Cultural Adaptation: Vietnamese Sojourners in Japan

by

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Abstract

Annually, many Vietnamese come to Japanese colleges and universities for their higher education, work or to follow their family, which requires them to adjust to a new environment, often accompanied by experiences of culture shock.

This research investigates and identifies some of the significant factors affecting Vietnamese sojourners' adaptation through their acculturation process, which includes changes at both cultural and psychological levels. Acculturation happens in various ways: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The conceptual and empirical relationships between how acculturation occurs and how well people adapt are examined in this research. The research collects survey data among four groups of Vietnamese residents: students, working people with and without a study/working background in Japan, and dependents who follow their family members to come to Japan, measuring aspects of their cultural adoption.

This study clarifies two types of acculturation for Vietnamese sojourners: Integration and Separation. Additionally, these Vietnamese sojourners see integration as the most appropriate form of acculturation for adaptation. This means people engage with Japanese society while still maintaining Vietnamese' values. The main factors contributing to Vietnamese sojourner adaptations are the language, attitude, and host cultural expectations. Another interesting finding is that individuals mislabel their acculturation strategies.

The results will contribute to research and curriculum design in diversity education, explicitly concerning study abroad program design and preparation.

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Introduction

I have been in Japan for six years studying and working. I had to adjust myself to overcome many unfamiliar situations, which were caused by cultural differences. Since I can deal with most problems from different cultures, I have been able to concentrate on studying and working with good mental health.

Like me, Vietnamese who come to Japan to live or work have to adjust to the culture. These processes of adopting and overcoming difficult situations are cultural adaptations. It is a long process that each person has to directly experience and overcome if they want to have a good quality of life in the other culture.

Annually, many Vietnamese sojourners come to Japan for higher education and work (VNA & JASSO, 2020). Sojourners are temporary stay foreigners. Coupled with the bloom of Vietnamese sojourners in Japan, many sorrows occur within and without the institution (Han, 2020). People have to prepare themselves before participating in a new culture though no one can anticipate all the differences before facing them directly. As a result, while some sojourners overcome the undesired situations and adjust to insignificant cultural differences, others may hide their difficulties and endeavor to blend in, leading to continued confusion.

This investigation is to understand how cross-cultural adaptation in Japan differs between Vietnamese people. Moreover, by analyzing Vietnamese sojourners' assessments on how they adjust themselves, I hope to provide a new perspective on Vietnamese adaptation in Japan.

The paper first introduces the literature review and then presents the main research questions. Following this is the methodology, survey and case study data, then the analysis and the results.

Literature Review

The research aims to describe Vietnamese people's cultural adaptations in Japan and analyze their assessment toward either a healthy and successful adaptation or an unhealthy result. The literature review of this study contains three sections. The first section is the data on Vietnamese people in Japan and some definitions related to the main participants of the research. The second section explains some theories about cultural adaptation and its role in the second-cultural adaptation process. Finally, the last section presents the resolutions (acculturation) under the strain of stress and readjustment of transformation.

Vietnamese People in Japan

According to the Japan Times, by 2050, Japan will need to fill the workforce by hiring foreign workers (Solomon, 2019). Some projects in the nursing or engineering area have plans to improve people's skills from developing countries while hiring them to work in Japan. Moreover, some remote islands like the city of Goto in Fukui welcome Vietnamese students to reduce the impact of the graying population when 90 percent of the city's young people leave the city for their higher education or jobs (Kyodo News, 2020). This partly explains the increase in the number of Vietnamese sojourners in Japan.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of foreigners coming to Japan in 2020 has decreased in general. Only Vietnamese residents have increased in number compared to the previous year. According to statistics on the number of foreign residents at the end of June 2020 released by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, the number of Vietnamese residents in Japan at the time was 420,415 people, occupying 14.6% of the total number of foreigner residents in Japan, ranking third after China's 786,830 people (27.3%) and South Korea's 435,459 people (15.1%). The number of residents in Vietnam has increased about 10.4 times from 40,524 at the end of 2008 (Vietjo, 2020).

Table 1

Top 10 Countries-Regions with The Most Foreign Residents in Japan

Country	Number of People	2020
China	786.830	-3.30%
Korea	435.459	-2.40%
Vietnam	420.415	+2.10%
Philippines	282.023	-0.30%
Brazil	211.178	-0.20%
Nepal	95.367	-1.50%
Indonesia	66.084	-1.20%
Taiwan	59.934	-7.50%
America	57.214	-3.30%
Thailand	53.344	-2.70%

Note. Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2020

Vietnamese Sojourners in Japan

My research will focus on Vietnamese sojourners. As mentioned earlier, sojourners are temporary stay foreigners. Hence, they expect to return to their home country after finishing their assignment, contract, or studies. They include international students and business people. Sojourners are more engaged than tourists but less involved than immigrants and refugees (Ward et al., 2001, p. 142). Most Vietnamese sojourners intend to return to Vietnam, although they spend a long time studying and working in Japan, different from the other groups such as tourists, refugees, or immigrants. They are people who have a limited time stay and a plan to return, such as international students or those on an extended business assignment, for one to three years.

The World Tourism Organization names visitors who stay more than 24 hours in a location away from home for a short trip as tourists (Ward et al., 2001, p. 19). According to the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, refugees are people being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, are outside the country of their nationality,

and are unwilling to return to their countries (ISSJ, n.d.). Immigrants are moving to a new country to settle there permanently after leaving the original country of citizenship because they face untenable challenges in their home country. Usually, immigrants go on to become citizens of the receiving nation (Gale, 2018).

Most Vietnamese sojourners represent a significant number of students and technical intern trainees in Japan. As announced by the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO), the number of Vietnamese students in Japan on May 1, 2019, was 73,389. Vietnamese students account for 23.5% of all international students, second only to China (124,436 students who account for 39.9%) (Dangcongsan, 2020). The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2020), indicated that by the end of 2020, more than 220,000 Vietnamese intern trainees were in Japan, the largest among the 15 countries that have dispatched technical intern trainees to Japan. Furthermore, according to the Ministry of Justice's Number of Foreign Residents as of the end of the first year of Reiwa, 53% of all Vietnamese residents are technical intern trainees (So, 2021).

The Problems of Vietnamese Sojourners in Japan

Many Vietnamese trainees in Japan are living in a working or learning environment under a less than perfect management system. A common issue in technical intern training programs is the poor working environment. Problems include long working hours, minimum wage violations, non-payment of overtime, ignorance of Japanese law, and a weak position. Despite various laws and regulations based on the Labor Standards Law being established to protect workers, according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2017, more than 70% of the establishments where technical intern trainees work are found to violate labor standards-related laws and regulations. The reality is that the establishments that fully comply with the laws are in the minority (Honichi, 2020).

According to the Tokyo University of Social Welfare (Mito, 2019), the whereabouts of 1,610 international students of this school were unknown between 2015 and 2018. The survey of this school revealed that many universities accepted international students in order to secure tuition fees and let them study under a poor management system. Hence, some international students tried to obtain a status of residence for study abroad in order to work, and there is a suspicion that they have taken advantage of getting student visas to enroll in large numbers only to work in Japan (Mito, 2019).

Theoretical Frameworks

Since the Vietnamese are living in Japan, they need to adapt culturally to the context of Japan. There are two key concepts connected to this: cultural adaptation and acculturation.

Cultural Adaptation

Before giving a discussion about cultural adaptation, a precise definition of culture is essential. There are many definitions of culture; each one has a relevant idea of the terms of culture, depending on their research area. This paper uses the definition of the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor: "Culture is that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1920, p. 1). This definition explains that culture is shared between societies, is learned from childhood and not what we were born with, is what happens to every human, and the way people experience their life defines that culture. Therefore, culture is not static, but changes, as time changes and people migrate. In this way, culture is no longer as it was in the past. It is essentially fluid and constantly in motion. This definition of culture is given as a foundation to develop the subsequent contexts of cultural adaptation and acculturation.
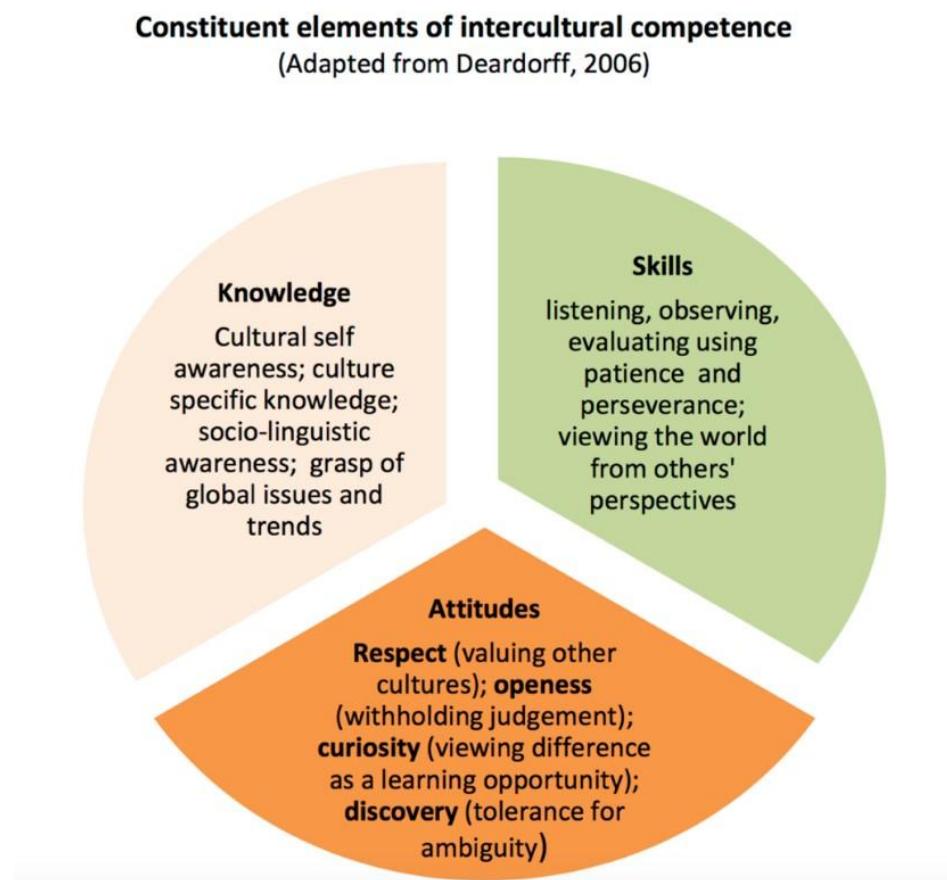
Cultural adaptation is people's ability to adjust their customs to survive and integrate into a new culture (Teasley, 2015). Teasley argues that living in a foreign country requires

people to learn how to speak the language, dress, eat, act, and interpret ordinary things appropriate to the host country community. The concept of adaptation contains both cultural survival and integration. Newcomers are entering a new culture, requiring them to change their habits to be accepted by the majority. This changing process is not easy, and includes learning the language and learning about the destination country. Taylor (1994) considered that the transformation among cultures starts in the stages of alienation and initial contact, followed by constantly testing new habits and hypotheses via trial and error, and ends at mutual dependence of retaining both cultures. Adaptation is the process of change in response to a new environment. It is one component of acculturation, which relates to the change in a group's culture or the change in individual psychology in response to a new environment or other factors.

The starting stage of cultural adaptation ability is different between people. The ability is shown by people's intercultural competencies. Deardorff explained intercultural competence as an ability "to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions" (Deardorff, 2006). Figure 1 gives an overview of the different constituent elements of intercultural competence, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff et al., 2012, p. 6). Whenever people face a difficulty caused by different cultures, they depend on their awareness, skills, and attitudes to adjust. That flexibility is an aspect of cultural adaptation (Wenzel, 2019).

Figure 1

Constituent Elements of Intercultural Competencies

Constituent elements of intercultural competence
(Adapted from Deardorff, 2006)

Knowledge
Cultural self awareness; culture specific knowledge; socio-linguistic awareness; grasp of global issues and trends

Skills
listening, observing, evaluating using patience and perseverance; viewing the world from others' perspectives

Attitudes
Respect (valuing other cultures); **openness** (withholding judgement); **curiosity** (viewing difference as a learning opportunity); **discovery** (tolerance for ambiguity)

Ward et al. (2001) stated there are two fundamentally distinct types of adaptation: psychological and sociocultural. According to Ward, psychological adaptation refers to mental well-being or satisfaction, mainly focusing on the way to handle stress, such as good mental health, psychological well-being, and achievement of personal satisfaction in a new cultural context. Psychological adaptation is affected by personality factors, life changes, and social support (Ward et al., 2001).

Sociocultural adaptation refers to the individuals' social competence in managing their daily life in the intercultural setting. It connects individuals with their new environment and means the acquisition of corresponding social skills and behaviors. It relates to social skills,

the ability to fit in with the host society, and social learning and social cognition approaches. The level of social difficulty experienced is related to cultural knowledge, language ability, and length of residence in the host culture (Ward et al., 2001). However, Berry said that both sociocultural and psychological dimensions of adaptation are interrelated. From Berry's point of view, adaptation implies the development of sensibilities to the given cultural beliefs, values, and norms. In other words, individual competency contributes to reinforcing the active social relationships along with maintaining the ethnic identity with good mental health (Berry, 1994; Berry, 2005; Castro, 2003, p. 84).

To sum up, adaptation is the process of change in response to a new environment. It is one component of acculturation and related to the change in individual psychology in response to a new environment or other factors.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Kim and Kim (2001, p. 31) define cross-cultural adaptation as "the entirety of the phenomenon of individuals who, upon relocating to an unfamiliar socio-cultural environment, strive to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment" in order to achieve "an overall fit between the individual and the environment to maximize the individual's social life chances."

Kim and Kim (2001) introduces the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic model (see Figure 2), as a movement of increased chances of success in meeting the demands of the host environment. In this model, Kim (2012) sees the human as a "system," which, when confronted with a new culture, goes through "disequilibrium." The person then incorporates feedback to bring the "system" back into balance. The model does not describe the adaptation process as a smooth, steady, and linear progression but rather as a dialectic, cyclic, and continual "draw-back-to-leap" pattern (Kim). Mayhew (2008) sees the adaptation process (according to Kim's model) as complex and non-linear because progressing through these

steps includes both forward and backward movement, depending on what additional stressors are in the people's lives and how those stressors influence identification.

Figure 2

Stress-Adaptation-Growth Dynamics
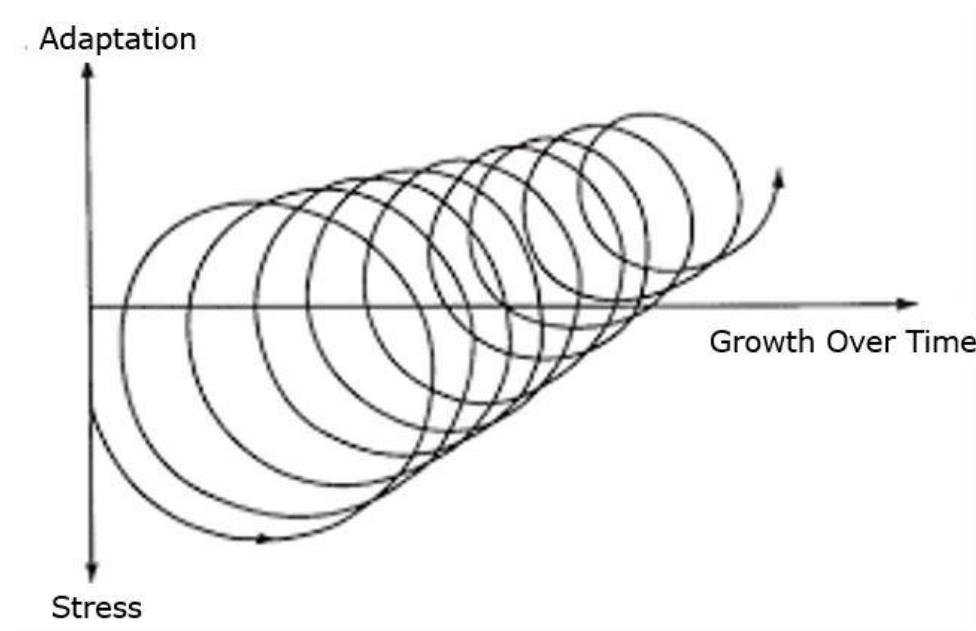
Note. Stress-Adaptation-Growth Dynamics (Martin et al., 1998, p. 297)

The spiral model (see Figure 2) explains that stress and recovery by adaptation forces push individuals to overcome a predicament and participate in the active development of new habits. According to Kim's model, it shows growth over time or an international transformation in the direction of greater fitness than the original environment (Kim & Kim, 2006, p. 3; Mayhew, 2018). This model addressed the essence of an individual's adaptation and explained differences between individuals (faster or easier) in their adaptation.
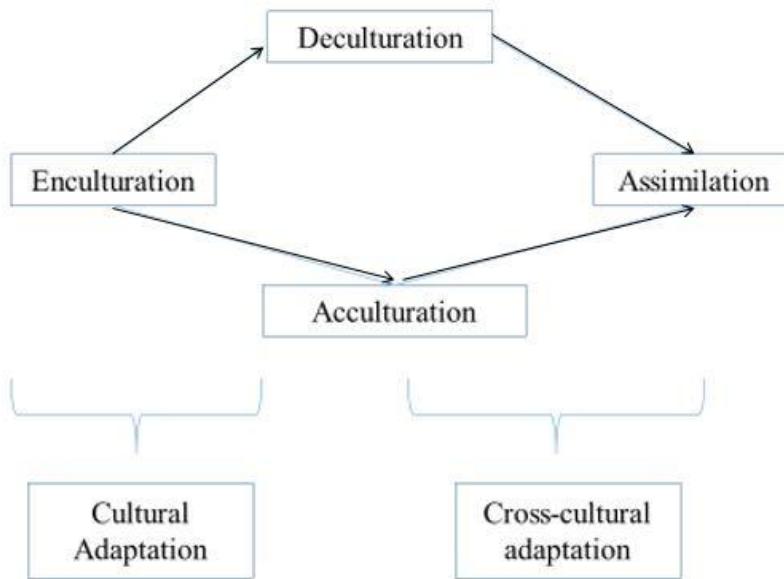
Acculturation

Acculturation has been researched in cultural studies (Padilla, 1980, p. 9-25; Sam & Berry, 2018, pp. 27-42). Acculturation is "the process of becoming communicatively

competent in a culture we have not been raised in" (Hall, 2005, p. 270). This definition is related to two underlying ideas.

When people enter new environments, they automatically engage with behavior patterns acquired by learning that culture: enculturation. Enculturation means learning about the different cultures of the new place. The willingness to adopt new habits gradually is one part of acculturation. On the contrary, deculturation is the process of unlearning the original culture, leaving behind its patterns when moving to a new culture. Wiseman (1993) stated that while new learning processes occur, deculturation or unlearning of some of the old cultural elements also occurs. Generally, acquiring something new causes the loss of something old. The acculturation process appears in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

Acculturation Process

Note. Adapted from Panocova, 2020, p. 86

According to Gudykunst (2005), newcomers are usually sensitive to conformity pressures from the host environment as cultural expectations increase, and they need to develop their cultural competence to deal with those constraints. As long as a difference

between the host society's demands and the newcomers' internal capacity to fulfill these demands exists, the learning process continues (Gudykunst, 2005).

Reception and its Effects on Acculturation

Acculturation is associated with psychosocial and health outcomes (Schwartz et al., 2010, p. 15). Evidence shows that the host society has attitudes and expectations toward how immigrants should acculturate. These expectations and attitudes affect migrants' acculturation patterns, leading to migrants being received favorably or unfavorably (Rohmann et al., 2008). Based on different ethnic groups, different socioeconomic brackets, and different reasons for migrating, host society members may also have different attitudes. For example, a western business executive may be regarded more favorably than a Vietnamese factory worker.

Together with perceptions of discrimination, perceptions of an unfavorable context of reception are hypothesized as being among the major sources of stress in the lives of immigrants (Schwartz et al., 2014; Segal et al., 2005, p.578). However, there are few studies about the effects that the context of reception has on immigrants' psychosocial and health outcomes. There is, however, evidence that perceptions of discrimination are likely to negatively impact physical and mental health (Williams & Mohammed, 2008) and prevent the acquisition of the new culture norms among migrants (Rumbaut, 2008). An unfavorable context of reception may result in what has been called acculturative stress. Acculturative stress refers to unfavorable effects of acculturation such as anxiety, depression, and other forms of mental and physical maladaptation (Lonner, 2007).

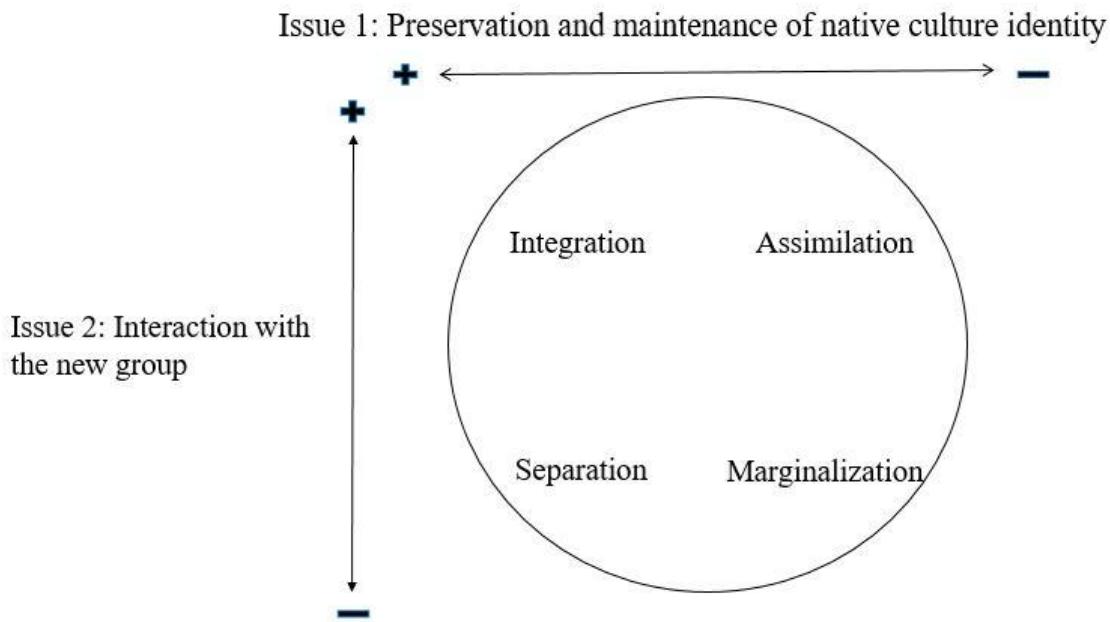### Second-cultural Adjustment

In general, acculturation applies to individuals and refers to changes that occur due to contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences (Gibson, 2001, para. 2). Since the early 1980s, cultural psychologists have recognized that acquiring the beliefs, values, and practices of the receiving country does not automatically imply that an immigrant

will discard (or stop endorsing) the beliefs, values, and practices of a heritage country (Berry, 1980).

Berry (1994, 1997) proposed two dimensions of acculturation orientations: the desire to maintain the heritage culture, and the desire to interact with others in the dominant culture. Based on the two dimensions, Berry (1994, 1997, 2012) identified four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. See Figure 4. As cited by Wang et al. (2017), the integration strategy involves the interest in both maintaining the original culture and interacting with members in the mainstream society. The assimilation strategy is adopted when individuals replace their ethnic culture with active participation in the dominant society. The separation strategy includes preserving the individual's original culture and avoiding contact with members in the dominant culture. The marginalization strategy is applied when individuals fail to maintain their original culture and at the same time fail to establish relationships with host nationals.

There are many arguments about the connection between acculturation settings and successful adaptation although they use the same model of Figure 4.

Figure 4

Acculturation Model

Issue 1: Preservation and maintenance of native culture identity

Issue 2: Interaction with the new group

Integration Assimilation

Separation Marginalization

Note. Adapted from Berry, 1997, cited by Gurieva & Kinunen, 2019, p. 274

Gurieva and Kinunen (2019, p. 274) emphasized the results of a cross-cultural survey that suggested people with integration setting demonstrated the best psychological and sociocultural adaptation results, while the people with marginalization setting had the worst results; people with separation setting demonstrated high psychological adaptation results, but low sociocultural adaptation results, and ones with assimilation setting had medium indices of psychological adaptation and low indices of sociocultural adaptation results. Panocova (2020, p. 86) said "assimilation is a theoretical construct, an ideal state, it is viewed as the highest end of the cross-cultural adaptation continuum." Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) suggested that integration only influences psychological adaptation, while assimilation is a unique influence on sociocultural adaptation.

Identity and acculturation are affected by many factors, such as individual characteristics (age, gender, and education), group characteristics (permanence of

cross-cultural relocation, motivation for migration), and the broad social context (cultural pluralism, prejudice, and discrimination). These variables correlate with acculturation and identity changes, but causation is neither linear nor simple, and some factors may have recursive effects (Zhou et al., 2008, p. 67).

Stress and Adaptation

Schwarzer et al. (2013) mentioned that sojourners' stress might not be as extreme as migrants' stress. However, some stressors may accumulate and can be responsible for health problems long after migration. Firstly, stress can occur at any point of the migration process: before, during, and after. Secondly, regardless of the duration and purpose, living in a foreign country is inevitably associated with social and material losses and new challenges such as different climates, new language, and unfamiliar customs, cultural norms, and values. In addition, more stress is likely expected depending on cultural differences between the indigenous and host cultures. Especially, acculturation stress (Kim, 2018) often appears in situations where immigrants have conflicts with the members of the new society; this stress might come from daily life at the workplace when immigrants are in interaction with their compatriots and local communities or from direct effects that are often associated with migration, such as status loss, discrimination, and prejudice. Acculturative stress is possibly the reason for mental health problems and somatic complaints (Compton et al., 2019).

Research Questions

This investigation is to understand how cross-cultural adaptation in Japan differs between Vietnamese people. Moreover, analyzing Vietnamese sojourners' assessments on how they adjust themselves gives a new perspective on Vietnamese adaptation to life in Japan.

By investigating these problems, Vietnamese sojourners and related organizations may better understand the current problems in order to provide support and give some suggestions to overcome these challenges. This leads to the specific research questions of this study as stated below:

1. How do Vietnamese sojourners perceive factors contributing to their success or failure of intercultural adaptation?

2. How do Vietnamese sojourners adapt to life in Japan?

Methodology

Qualitative Research

My research examined sojourners and their understandings and beliefs about the culture of living in Japan. As such, the decision was made to use a qualitative research approach to collect data, focusing on personalized behavior, such as habits or motivations behind decisions. Additionally, qualitative questions can uncover thoughts, opinions, beliefs, motivations, challenges, and goals making it suitable for the type of questions that are the focus of this research. Qualitative data can also be gathered through contextual inquiries (survey) and interviews to learn more about feelings, attitudes, and habits that are harder to quantify (Miles et al., 2013, p. 4).

Participants

The research focused on Vietnamese sojourners in Japan, i.e., those who would return to Vietnam after finishing their studies or work. There were 110 people participating in the online survey, and 10 people were interviewed. Out of 10 people interviewed, five were selected due to their prominent characteristics which are best to represent each strategy. The rest are very similar with each others. Online survey participants included four groups: dependents, students, people working with living experiences in Japan before (WE), and people working without living experiences in Japan (WOE). See Table 2 below.

Table 2

Background Information of Online Survey's Participants

		Frequency ($n = 110$)	Proportion
Gender	Male	63	57.30%
	Female	47	42.70%
Resident Groups	Dependent	2	2.00%
	Student	32	29.00%
	Working (WOE)	45	41.00%
	Working (WE)	29	26.00%
	Others	2	2.00%

The dependent group is people who followed their partners or their families to Japan. The people in this group often have little knowledge of the language and Japan's living environment. Their purpose in Japan is to take care of their partners and family; it is not to do any full-time work.

The students are a group of people who are studying in Japan. This could be at a language school, college, or other higher education institution. Students have more chances to engage in Japanese society than the other groups due to the flexibility of their time. This flexibility is most demonstrated when students receive knowledge at school and quickly turn to work or dependent groups if they want.

Individuals in the working without living experiences in Japan (WOE) group came directly to Japan to work, often by an assignment with a specific company through a dispatch agency. These people had received a few lessons about the language but nothing relating to the living environment and how to engage in Japanese society.

Working with living experiences in Japan (WE) is the group of people who worked or studied in Japan before and have returned to Japan again for a new job or to continue the previous one.

Research Design

The research has several parts: a qualitative survey, a stress survey, and case studies. The surveys documented the beliefs of a large number of respondents and the case studies were to look deeply at the ideas of a few respondents.

Online Survey

The online survey was conducted in April and May 2021 by creating 12 questions in Google Forms and was published on the writer's social network homepage. People read the survey's introduction and consent information and participated if they wanted to.

Qualitative survey questions tend to be open-ended and aim to gather contextual information about a particular situation, often focused on the "why" or "how" reasoning behind a respondent's answer. This is necessary to gather information about people's perspectives. In addition, open-ended questions allow respondents to express themselves freely which may reveal new paths to explore further (McMillan, 2012, p. 272).

The online survey aimed to collect information about Vietnamese sojourners' beliefs and tendencies. The survey also collected general ideas about people's backgrounds and cross-cultural adjustment over time.

The survey was written in Vietnamese to send to participants. All questionnaires and collected data were translated into English before moving onto the coding and analyzing stage.

Participants also helped to spread the survey. Hence, by the snowballing method, the research was broadcast to Vietnamese people in Japan. "Snowball sampling is a 'chain reaction' whereby the researcher identifies a few people who meet the criteria of the particular study and then asks these participants to identify further members of the population" (Dörnyei, 2010). During the pandemic, locating Vietnamese to participate in my research was

difficult. Thus, I used snowballing, and I asked participants if they knew other people who could answer the survey.

Case Study

There are many research strategies such as experiments, surveys, archival analysis, and case studies (Yin, 2018). Each strategy can be used for the three key research purposes – exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. An exploratory case study was selected to be the research strategy of this study. The reasons for this exploratory case study approach are the research questions of this study mainly focus on "what" and "how" which are appropriate for exploratory purposes. Secondly, acculturation is an ongoing process, and this fits with case study research. Finally, this study is examining contemporary events.

After looking at the data collected by the online survey, case studies can be used in order to understand a few people's ideas in detail (Yin, 2018). I mainly used semi-structured interviews, which were held to find more profound answers; interviews occurred during September 2021. By answering questions of "how" rather than "what," the interview assisted in exploring more angles of the cultural adaptation of Vietnamese sojourners in Japan.

In the interviews, each of the respondents answered about six preset open-ended questions for 20-30 minutes. Questions for the interview were based on the online survey's responses and points to clarify answers to questions on the survey. All the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and translated into English by the author. The questions in the interview include asking about experiences in Japan, relationships, cultural climates (how hard the differences are), time (how long it took to change and adapt to new things), adjustment style (assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization), attitudes (positive or negative), and how they have adapted to intercultural communication.

Coding

Coding is a part of analysis (Miles et al., 2013). When coding, the researcher first reads through the transcripts and codes the relevant passages. Codes are the keywords or ideas in the transcripts.

Coding was also conducted during interviews. When participants described their lives during the interviews, they spontaneously told what they experienced, felt, and did concerning a topic. Even the participants discovered new relationships during the interviews, saw new meanings in what they experienced, and did so based on their spontaneous descriptions.

The interviewer confirmed and condensed what the interviewee described during the interviews. The interviewee then had the opportunity to reply; for example, "I did not mean that" or "That was precisely what I was trying to say" or "No, that was not quite what I felt. It was more like..." This process ideally continues until there is only one possible interpretation left, or it is established that the subject has multiple and possibly contradictory understandings of a theme. The final transcription can then be a self-correcting interview. According to Miles (2013, p. 12, para. 4), this condensing "makes the data stronger."

The interviewer analyzed the recorded interview. The analysis involved coding the interviews, understanding the meanings of the interviews, bringing subjects' understanding to light, and providing new interpretations from the researcher.

After the interviewer analyzed the interview texts, interviewees had a chance to read the interpretations. In a continuation of a self-correcting interview, the subjects then had an opportunity to comment on the interviewer's interpretations as well as to elaborate on their original statements as a form of member validation.

Stress Survey

This research used a stress survey as a tool to examine how Vietnamese react under stress. Since stress is a starting point of the acculturation process (Figure 2:

Stress-Adaptation- Growth Dynamics), a stress survey is necessary to investigate how stress affects people's acculturation. The stress survey uses the Social Readjustment Rating Scale as a tool to measure participants' loading stress (Schwarzer et al., 2013, p. 8).

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale helps to measure participants' stress levels. To score their stress levels, participants simply select Yes or No for each of the events in the statements column that have happened to them in the last year. A total score from 0 to 149 means that the participant has an almost 30% chance of developing a stress-related disorder. A score from 150 to 299, means the chances are about 50%. At more than 300, the chances are about 80% (Schwarzer et al., 2013, p.8). The stress score helps to determine the relationship between acculturation stress and people's reactions.

Online Surveys: Results and Analysis

Within this section, I have included the results and analysis of the survey. This format was more effective for describing and explaining the data. The online survey's results show surface beliefs and the participant's attitudes toward their adaptation in the past, currently, and predictions for the future.

The Hope of Integration

According to Berry (1997), there are four acculturation dispositions or strategies for conceptualizing home and host identities. The integration strategy involves the interest in both maintaining the original culture and interacting with members in the mainstream society. The assimilation strategy is adopted when individuals replace their ethnic culture with active participation in the dominant society. The separation strategy includes preserving individuals' original culture and avoiding contact with members in the dominant culture. The marginalization strategy is applied when individuals fail to maintain their original culture and at the same time fail to establish relationships with host nationals.

Figure 5 show the change of the adjustment group. The results are based on my participants' answers about their expectations before going to Japan, when living in Japan, and future expectations. Figure 5 shows that integration was the most chosen strategy, for past, current, and expected strategy use. Data were recorded as 92%, 84%, 94%, respectively. While 92 percent intended to use the integration strategy, only 84 percent felt they were integrating while living in Japan.

When living in Japan, sojourners who stayed three years or less had an integration percentage that was more than those who stayed above three years. The percentages were 86% (less than three years) compared with 75% (three years or more). (See Figure 6). It begins to explain that people still kept their high integration expectations at the beginning of their stay, as the expectation before they came to Japan. Then, this percentage decreased along

with the length of stay. The decrease of people in the integration group emphasizes the troubles they were facing, with some retreating to their cocoon (see below). Ninety-four percent of Vietnamese expect to integrate into Japanese culture in the future, higher than the integration percentage as of now (84%) and even higher than the percentage of expected integration before they came to Japan (92%).

The cocoon here is the Vietnamese compatriot community. The decrease in the number of people in Integration when Living in Japan goes down as the number of people who chose Separation increased from 4% to 12%. Only four percent of participants thought that they would only need to contact Vietnamese people before leaving for Japan. However, the data showed that 12 percent of participants actually did not have many relationships with Japanese people when they lived in Japan.

On the other hand, in the future, the expectation of using integration strategies is at 94%, which includes not only people in the integrating group, but also people from the assimilation and separation groups. A possible explanation for this could be that people recognized that integration is the most appropriate strategy to adapt and have a better living experience in Japan.

Figure 5 gives a visual representation of the strategies people have used, currently use, and expect to use in the future.

Figure 5

*Adjustment of Vietnamese Sojourners*
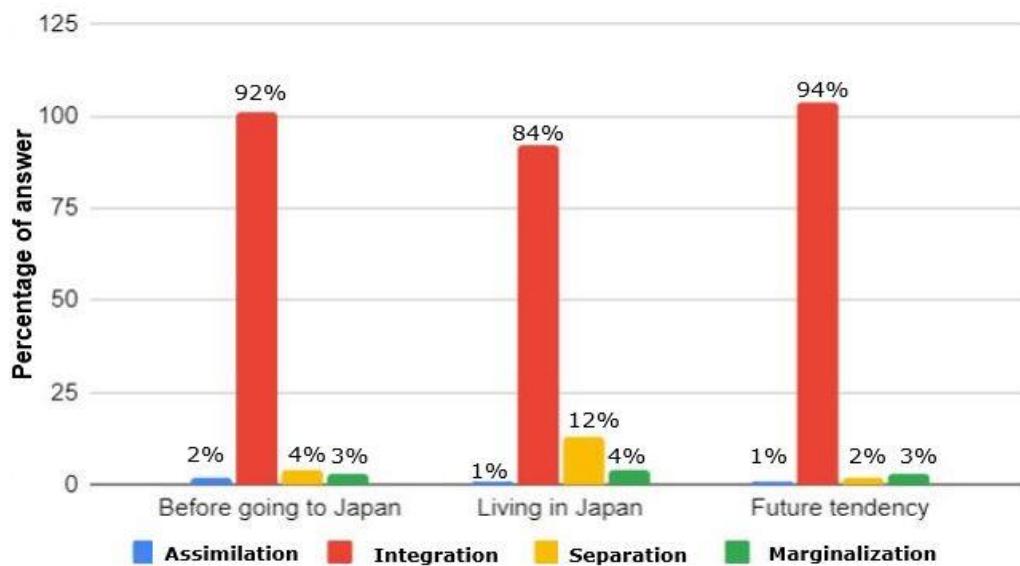
Note. All figures are rounded.

Length of Stay and Acculturation

Figure 6 clarifies Vietnamese sojourners' reported changes in acculturation strategy along with the length of their stay in Japan so far. Participants were split into two groups - those who have stayed in Japan for three years or more, which had 60 responses, and under three years with 50 responses.

Figure 6

Length of Stay
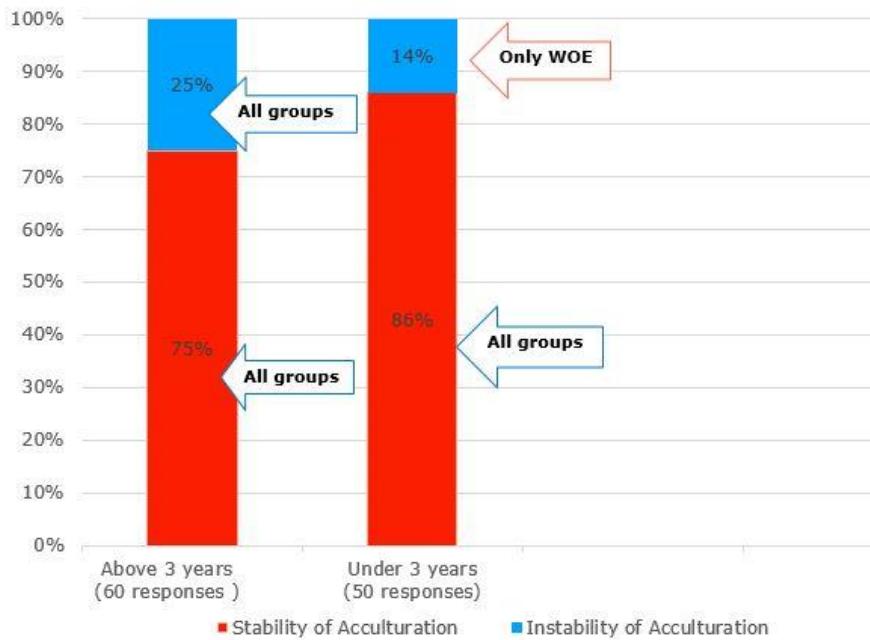
The data shows that 25% of Vietnamese participants who stay in Japan above three years report a shift in acculturation. This shift was observed in all groups, WOE, WE and students.

This may happen because the long period of stay exposes these participants to the culture, new experiences, and local people. As a result, they have a clear expectation of an appropriate state of acculturation in the present and in the future.

Only 14% of Vietnamese participants who have been in Japan for under three years have acculturation shifts, and this has only happened in the WOE group. Therefore, the case studies focus on the acculturation of Vietnamese participants who stay in Japan for above three years.

The majority of Vietnamese sojourners have stable acculturation over time. In detail, 75% of the over three year group and 86% of the under three year group continue with the state of integration from their expectations before going, when they are living in Japan and future expectations.

Adjustment of Vietnamese Sojourners in Different Resident Groups

Table 3 shows the adjustment of different resident groups, that is, the expectation before going to Japan, when they are actually living in Japan, and their future expectations. Of course, the change now might depend on many subjective and objective factors, yet the expectations of change in the future shows what they think are most suitable for them in Japan.

Table 3

Adjustment Difference between Groups of Vietnamese Sojourners

3.1 Before Going to Japan

	Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization
Other visas	0	1	1	0
Working (WE)	2	25	1	2
Working (WOE)	0	42	1	1
Dependent	0	2	0	0
Student	0	31	1	0

Note. N = 110

3.2 Living in Japan

	Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization
Other visas	0	2	0	0
Working (WE)	0	27	2	1
Working (WOE)	1	35	6	2
Dependent	0	2	0	0
Student	0	26	5	1

Note. N = 110

3.2 Future expectations

	Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization
Other visas	0	2	0	0
Working (WE)	0	29	0	1
Working (WOE)	0	41	2	1
Dependent	0	2	0	0
Student	1	30	0	1

Note. N = 110

According to the collected data of each group of Vietnamese sojourners, experience living in Japan had an important effect on the integration of the Vietnamese participants. Before going to their current adjustments, people in the working with experience group (WE) changed their expectations from 25 people before going to Japan to 27 people living in Japan. This is a slight difference, but compared with the reduced number of the other group's expectations, this small increase is a sign of an adaptation process as the only group that had an increasing number over time. In reality, WE people may find it easier to adjust their lives to Japanese society while still maintaining the original culture than the other groups.

Forty-two individuals in the working without experience (WOE) group expected to use integration strategies before coming to Japan, but only 35 people feel this in their current lives; the corresponding number of the student group was 31 to 26 people. The movement emphasized that somehow people in these groups had trouble with integration while engaging in Japanese society or maintaining their Vietnamese values, accompanied by a number of people who could not reach their expectation of integration.

On the contrary, only 25 of the WE people had expectations of integrating into Japan's culture before coming to the country, which is lower than WOE and student groups. This might be due to their anticipation of the difficult integration and better preparation before coming to Japan. The low expectations on integration of this group help them overcome their crisis because they have prepared both physically and psychologically for their movement. In reality, 27 people of the WE group were in the integration groups, which is two people higher than their expectations before the group came to Japan.

The increasing number of people in the separation strategy of the WOE group and student group accompanied the withdrawal from the expectation to integrate before leaving Vietnam. As shown in Table 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, the number of people who expected to use separation strategies before coming to Japan was one for the WOE and student groups,

increasing to six and five people respectively when actually living separately in Japan when thinking about current strategy use. Only two people in the WOE group wanted to maintain use of this strategy in the future. That begins to explain that they did not intend to use separation strategies; somehow, they were in the separation strategies now but still want to leave this strategy in the future (except two people in the WOE group). Only two people in the WOE group want to maintain use of this strategy in the future.

Problems Contacting Japanese People

Figure 7 represents the main reasons or influences as to why the participants are using their current adjustment strategy (N = 110). This survey question was multiple-choice with six fixed and one open-ended answer. The question aimed to clarify the question "why" and the reason for participants' choice and their change.

What are the main reasons causing you to be in your current situation? (Multiple choice)

a. You had problems when in contact with the Japanese people.

b. You had problems when in contact with the Vietnamese people.

c. You were that way before going to Japan.

d. You have problems when connecting with people.

e. Somebody gave you the advice to do it.

f. No specific reason.

g. Other_____ (please write down your ideas)

Figure 7

The Main Reasons Causing Vietnamese Sojourners to be in the Current Adjustment (multiple

choices)

A large number of Vietnamese sojourners (43) indicated their current adjustment

strategy use was related to having problems in having contact with Japanese people. This

shows that not only people in the marginalization group and the separation group have trouble

making contact with people, but also people in the integration group do not feel satisfied with

their relationships with the Japanese and their ability to fit in with the host society's social

culture adaptation. (In fact, there are only 13 people in the separation group, 4 people in the

marginalization group (see Figure 5); they are the people who are supposed to have no contact

with Japanese. However, a total of 43 responses said that they have problems when contacting

Japanese people.)

On the other hand, explaining the current adjustment, 34 responses have no specific

reason, 21 responses said that they were that way before going to Japan, and 16 responses

have a problem in general when contacting people.

Psychological and Social-cultural Adaptation

Figure 8 presents the self-satisfaction of 110 Vietnamese sojourners on their psychological and sociocultural adaptation. This assessment can emphasize the level of happiness and finds which problem, psychological or sociocultural adaptation, concerns them the most.

Psychological and social-cultural adaptation is measured by the questions:

- Are you satisfied with your internal adaptation (stress, personal goals, achievement)?
- Are you satisfied with your external adaptation (connection with the new environment, ability to fit in Japanese society)?

Figure 8

Psychological and Socio-cultural Adaptation
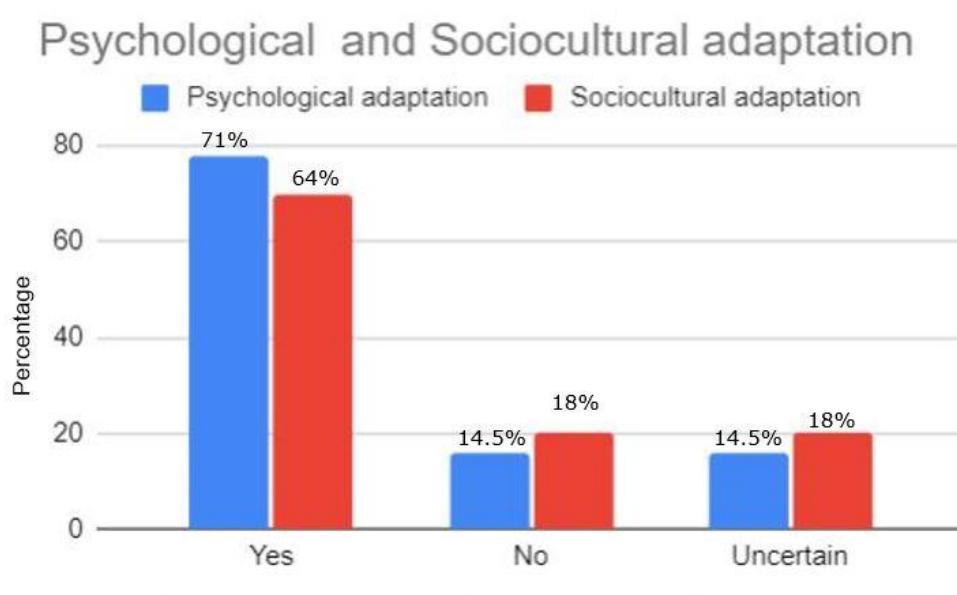
Figure 8 shows that 71 percent of participants said they are satisfied with psychological adaptation, and the corresponding sociocultural adaptation number is 64 percent. This result suggests that psychological adaptation, which shows internal satisfaction such as mental well-being and the ability to handle stress, is easier to achieve than social-cultural adaptation (71% vs. 64%). Sociocultural adaptation is the ability to engage with the host society. A

possible interpretation is that the respondent's satisfaction with daily life and everyday activities is not difficult to achieve. However, the portion of people who believe that they successfully connect with Japanese people is 64 percent. To sum up, it is harder for Vietnamese sojourners to fit into Japanese culture than simply survive there.

Figure 9 displays external relationships, the people the sojourners usually talk with or receive help from to overcome the difficulty of being placed in the new culture. This data clarifies the social circle of Vietnamese sojourners in Japan, the relationship between sojourners and their compatriot community, and Japanese society.

Figure 9

The Main People to Help Vietnamese Sojourners Overcome Stress
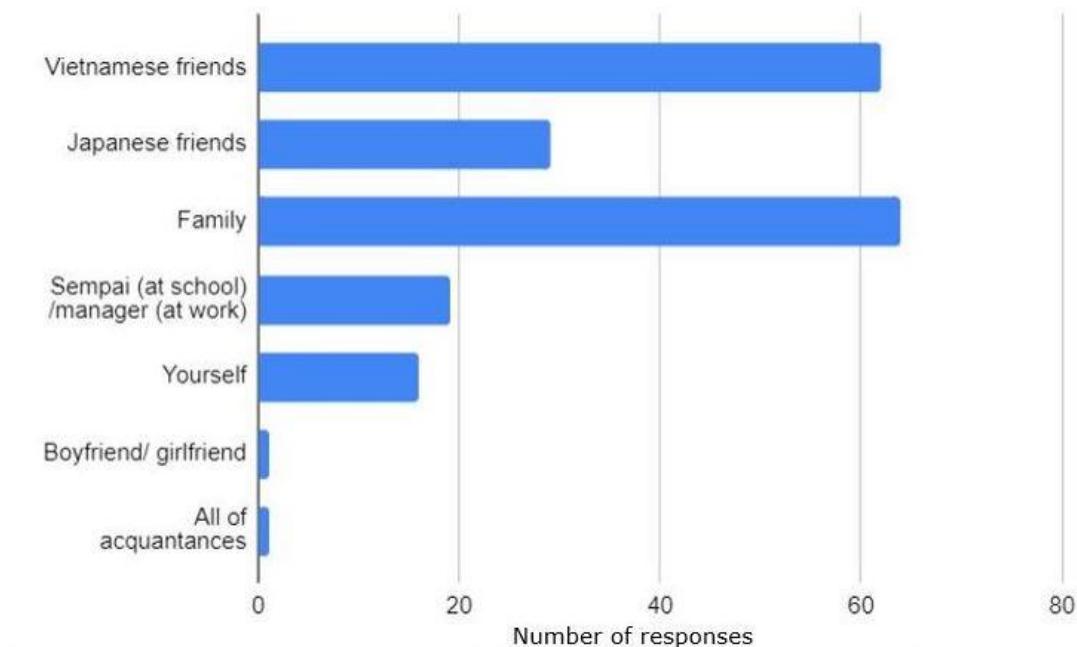
When Vietnamese sojourners carry stress, the principal people they talk with to reduce that stress is the Vietnamese community, not the host society. As indicated in Figure 9, the number of respondents who said that they were confiding with their family is 64, and Vietnamese friends is 61 people, while the number of people who chose Japanese friends or their seniors to talk to is 29 and 19 people.

The other worthy remark is that 16 respondents indicated that they have to overcome stress in Japan by themselves. It means that they were receiving no social support when living in Japan. Although there are only four respondents who belong to the marginalization group, that means four people consider themselves to not have any contact with people in Japan, including both Vietnamese and Japanese. As a result, obviously, they have to overcome stress by themselves. However, another 12 respondents said that they are in the same situation. Hence, not only the marginalization group but also people in the other group who claim they do have contact with other people, still have some problems in that they do not feel supported by other people.

Self-assessment Towards a Successful Adaptation

The question addressing people's perspectives about a successful adaptation was built on the constituent elements of intercultural competencies (Deardorff, 2006), including knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Therefore, this question aimed to find the most important ability of Vietnamese people and what they feel enables them to say that they have successfully adapted. However, as a multiple-choice question, some responses cover all of the abilities, and some abilities may be needed. For example, to "have a good job" in Japan, people need to have a good knowledge of the Japanese language, skills for working in a group, skills for observing or listening which will help them connect with people. In addition, colleagues suggest they need to like to work with people with a positive attitude. Figure 10 shows the answers for the self-assessment of Vietnamese sojourners about successful adaptation.

Figure 10

Self-assessment About Successful Adaptation of Vietnamese Sojourners
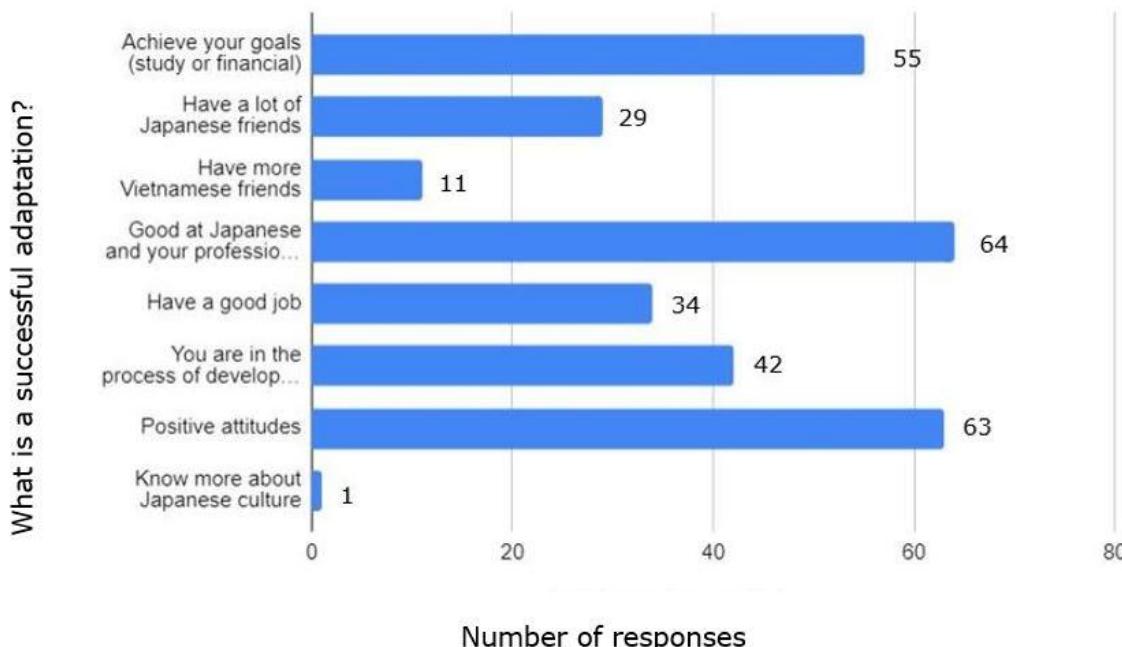
Based on 110 Vietnamese sojourners' responses, knowledge is the most important component of a successful adaptation among the intercommunication competencies. In fact, 64 respondents thought that "Good at Japanese and your professional knowledge" is the most essential ability they have adopted. The other noticeable choice was "Achieve your goals (study or financial)," which had 55 responses related to the knowledge element. There was also one opinion that shared the idea that "Learning more about Japanese culture" is adaptation.

The second most popular choice (Positive attitude), which has 63 responses, was second to the first choice by only one point and belongs to the attitude component. According to this assessment, a positive attitude decides whether they are adapting to life or not.

The last element of intercultural competencies that appeared in this assessment is skills. Although the skills component had fewer choices than the other two, there were two answers, "You are in the process of developing yourself with skills and experiences," with 24 responses; and "having a good job," which has 34 responses. Moreover, the Vietnamese

sojourners had a high opinion of connecting with other people, choosing the option "Have a lot of Japanese friends," (29 responses), and "Have more Vietnamese friends," (11 responses).

Additionally, 34 respondents said that success meant that they would "Have a good job" after they finish living in Japan, which requires them to achieve a certain development in all of these competencies. Since having a good job requires a high level of professional knowledge, a cluster of skills to work smoothly, such as listening, working in a group, communication, and a positive attitude, this makes people try new things to develop their abilities.

This assessment emphasizes what Vietnamese sojourners think about successful adaptation. Of course, different opinions arose, but all of them are connected to the theory of intercultural competencies. The surveys suggest that knowledge and attitude components were important.

Stress and Adaptation

Although there are differences in each person's ability to handle difficulties in their lives and their particular reactions to stress, as mentioned earlier, the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) is a general guideline (Schwarzer et al., 2013, p.8) that can be used for research. This scale suggests that change in individual life requires an effort to adapt and then an effort to regain stability.

Table 4 shows the average stress score by different adjustment groups when they are living in Japan. The scores were determined by the average stress score of all people in each group.

Table 4

Average Stress Score by Different Adjustment Groups Living in Japan

	Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization
Total responses	1	92	13	4
Average stress score	44	160	100	191

Note. N = 110;

Total responses' equals the number of people

Average stress score equals score on the instrument

The most stressful group of Vietnamese sojourners in Japan was the marginalization group; their average stress score was 191, implying that they have a chance of developing a stress-related disorder of about 50%. However, these individuals are likely to be stressed as people in this group do not contact either their Vietnamese compatriots or Japanese people. Hence, they have to overcome stress by themselves, and their relationship circles are small which makes them less likely to express and talk to other people in order to overcome stress, as compared to people in the other groups.

Similarly, the integration group has more connections than the separation group. They maintain and contact their original culture while having a relationship with the host culture, whereas people in the separation group had no interaction with Japanese people. It suggests that people in the integration group should be less stressed than the separation group. However, the average stress score of the integration group is higher than the separation group, 160 compared with 100.

A possible explanation for the different stress scores between integration and separation groups is not because the separation group can overcome stress more easily than the integration group, but because people in the integration group have more stress than separation. The people in the integration group have to balance the different characteristics of

two different cultures in order to keep both in a good connection. The separation group has already shrunk into the compatriot cocoon; their lives in Japan have fewer challenges than those in the integration group. Still, this finding suggests that stress caused by challenging new things or stress caused by trying to overcome sorrowful problems can be good if it helps people in their progress towards adjusting. The distinction about these stresses of the participant's perspective will be addressed in the next chapter.

The assimilation group recorded the lowest average stress score of 44. There is only one person in this group, so it is difficult to make judgments about stress based on one person's response. Hence, the following conclusions are approximate since the sample of the assimilation group is only one person, and incomparable to other groups (92, 13, and 4 people). The biggest challenge of living in another country is all of the differences caused by a new culture. Hence, people who assimilate want to become like Japanese, abandon their original values and adopt whatever they think is Japanese. It suggests that there is no contradiction when two cultures meet each other in their unconscious mind, explaining their low-stress score.

Summary

The online survey's results indicate that Vietnamese sojourners hope to integrate as 94 percent of respondents expect to integrate in the future, despite any acculturation strategies they are in the current situation. However, the other finding was the unintentional separation of some people in the WOE and student groups. Unlike the people in the WE group who did not drop their integration expectations and were the only group with experiences before coming to Japan, the people in the WE group showed the importance of experiences in avoiding unexpected situations when entering the new culture.

In general, Vietnamese sojourners are tolerably satisfied with their cultural adaptation as shown by the high levels of self-satisfaction. However, the connection with Japanese society,

especially the problem when making contact with Japanese people, was the most concerning issue of all participants. Vietnamese sojourners have a stronger connection with their compatriot community than with the host (Japanese) culture.

Furthermore, Vietnamese sojourners think that knowledge and attitude components were important for their successful adaptation. Although the other element, skills, was embraced in many questions, knowledge and attitudes are still outstanding as the most important components that influenced Vietnamese acculturation.

The marginalization and integration people had a stress score of more than 150, implying that they obtained a chance of developing a stress-related disorder of about 50%. Besides that, the other two groups (assimilation and separation) seemed to have not many acculturation stress issues. Although there were a very different number of participants between those two groups (one and four people), it implies that acculturation stress is easy to occur for the people who have to balance both original and new cultural aspects.

Case Study Results & Analysis

After collecting data from the online survey, interviews were carried out to understand the participants' choices, and this is represented by case studies. The participants' names are not their real names; the participants were chosen to ensure that each acculturation strategy had representative responses. However, the only person in the assimilation setting changed his perspective, becoming conscious of himself as making use of the integration strategy. Thus, there is no assimilation respondent in this interview chapter.

Moreover, only 14% of Vietnamese participants who have been in Japan for under three years have acculturation shifts, and this has only happened in the WOE group. Therefore, the case studies focus on the acculturation of Vietnamese participants who have stayed in Japan for more than three years.

Table 5 shows the background information and stress scores of five case studies. These case studies were selected to provide the diversities of each case, due to their prominent characteristics which are best to represent each strategy.

Table 5

Case Studies' Information

Acculturation setting	Integration		Separation		Marginalization
Name	May	An	Tu	Ky	Ly
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Stress score	323	13	168	0	248

Cases of Acculturation Strategies

There were two different stories about two Vietnamese people in the integration setting. Both May and An proposed to engage in Japanese society while they highly desired to keep their Vietnamese aspects. However, living conditions and resident status in Japan caused them different challenges and perspectives about adaptation.

Integration: May and An

May's Integration Story. May, an international student, was living her sixth year in Osaka, Japan. May believed that she is in the integration setting because her knowledge was "accessible to many things in Japan" while she "does not want to lose Vietnamese identity." However, May struggled with mental problems, feeling "not healthy inside," and that she was "facing stresses and fears." May had Japanese friends but not so many and "nothing more than colleagues and classmates." That was the reason she considered that she was "not fully adapted to Japan."

Putting herself into the integration setting, she did not think that all Vietnamese sojourners should do that because "people have their own goals," and "they should adjust themselves to the most proper way." Most of her stress came from the wish to be integrated: "I need to learn more to engage, not just the language but also the cultural things." May's stress also comes from her foreigner status: "As a foreigner, I also fear being alienated from society, stress on economics and study things...If I were Japanese, I would not have that stress." To express how to overcome stress, May said:

> Stress is still bothering me but not as serious as it was before. It is not because I overcame that stress, but because I trained myself to live healthily, meditate, and find new hobbies. So, those stresses cannot affect me as they used to.

May saw her stress at a medium rate as "good for adaptation if people can overcome it," but serious stress was dangerous due to "causing severe mental problems," and "people want to escape." She said, "My stress made me a better version of myself."

May believed that knowledge such as language, culture, and skills are "the necessary conditions for living in another country." However, she thought "attitude is a sufficient condition" because "people want to apply what they know to integrate or not; that is the problem."

As an international student, May had to do everything by herself whereby she had opportunities to contact more Japanese people and Japanese aspects than just at school and work. The more she contacted people, the more risks of cultural conflicts happened, and cross-cultural stress arose. That principle created fear and stress for May, emphasized by her stress score of 323. There was the fear of being eliminated from Japanese society, and stress from the effort to not be eliminated. Because she aimed to integrate, she had to force herself to overcome her stress to achieve the integration, not to give up or ignore her stress.

May's experiences on how to overcome stress persuaded her that the most important thing to overcome difficulties is people's mindset. She had access to cross-cultural knowledge and skills through her study and daily occurrences, but if stresses and fears defeated her, she would shrink herself into a cocoon as the separation people did. Thus, successful adaptation needs the intentional application of people's knowledge and skills, not only keeping them.

Most of the Vietnamese international students in Japan work part-time during their studies. Working part-time to cover tuition and living expenses, they also have little time to study. Since they live mostly in urban areas, they have more exposure when working part-time in the service industry, and learn Japanese properly, but in order to be able to use Japanese fluently and get a job equal to other Japanese people, it requires a solid and constant determination.

An's Integration Story. An had a different story about integration. He was a nurse living in Nara, Japan. As an employee, his daily living conditions, personal budget, and social obligation were easier than the international student thanks to support from the hospital. An assumed that he was in the integration setting. He wanted to maintain his Vietnamese identity, "All of my relationships here are Vietnamese; we have a common thing as 'The Vietnamese' to share." However, a good connection with Japanese people was also his priority. He said, "I work in an entirely Japanese environment, and I have to integrate to gain credibility so our

work can go favorably." Whereby, he thought all of the Vietnamese in Japan should do the same: "Living in other countries' situations compel us to integrate."

It seems that An had no stress except the language. He said, "My colleagues used to not understand me, it was tough to communicate with them." Now, An found out how to overcome his difficulty so that his stress on language did not worry him anymore. He added, "I talk to my family to relax, get advice from my Japanese supervisors, take notes, and keep learning Japanese and my specialty." Therefore, "even though there will be many new challenges coming, I believe that I can overcome them as I did [in the past]." As a result, An said, "I am pretty content with my life now." He saw his experiences as a challenge to conquer: "Overcoming past issues made me feel satisfied."

Due to An's experiences, he believed knowledge is the most important element to adapting: "language is essential to communicate and work", and skills are necessary for Vietnamese people when living in another country; "discipline, learning, and motivation are also crucial to Vietnamese people's successful adaptation."

As a foreign nurse, An and the other high-skill professional resident status Vietnamese do not need to worry about anything except the profession. This reveals why his difficulties came from the language, mainly when contacting Japanese colleagues while working. Support protected him from experiencing stress as May had, but did not block him from society. It allowed him to develop, illustrated by the wish to improve the Japanese language and career.

An kept learning and consulting with his Japanese seniors to beat his difficulties. That explains why he thought language and skills were the keys to a successful adaptation.

Separation: Tu and Ky

Tu and Ky were physical workers on a trainee program which did not allow them to leave or be absent; they were not allowed to visit home during the period of their contract. Every day, they moved between the dormitory and the workplace, which was very close, by

bicycle. They stayed far away from the station and the city. Japan to them was probably just images on TV that they cannot understand either.

Tu's Separation Story. I had talked to Tu, a trainee program food processing worker in Aomori, who had lived for three years without stepping foot out of the "godforsaken" town in the remote northern part of Japan. Tu intended to integrate into Japanese society before going to Japan, but "The reality here is not as I imagined." Instead, Tu believed she was in a separation strategy because "I live near the factory near all Vietnamese and I feel isolated from the Japanese world." For more details, she said, "We have the internet to connect with friends and family, but it is far away from the city. Our supervisor takes us to the supermarket once a week by car."

She explained in her broken Japanese, "I have learned a little bit, but we do not need the Japanese language to work or communicate." Even though her Japanese social circle was not as good as she expected, Tu was still satisfied because she was here to earn money to support her children in Vietnam, and now Tu could earn more than when she was in Vietnam "This isolated place prevented me from spending money."

Most of Tu's stress came from the living conditions. She complained, "I was lonely in here," and "It does not look like living in another country; I do not know anything about Japan." However, after three years, she was acquainted with this living condition, and "It is not as sad as three years ago; now I am waiting to go back to Vietnam." Nevertheless, Tu still maintained that integration is the most appropriate strategy for people when living in the country, but "It also depends on how you approach the society, if not, you still need to survive, not to fit in."

When she needed somebody to talk to, she was surrounded by Vietnamese colleagues and she added "I call my family every day to talk. That is helping me overcome these three

years here." Besides that, she shared, "There are no complex issues during working; the factory provides most of the necessary equipment for us."

Tu felt that she was not changing or improving much more than three years ago. Although she completed her goal of "earn money to support children," she still "worries about the future because I have no accumulated skill to work outside the factory."

Tu thought that reaching personal goals is evidence that shows people's success. Besides that, she believed that "Language is important; it will be so shameful when I go back to Vietnam after three years but cannot speak Japanese."

Tu's story provides a particular case for how strongly the surrounding environment influences people's intentions. She expected to integrate into Japanese society, but reality prevented her from doing that. Eventually, Tu ended up placing herself in the separation strategy. Besides personal attitude, the living environment in Japan is one of the significant impacts of Vietnamese sojourners' adjustment. Like An's case, it can support people's ideal of integration or push people to shrink into their compatriot community as in Tu's case. To sum up, one of the reoccurring tendencies of Vietnamese sojourners is withdrawal from Japanese society; they adjust themself to survive, not to fit in the host culture.

Ky's Separation Story. Ky was working in Nara on his second fixed-term contract as a construction worker. He finished his first 3-year contract and then continued the second one. Ky's ideal was different from the majority of Vietnamese sojourners in Japan who intentionally integrated into Japanese society. He remembered, "I aimed to go to Japan to earn money, not travel or discover." Therefore, he planned to live separately before going to Japan. He said, "Except for communicating with team members while working, I have no contact with Japanese people." He described his daily life as "working five days a week, cooking, and making video phone calls to family in Vietnam." He added "I can only speak very basic Japanese and know nothing about the country."

Ky was satisfied with his life, both physically and socially. He said, "I am here to work, finish five years, and return. I think people should do things which make themselves happy, no need to overthink." In Japan, some "unfamiliar problems" occurred , but he said, "I do not care." He was supported by his Vietnamese compatriots. He said "I have friends who went to Japan before me, they can help me," and the company, where his boss was responsible for solving most foreigners' daily tasks, is also a source of support: "For more complex issues, my bosses, who hired me, can solve them." Therefore, he admitted, "I think the separation setting is the most sustainable for me; Japanese is too hard; I can work without learning Japanese, and no need to be concerned about the other cultural aspects. Anyway, I am here to earn money. That is enough."

Ky's interpretation of successful adaptation was about "achieving goals," especially "saving an amount of money before going back to Vietnam." However, during the process of reaching goals, he added "A positive attitude is a key to living happily in Japan."

A few months of learning the language before going to work was just enough to remember a few simple conversation patterns learned by heart. When they came to Japan, both Tu and Ky were guided by Vietnamese people who came first and did not use any Japanese sentences each day, other than a short greeting at the beginning and at the end of working hours. Therefore, their Japanese was still broken. Moreover, of course, they did not accumulate any working and language skills. Most of the local businesses that employ trainees like Tu and Ky require only manual labor, with working conditions so harsh that no Japanese wanted to work there. The three-year stay in Japan with the trainees was defined as the time spent working as hired laborers to earn money, and thus, the less motivated they are to integrate Japanese society.

The numbers show that at least 70% of the Vietnamese community are simply workers (200,000 are technical interns, 100,000 are international students and not less than 80%

working in the service industry, and 100,000 are the other forms of stay, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2020). Tu and Ky are two of these who, probably like others, are largely unable to integrate into Japanese society.

Marginalization: Lily

Lily was the only participant who belonged to the marginalization strategy. There is nothing that pushes her into this situation but her wish before going to Japan.

Lily's Marginalization Story. Lily was an assistant in the legal department of a company in Osaka. This was her fourth year in Japan. She claimed that she was in the marginalization strategy, "I do not need to return to Vietnam, but I do not like to be a part of Japan. Vietnamese people have bad habits that I want to reject; Japanese people are inflexible and conservative and I do not like them." Lily planned to live separated from people from the beginning. She had a high Japanese proficiency, specialist knowledge, and an economic situation good enough to live without connection with anybody. However, Lily was comfortable with her physical and sociocultural adaptation. She admitted, "I am satisfied with my life now. I do not care about anything except myself, and I do not need anyone."

For more details about her relationship, she shared, "We have three people in my legal department, my Japanese's relationships are only that of two supervisors and all connection is about working." Besides that, Lily has a roommate, and that was the only Vietnamese friend she had.

To state about acculturation stress, she shared, "I am totally fine with Japanese life. I love manga and anime. I do not go out except to work." However, the difficulties Lily had were the unfamiliar customs such as food and fashion. She said, "I do not like to dress like Japanese people, but I have to look like them to avoid stares from people," and "At the beginning, it was hard for me to find Vietnamese food because I never go to a strange new restaurant." She also agreed, "People have to try to integrate if they want to work or live

smoothly. I can live well without integration, but this is not true for every Vietnamese in Japan." She explained, "I did not appreciate those difficulties...I had to force myself to integrate, I do not like it," and "I wish it did not happen." Nevertheless, Lily learned a lot; she can speak four languages: Vietnamese, Japanese, English and Korean. She spent her free time on hobbies, manga, and anime, and these hobbies were the reasons that brought her to Japan. She filled out her day with full activities; thus, she hated "unexpected things and challenges."

Lily suggested, "Fortune is the best for adaptation," and "...fortune to not meet absurd people or bothersome problems." For Lily, being fortunate is about the living conditions. For example, she mentioned the living environment, "It was great to live in sufficiently primary requirements such as food, shelter, and public facilities accessible."

In fact, some Vietnamese sojourners struggle with finding Vietnamese foods (Lily's case and personal experiences); they were obsessed with food and could not live without some essential spices from their homes. Moreover, some rental apartments in Japan require a Japanese guarantor as a legal procedure. Some newcomers or even veteran foreigners who have been living in Japan for several years cannot afford it. Consequently, they reluctantly accept to live in poor living conditions and insecure buildings. There are also public services such as tax, national insurance, and visa validity which foreigners can receive at a different price, for an extended time, or differently depending on how complicated it is to complete. Those public services have a fundamental process but depend on the place, how well the consultant performs, and how much support foreigners receive from the organization such as schools or the companies. To sum up, the "lucky" or "fortunate" that Lily mentioned was how smoothly Vietnamese sojourners could access normal living conditions in Japan.

Throughout Lily's interview, her cross-cultural adaptation is mainly related to her proficiency and self-confidence. She also stated in the online survey that she had a problem

when contacting people. Thus, personality was a reason for her adjustment, not just her living conditions.

However, unlike the claim of being in the marginalization state, from an objective perspective, Lily still has an integrative life. She maintains Vietnamese customs such as food and fashion while trying to be like Japanese, at least in appearance. This point shows the "integration," which she did not recognize.

Besides that, although Lily did not mention it in the interview conversation, her background and daily custom unveiled a degree of successful adaptation. She had acquired the Japanese language and specific cultural knowledge through manga and anime. Moreover, she was continuing a disciplined daily activity and motivation of learning. Therefore, successful adaptation might not be interpreted by how many Japanese friends people have or how people think of themselves, but includes how people can be successful in their development of ways to live in another country.

Discussion

The research was conducted to find the answers to two research questions:

1. How do Vietnamese sojourners perceive factors contributing to the success or failure of intercultural adaptation?

2. How do Vietnamese sojourners adapt to life in Japan?

Here are the key findings that arose from the online survey and case study analysis.

Two Types of Acculturation Strategies Among Vietnamese Sojourners

Collected data indicated that only two acculturation strategies existed among the Vietnamese sojourner's community. Unlike Berry's (1997) ideas about four strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization, Vietnamese sojourners are divided into integration and separation.

Integration Strategy

The integration group included people aware that they were living integrated lives, and those who live integrated lives but did not recognize that. Throughout the interview, beliefs and actions of participants who are unaware that they are living integrated lives unveiled the inconsistent statements.

In fact, one person who assumed himself to be using the assimilation strategy during the online survey changed his mind to claim that he belonged to the integration group when the interview was conducted. The other case was a person in the marginalization strategy who did not seem aware that she still maintained Vietnamese culture through her daily activities. Moreover, given the way she worked, she engaged in Japanese society. Initially, she went through cultural conflicts, then accepted and changed to adapt to have the current satisfying life. This is an example of the "draw-back-to-leap" pattern, a part of learning and practicing new cultural adaptation (Kim & Kim, 2001). No matter how people perceive their situations,

even if they mislabel themselves, the fact is they are trying to integrate with Japanese culture, and fit in, not just survive.

Separation Strategy

The online survey's result showed that 12% of respondents considered themselves in separation settings. The interviews' results clarified the cause of people's separation statement, including objective and subjective reasons.

The objective reasons were external factors that prevented Vietnamese sojourners' contact with Japanese society. However, the essential part found in this research is living conditions. Living in an isolated suburb area limits Vietnamese sojourners to have daily contact with locals through shopping or entertaining activities. Furthermore, working in a secluded area with only compatriot workers restricts them from using the Japanese language. Thus, the environment created an isolated subculture in which Vietnamese people only connect with the compatriot community, leading to the separation strategy.

The subjective reason mainly came from the self-satisfaction of Vietnamese sojourners. Especially people who came to Japan to complete their specific goals such as making money, completing a certification, or just wanting to have a different experience. These people are happy when they are cognizant that they are in progress towards their goals, resulting in losing the desire to learn or try new things. Eventually, they are comfortable with the separation strategy and keep a limited connection with the Japanese community. These sojourners included trainee workers, high-skill workers, and even international students.

The Hope of Integration

The collected data provided clear evidence that Vietnamese sojourners who actually are in the state of integration or in other states, saw integration as the most appropriate adaptation for acculturation. Therefore, the integration state where people engage with Japanese society while still maintaining Vietnamese' values, seems to help Vietnamese sojourners access the

most successful adaptation in Japan among the four strategies. There are people who forced themselves into the integration setting because they assumed that it was good for them. In addition, there are people who could not achieve the hope of integrating, yet they did not deny the necessity of integrating into the host culture. Especially, people who had trouble contacting people, setting themselves in the marginalization strategy, would like to recommend other Vietnamese people to integrate.

Vietnamese sojourners will return to Vietnam, so maintaining their original culture plays an important role in their future. However, while living in Japan, Vietnamese sojourners see the benefit of integration. This shows a sign of adaptation by these Vietnamese.

Past Experience in Japan and Hope of Integration

There is one unique group that hoped to integrate and they, in fact, integrated. However, none of these participants were interviewed. From the survey's results, this group is people who had past experience in Japan, which helped them overcome difficulties more easily than the other groups, such as students, people without experiences. However, past experiences did not affect people's adaptation and only benefited them by not reducing their expectations on their second time going to Japan. For example, in Ky's separation story, he used to work in Japan before and still wants to be in his state of separation.

Stress and Acculturation

Integration Strategy

Appropriate integration is also connected to the challenges that people have to face. For example, it requires a particular level of language and cultural knowledge to access the Japanese community; if not, people must make more efforts to overcome challenges. Moreover, integration puts people in a state of having more cultural conflicts than the other acculturation strategies.

Interacting with Japanese people is accompanied by cultural conflicts and acculturation stress, which impacts people in two ways. First, overcoming the difficulties and then adapting to the new situations, as in Kim's adaptation model (2006). When confronted with a new culture, people go through "disequilibrium." The person then incorporates feedback to bring the "system" back into balance (Kim & Kim, 2006, p. 3; Mayhew, 2018). The continual "draw-back-to-leap" pattern is the model applied for people who can overcome stress. The other possibility is serious stress, leading to mental problems and withdrawals from integration to separation or marginalization. In this case, the "draw-back-to-leap" pattern is destroyed.

Separation Strategy

The results showed that the people in the separation setting were less stressed than the integration one. This can be explained by the specific feature of the separation group: they just want to connect with their compatriot people, not people of the host culture. As a result, the relationships among Vietnamese people were less complicated than with Japanese people. No cultural conflicts arose and acculturation stresses were eliminated.

Factors Contributing to Adaptation

Language

The research found that there is no definite factor that influences what is called successful adaptation. However, there is some connection between language and successful adaptation in the online survey as well as the interview results. Both indicate that language is essential for integrating and successful adaptation. The language is a tool encouraging Vietnamese sojourners' approach to Japanese culture through daily communication, books, manga, anime, and other media. Specifically, most of the integration strategy participants have higher proficiency in the Japanese language than persons using the separation strategy.

On the other hand, hoping for integration or the desire to engage in Japanese society motivates people to learn and improve their language skills.

Attitude

Attitude is one of three elements of intercultural competency (Deardorff, 2012). According to the online survey results, the second most popular choice (Positive attitude), with 63 responses, was second to the first choice by only one point. Based on this assessment, a positive attitude has an impact on whether they adapt to life, which is as important as knowledge (Good at the Japanese language).

Attitude also was mentioned in May and Ky's stories. From their assessment, attitude played an important role, influencing whether Vietnamese sojourners intend to integrate or not; a positive attitude also helped them have a happy life. People who are not happy with their current situation, for example, non-fluent speakers or people with low proficiency, must try to learn or improve their language skills in order to improve their knowledge in their fields. Curiosity, positive attitude, openness, and intentional engagement in Japanese society are needed to integrate (Deardorff, 2012). Similarly, there are many purposes to living overseas, such as monetary rewards, developing oneself, making international friends, or discovering new challenges. People adapt differently to achieve satisfaction. Each motivation impacts people's different attitudes on their cultural adaptation, influencing if they should integrate or not. They intentionally integrate when they recognize the need for engagement with Japanese society to achieve their goals.

Host Cultural Expectations Affect Acculturation

Based on people in separation strategy's case studies, the primary factor affecting their separation is isolated living conditions, which prevents people from the hope of integration in both reality and thought. For example, one person could not communicate in Japanese or experience the local lifestyle because of isolated conditions; she dropped from integration to

separation. In the case of the satisfied person, living in that isolated condition is still enough to survive, blocking his ideas of integrating. On the other hand, if the working demand needs more Japanese language, he might have to try to learn; if the Japanese community is around him, he will have more chances to make contact, which could be followed by the desire to develop.

What are the Japanese business owner's expectations for Vietnamese trainees or workers? During my work as an interpreter for a company hiring labor directly from Vietnam, I found that some Japanese companies do not require any intercultural competencies and have very strict rules applying to foreign laborers such as no leave for pregnancies during labor contracts, which make workers isolated from the whole society. Some also simply do not provide enough opportunities for Vietnamese sojourners to engage with Japanese society (Personal experience as a translator, 2021). Unfortunately, Vietnamese represent 53% of the interns employed for physical labor in Japan (Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2020). In addition, the intern regulations were huge barriers that influenced the general adjustment of Vietnamese sojourners' adaptation. As a result, the intern regulations are huge barriers that influence the general adjustment of Vietnamese sojourners' adaptation.

Individual Mislabeling of Acculturation Strategies

The interviews indicated that some people mislabel themselves, but they are not aware of this. For example, one said she was marginalized, but really she was using integration strategies. She talked about how she forced herself to dress up like Japanese people, learning and speaking Japanese, and especially about how afraid she was when seen differently from Japanese people. These were the signs of integration into Japanese society.

Another said he was assimilated in the survey; however, in the case study, he expressed that he still has a strong connection with Vietnamese values and compatriots. This would make him integrated.

Suggestions

Suggestions about future research:

1. There is a necessity to determine the connection between people's beliefs and intercultural competencies such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

2. Also, how these patterns differ based on characteristics of the people themselves, the context in which they have settled, and the extent of discrimination and other stressors they have experienced, need to be investigated to have a precise tool to clarify people's adaptation.

I hope that the issues I have raised here can help open a line of research on acculturation and its effects on important outcomes in the lives of Vietnamese sojourners.

Suggestions about policy:

3. Vietnam needs NGOs to help support Vietnamese who hope to come to Japan and help them understand acculturation along with the Japanese language.

4. Trainee program workers have very limited living conditions that allow them to interact with the Japanese. For example, after they sign a contract, they have to go to that place for three years. They have no choice if they want to be absent or switch their jobs. This program needs to be adjusted to provide a flexible and better working environment and to protect the fundamental rights of ordinary laborers. For example, paid holidays and maternity leave are needed.

Vietnamese sojourners need to:

5. Read blogs, newspapers, and the valuable sharing information of the other Vietnamese people in Japan. Usually, newcomers believe one-way information, which often casts lively color on their new life in Japan and ignores difficulties that may come to them.

6. They should determine the goals of the trip to Japan and which acculturation goes along with their goals and understand the benefit of the journey, not only the specific

goals. For example, the experience in Japan might be utilized in their future, through the working skills, the language, valuable friendship, and new knowledge they gain.

Limitations

This research has some limitations.

The first limitation of this was the number of 110 participants in the online survey and that only five case studies were used. This cannot fully represent all Vietnamese sojourners in Japan.

The second limitation was the pandemic. Because of Covid-19, I could not get more students to do the survey and interviews. Without contacting people directly, it was hard to explain to them about their options. For example, question number 2 of the online survey was designed to categorize each person into a group due to their experience in Japan, not resident status. However, there are many responses in the "other" option. That led to difficulty in coding and analyzing.

The next limitation was that internet scammers are too familiar nowadays. People were afraid that my suggestion to fill out the survey was an e-fraud (click into the link, fill in the email address, and their account will be hacked). Consequently, people might have been unwilling to complete my online survey, limiting the number of responses.

This research shows that when people are asked about personal beliefs on a survey, the limited choices may limit the range of their thinking. For example, people classified themselves as marginalization, separation, integration, or assimilation. However, in the case study interviews, when they thought about themselves and their lives deeply, they rethought their category and changed their categorization.

Conclusion

While there is an increasing number of Vietnamese sojourners in Japan, little attention has been paid to how they have adapted. To narrow the gap, this study examined how Vietnamese sojourners adjust themselves and which factors contribute to their adaptation.

The key findings of the research are that different from the four types of acculturation adjustment in previous research, Vietnamese sojourners are divided into two types: integration strategy and separation strategy. The integration group included some people who were aware they were in this group, and some that seemed unaware that they were using this strategy. The separation group contained people who have an obvious reason for feeling separation, such as the effect of living conditions and satisfaction with living a separated life.

Other key findings are that the majority of Vietnamese sojourners hope to integrate and that the stress that people carry in the integration group is more than the separation group. Integration puts people in a state of having more cultural conflicts than the other strategies, while people in the separation group avoided interacting with Japanese which led to few cultural conflicts, and acculturation stresses were eliminated.

The factors contributing to the Vietnamese sojourner's adaptation included three principal constituents. These are language, attitude, and the host culture's expectations. The first is language. Language is a tool encouraging Vietnamese sojourners' approach to Japanese culture. The second factor is attitude. Vietnamese sojourners see attitude as being as necessary as language when living in Japan. Attitude strongly influences whether or not they intend to integrate, and a positive attitude helps them keep a happy life in any situation. The third factor is the host culture's expectations. This factor is as important as the other two factors because Japanese business bosses' expectations directly affect Vietnamese trainees. Therefore, if the recruiter only expects simple physical labor, it would not allow the Vietnamese trainees to access more opportunities to engage in Japanese society.

Also, Vietnamese sojourners will continue to come to Japan in the future. There will be a different level of adaptation occurring based on a person's intercultural competencies, her goals, and the context of the environment in which she will settle. However, I am worried about the serious stressors they may have during cultural conflicts and the possibility of being isolated. I hope to continue research on the psychological aspect and do more to find out how to help those 53 percent of interns mentioned on page four of my literature review.

Finally, more research is needed to delineate how original culture and new cultural practices, values, and identifications are interrelated and change in similar or different ways.

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Appendix A: Selected Online Survey Questions

This research project is investigating cultural adaptation by Duong Ha Ngoc Dung. Participation will help improve the knowledge about the current situation and perceptions of Vietnamese acculturation in Japan. Participation in this study is voluntary. There is no direct benefit or demerit to participating in this study. Only Duong and the research supervisor will have access to the raw data. All data from participants in the survey will be strictly monitored to ensure participants' privacy. If you are willing to participate, please complete and return the survey.

If you have questions, contact:
Researcher   Duong Ha Ngoc Dung
Email address   dh820001@wilmina.ac.jp
Instructor: Professor Scott Johnston，PhD

Section 1: Background information

1. Gender
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. What is your residence status in Japan?

   a. Working without studying experience in Japan.
   b. Working (graduated in Japan)
   c. Student
   d. Dependent (family member is working in Japan)
   e. Other_____

3. How long have you been in Japan?
   a. Under one year
   b. 1-3 year
   c. 4-5 year
   d. 6 or over

Section 2: Acculturation strategies

After **A** lived in Japan for a time, he changed his habits naturally and intentionally towards the Japanese, such as trying Japanese foods, changing his fashion style, raising his tone of voice, and adding more compliments into the conversation. He thinks that these

changed habits could help him become integrated into Japanese society, which he believes will allow him to have a more comfortable life in Japan. **A** wants to enjoy Japan in an integrated way while continuing to be a part of Vietnamese culture.

B is determined to accomplish his goals in Japan earning 5.000.000 Yen or completing college certifications), and he wants to finish them without disruptions. After school or work, **B** is just hanging out with Vietnamese but not having interactions with Japanese. **B** thinks he should keep his Vietnamese values, and interacting with the Japanese is just causing stress.

C also has a specific goal to focus on in Japan. However, **C** thinks that he is not here to make friends, and even accompanying Vietnamese do not help him improve any skills. He can do everything by himself. He keeps limited interactions with both Vietnamese and Japanese.

D thinks that he should change all of his habits and behaviors to look like a Japanese person. Japan is more developed than Vietnam, and acting as a Japanese will benefit his life afterward. **D** denies Vietnamese culture's values and criticizes them, such as the Vietnamese are noisy and do not have self-discipline. **D** prefers to have Japanese friends and avoid Vietnamese contact in Japan.

4. Who was your ideal type before arriving in Japan?
    a. A
    b. B
    c. C
    d. D

5. Which type are you right now?
    a. A
    b. B
    c. C
    d. D

6. If you could change yourself in the future, who would you want to be?
    a. A
    b. B
    c. C
    d. D

7. Are you satisfied with your internal situation (with your lifestyle and with daily activities)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Undecided

8. Are you satisfied with your external relationship? (Vietnamese and Japanese friends, co-workers, classmates, other relationships)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Undecided

9. What is the main reason causing you to be in your current situation? (Multiple choices)
- a. You had problems when in contact with the Japanese people.
- b. You had problems when in contact with the Vietnamese people.
- c. You were that way before going to Japan.
- d. You have problems when connecting with people.
- e. Somebody gave you the advice to do it.
- f. No specific reason.
- g. Other_____ (please write down your ideas)

10. Who helps you overcome stress (by listening or consulting)? (Multiple choice)
- a. Vietnamese friends
- b. Japanese friends
- c. Family
- d. Sempai (at school) /manager (at work)
- e. Yourself
- f. Other_____ (please write down your ideas)

11. What is the importance of successful adaptation? (Multiple choices)
- a. Achieve your goals
- b. Have Japanese friends
- c. Have more Vietnamese friends
- d. Good at Japanese and your professional knowledge
- e. Have a job that lets you earn enough money for spending and saving
- f. You are in the process of developing skills and experiences.
- g. Your attitudes (positive or negative)
- h. Other..._____ (please write down your ideas)

Section 3: Social Readjustment Rating Scale

12. This Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) helps to measure your stress level. To score your stress levels, simply select Yes or No for each of the events that have happened to you in the last year in the Statements column.

Ex. I am single, so events like "Death of Spouse" or "Divorce" are not related to me. I will not choose them.

But I am over 30 years old, I want to marry, but I can not find somebody to date and do not feel good. So, "Marriage" is the event I am concerned about. I checked `` Yes" in the "Marriage" event.

If you are concerned about something, but it doesn't bother you, please check No.

Life event	yes	
1. Death of Spouse (100)		
2. Divorce (73)		
3. Marital separation (65)		
4. Jail term (63)		
5. Death of a close family member (63)		
6. Personal injury or illness (53)		
7. Marriage (50)		
8. Fired at work (47)		
9. Marital reconciliation (45)		
10. Retirement (45)		
11. Change in health of family member (44)		
12. Pregnancy (40)		
13. Sex difficulties (39)		
14. The gain of a new family member (39)		
15. Business readjustment (39)		
16. Change in a financial state (38)		
17. Death of a close friend (37)		
18. Change to a different line of work (37)		
19. Change in number of arguments with spouse (35)		
20. A large mortgage or loan (31)		
21. Foreclosure or mortgage or loan (30)		
22. Change in responsibilities at work (29)		
23. Son or daughter leaving home (29)		
24. Trouble with in-laws (29)		
25. Outstanding personal achievement (28)		
26. Spouse begins or stops work (26)		
27. Begin or end school (26)		
28. Change in living conditions (25)		
29. Revision of personal habits (24)		
30. Trouble with boss (23)		
31. Change in work hours or conditions (20)		
32. Change in residence (20)		

33. Change in schools (20)		
34. Change in recreation (19)		
35. Change in church activities (19)		
36. Change in social activities (18)		
37. A moderate loan or mortgage (17)		
38. Change in sleeping habits (16)		
39. Change in number of family get-togethers (15)		
40. Change in eating habits (15)		
41. Tet holiday (13)		
42. Vacation (12)		
43. Minor violations of the law (11)		

Although there are differences in each person's ability to handle their life difficulties and their particular reactions to stress, this SRRS is a general guideline. This scale seems to suggest that change in individual life requires an effort to adapt and then an effort to regain stability.

- A total of 150 or less is good, implying a low level of stress in your life and a low probability of developing a stress-related disorder. You stand around a 30 percent chance of getting sick from stress in the near future.
- If your score is 150 to 299, the chances are about 50%.
- If your score is 300 or more, statistically, you attain an almost 80% chance.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What kind of acculturation setting do you think you are in right now? Why?

2. Do you think integration is the most appropriate setting for you? For Vietnamese people in Japan?

3. Do you have any difficulties or stress when you keep yourself in a … setting?

4. Do those difficulties still bother you? If not, please explain how you overcome those problems?

5. People say that if you overcome difficulties, you will be a better version of yourself, what do you think? Was that experience important?

6. What is the most important aspect to a successful adaptation? Self-assessment: successful or not?