20s and 30s were the ones who responded this way. There was no difference between Japanese CCIIs and non-Japanese CCIIs.
Table 5.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

*Work-life balance*

There are 6 interviewees who considered work-life balance is needed. There were more non-Japanese interviewees who thought this criterion is their priority. There was no male Japanese interviewee who said that work-life balance is their priority as they are making career choice. I predicted that the interviewees in their 20s and 30s want to improve themselves in their first stage of career path and, hence, that their career was much more important than keeping a good work-life balance. However, people in their 40s and above, may have already understood or are able to keep good work-life balance, this factor becomes less of their priority.

Table 6 shows the detailed information of interviews who commented “Work-life balance” is important for their career choice.

Table 6.

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<th>Work-life balance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Above 40s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Working in Japanese corporate culture*

Thirteen interviewees said they were willing to work in Japanese corporate culture, including 11 Japanese interviewees and 2 non-Japanese interviewees. There were only 2 non-Japanese interviewees who are willing to work in Japanese corporate culture. In other words, the other 6 non-Japanese interviewees said they would not like to work in such a culture. The reason includes the slow decision-making process, group-orientation, and long working hours. There is a big difference between Japanese CCIs and non-Japanese CCIs. Non-Japanese CCIs said they think they may not fit well
under Japanese corporate culture. Because there are too many rules and the hierarchical relationship.

“"I am only looking for overseas companies. They call them ‘Gaishi’...so I’ve been only looking for gaishi companies, because I want a really challenging atmosphere for me. I’ve heard a lot about Japanese system.... It’s more seniority with age and experience. It takes long time to make yourself to work yourself up....” (Participant B)

“It cannot be a job in Japanese company.... I don’t like the system, where you have to do shushokukatsudo before you graduate, otherwise it gets more challenging to find a “permanent” position...besides that, I don’t like the working environment, women’s position, the kohai sempai relationship, the mandatory countless nomikai, and the very limited work life balance” (Participant Q)

Table 7 shows the detailed information of interviews who commented “Work in Japanese corporate culture” is one of factors as they are considering their career path.

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<th>Work in Japanese corporate culture</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>20s</td>
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</table>

**Others (family, location, salary, social contribution)**

Other criteria were also being considered by interviewees. For instance, one interviewee said he will consider where is the best place for her children to have education. There were also the other interviewees mentioning that how much salary they could get from a job is their first consideration. Three interviewees said they tended to find a job which could give contribution to the society.
5. Discussion

In this section, the main findings of the study related to the research questions are presented and discussed.

RQ1. How does the experience of living in multiple countries in developmental period influence CCIs’ career choice?

5.1 No specific preference for location
Some interviewees especially for Japanese returnees said that they want to work in Japan for a while or for good because they have lived overseas for so long and wanted to retrieve their Japanese identity. Most of interviewees in this study said they do not really care about where to go as for the geographical location of working place.

One interviewee said the geographical location does not matter a lot for her, but the culture matters. Because she had the experience of living in multiple countries, she could compare different culture and understands which culture provide the most comfortable condition for her. There are also three interviewees who said they prefer urban living because of much more chances to work under an international environment due to convenience of life.

5.2 More choices and more options compared to other people
There are 18 interviewees who agreed that the experience of living in multiple countries does help them in their career choice. The experience made them understand what they want to do or what they do not want to do. Compared to the individuals who only grew up and lived in one country, CCIs had more opportunities to experience and interact with people from different cultures and places during their developmental years. Therefore, we could say the experience made interviewees have better chances to know themselves more deeply.

Besides, some interviewees said the experience let them have opportunity to know how an organization works in Japan and their home country. They are able to compare working environment, salary and corporate culture. They have more channels to collect information about the job.
5.3 Industry
Based on the Table 1. Participants information, I found some of them choose to work in an industry which could let them have opportunity to exercise their language skill, such as trading, aviation, and hotel. Some of them choose to work in an industry which allow them utilize their personal skills which were learnt from school or by their experience of living abroad, such as finance, medical and tertiary education. I found there is one thing in common that interviewees tend to choose to an industry which provides an international working environment. As a result, CCIs may choose a career in an industry which can provide an international working environment.

5.4 Cultural distance
The cultural distance between a home country and a host country matters more than the number of years CCIs lived abroad. Most of participants have lived in more than 2 countries before. However, I found that if the cultural distance between the home country and the host country is far, the experience of living abroad seems to give more influence and impact on CCIs even the time spent in the host country is short.

“Although it was only a year, the culture shock and the differences between France and Malaysia really had great impact on my life… I am also considering moving to Malaysia for working for few years.” (Participant Q)

If the differences such as life quality, safety and learning environment between the home country and the host country is far, it may make CCIs think more deeply about who they are, where they belong or the way of thinking.

On the other hand, some participants have lived abroad for a long time. However, if the cultural distance between the home country and the host country is close, the experience of living abroad have less impact on CCIs. Even though they are still able to understand multiple cultures, most of them do not have much problem with their cultural identities. Moreover, I found that these people are also more willing to work and stay in their home countries.
RQ2. What makes CCIs choose or not choose to work in Japan as they choose their careers?

5.5 Japanese CCIs
I found that how long Japanese CCIs spent their life in the Japanese culture or foreign culture during their developmental period influences their choice of work in a Japanese company and/or staying in Japan. It can be predicted that the CCIs who spent more time living in the Japanese culture have stronger Japanese identity than the CCIs who spent more time in living in a foreign culture during their developmental period. Stronger Japanese identity makes Japanese CCIs be more willing to work in a Japanese company and stay in Japan. On the other hand, Japanese CCIs with weaker Japanese identity seems hard to define where they belong to, and tend to be less willing to work in a Japanese company or stay in Japan. Nevertheless, there are still other factors that matter for Japanese CCIs to consider staying in Japan or not, such as family.

Table 8. Japanese CCIs

| Japanese CCIs | Spent more time living in Japanese culture in developmental period | Be more willing to work in a Japanese company and stay in Japan |
| Spent more time living in foreign culture in developmental period | Be less willing to work in a Japanese company or stay in Japan |

Table 8. shows factors that influence Japanese CCIs to be more willing to work in a Japanese company and stay in Japan and vice versa.

5.6 Non-Japanese CCIs
As for non-Japanese CCIs, we found there are two aspects that may influence their choice of working in a Japanese company or stay in Japan. One is the willingness to accept Japanese corporate culture. If non-Japanese CCIs are willing to accept Japanese corporate culture, it also makes them have more willingness to work in a Japanese company and stay in Japan. However, if non-Japanese CCIs hard to accept Japanese corporate culture, it naturally makes them become less willing to work in a Japanese company or stay in Japan.

The other one is Human Development Index (HDI), which is a tool developed by the United Nations to measure and rank countries' levels of social and economic
development (UNDP, 2018). I found that if non-Japanese CCIs are from a developing country, they seem to be more willing to work in a Japanese company and stay in Japan. It can predict that because Japan have higher living quality and higher salary make Japan be a better choice for them as they are making career choice. However, the non-Japanese CCIs from a developed country seems to be less willing to work in a Japanese company or stay in Japan. This may be because they are also from a developed country which may be not so different from Japan in terms of living condition and the level of safety. The Non-Japanese CCIs in this study who are from western countries said they found it little hard to fit in to the Japanese corporate culture.

However, the Japanese government is trying to change the traditional Japanese corporate culture and intend to create more foreigner-friendly working environment. Japan is changing and getting better than before. Therefore, it may also make a difference after few years.

Table 9. Non-Japanese CCIs

Table 9. shows factors that influence non-Japanese CCIs to be more willing to work in a Japanese company and stay in Japan and vice versa.
6. Conclusion

When making career choices, CCIs have particular considerations that appear to relate back to their unique experiences. On the other hand, understanding the career choice of CCIs gives the information for business organizations who have needs to hire international talent in the future. Providing an environment or job contents which CCIs pursue will enable firms to acquire and retain CCIs.

6.1 Limitations and implications of the study

In this section, limitations of the study will be introduced. Besides, implications for organizations and individuals are discussed in the end.

Limitations

This is a qualitative study based on personal interviews with twenty individuals. The findings of this research can only speak for the experiences of these participants. Although the results cannot represent the experiences of anyone else, the findings from the interviews give some information that cannot be collected from quantitative studies.

This study mainly focuses on CCIs in Japan. As a result, it may be hard to completely applied in other countries. However, it is considered that some characteristics of CCIs and findings in this study can be a reference for future study. Besides, most of the interviewees in this study are 20s and 30s CCIs. But 40s and 50s CCIs may provide more information about CCIs’ career choice because of longer life experience. As for future research, it is also recommended to focus on older generation. Another limitation of this study is the analysis only focus on the perspective of CCIs. However, the analysis from the business organization perspective may also provide valuable information. The results of this study are not representative of all CCIs. However, it can be a reference for future research which is focus on the career choice of CCIs.

Implications

CCIs as a bridge between people from different cultures

CCIs exposure at developmental ages under different environments teaches them how to handle themselves in different situations and with different people. The experience of living in multiple countries also makes them able to understand multiple cultures. The international worldview and the cross-cultural experience probably explain why CCIs are more able to be patient in allowing others to express themselves. These
characteristics, and knowledge allow CCIs to be as a mediator between people from different cultures, and enable them to stand in the gap to bridge differences between people in the working place. Managers may consider CCIs for positions where they have the opportunity to work with different kinds of people or an environment with high diversity.

**CCIs’ willingness to challenge with global mobility**

Most of CCIs grew up in an international environment, which makes them have global mindset and networking from all over the world. Therefore, they have more channels of receiving information than others which makes them be have more ambitious. Moreover, due to the experience of living in multiple countries, moving from one country to another country is not a problem for them. Job rotation in different functions and departments including headquarter and overseas subsidiary may help them to feel challenging and enthusiastic about their jobs.

Based on a survey about 2019 Japanese new graduate’s career choice (マイナビ, 2018), it shows that over 50% Japanese new graduate do not want to work overseas. However, CCIs are different. If there is a chance for a job which enable them to exercise their personal skills and help their career path, they are more willing to give it a try instead of resisting it. For the Japanese companies or other global companies in Japan, CCIs seems can be good candidates for being in charge of international business such as expatriates.

**CCIs and their International communication skills**

Hilton (1992) found that most Japanese think English language proficiency is perceived to be a corporate priority and Japanese companies also offer business English training. However, the survey indicated the majority of Japanese employees do not use English effectively in a business situation. Even some Japanese business persons who read and understand English, their foreign counterparts set the pace in their actual international dealings. They often lose the chance to say what they wanted to say (Numata, 2013).

Due to the insufficient language skills and the relative lack of knowledge about foreign culture, Japanese companies sometimes lose their dominance in a business situation. Having international background can be a strength for CCIs, which give them the understanding of the diversity between people from different cultures. Most interviewees said they can communicate with people well and keep continuous good relationship with them. The multi-lingual skills also make them able to communicate with people easier. Therefore, CCIs are expected to contribute their international communication skills to the Japanese organizations in the future.
7. Reference


assignments. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, New Orleans, LA.


## Appendix A: Interview participant information

### Interview Participant information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Country you were born in</th>
<th>What language do you speak</th>
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### List of countries that you have lived in with the corresponding age, length of time and reason

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<tr>
<td>Country 3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Country 4</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### List of job(s) that have worked in

<table>
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<th>Job Content</th>
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<th>Industry</th>
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Appendix B: Interview questions

1. What kind of languages would be the most comfortable to you during the interview?
2. Can you make a brief self-introduction of yourself?
3. Please share the experience of being living in multiple countries.
   i. What do you think it is good?
   ii. What do you think it is bad?
   iii. Have you met any big challenge or failure during this period? Would you like to share?
   iv. When is the most influential time period for you to build up your personalities, values or way of thinking? Or family is the most influential?
4. As choosing a job, what criteria will be considered?
   i. A domestic company or multinational company? Why?
   ii. For people who have working experience Why choose this job/company/Industry? What is the biggest obstacle you faced in your career? How did you overcome it?
   iii. For people who don’t have working experience What kind of job would you like to get? What kind of organization would you like to work for? If you don’t know what to choose, who/what will be reference for you?
5. What do you think your strengths and weakness on the job / school life? (especially related to the experience of being CCI)
What kind of person do your friends or co-workers think you are?
6. Do you think your experience of living in multiple countries help you when you are doing the decision of career choice? Why yes? Why not?
7. Based on your previous experiences, what do you think about Japan this country? Why Japan? Where will be your next choice in the future?