

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY
LORD ASHCROFT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
SCHOOL

NON-JAPANESE WOMEN WORKING IN
JAPANESE ORGANISATIONS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Anglia
Ruskin University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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*To Miyashita Shoichiro
for making the dream come true*

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This work is original except where stated otherwise and is not the result of collaboration. It has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

Nikoletta Molnar

September, 2018

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY
ABSTRACT

LORD ASHCROFT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

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NON-JAPANESE WOMEN WORKING IN JAPANESE
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September 2018

This thesis focuses on the experiences of non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japan in the last ten years. The study discusses theories regarding the challenges women face in the workplace, reviews the literature about the Japanese working culture and expatriation in Japan. It also highlights the obstacles, foreign women faced at work in Japan and the enablers, which supported their adjustment and career development.

This research is exploratory, phenomenological and adopts a subjective, constructionist - interpretivist research paradigm. The primary data was collected qualitatively through twelve phenomenological interviews with primarily self-initiated expatriates.

The interviews reveal four significant challenges non-Japanese women face in Japan: (1) the Japanese working culture, especially long working hours and hierarchy, (2) limited career chances due to gender-stereotyping, (3) expectations of the Japanese, how a woman should behave and what her role in the society is, regardless of her nationality, and (4) challenges to combine career and family. The four most important advantages and enablers, which helped non-Japanese women were (1) knowing the Japanese language and the culture, which supported them in adjustment and increased their career chances, (2) *foreigner card* or acting as a non-Japanese, giving them a temporary opportunity to ignore the Japanese behavioural rules, (3) support from their boss, helping their adjustment in Japan, and (4) mentoring and networking, especially with the international management to increase their career chances.

This study contributes to knowledge by narrowing the gap in the international human resource management (IHRM) literature about the experiences of self-initiated expatriate women, who had been working in Japan. The thesis closes with practical recommendations and ideas for future research.

Key words: female expatriates, self-initiated expatriates, working in Japan, gender

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Assigned Expatriate
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DCC	Dual-Career Couple
DCF	Dual-Career Family
EU	European Union
FTSE	The Financial Times Stock Exchange
GMAT	The Graduate Management Admission Test
HR	Human Resources
IHRM	International Human Resource Management
IMF	International Monetary Found
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MNC	Multinational Company / Multinational Corporation
NIKKEI	Nihon Keizai Shinbun Stock Market Index
OE	Original Expatriate
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PwC	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
PR	Public Relations
S&P	Standard & Poor's
SIE	Self-Initiated Expatriate
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States (of America)

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LIST OF FOREIGN WORDS

In this thesis, I use the Hepburn romanisation system for the transcription of Japanese words.

anime	アニメ	animation, Japanese cartoon
Deru kugi wa utareru.	出る杭は打たれる。	The nail, which sticks out will be hammered. (If you stand out, you will be subject to criticism.)
gaijin / gaikokujin	外人 / 外国人	foreigner
hai	はい	yes, understood, ok, I hear you
honne	本音	true sound, real feelings
ie	家	household
īe	いいえ	no
juku / gakushu juku	学習塾	cram school
karōshi	過労死	death by overwork, stress death
kachō	課長	manager, section leader
kakuninshimasu	確認します	I confirm it. / I work it out.
kōhai	後輩	lowerclassman, junior
nemawashi	根回し	pre-discussion before decision making
nomikai	飲み会	drinking party
ojīsan	おじいさん	grandfather, elderly man
salaryman	サラリーマン	(Japanese) businessman
samurai	侍	warrior
senpai	先輩	upperclassman, senior
sensei	先生	elder, teacher, master
tanshin funin	単身赴任	commuter marriage
tatemaie	建前	built-in-front, socially accepted answer
zangyō	残業	overtime

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This thesis focuses on the work experiences of non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japan in the last ten years. Studies in this subject are rare and relatively outdated, as they were carried out more than twenty years ago (Adler, 1987; Taylor and Napier, 1996). This research aims to expand our understanding of the experiences of female expatriates in Japan, presenting the findings from twelve phenomenological interviews.

This first chapter serves as a general introduction. It describes the background of the study: my motivations to carry out the research. This is followed by the statement of the research questions. I explain why I decided to study non-Japanese women working in Japan, why this topic is personally significant to me, what personal experiences motivated me to carry out the research. I introduce the problem followed by the aims and the objectives of the study. I highlight how my research contributes to knowledge: which gap it is trying to fill and why it is important academically. I will also summarise how carrying out this research adds to my profession, to me as a person and a learner. This first chapter ends with the outline of the thesis, explaining the structure of the study.

1.2. Background of the Study

According to Moustakas (1994), research questions in phenomenological studies are formulated because of an intense personal interest in a problem or a topic. The topic of this research emerged due to my personal interest in the Japanese working culture. After learning both the language and the culture at university, in 2010, I got an internship in Japan. In 2011, I joined the same company as a self-initiated expatriate (SIE). Shortly after I started to work in Japan, I decided to start this project. I had several preliminary ideas, but I had to refine them. Initially, I was very interested, how the phenomenon *New Japan* (Matsumoto, 2002) impacts the Japanese working culture, like the rise of a new generation, changing values in the society and the wish for a different working style. The reason why I chose gender was first again, personal. The most surprising observation I made in the first six months while working in Japan was, how few women were working at my company. Their number

was low, both Japanese and non-Japanese. I met many non-Japanese women during these six months. Our discussions often were about experiences we all made working in Japan. After reviewing the academic literature, I decided to focus the research on non-Japanese women. Although Japan is the third-largest economy in the world and a challenging country for foreigners due to its specific culture, surprisingly few studies have focused on expatriate adjustment in Japan (Adler, 1987; Taylor and Napier, 1996, Peltokorpi, 2007, Peltokorpi, 2008, Caligiuri and Tung, 1999).

In the 1980s the *Pacific Rim* (the countries around the rim of the Pacific Ocean) was already the fastest growing business in the world, headed by the United States and Japan. Japanese women are highly educated and integrated into the workforce, but they only earn on average 60% of the *salarymen* (Japanese white-collar worker, businessman) do, and only 10% of women are managers in Japan. For most of the women, it is very complicated to return to work after childbirth and continue their career. Adler's well known research (1987) highlighted, that although gender inequality in Japan may be high, foreign women are treated by the Japanese differently, not like women, but like foreigners (*gaijin syndrome*). Adler's (1987) sample though only included North American female managers.

A research conducted some years later confirmed Adler's findings to some degree (Taylor and Napier, 1996). The expatriate female managers, who participated in the study believed that being a woman in Japan was either neutral or an advantage, due to visibility and curiosity. The focus of the research was *adjustment*. The critical factors for adjustment were age and language knowledge. As Japan is a patriarchal country, the age of the expatriates has a special significance. Young people usually hold lower level positions while the ones in higher ranks are rather senior colleagues. The Japanese language proficiency was especially crucial for those, who were externally exposed. Top managers, who participated in the study were successful regardless if they could speak the language or not. There was another essential observation made by the researchers. Only 5-10% of the foreign women (members of an organisation in Tokyo called Foreign Executive Women) were so-called traditional or original expatriates (OEs). The rest of the women were self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), who either went to Japan by themselves or accompanying a partner, who also had been working in the country.

Adjustment was in the focus of the studies, which were done about expatriates, who were working in Japan (Peltokorpi, 2008, Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010). These studies included both male and female participants; and their focus was not *gender* anymore. The findings of these studies are still relevant from several perspectives. First of all for highlighting, that the experiences, original expatriates (OEs) and self-

initiated expatriates (SIEs) make in Japan can be very different. The researchers themselves seem to have a deep understanding of the Japanese culture, so they could emphasise, why the adjustment for foreigners is so hard in Japan.

In spite of the rise of a new generation who may not wish to continue the lifestyle of their fathers being hard-working ants, business samurais or salarymen, Japanese are still expected to work long hours, attend after work socialising events, etc (Kingston, 2011; Matsumoto, 2002; Sugimoto, 2002).

1.3. Research Questions

There are three research questions this study tries to answer:

Q1. What are the experiences of non-Japanese women who work in Japan?

The first research question is a rather general one to find out, how was it for non-Japanese women to work in Japan. What factors had the most significant impacts on their experiences? Was their working experience similar to the experience in their own country or was it different? How did the Japanese working culture influence their experiences? Considering their initial expectations about their working life in Japan, I was interested, if their experience confirmed these expectations or if reality was different than they expected. If it was different, what were the most surprising things, they experienced? I was also interested, what role their gender played in their adjustment and their career success.

Q2. What are the difficulties non-Japanese women face when working in Japan?

The second research question is a more specific one. If non-Japanese women, while working in Japan had difficulties or challenges, I wanted to highlight, which ones. As later discussed in details, according to the literature, expatriates, who are working in Japan have adjustment difficulties based on the Japanese culture, due to working hours, seniority, and so on. Another possible challenge they could face may have to do with their gender. Working in a patriarchic country may be difficult for women (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999). A third, where they may have problems is language knowledge.

Q3. Which factors can help non-Japanese women to be successful in their job in Japan?

Similarly to the second question, this question is also a more concrete one, looking into factors, which supported women to adjust themselves to the Japanese working style and be successful in their careers. Initial literature review suggests that surprisingly gender may be such a factor, alongside with age, language knowledge and so on.

To be able to answer the three research questions, first I conducted an extensive literature review. The findings of the literature review are included in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. These findings were the basis of the conceptual framework (Chapter Five). I described the experiences of the twelve participants in the first part of Chapter Seven. In the second part of Chapter Seven, I included the most important themes, which emerged from the interviews. In Chapter Eight, discussing the findings, I connected the data to the existing academic literature. In Chapter Nine, I reviewed the conceptual framework and answered the research questions above.

1.4. Introduction to the Problem

1.4.1. Why Working Women?

International human resource management (IHRM) is a developing research area and the number of studies in expatriation considerable increased in the last 40 years. However, studies, which are exclusively researching the expatriate experience of women are still somewhat rare. Most of the research, which is dedicated to the study of women in this context is looking into the role of the accompanying wife or partner, and the impact of their satisfaction in the host country may have on the success on the assignments in general (Fischlmayr, 2002). The reason why the female expatriate experience is somewhat under-researched is that women in international management are still not represented in high numbers. According to Cole and McNulty (2011) only 20% of the expatriates are female. Women are often overlooked for international jobs, due to gender stereotypes, believing that women are not suitable for such positions, due to their possible acceptance, their different other roles in life, their ambition, etc (Selmer and Leung, 2003). However it also very important to highlight, that in the 1990s the proportion of female expatriates was only around 3%. There are several reasons, why this number is growing and will keep growing in the future. As there are more dual-career couples than ever before, fewer

male employees will be able to accept assignments abroad. Changes in the job market will lead to even higher female participation in management positions, also internationally. Management styles are changing, and the demand for a softer, more feminine leadership style will keep increasing (Harris, 1998 in Fischlmayr, 2002; PwC, 2011; Deloitte, 2016). Therefore research conducted in this area can support female expatriates, who are interested in undertaking international assignments and also organisations, who would like to send more female expatriates abroad.

1.4.2. Why Working Abroad?

Economic globalisation, the increasing integration of economies around the world is not a new phenomenon, but the technological advances of the 20th century accelerated it (IMF, 2000). Multinational companies have offices in several countries and often send their employees with experience overseas. Faster and cheaper transportation, convenient telecommunication make physical distances smaller and more people decide to collect some overseas exposure. One of the most essential tools to develop international managers is believed to be international assignments. An assignment abroad is a valuable learning opportunity for employees (Riusala and Suutari, 2000).

1.4.3. Why Japan?

Japan is the third largest economy in the world by nominal GDP. After Japan's economic rise in the 20th century, all major multinational companies opened local offices and subsidiaries in Japan. Most of the staff in these offices are locals. However among the managers, especially in top positions, the number of non-Japanese, coming from the headquarters is usually high. Although culturally challenging, Japan is one of the safest countries in the world. This is why several women often choose the country as their temporary home, either as a traditional expatriate (OEs) or a self-initiated expatriate (SIEs).

1.4.4. Why Now?

As suggested, research about female expatriation is limited, especially about expatriation to Japan. In 2008, PwC interviewed more than four thousand graduates about their expectations regarding career. 80% of the interviewees stated that they

would like to have an overseas assignment and 70% of them expect to use other languages than their mother tongue during their career. These graduates, belonging to the millennial generation, being born between 1980 and 2000, entered the workforce in vast numbers and by 2020, according to PwC (2008), this generation will “shape the world of work for years to come”. The future of the most important businesses worldwide will depend on if they can attract the best of the millennials. Japan was the 8th most desired destination to go abroad (PwC, 2011).

1.5. Aims of the Study

The aim of the study is to expand knowledge and understanding regarding the experiences of female expatriates, especially of non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japan in the last ten years. This research will narrow the gap in the academic literature on the experiences of non-Japanese women working in Japan.

This research may be mainly beneficial for organisations, who are sending female expatriates to Japan or who have non-Japanese female employees in Japan. The study is equally useful for women, who are considering to move to Japan either as an original expatriate (OE) or as a self-initiated expatriate (SIE). Other researchers studying female expatriation in general or female expatriation to Japan may also find this study useful.

1.6. Objectives of the Study, Original Contribution to Knowledge

The objective of this research is to present the lived experiences of non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japan by giving them a voice. By conducting phenomenological interviews, the goal is to gain an insight to the difficulties the non-Japanese women encountered during the time, they had been working in Japan and to discover the factors, which helped their adjustment and career in Japan. This research also contributes to knowledge by advancing the understanding about the female expatriate experience and narrows the gap in the international human resource management (IHRM) literature about the experiences of self-initiated expatriates, who had been working in Japan.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Some terms in the expatriate literature are used with multiple meanings. This section serves as a clarification, what these terms mean in the present study.

1.7.1. Expatriate

According to Oxford Dictionaries (2016), an expatriate is “a person who lives outside their native country”. The word originates from the mid 18th century from the medieval Latin *expatriat*: gone out from one’s country. The verb consists of the words *ex*, meaning out and *patria*, meaning native country. In the academic literature, some researchers use the word expatriate as a synonym to the expression original expatriate. In this thesis, the word expatriate is used as a category, which includes persons, who live outside their countries for a certain time, regardless of their mode of expatriation.

1.7.2. Original Expatriate

An original expatriate (OE), also called traditional expatriate and assigned expatriate (AE) is a person, who is transferred by his or her organisation to a different country for some years. The reasons, why companies send employees abroad vary, but the most important ones are intra-organisational managerial development and the establishment of subsidiary control (Selmer and Luring, 2011).

1.7.3. Self-initiated Expatriate

Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) are people, who take charge of their own career, without the direct support of an organisation. They decide to live and work abroad and are hired on a contractual basis in the host country (Selmer and Luring, 2011; Richardson and McKenna, 2003, Richardson and Mallon, 2005). Researchers studying the reason, why somebody decides to be an SIE, found various reasons. One of the reason was the desire for travel or the desire for adventure. Another significant factor was financial incentives, especially for people, who left a country, where the salaries are lower than in the new country. The family also played a role in some cases in the decision of initiating an assignment; parents wanted to offer the chance for their children to grow up somewhere else and have opportunities to trav-

el. Gaining international experience to improve one's career prospects was also an important reason (Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Richardson and McKenna, 2003; Richardson and Mallon, 2005). Worldwide there are more SIEs than OEs in the global workforce (Myers and Pringle, 2005 in Selmer and Luring, 2011). Some SIEs, who decide not to leave the new country, where they are living, and working become immigrants, "people who come to live permanently in a country" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016).

1.7.4. Trailer or Trailing Spouse

As the proportion of dual-career couples is increasing, more people relocate abroad accompanying a partner, who goes on an assignment abroad. These people, the spouses and partners of original expatriates (OEs) are called in the literature *trailers* (Napier and Taylor, 1996). Most of the trailers mentioned in the literature are women, who are not working during the assignment of their husbands or partners (Riusala and Suutari, 2000; Shaffer and Harrison, 2001). However, it is more and more common, that the spouses also would like to work. Some of the multinational companies, who are sending expatriates abroad to their local subsidiaries assist the dual-career couples. They can either offer a job to the spouse in their own organisation, if possible or support them finding a job in other organisations in the host country. In cases, where employment is not a possibility, some companies offer the spouses education opportunities, covering the costs of those. If the spouse follows the expatriate, but cannot directly benefit from this arrangement, the company may offer her a compensation for the lost salary in the home country. Some spouses or partners do not become trailers, as due to several issues, they are unable to follow the expatriate to the host country. These issues can be related to work permits, difficulties to get a job abroad as a foreigner, family obligations, but also their own career interest (Riusala and Suutari, 2000).

1.7.5. Dual-career Couples (DCCs), Dual-career Families (DCFs)

When both spouses are working and are having their own career, they are also referred to at the literature as dual-career couples (DCCs) and as dual-career families (DCFs), when they have children (Fischlmayr and Puchmüller, 2016).

1.7.6. Non-Japanese, Foreigner

In this study, I use the term non-Japanese when I refer to people, who are not Japanese nationals. I also use the word *foreigner* as a synonym, referring to a person, who is not a native to Japan.

1.8. The Research Process and Outline of the Thesis

Figure 1-1. shows the most important steps undertaken, while writing this thesis. It also indicates how the thesis is built up, which chapter is dealing with which step. The first step after the wish to start this research was formulating and clarifying the research topic. Chapter One, Introduction chapter the background of the study and introduces the reader to the problem. It also states the research questions, followed by the research aims and objectives of the study.

The second step was to review the existing academic literature critically. Chapter Two includes the most significant challenges working women face, such as stereotypes regarding traditional gender roles, occupational segregation, and *glass ceiling* (barrier of career advancement for women). In Chapter Three, I present the Japanese society and the Japanese culture, with a special focus on the working culture, because of its possible relevance on the adjustment of non-Japanese female expatriates. One of the subchapters deals particularly with female employment and the career chances of Japanese women. Chapter Four includes the most important academic literature about the experience of non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japan, followed by studies about the experience of expatriates made, who had been working in Japan, regardless of their gender.

The next step after reviewing the literature was to create the conceptual framework. Chapter Five, The conceptual framework, encapsulates the most important theories related to the topic “non-Japanese women working in Japan”.

Chapter Six explains the constructionist philosophical background of this phenomenological research. It also presents how the participants were selected and interviewed. In the sixth chapter, I also describe what happened to the collected data and how the data analysis was carried out. I introduce the reader to the process of coding and creation of themes and how I wrote up the data I gained from the phenomenological interviews.

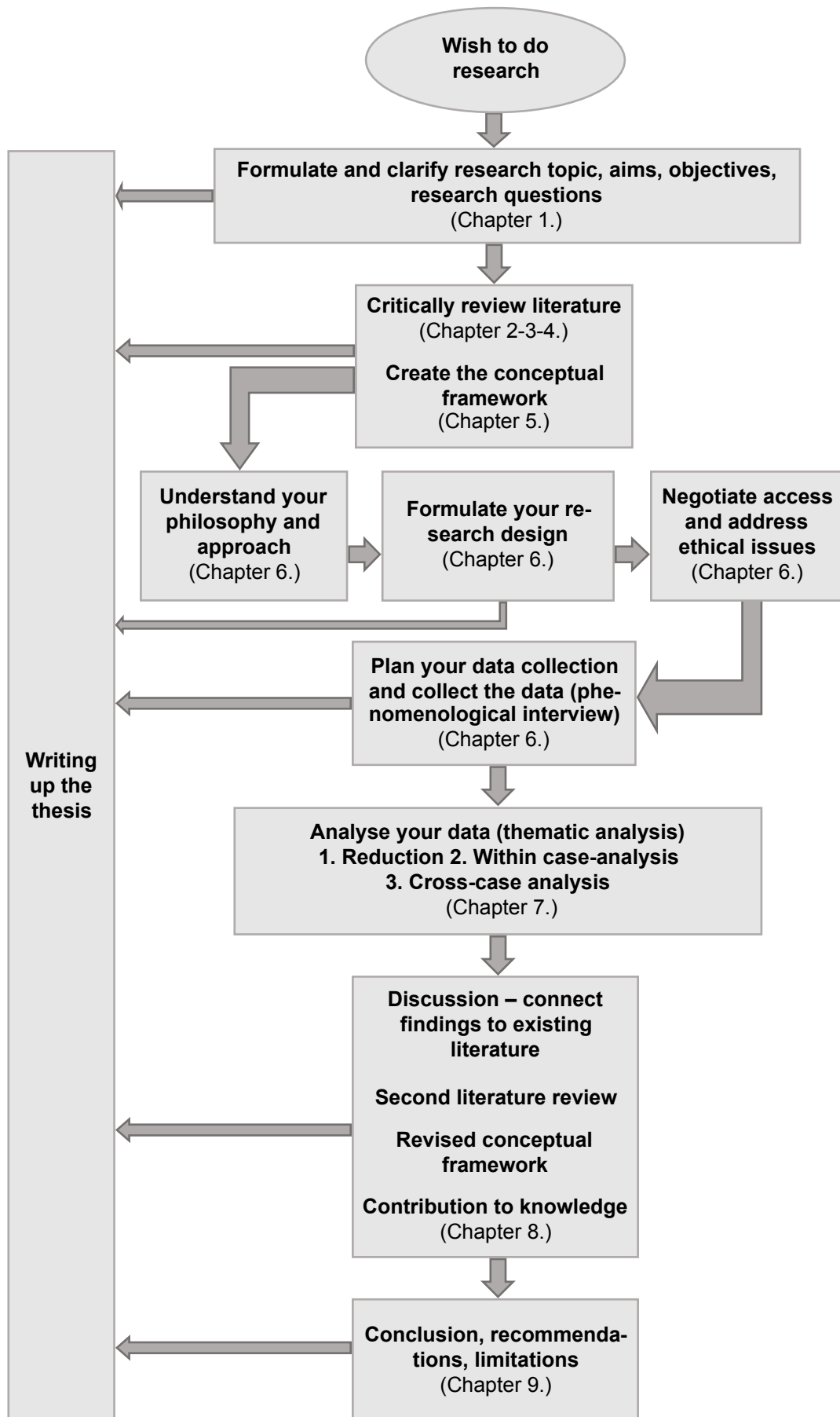


Figure 1-1. The Research Process

The chapter also deals with the criteria of the qualitative research such as internal validity, external validity, reliability and confirmability. At the end of the chapter I explain what steps I took to ensure that my research is carried out ethically.

After the research was designed, the sampling was done, and the participants were selected and contacted, I carried out the phenomenological interviews. I analysed the data as described in Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven, I present the data collected. First, including the individual life experiences of the participants and later in the chapter the themes which emerged from the cross-case analysis.

As a next step, I built connections between the data and the existing academic literature, including it in Chapter Eight. I also did a second literature review to check theories about topics, which emerged during the data collection phase. Based on my findings, I revised the conceptual framework and highlighted the original contributions to knowledge.

As the last step, I focused on the conclusions of the thesis, summarising them in Chapter Nine. Chapter Nine also includes my recommendations followed by the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN AT WORK

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I summarise the most critical challenges of women at the workplace. I introduce the topic with a summary of the most significant changes happened in female employment in the last century. This is followed by some thoughts about the division of labour, based on gender. I write about traditional female roles, the expectations different societies may have regarding the position women fulfil in their private and professional life. In the section, Gendered career path, I explain what occupational sex segregation means and what impact it has on the career of women. I also introduce the term, glass ceiling, the barrier, which impedes women to climb the career ladder and reach top positions.

2.2. Female Employment

In the first half of the nineteenth century in the working class all family members, men, women, and even children had to work to ensure their survival. Later, in the second half of the century, the working conditions improved and some families became richer. After the Second World War, the *male breadwinner household model* developed. The household consisted of a man, who was working and providing an income, while the wife took care of the home. Men this way were assigned to a productive field and women to an unpaid private sphere (Hanappi-Egger, 2014).

Although this role was satisfying for some women, others wanted to find meaningful work outside the house. For the women, who had a job, this created another issue in the 1980s, called *superwoman syndrome*, women trying to fulfil their double roles the best they could. They tried to be a full-time career woman and a full-time housewife. At the workplace, the standard of perfection was set by traditional men, who took care of their non-work related needs and by traditional women, who were more ideal housewives and mothers than working women (Tong, 2014).

In the past years, women's raising employment according to economists also has to see with the fact, that increasing wages for women also increase the opportunity cost of being a homemaker. Other researchers argue that the decline in men's real wages is one of the reasons why the number of working women increased world-

wide. Women, who are higher educated are more likely to be employed than lower educated women. As more women were working and the family income was increasing, some families achieved higher living standards, which motivated other women to start working (England, 2005).

2.3. Traditional Female Roles

Men and women are expected to behave in certain ways in almost all the societies and the same way all cultures make a difference between male and female roles. In southern European countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal), the number of women who work outside the home is still much lower than in other European countries. The number of top female managers is respectively low. The reason behind this is probably the fact that the value of marriage and motherhood for women in these southern European countries is strong. A high number of women in these countries also stop working after the birth of their child (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). This expectation, the society has towards the role of women shows similar characteristics to the ones we can see in Japan (Sugimoto, 2002).

In other European countries, for example in Switzerland, people believe if a Swiss man's wife has to work, it means the man is not able to provide for the family. Most of the Swiss men are not supporting the idea, that their wives pursue a career. Maybe this is the reason, why 62% of Swiss female managers are not married. In comparison, only 14% of the Swiss male managers are not married (Linehan and Scullion, 2004).

What makes an ideal manager can vary across cultures, but in most of the cultures the characteristics associated with it would be mainly masculine (Schein and Mueller, 1992; Linehan and Scullion, 2004; Tzeng, 2006). These characteristics are for example assertiveness, independence, willingness to take risks (Powell, Butterfield and Parent, 2002). Other typical masculine traits are ambitious, dominant, self-sufficient, self-confident and prone to act as a leader. Meanwhile, more typical female qualities are: affectionate, helpful, kind, sensitive, nurturant and gentle (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

Some studies suggest, that while most of the companies see married male managers as an asset, they see married female managers as a liability. Most employers assume that women cannot have the same level of commitment as men, due to their responsibilities at home (Tzeng, 2006). In Europe, most of the female managers are not married, or if they are married, they do not have children. In the UK,

only 58% of the female managers are married compared to 93% of male managers. Male managers are three times more likely to be parents as female managers. In France the situation is the same, most of the female managers are not married, and even if they are and have children, they only have one and very seldom two.

On the other hand, female managers, who are not married are targets of rumours and considered old maids. Women in senior positions are not only victims of gossips and criticism by men, but very often by other women. Although the European Union has the goal to standardise the legislation regarding the employment of women, law on equality, equal pay and maternity leave is still very different across the countries of the European Union (Linehan and Scullion, 2004).

If women also believe, that the necessary characteristics to be a successful manager are mainly masculine, they will either lose their motivation and give up their target to be a manager or start behaving in a more masculine way to be perceived differently (Schein and Mueller, 1992). A woman as a successful manager is often described in a negative way like bitter or selfish, less logical or objective and not being able to separate feelings from ideas. This phenomenon poses a double challenge for women in leadership. If they keep behaving as it is expected from a woman, they may fail to be able to demonstrate that they are a good leader. However, if they act like a strong leader, as described above, this may result in negative feelings. Physical attractiveness or very feminine clothing can also work as a disadvantage for women who are in a leadership role, as these reinforce the gender role more heavily (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

About task competence, often there is also a double standard towards women. A woman to be considered as very competent must outperform men. However, if she gains a high level of influence out of this and behaves as a very qualified person, this behaviour most probably elicits negative feelings and reactions from men. Self-promoting way of behaving is usually considered a masculine one, while women tend to be moderate about their success. According to an experiment (Rudman, 1998 in Eagly and Karau, 2002), when women self-promote themselves highlighting their accomplishment, it makes them less likeable and less attractive. When men do the same, they do not suffer similar negative judgements. Interestingly, in the study, the strongest disapproval towards women came from other women rather than from men.

According to Morrison, White and van Velsor (1987, in Eagly and Karau, 2002) for women leaders only remains a "narrow band of acceptable behaviour". They should behave in a way, that is somewhat feminine, but not too feminine and slightly masculine, but not too masculine. Their behaviour should be professional to remain

credible as managers, but the same time feminine, that they do not challenge the existing assumptions about gender.

Women, as a social group, are still changing, shifting from domestic labour to wage labour. The society is slowly accepting the fact that women can also adopt more masculine characteristics as leaders. In modern organisations, the requirement to successfully fulfil the role of a leader is also changing. Instead of a traditionally very masculine style, a skillset with a traditionally more feminine style is required. Supportiveness, participatory learning, removing fear and intimidation from the workplace are all tools of a more democratic leadership style, which is often practised by women. There are several studies about how successful female managers can enhance the competitive position of their companies (Tzeng, 2006).

Despite the possible changes described above, most women still do not possess economic security, do not participate in financial decision-making, and do not bear economic power the same way men do. Women represent more than 40% of the world's labour force, but the overall share of those who are managers is only around 20%. In the world's largest and most influential organisations, only 2-3% of the top positions are filled by women (Plomien, 2014; Tzeng, 2006).

2.4. Gendered Career Path

When women started to work outside of the household, the income they gained was usually secondary in the family. Therefore the work itself was also considered as a secondary activity. Some women had a job, but a career was mainly a concept which was only relevant for men. *"A career could be described as a sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with work-related experiences and activities which requires a high level of commitment."* (Linehan and Scullion, 2004, p. 439). The rewards of the traditional career provided by the organisation are increasing earnings and hierarchical advancement. Companies logically offer these rewards to those employees from whom they expect the highest return on investment. To demonstrate devotion employees are expected to work long hours and the willingness to put job ahead of private life. The traditional career, therefore, is heavily gendered (Valcour and Ladge, 2008). Due to childbearing and childrearing, for most of the women, it is almost impossible to build up a continuous linear career pattern. Hence it is not surprising that most of the expatriate female managers are relatively young and single. Another difficulty women encounter during their career is networking. Men are often able to join some *"old boy networks"* at their organisation, a group where usually senior men with power can support the career of younger ones.

However, women report that they encounter difficulties when trying to join such networks (Linehan and Scullion, 2004).

In Spain, an analysis of relative participation rates reveals that women represent 64% of those employed in the leather and footwear industry, 45% in the clothing and textiles industry, 38% in restaurants and catering, 47% in cleaning services, and 83% in personal and domestic services. The proportion of women in senior management positions is still less than 5%, and these women are usually employed in the service sector firms, small and medium-sized firms, and newly created businesses (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). Spanish women were in the past also under-represented in politics. However, in 2018, the newly elected Spanish socialist government wrote history as it has eleven female and six male ministers, being the world's most female-dominated cabinet (Reuters, 2018).

Occupational sex segregation describes how based on gender the distribution of the workers within occupations is. *Horizontal segregation* refers to the difference of numbers of people each gender present across occupations. There are certain sectors, for example, services and nursing where the proportion of women is high, while in other industries, like manufacturing, transportation and construction is low (England, 2005; Stier and Yaish, 2014). The reason behind this may be historical and explained by *preference theory* (Hakim) (Stier and Yaish, 2014). According to this theory, women are deliberately choosing such occupations where they can better fulfil their double role: shorter and flexible working hours and less requirement for a linear career. The disadvantages are that these positions often mean lower wages and career chances and these female-coded jobs are most of the times not even family friendly. Some women choose such occupations, because they do not have other choice or because they prefer to work with other women. For some women, social contact or lower stress level are also important (Stier and Yaish, 2014). Due to occupational segregation, in the society often false images are created that teachers are women and doctors are men. Another reason behind occupational segregation may be gendered socialisation. Because of cultural impulses, men and women will have different preferences, interests and aspirations. Criticising this theory, other researchers say that gender is more something what we actively do and not something socialised once and for all (England, 2005).

Vertical segregation refers to the phenomenon that men dominate all high-status jobs, both in traditionally male and female occupations. Occupational segregation is the top contributor to the gender pay gap preventing women from entering the best paying jobs. The depth of occupational segregation can vary by nation, but considering horizontal segregation, the industries where there is female or male dominance

are very similar. In the United States of America, women who are holding a college degree face the lowest level of segregation (England, 2005; Hanappi-Egger, 2014).

According to the *gender discrimination approach* (Glass, 1990), women have a disadvantage in the labour market being in the least favourable positions. Stier and Yaish (2014) found that women did not have any advantage over men in the job market. Their occupations offered lower wages, less opportunities for advancement, lower job security, worse job content and surprisingly even worse emotional conditions. Their finding supports the *discrimination theory* against the preference theory.

Employers at hiring cannot make predictions about the possible productivity of an individual. We talk about *statistical discrimination* when employers treat all women as the average woman and all men like the average man. In the case of a woman, lifetime productivity due to women's different role is estimated to be lower, so for profit-maximisation employers may prefer to hire men. Such discrimination is especially typical where the cost of the training is very high (England, 2005). Statistical discrimination in some cases may be self-fulfilling. Once women become aware of their expected gender roles, they tend to self-exclude themselves (Hanappi-Egger, 2014).

Gender pay gap describes the difference between the remuneration for working men and women. In Europe, the gender pay gap was 16% in 2016 (Eurostat, 2018), 0,6 pp lower than in 2011. Germany (22%), the United Kingdom (21%) and Austria (20%) were among the top countries with the highest pay gap alongside with Estonia (25%) and the Czech Republic (22%). The Scandinavian countries despite being famous of their gender-equal working policies are also having indices close to the EU average (Norway: 15%, Sweden 13%, Finland 17%, Iceland 16%). In the United States of America, the gender pay gap varies significantly by states, but it was between 10-30% in 2016. According to Stier and Yaish (2014) there are two main reasons behind the gender pay gap. One has to see with the occupational segregation, as described earlier: women are often employed in lower-paying jobs. The other reason is the childrearing responsibilities of women. Women due to their childrearing role may be a shorter or a longer time outside of work and this way; they do not reach the same level of seniority as men do. A possible third reason according to Tong (2014) is that many women are only working part-time, compared to men, who usually work full-time. Tong (2014) also highlights, that even when women work full-time, stay in the workforce, do the same jobs, their wages often lag behind men's.

Discrimination against women is a topic, which only can be solved by men and women. There is a lot to do in governments and organisations, but a lot can be done in the households, too. As Chodorow (Tong,2014) argues, children who are *dual-*

parented will stop seeing the home as the domain of women and the workplace as the domain of men. Growing up they will see that human beings spend some of their times working outside of the home and the rest of their time with their families and friends. The so-called *universal-caregiver model* aims to make women's life patterns the norm for both men and women. This model is the principle on what the policies of the Scandinavian countries are built.

2.5. Glass Ceiling

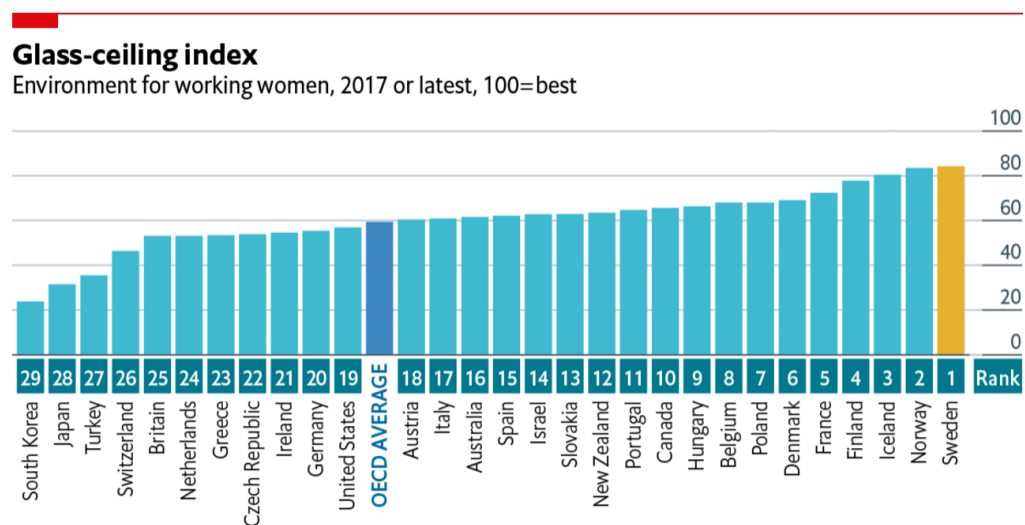
"*Glass ceiling* refers to a barrier of prejudice and discrimination that excludes women from higher level leadership positions." (Eagly and Karau, 2002). In the United States, more than half of the students holding a bachelor degree are women, almost 50% of the workers are women and women are occupying the half of the lower managerial positions, too. The statistics are very similar in Western European countries like the United Kingdom and Germany. However, the number of female CEOs, the highest earning officers, senators, and governors remain low. The phenomenon is explained by the lack of talented women as women have family responsibilities or they are less motivated to achieve high-level positions. Instead of the term glass ceiling, the term *concrete ceiling* is used to highlight, how difficult the situation is. According to the projects of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2008), in the UK it will take another 73 years for women to be equally represented in the boardroom of the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) 100 companies (100 companies listed on the London Stock Exchange with the highest market capitalisation). Women belonging to ethnic minorities in the UK have even less chance to reach such positions. Women occupy only 11% of directorship posts in FTSE 100 companies, but less than 1 percent of jobs (0.7 per cent) are held by women from ethnic minority groups (Mills and Mullany, 2011). 45% of the total employees of the S&P 500 (Standard & Poor's 500, the 500 largest companies listed at two American stock exchanges) companies in the US are female. 37% of the first and mid-level managers, 27% of the senior and executive managers and 21% of the board members are women. However, only 25 of the 500 companies (5%) have a female CEO. In the United States of America in 2018, there are fewer women in leadership positions than there are men named John (Catalyst, 2018).

As described, the ideal manager in most of the cultures is to possess somewhat masculine characteristics. In organisational hierarchy, the higher the level, the more traditionally male qualities were mentioned as important abilities to be successful at the position (Eagly and Karau, 2002). While in the low and middle management skills like mentoring, monitoring problems and motivating employees were the main

activities, at the executive level a more complex skill set was required, like showing entrepreneurial ability and serving as a liaison. At this top management level, the necessary characteristics mentioned were decisive, courageous, proactive in making a good leader. Considering these, Eagly and Karau (2002) believes that the incongruity between the female gender role and the leadership roles at the executive level is the most extreme. In cultures or even industries, where leadership has a more masculine perception, people would see women as less qualified for a management position than men.

The term glass ceiling was first used in 1978 by Marilyn Loden, but it became widely cited after 1986 when an article in the Wall Street Journal with the title of "The Glass Ceiling: Why Women Can't Seem to Break The Invisible Barrier That Blocks Them From the Top Jobs" was published. *Sticky floor* describes the phenomenon when women are not starting to climb the career ladder at all. The *frozen middle* is a term to describe how women are not advancing in their career behind middle management. *Second shift* explains the double burden women are facing taking care of their domestic responsibilities while also having a job outside of their home.

The Economist (2018) created the Glass-ceiling index (Figure 2-1.), in search for the best country to work in for women based on specific criteria. The selected criteria were higher-education gap, labour-force participation, wage gap, share of senior managers who are women, women on company boards, child-care costs, paid leave for mothers, paid leave for fathers, the share of GMAT candidates and women in parliament (The Economist, 2016). While the list in 2016 was lead by Iceland, in 2018 Sweden was the first in the ranking. Japan is almost the last country on the list; only South Korea has a worse position.



Sources: European Institute for Gender Equality; Eurostat; GMAC; ILO; Inter-Parliamentary Union; OECD; national sources; *The Economist*

Figure 2-1. The Glass-ceiling Index

2.6. Summary

Chapter Two summarised the most critical challenges for women in the workplace, especially the ones, which have an impact on the career development of expatriate women, who are working in Japan. First, I started with a summary of female employment, introducing concepts like the *male breadwinner theory* and *superwomen syndrome*. In the next subchapter, I highlighted, how *horizontal and vertical segregation* impacts the career chances of women worldwide. Horizontal segregation means that women are more often working in so-called female-coded jobs (teaching, nursing) than men; vertical segregation stands for the phenomenon, that men are dominating all high-status jobs worldwide, regardless of the industry. In the same subchapter, the concept of *statistical discrimination* was also introduced. This term refers to a situation, when employers treat all women as the average woman. It is also discussed, how all these forms of discriminations are impacting the pay of women: what *gender pay gap* means and how it affects women worldwide. Finally, the term *glass ceiling* was explained, a barrier, which women face in their career advancement.

CHAPTER THREE

WORKING IN JAPAN

3.1. Introduction

Academic literature studying expatriate adjustment in Japan suggests that one of the major difficulties non-Japanese face, when working in Japan is the cultural difference between their home country and Japan and its implications (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999; Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010, Peltokorpi, 2008). In this chapter I present the current challenges in the Japanese society, which may have an impact on the Japanese working environment, having gender in focus. First I look into values, which different generations, who live in Japan find important. Then I explain the particularities of the Japanese education and socialisation. I also highlight, why groups and relationships are important in Japan and what challenges they face due to the ageing society. This part is followed by an explanation, how marriage and family were working in the past and how it is nowadays. The second part of the chapter is focusing on the work realm. First I describe, why communication is a challenge for Westerners in Japan. Then I present the Japanese business world and its particularities. I explain, who are called business samurais and why are they working long hours. I also introduce the term *New Japan* (Matsumoto, 2002), describing a changing Japanese society and value system. The last section highlights the most critical challenges Japanese women face at the workplaces and the most significant barriers to their career advancement.

3.2. The Japanese Society, the Japanese Culture

3.2.1. Generations in Japan

Japanese people see themselves similar to other Japanese regarding values, most of them claiming to belong to the Japanese middle class. Looking deeper, according to Sugimoto (2002) four different generations are living in Japan. There is the war-time generation, educated before or during the Second World War. Some of the Japanese people belonging to this generation are proud of their acts during the war, while others feel shame or remorse. The *postwar generation* had a childhood with many changes, especially in values. To this generation belong the baby boomers who experienced a massive competition at university entrance examination, job application and promotion. In spite of the different values, their working style reflects

more the one of the wartime generation, being workaholics, *working ants*. Japanese who sacrifice personal time and interest and entirely devote themselves to their job would mainly belong to this generation. The *prosperity generation* emphasises individual interests, private life and self-expression. Many of them are open to change jobs; they expect their companies to offer good pay and long vacations. The *global generation* which includes people born in the mid-seventies or later, inherited many characteristics from the prosperity generation. Globalisation and information revolution offered them many opportunities; they travelled extensively abroad at a young age. This generation had to face Japan's severe economic stagnation which made them pessimistic about the job market, many of them see themselves as members of a *disposable generation*. The global generation with minimum job security and lack of favourable prospects postpones grounding a family as much as possible. While the wartime and *postwar generation* was ready to sacrifice their interest for the community, whereas many of the *prosperity and global generations* are leading their life based much more on individual interests and preferences. Although Japanese people consider themselves based on their origins and values as a homogeneous group, the above description shows how different experiences members of different generations living in Japan made. The description of these generations also indicates that the value system of the Japanese society is drastically changing having a considerable impact on the working style and working preferences of the Japanese people. For non-Japanese women working in Japan, this can mean that at the workplace they may come across with colleagues who have a more traditional value system, while a younger generation might have a different perspective.

3.2.2. Education and Socialisation

The studies about female expatriates suggest that the Japanese education system, and the way, how children, especially girls are socialised in the society in Japan are different from Western cultures (North America or Europe) (Adler, 1987; Caligiuri and Tung, 1999). Researchers analysing the Japanese economic miracle believed, one of the pillars of the success was the Japanese education system (Hidasi, 2002).

Japan is known for having a robust primary education system. Many young children spend most of their time studying, becoming 'study robots'. Besides attending regular classes, most of the students attend *juku*, an after school for either catching up with their homework or prepare for the university entrance exam. Rules at school are strict, and there are several restrictions regarding the hairstyle, clothes, school bags and shoes of the students (Sugimoto, 2002; Matsumoto, 2002). It is interesting to note that one of the important selection criteria of higher education committees

besides the grades is the number of days the student had missed school. The children who did not miss a day are considered very reliable (Hidasi, 2003).

The level of education in Japan is very high, most of the students continue their studies at universities. However, universities require from most of the students only a minimal amount of individual work (Hidasi, 2002; Kingston, 2004). Competencies, like memorising facts, events and solving mathematical or scientific equations, are trained, but other skills like creative thinking or critical analysis are not developed (Sugimoto, 2002). The learning style of Japanese and many Asian students are drastically different from the Western one. While the Western student tries to understand the rules and the mechanism itself before starting to learn it, Japanese try to imitate their masters (Hidasi, 2005). The Japanese education system may have served as a base for the Japanese economic growth and mass production. It teaches students discipline, to give up individual interests and to work for the community. However nowadays on an international level, this kind of education may have many disadvantages, and some researchers suggest that the Japanese university education is failing to prepare their students to the challenges of the 21st century (Hidasi, 2002). There is one clear disadvantage in the Japanese education; it fails to provide adequate English tuition to students. Despite being taught English for several years, many Japanese have only limited English oral skills. (Matsumoto, 2002)

The percentage of female students at Japanese universities, especially at lower levels is high, around 40% (Sugimoto, 2002). However, they are underrepresented in the top universities in Japan. While the number of female student ratio is close to 50% at universities such as Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, MIT, Oxford and Cambridge, in Japan it is around 35% at Waseda University, about 30% at Keio University, 22% at Kyoto University and approximately 18% at Japan's most prestigious university, Tokyo University (Goldman Sachs, 2014).

In Japan boys and girls do not socialise together, which is in modern societies rather uncommon. Girls enjoy their free time together; go out to cinema, practice sport with girls. Boys are spending their times with other boys. One of the reason is the group spirit, Japanese people like to spend time in a group. As many Japanese children and young people are somewhat shy, they would not feel so comfortable going out with the other sex. Dating as a couple is also not very popular, most of the young people go out in small groups and only as a couple if they are in a relationship, or they would like to marry. The situation is not changing when they become adults either. Men are going out with men and women with women. At work men after the long working day go out to drink with other male colleagues, and on weekends, they do sport together like golf, tennis or bowling. Husband and wife seldom have mutual

friends, and they do not talk about each other's activities (Sugimoto, 2002; Hidasi, 2005).

The Japanese human resource development system evolved in a way that it makes women impossible to get the best jobs on the market. Education is also responsible for this outcome. Children are often segregated by sex in schools, boys and girls are going to different *juku*. They choose different after-school education also due to the influence of the society and parents also have different expectations for boys and girls. Although the level of education is very high in Japan, it is not the merit of the public education system, but mainly of the mothers who put much effort into the support of the children. If the participation of women in the labour market increases, it can have a negative impact on education in Japan which may pose the necessity to transform the existing system (Brinton, 1992).

3.2.3. Group, Relationships

Nordic expatriates in Peltokorpi's study (2007) mentioned that one of the difficulties they face was to integrate at work to the already long existing groups, feeling excluded. In the Japanese culture, group loyalty is one of the most important values. The goals of the group are always more important than the goals of individuals and what matters instead is the performance of the group than of the individual. Children at school learn about hard work and collaboration inside the group. The education system also puts less emphasis on the performance of the individual, rather promotes the importance of good teamwork (Sugimoto, 2002). Decisions are made collectively, and the group shares the responsibility. It is not appreciated to be better, to have individual ambitions. This kind of socialisation is often described with the following Japanese quote: *deru kugi wa utareru* (the nail, which sticks out will be hammered). If you stand out, you will be criticised or have to leave the group. This educational basis was a solid one supporting Japanese mass production (Hidasi, 2002). Keeping up the harmony inside the group is vital. Superiors and inferiors spend time and effort to maintain a good relationship. The most important measure of one's status is the length of membership in the group (Sugimoto, 2002). The group consciousness is always stressed, this creates a position of "us" versus "them" (Matsumoto, 2002). Relationships in Japan are very crucial, both in private life and business relations. In many situations even if formal contracts exist, parties believe if the circumstances change, the other party will accept that some modifications have to be made. The most important is to establish trust. Inside the company, networking plays a significant role. Coworkers go out to celebrate certain events like new-year, or when a new employee joins the group, many play golf together on the weekends (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2002; Zimmerman, 1994). The Ja-

panese group perspective can cause difficulties to expatriates in Japan as to become a fully recognised member of the group can take much time, which usually expatriates do not have (Peltokorpi and Froese, 2009).

3.2.4. Age, Ageing Society

Taylor and Napier (1996) highlighted in their studies that the adjustment for women who were older was less complicated than for younger ones. The reason behind may originate in the Confucian value system where being older is a base for respect. In Japan, children are taught in school that they have to respect their older schoolmates, the so-called *senpai* (Hidasi, 2004a). They are expected to greet them with a bow when encountering them at the street (Sugimoto, 2002).

Japan's population reached 126 million in 2006, and since then it is declining. In most of the developed countries, the society is getting older, but Japan has one of the lowest birth-rate in Asia (1.44). 27% of the Japanese are 65 years old or older, 13% of them are 75 years old or older. The proportion of children (14 years old and below) is 12% (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018). Japan has the longest life expectancy in the world. Every fifth citizen is older than 65 years old, and by 2055, this figure can reach 40% (Hidasi, 2004a; Kingston, 2011).

While in 1950, ten workers supported one retiree, in 2000, this figure was 3.6, and it is estimated to shrink to 1.9 in 2025. If there are no children, there will be fewer consumers, taxpayers and economy will decline. The age of retirement changed from age 55 to 65 while some suggest increasing it to age 70. The 7 million baby boomers will be in their seventies from 2017 that means the need for nursing care services will increase. Ageing society means fewer workers, reduced consumer demands (Kingston, 2011). Japan is experiencing acute labour shortages, in labour-intensive industries such as security and mining there are 3-5 open positions available for each applicant (Goldman Sachs, 2014).

Japanese people have an obligation to take care of their elderly parents. The number of social institutions which could take over this responsibility is still low, and such arrangements were socially also not accepted in the past. As in Asian communities, the basic unit is the family and not the individual; women have to align their wishes and desires with their obligations and family traditions (Rana et al., 1998). 85% of elderly caregivers in Japan are still the daughters or daughters in law of the elderly who often have to give up their job to be able to fulfil this obligation. Women of the new generations are less likely open or capable to become a caregiver so that Ja-

pan will need an increased number of nurses and caregivers in the future (Kingston, 2011).

3.2.5. Marriage and Family

In Japan, arranged marriage has a long tradition. Parents selected for their daughters or son the person they should marry and the children following the Confucian values fulfilled the wishes of the parents. These marriages were usually not based on love, but on economic and social considerations. The couple learned to respect each other, the base of their relationship was not love, but to build a family together. Both parties had to fulfil their roles, the husband to be the breadwinner and the wife to provide a stable background. Emotional or sexual life was never the focus of these relationships. Some people still follow old traditions, especially if they could not find love 'in time'. Society still puts pressure on people to get married before they turn 30, but many young people do not want to get married at all (Hidasi, 2005). According to Sugimoto (2002), Japan is the only industrially advanced country where a considerable amount of marriages are still arranged. Around half of all married couples in Japan found love with the help of some intermediary. Most of the marriages are class dependents, graduates of prestigious universities are selecting partners among themselves.

Japanese women are not allowed to keep their family names after marriage. Either both the husband and wife take the name of the husband or both the name of the wife. The reason is that the Japanese are not registered as individuals, but as members of an *ie*, a household. Therefore, after the marriage, they will create a household together which must be identified with one family name, which can be either of the husband's or the wife's (Kingston, 2004). Japan is a patriarchal society. In the past, in the household, the labour and responsibilities were divided. Men were the breadwinner and had all duties outside the home. Inside the house, women were responsible for the family finances, raising the children with special attention to their education. According to Confucian traditions, men were the masters and women were expected full devotion. Nowadays more men and women have independent lifestyles, individual wishes (Matsumoto, 2002). The breadwinner husband and homemaker wife model families are today in minority, in more than half of the households both spouses are working. (Kingston, 2011) While in 1980 the number of single-income households was nearly the double the number of dual-income families, in 1990 the number of dual-income households surpassed those where only men were employed. In 2016 the number of dual-income households was almost

the double the number of the single-income families (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018).

Husbands work until late, wives attend evening classes, and meetings and children go to private after-school classes, which make many Japanese families 'weekend families' as on weekdays they do not have much time for family interactions. According to conservatives, after women became more educated, gained interest to pursue their own career and did not have the financial necessity to get married to enjoy life, therefore, they postponed the timing of marriage. However based on statistics women with higher education are keener to get married than women with lower education (Sugimoto, 2002). In the 21st century Japanese select their future partner based on love, but these marriages are not having the same solid base as the arranged ones had before. When the love is gone, there is a risk that the relationship will not last long. The number of unmarried people and the number of divorces got higher. 60% of all unmarried women are still living with their parents; they are often called *parasite singles*. Not only women are postponing marriage, but 53% of men above 30 in Tokyo are not married (Hidasi, 2005). In 2018, the mean age for a first marriage was 31 for men and 29 for women. For both genders, the age of marriage in average was postponed with around half-a-year since 2010, around two years since 2000 (29 men, 27 women) (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018). The OECD-25 average for men in 2014 was 32.6 and for women 30.3 (OECD, 2018). The marriage rate reached its all-time low, five marriages per 1.000 inhabitants (6.4 in 2000, 10 in 1970) (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018), but it is still higher than the OECD average with 4.6 (OECD, 2018).

Divorce was for a long time stigmatised by the society and economically was also not feasible. Most of the housewives had little or no working experience and was difficult for them to find any job after the divorce (Kingston, 2011). Houses, where the family lived, were properties of the men, which meant in case of a divorce the woman had to find a place on her own (Sugimoto, 2002). In case of a divorce, besides the emotional issues, the men also face another one. In most of the traditional families, women take care of all household responsibilities, they take care of the children and the elderly. Men working until late have neither time nor energy to complete these tasks (Kingston, 2004).

While in 1947 Japanese women were bearing 4.3 babies on average, in 2003 this figure was merely 1.29. This number is lower than what is necessary to maintain the current population (2.07) (Kingston, 2011). In 2016, the rate was 1.44, which is slightly higher than the figure for 2003 (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018). The rate in 2016 is on the level of other European industrialised societies like Germany (1.5), Italy (1.4), higher than South Korea (1.2) and Singapore (1.2), but

lower than the Netherlands (1.7), Finland (1.7), UK (1.8), US (1.8) Sweden (1.9) and France (2.0) (The World Bank, 2018).

Researchers try to find out the reason behind the facts that Japanese women are postponing childbirth, they do not want to parent more than one child, and many of them will not have children at all. Some believe the reason is Japan's unstable economic situation while others connect it with female emancipation. In some families, women have a good job and lifestyle, and they are not ready to give this up and take the role of the mother. In others, women cannot stay at home anymore, as their salaries are essential to the family budget. Childcare leave in Japan is available for 14 weeks with 60% of pay. Parents with children under six years of age are not required to work after 10 pm. As men usually earn more money than women do, women are the ones who take the leave (Sugimoto, 2002). Having a child in Japan is extremely expensive. Considering the opportunity costs of women staying at home, high tuition costs and other expenses it can cost up to \$300,000 to have a child in Japan (Kingston, 2011, Sugimoto, 2002).

One of the reasons behind the tensions in the Japanese society can be Japan's fast economic growth. People are living a more comfortable life, but the feeling of belongingness to a community is the price they had to pay for this comfort. The number of multi-generation households decreased, creating lonely citizens. Another considerable change is resulting from the technological development. Instead of face to face interactions, people communicate with each other via messages and emails, reducing the time spent on interpersonal communication. Children spend their free time closed in their rooms playing on computers. Similar changes also occurred in other industrialised nations. Meanwhile, in many countries, these changes took various decades, in Japan all the changes happened during one or two decades (Hidasi, 2002).

3.3. The Japanese Working Culture

3.3.1. Communication in Japan

Communicating with Japanese people can be challenging as there are many important rules to consider. Even if the language of the communication is English, most of the Japanese think in the Japanese way, so, unfortunately, the two communicating parties often misunderstand each other.

When talking to Japanese people, one quickly notices they very often use the word: *hai* (yes). Non-Japanese tend to believe Japanese people using this word express agreement. However, it more means that the other party is following you and understand what you are saying. When communicating they also expect from the other party to give continuous feedback that they are still following the conversation. There are also rules on how to express this feedback depending on the rank of the person - saying yes, "mhh.." or nodding. One is expected to do this even if he or she does not agree with the content of the discussion. The use of the word of *no* is not straightforward either. Japanese people will try to avoid as much as possible to say *no*. They say instead: It is difficult. However, if something is difficult for a Japanese, it usually means they do not think it is possible. They also cannot handle well to receive *no* as an answer. Interrupting others in Japan is considered very rude, once somebody is finished with what he or she has to say will stop talking. After two or three seconds it is appropriate for another person to start expressing his or her opinion (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2002). Non-Japanese are often intimidated by the silence in some discussions with Japanese. Silence is not always to be broken, it means people are thinking or considering what was said. Very long silence is, of course, a bad sign.

In the Japanese culture, uncontrolled emotions are not tolerated and considered as a characteristic of weak and immature people. Therefore raising the voice, shouting, but also being overly happy or laughing uncontrollably are not recommended. The taboo topics in Japan are money, salary, family, private life and problems. Most of the Japanese people do not understand Western jokes and sarcasm, most probably they get confused if they hear some (Engel and Murakami, 2001).

The Japanese language reflects the Japanese culture considerably. Japanese is a sexist language, male and female vocabulary, expressions and accents are different. While the male language is crude and aggressive, the female style is soft, polite and submissive. The language is also a hierarchy-oriented one where honorific expressions make sure one is always attentive to the person to whom she talks (Sugimoto, 2002).

Non-verbal communication in Japan is not straightforward for foreigners either. It is recommended to avoid eye-contact as Japanese feel uncomfortable with it. Physical contact is not frequent either. The physical distance between people is usually 1,5 bigger than for example in the UK. Bold gestures and pointing at things should be avoided, too (Hidasi, 2004b). A smile means mostly embarrassment; this is why in a peculiar situation Japanese people are smiling. It does not mean, they are laughing at you. If they are laughing, they cover their mouth (Zimmerman 1994). When a Japanese person is angry or disappointed, mostly he or she is sucking in the breath,

and you can hear *shh...* or *sah...* sound. This sound is accompanied by a head movement to the side (Engel 2001). Japanese people often concentrate with closed eyes, which does not mean they are sleeping or not interested. In Asian cultures, it is strongly recommended to never criticise somebody openly in front of the group. Such criticism would lead to the loss of the face of the person in front of other members of the community (Zimmerman 1994).

3.3.2. The Japanese Business World

All the past studies about female expatriates in Japan and expatriate adjustment (Adler, 1987; Napier and Taylor, 1996; Peltokorpi, 2008) mention that they chose Japan as a country to research due to the country difficulty. By this difficulty, they meant cultural difference compared to North America or Western Europe. Besides a completely different value system, the Japanese business culture also has several particularities.

Japan has a very peculiar recruitment system. Japanese university students submit their application to companies a year before graduation. They are usually not applying to specific positions, but they select the company where they would like to work. The students who study at the most prestigious universities have a high chance to get a job at a top company. The ones from less known universities usually have no prospect to get in such companies. The connection between one's major and the finally obtained position is also not as straightforward as in the Western world. A new recruit can start his or her career in the accounting department, then switch to sales and later to advertising. Salaries are defined based on the length of the service in the company and therefore moving to another company is usually not offering additional benefits. When somebody is working for one of the big companies and wants to maximise his benefits, the best choice is to stay with the same company forever. Such a lifetime employment system is still existing in many firms in Japan, but there are sectors where this practice is disappearing. Some companies introduced a more performance-based system, but even in those, the length of service plays a crucial role. A considerable part of one's income in Japan is the bonus, which motivates people to work hard for the success of the company (Sugimoto, 2002).

When talking about the Japanese office worker most people associate with the salarymen, the business samurai. The Japanese who devote themselves to their jobs and the company and consider the company as more important than their own family. They have to take care not only about their tasks, but be cooperative, obliging and keep up harmonious interpersonal relationships that the company can

reach its broader goals. Many arrive at work very early in the morning and leave late. (Sugimoto, 2002, Kingston, 2011) Japanese managers are expected to treat their subordinates at restaurants and bars after work at their expenses, take care and be supportive about their personal matters in exchange for the employees' dedication. Overtime is part of the life of most office employees in Japan. In some companies, overtime is paid, in others, employees do 'service overtime' without payment. Another problem, which makes the working day extremely long is commuting which in some cases can be as long as two hours per direction. Japanese employees are also not taking many holidays. Most of them could take 20 days of paid holidays per year, but the majority takes only the half, and some employees do not take any. In Japan the sick leave is not paid, when somebody is ill has to take a holiday. Another challenge to Japanese employees can be the practice of *tanshin funin*, when companies relocate their employees to another branch. Often the family of the employee cannot join, as changing school for children is very complicated or not desired in the case of elite education (Sugimoto, 2002).

The image of the Japanese business world perceived by foreigners is that Japan is the land of mega-corporations and most of the people are working for one of those. In reality, powerful corporations constitute a minority in Japanese business life (Sugimoto, 2002). The lifetime employment system has been challenged in the last thirty years. In the 90s the baby boom generation, around seven million people moved to the top in the company hierarchy. As Japan has a seniority wage system, these employees became very expensive for the companies. This was also the time when the economic crisis started. Companies decided to fill up the open positions with freelance and temporary workers who had lower pay and no job security. The ones who still enjoy the benefits of lifetime employment are those working at large enterprises, and they account for 30% of the full workforce and are mostly men (Kingston, 2011).

Table 3-1. is comparing values, behaviours and attitudes in Japan in the past with the ones in the present and the future. The lifetime employment is disappearing, and the seniority-based wage system at many companies has been changed to a performance-related one. Company loyalty is weakening, and the number of employees who change the workplace for a higher salary or new challenges is increasing (Sugimoto, 2002; Kingston, 2004). All these changes affect relationships inside the company and create confusion. Some employees still believe in the old system while others are enjoying the benefits of the new one. Young employees are not willing to sacrifice their free time for the company.

Possible Alterations in Work Related Values, Attitudes and Behaviours in a Culturally Changing Japan

Japan in the Past	Japan Now and in the Future
Reliance on the company to provide for the employee	Lower expectation the company will provide for the employee
Sacrificing personal time for the company	Importance of employees' personal time
Large companies attractive	Small companies attractive
Moral involvement with the company	Self-serving involvement with the company
Moral importance attached to training and use of skills in jobs	More importance attached to freedom and challenge in jobs
Managers aspire to conformity and orderliness	Managers aspire to leadership and variety
Managers rate having security in their positions as important	Managers rate having autonomy as important
Managers support "traditional" points of view, not employee initiative and group activity	Managers endorse "modern" points of view, employee initiative and group activity
Group decisions better than individual ones	Individual decisions better than group ones
Managers choose duty, expertise, and prestige as goals	Managers choose pleasure, affection, and security as goals
Individual initiative is socially frowned upon	Individual initiative is socially encouraged
Social relationships predetermined by ingroups	Need to make specific friendships
Managers make decisions autocratically and paternalistically	Managers make decisions after consulting with subordinates
Employees fearful of disagreeing with their boss	Employees less afraid of disagreeing with their boss
Companies' interference in private life accepted	Companies' interference in private life rejected
Higher job stress	Lower job stress
Fewer women in jobs; less mixed sex composition	More women in jobs' more mixed sex compositions

Table 3-1.

The New Japan

Hofstede in Matsumoto (2002) p. 145

They value merit instead of loyalty (Matsumoto, 2002). The changes also require different leadership and management styles. Some employees are not expecting anymore that managers take care of their wellbeing and discuss private problems with them. Individualism is increasing in the society and inside the company, which may result in the disappearance of extreme gender differences. These changes also pose new challenges to the human resource departments of the Japanese companies (Kingston, 2011).

3.3.3 Female Career in Japan

Japan's labour force is decreasing, and companies are hiring more women than before. Women are getting more skilled, and some can maintain careers while having families due to family-friendly policies (Kingston, 2011). In 2013, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe introduced his economic policy package to boost the stagnating Japanese economy called "Abenomics" (Abe+economics). He recognised that there is a great potential in increasing the female work participation, closing the gender employment gap. "Womenomics" is the name of the sub-project focusing on gender-related topics.

The target to increase the female work participation has been reached. In 2016, the female employment rate in Japan was 66.1% which is above the OECD-34 average of 59.4%, 6% higher than in Korea, on the same level as the US, but lower than the UK, Germany or Sweden (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018).

However, as Figure 3-1. shows, more than 55% are working part-time or is engaged in some other non-regular type of work. Regarding the number of hours worked, it can also mean only a couple of hours per week. Part-time work usually means lower wages and job security (Kingston, 2011). Many women work as fixed-terms doing computer programming, interpreting, secretarial work, and bookkeeping. (Sugimoto, 2002). It is important to mention as it can be seen in Figure 3-1., in the last 20 years the number of male non-regular staff also increased which shows that some companies are not able to offer the same benefit-package for all anymore.

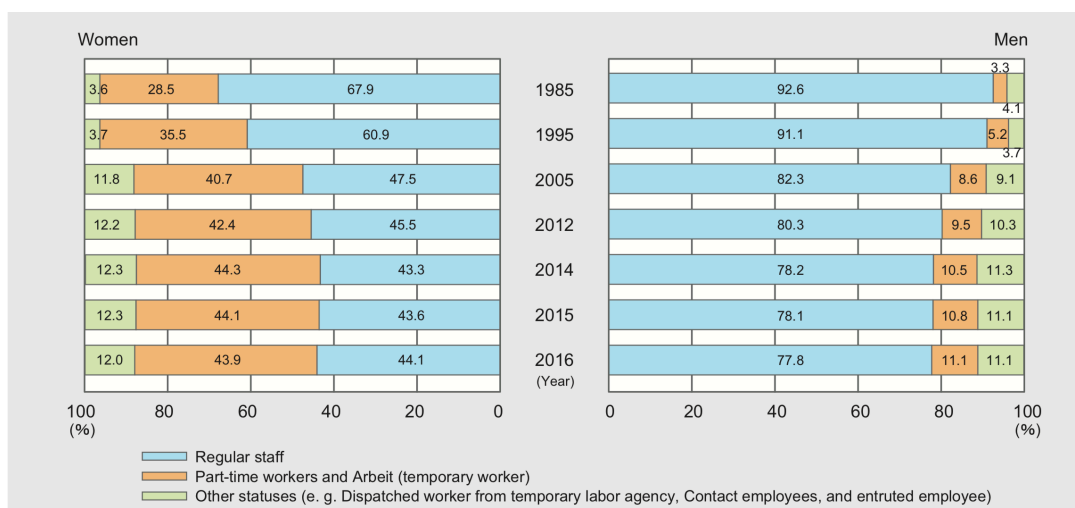


Figure 3-1. Type of Employment per Gender in Japan
Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018 p.9

Japanese women named various reasons why their labour participation is low or why they are only engaging in part-time work. These reasons were housework (33.9%), working hours (14.2%), health (12.1%), location (7.9%), job characteristics (3.6%) and others (28.2%) (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, 2010 in IMF (2012a)). They named housework as one of the main reasons why they do not work outside the household. Figure 3-2. shows, how little Japanese men spend on housework (including childcare) compared to other developed countries.

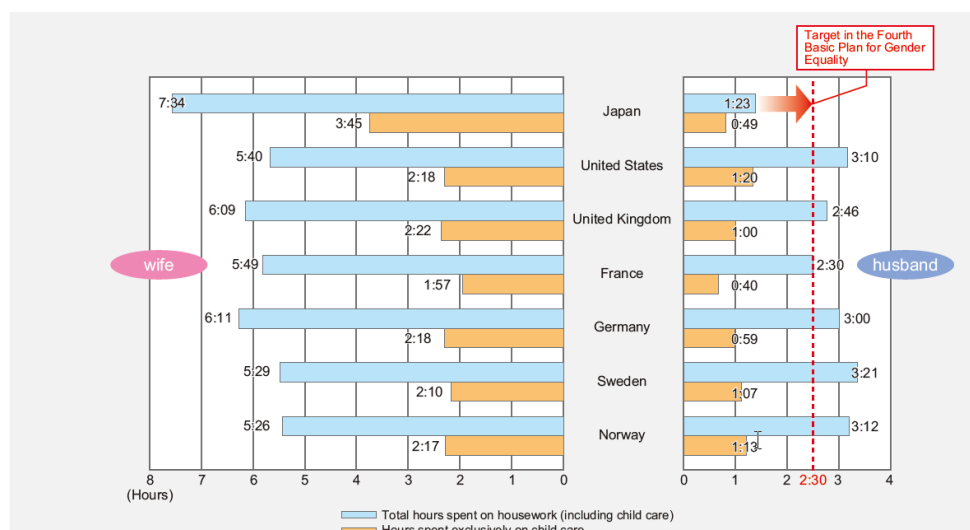


Figure 3-2. Total Hours Spent on Housework and Childcare in Japan and Some Other Countries
Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018 p.10

Despite being highly educated, the primary goal for plenty of women remains to get married. Financially independent women face difficulties to find suitable partners in Japan, as they believe Japanese men are intimidated by their independence. The Japanese society poses a clear expectation on women; they should fulfil their traditional role as wives and mothers. Having both a career and a family remains a dream for most of them (Aronsson, 2014).

After having a child, it is tough for Japanese women to continue working as a full-time employee. Corporate practices are very rigid and are formed on the idea that the usually male employee has a wife at home taking care of the household meanwhile their husband works (Kingston, 2011). As seen in Figure 3-3., between 2010 and 2014, 57.5% of expectant women were not employed. 23.6% of them were not employed when becoming pregnant and 33.9% gave up their job upon becoming pregnant. Although still a high figure, 10% fewer women gave up their jobs entirely between 2010 and 2014 than ten years before. The proportion of women keeping their job and taking childcare leave increased by 10% in the last ten years. (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018).

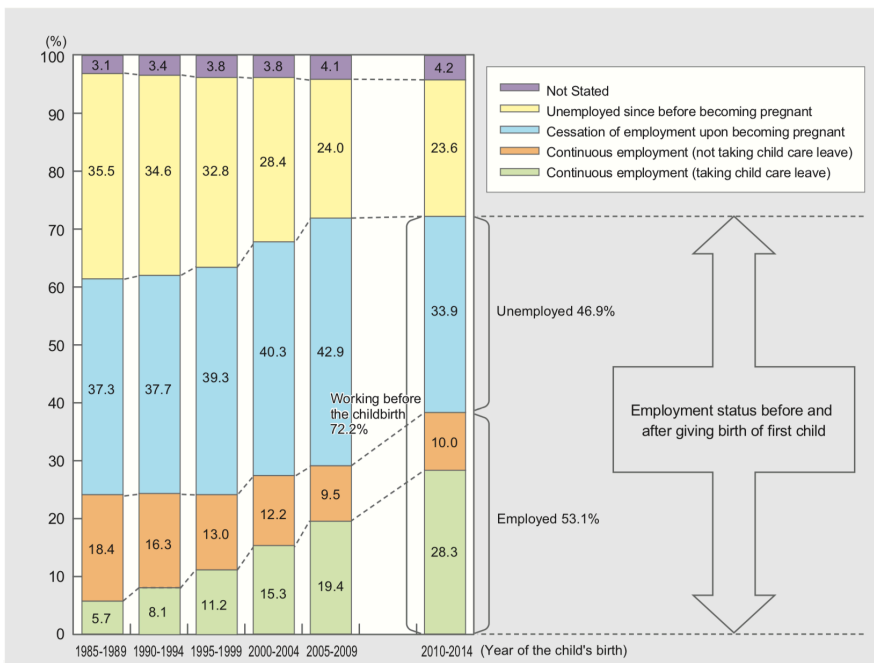


Figure 3-3. Employment Status of Women in Japan Before and After Giving Birth to Their First Child
 Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018 p.8

The reason why still many women are giving up their job can be their own desire to fulfil a role expected from the society and raise their children for the first three years of their lives or because they cannot secure day-care. Flexible working is still not widely available in Japan, and it is challenging for women who quit their jobs to return to work full time (Kingston, 2011).

According to the study of the Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office (2018), 74% of the Japanese regardless of gender believe that men are being given a preferential treatment in Japan (women 79%, men 68%). 45% of men completely agreed or rather agreed to the quote: "Husband is expected to work outside the home, while the wife is expected to take on domestic duties". 37% of women shared this opinion. Regardless of gender, the proportion was 73% in 1979, 47% in 2002, 41% in 2009, 52% in 2012. In spite of the increase of the dual-income households and the proportion of working women, almost half of the surveyed sample by the Japanese government believed that women have no place outside of the household.

Japanese companies prefer to have male employees over the female who have a stable home with a wife taking care of the family. Besides public sector employees and professionals, such as lawyers, doctors, architects with credentials for women having a child probably means the end of their career. In case women return to the company, they have to face dropped pay, status and responsibilities. Moving into cities and living in smaller houses the number of three-generation households decreased drastically. With no possible help from the grandparents, day-cares would offer a solution for many Japanese parents. Day-cares are expensive in Japan, and in big cities, there are often long waiting lists. It is complicated to organise drop-off and pick-up times due to the usually long commuting and working hours in Japan. In 2001, only 23% of the children under the age of six were enrolled in any day-care facility, and only 11.2% of the wives had a full-time job (Kingston, 2004). Among Abe's initiatives to improve work-life balance was to increase the number of available day-care facilities. Between 2004 and 2014, the daycare capacities were increased by 20% but still are not sufficient (Goldman Sachs, 2014).

There is significant pressure on women by the society regarding their roles as a mother. Being a successful mother and in this way, a successful woman is strongly linked with children's success at school and later at the workplace. Children spend limited time with their fathers as they spend most of their waking hours on the job (Matsumoto, 2002).

When talking about the female career in Japan, a very particular employment pattern can be observed as seen in Figure 3-4. Childbirth affects the choices of em-

ployment of Japanese women creating an M-shaped labour force participation pattern. It is observable that the employment rate for women in Japan before the age of 30, with around 80% is on a similar level as in Sweden, France, and Germany and higher than in the US. However, at the time when women decide to have a family, this participation rate drops around 10%. In other countries is a slight drop is observable, too, but not on the same level as in Japan. The participation rate of women in their 40s increases again peaking before the age of 50, but it is not reaching the previous height anymore before retirement age. This so-called M-shaped pattern is not observable in other developed countries. However, it is important to note, that due to the increase of female work participation, the curve became less steep in the last ten years.

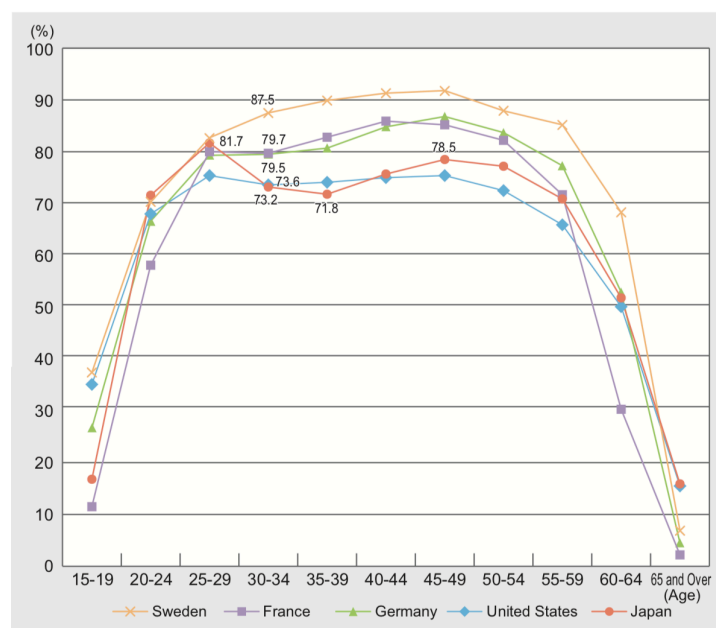


Figure 3-4. Labour Force Participation Pattern in Japan and Some Other Countries
Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018 p.7

Around 65% of women earn less than 3 million JPY a year compared to 16% of men while 25% of men earn more than 7 million JPY compared to only 3% of women. In the industrialised world, Japan has the most significant wage gap, it was in 2002 50% for the whole working population and 35% for full-time employees (Matsumoto, 2002). As it can be seen in Figure 3-5., in the last 14 years the wage gap in Japan decreased somewhat. Women earn on average just 73% that of Japanese men. In the UK, Germany and the US, the figure is above 80%, in France and Sweden closer to 90%.

As Figure 3- 5. shows, 56% of working women are engaged in part-time work. The wage-gap between part-time and ordinary workers is 58% (Goldman Sachs, 2014). Behind the high degree of the pay gap, there are several factors to consider. One of them is the already mentioned fact that Japanese women after childbirth give up their often well-paying jobs and do not return to work either at all or for some time. The ones who return take on part-time jobs. Another issue is that women are often not on the right career track. As companies know about their possible intentions after marriage and childbirth, they may not be on a track at all. However, even companies who try to support the promotion of women assign women on a more clerical or administrative career track which in a later stage of career makes impossible further promotion to top management (Goldman Sachs, 2014).

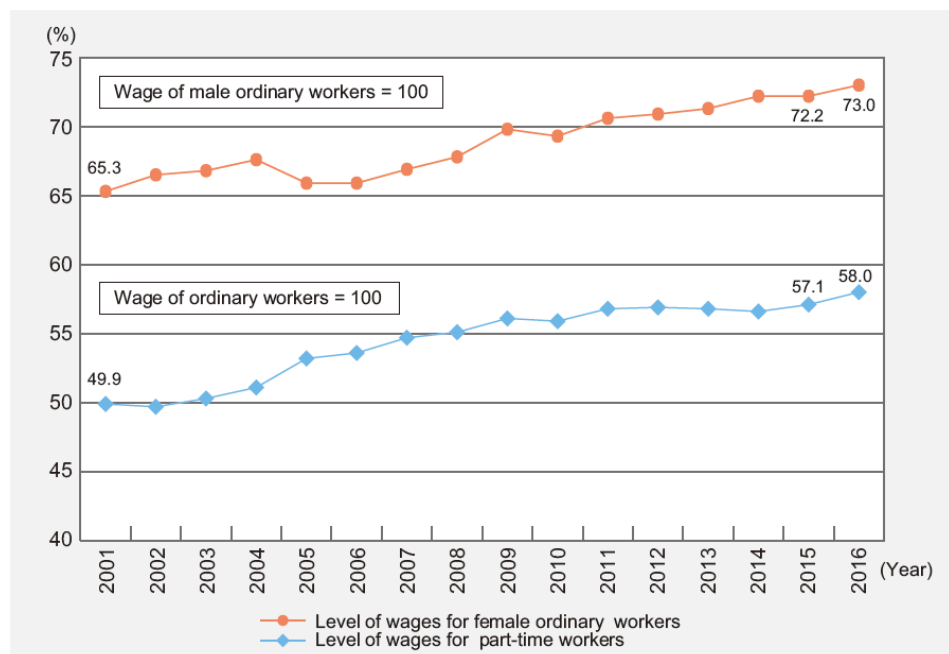


Figure 3-5. The Wage Gap in Japan
Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018 p.9

In private corporations, the proportion of female managers is 10.6% in 2011, and it remained at a similar level in 2018. Only 6.6% of the general managers are women, and 3.7% of the executives in listed companies are female. Among 193 surveyed countries, Japan takes the 157th place considering the proportion of women in parliament (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018; Goldman Sachs, 2014). As we can see in Figure 3-6. on an international level, this proportion is deficient. In Germany, the ratio of female managers was around 30%, in the UK 36% and in the United States 43% (Goldman Sachs, 2014).

Ratio of female managers (2011), % total

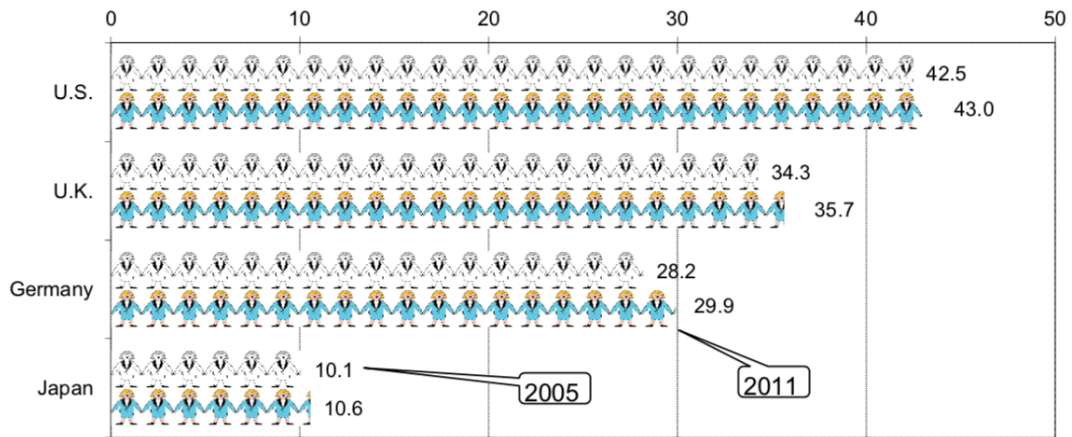
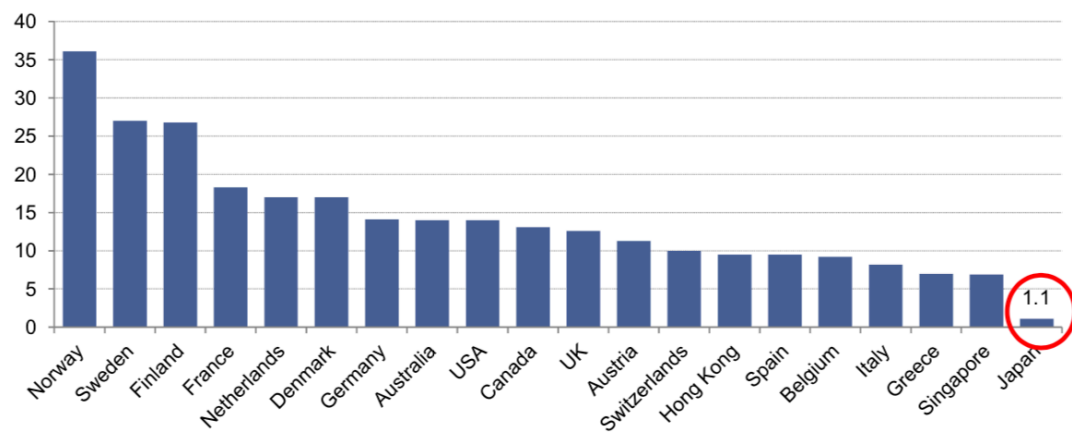


Figure 3-6. Percentage of Female Managers (2011)

Goldman Sachs, 2014, p. 13

The percentage of female board directors worldwide is low, except some Nordic or Scandinavian countries, but Japan with 1% is significantly behind all other developed countries as it can be seen at Figure 3-7. (Goldman Sachs, 2014).

% Female board directors



Note: As of March 1, 2013

Figure 3-7. Percentage of Female Board Directors

Goldman Sachs, 2014, p. 14

These women are often married to other elite men and get support from their parents, too. In the public sector in the top four levels of national bureaucracy, only 1% are women. The proportion of women are around 10% in the parliament and lower among lawyers, prosecutors, judges (Sugimoto, 2002). One of the initiatives of the Abe government is to increase the number of female managers in Japan. In listed companies, the proportion of female executives was 3.7% in 2017, the goal is to increase this figure to 10% by 2020 (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018). Such initiatives and quotas can naturally have undesirable side effects. Some women are promoted to functions, which are in name top management positions, but in reality are only symbolic. Often in the interest of career longevity, women are placed on a career track, which is more administrative or clerical in nature, or in departments like HR and PR, from where is often no way is leading to top management. Unfortunately, high potential women in such functions are not able to obtain the necessary skills or experience to take over an executive job later (Goldman Sachs, 2014).

According to Ng and Yik (2012), women's desire to be a manager in Japan is low. In their study, while 38% of men said they wanted to be a manager, only 18% of women had a similar career goal. 34% of women answered that they did not want to be a manager compared to 10% of men. 41% of female participants marked long working hours as one of the reasons while they were not motivated. Young women were less interested than older women, 37% of women under the age of 29 years said they did not want to be a manager compared to 29% of women between the age of 50-59 years.

Government tax and pension policies are not encouraging women to return as full-time employee either. When the wife's annual income reaches a certain amount, she loses the income tax exemption status and must pay social security, and at the same time, the husband is losing the dependent tax credit. This amount until 2017 was 1.03 million JPY (Sugimoto, 2002). The Abe government increased the amount to 1.5 million JPY in 2017, to increase the motivation of Japanese women to work more outside the home (Financial Times, 2016). Full-time housewives who do not pay social security, and pension premium receive 75% of their husband pension coverage, but once they pay social security they will be entitled only to a smaller amount of pension. Not just the government, but some companies also penalise wives who work full time, as their husbands can lose several benefits such as housing subsidy or dependent allowance. These policies define the home as women's places to be and expect women to take care of children and elderly (Sugimoto, 2002).

As many companies assume women will quit after having a child, they do not invest equally in the training of women. Some families knowing that the return on investment in their daughter's education is much lower than for sons, they may decide to spend less on it (Brinton, 1992). Ng and Yik (2012) found several barriers, which impede higher female labour participation in Japan. Japanese workplaces are reported to be very male-dominated, and young women are often asked to carry out secretarial or assistant-type tasks. Japanese women need much effort to build credibility. Outside work leisure activities are also oriented to men, so women often decide not to participate in such events. This way they lose a chance to integrate better into the community. Most of the women after getting married feel that they can no longer fulfil their professional and personal roles. The corporate culture is strong requiring long working hours what many women cannot handle any more. Most career track women, therefore, decide to quit the company before reaching management-level positions. The Japanese system works against the flexibility women would need to combine their roles in the workplace and home (Brinton, 1992). As discussed already in details earlier, in Japan childcare support is not adequate. In many other Asian countries like Hong Kong and Singapore affordable domestic help is available which is not the case in Japan. Many women postpone childbirth, and also an increasing number of women decide not to have children at all. Those who still opt for a family will most probably never return as a full-time employee.

The lack of female role models in senior management also eradicates the chance of motivation for other women. Some who became managers describe the experience as a lonely and challenging one. The participants of this study also reported discrimination. They feel less valued than male colleagues at work and believe that they are not getting the same opportunities especially if they have small children at home. In Japan similarly to other parts of the world women were introduced as additional labour and many believe that this is the case even nowadays (Sugimoto, 2002). Goldman Sachs (2014) estimates that closing the gender employment gap in Japan, the GDP increase could be nearly 13%. Japan should increase the number of child care facilities, extend the duration of parental leave policies, eliminate exemptions on spousal income regarding social security and tax, create more flexible work environments, etc to increase the female labour participation and women's career chances(IMF, 2012a).

A new, neoliberal environment in Japan puts more emphasis on performance and merit, rather than on seniority. Japanese women are taking advantages of this system and obtaining more qualifications than before. In their career, this change in mindset is also an advantage as this system is more likely to recognise the contribution women make at the workplace. However finding or establishing a fulfilling ca-

reer without sacrificing private life remains a challenge for most Japanese women (Aronsson, 2014).

3.4. Summary

The Japanese culture is unique. Knowing the most important values of the Japanese society and the most important customs and habits at work helps to understand the experiences non-Japanese women made when working in Japan. Although some researchers argue, that gender discrimination towards expatriates is not an issue in Japan (Adler, 1987), others believe, that women do experience certain disadvantages because of their gender (Taylor and Napier, 1996). One of the reasons behind this may be expatriate gender stereotyping. This theory suggests, that host nationals may project their expectations regarding behaviour and gender roles in their own countries on expatriate women (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998). Therefore in this chapter, I also reviewed the significant challenges Japanese women face when they want to build a career in Japan. Matsumoto (2002) believes that the Japanese culture and value system is changing to accommodate the worldview and the expectations of the new generation. This modern society is one, where employees value their free time, where work can be fun and not only mean stress and pressure. In this society working women also have an essential role, which allows them to combine their wishes to build a career and a family at the same time. Such society would pose fewer adjustment challenges to ambitious female expatriates, as their aspirations would most probably be considered less unusual.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPATRIATES WORKING IN JAPAN

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I review the academic literature about expatriates and non-Japanese in Japan. I start with the most relevant studies for my research, followed by articles, which also may have implications for my topic. I present Adler's (1987) widely cited study about North American expatriate women in Japan, which tries to debunk several myths regarding female expatriation. She introduces some key concepts such as the *gaijin syndrome*, arguing that expatriate women in Japan are not seen as women, but as foreigners. I continue the review with the research of Taylor and Napier (1996), which introduces experiences of both traditional expatriate (OEs) and self-initiated expatriate (SIEs) women. Peltokorpi's research from 2008 and 2007 includes both genders, but it has significant findings on the experience expatriates made working in Japan. The previous study highlights that the Japanese culture due to its difficulty most probably has an impact on the expatriate adjustment. It also suggests that the experience of original expatriates (OEs) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) in Japan is different. Traditional expatriates (OEs) showed higher satisfaction in the study than self-initiated expatriates (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010). Peltokorpi (2008) suggests, that language knowledge is a crucial adjustment factor; however, it does not have an impact on satisfaction (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010). The hypotheses of Caligiuri and Tung (1999), that high power distance countries (patriarchic) prefer men as managers and that in collectivist societies women are less like to achieve top positions were supported. They also posed a difficulty to female expatriates, according to the findings, but they had no impact on success. Westwood and Leung (1994) studied female expatriates in Hong Kong. In contrary to Adler's (1987) research, the participants of their study did report, that had challenges, when they were on an assignment in Hong Kong as female expatriates. In the last part of the chapter, I include theories and concepts about the challenges women may face as expatriates based on their gender.

4.2. Working in Japan as a non-Japanese Woman

Table 4-1. provides a summary of the most relevant literature regarding female expatriation to Japan.

Table 4-1. Literature Review - Female Expatriation in Japan

Source	Year	Research Questions/ Hypotheses	Theories and Key Topics (presented and de- veloped)	Relevance
Adler, N.J., <i>Pacific Basin Managers: A Gai- jin, Not a Woman</i>	1987	Q: Can North American firms successfully send female ex- patriate managers to Asia or must they limit international management positions to men? H1: Women do not want to be international managers H2: Companies refuse to send women overseas H3: Foreigners' prejudice against women renders them ineffective, even when inter- ested and sent.	Male breadwinner, traditional female roles Japanese culture - Confucianism Gendered career paths in Japan Being a woman is advantage: visibility, curiosity, social ca- pabilities Gaijin syndrome	High Female managers' working experi- ences in Japan
Adler, N.J. <i>Com- petitive Frontier: Women Man- agers in a Global Economy</i>	1994	Same as in 1987	Equity and complimen- tary approach	Same as in 1987
Taylor, S. And Napier, N.K. : <i>Working in Japan: Lessons from Women Expatri- ates</i>	1996	Q1: How well do foreign women professionals adjust to working and living in Japan? What factors (e.g., type of job, language ability, or age) affect a foreign woman's adjust- ment? Q2: How successful are for- eign women professionals in their work in Japan? Q3: Do foreign women pro- fessionals have any advan- tages in performing their jobs as compared to foreign male professionals? Q4: What can companies do to enhance the foreign women professionals' chances of success when working abroad?	Expatriate adjust- ment - language knowledge is key Expatriate adjust- ment - age is critical Being a woman is advantage: visibility, curiosity, social ad- justment capabilities Being a woman is neutral Working with Ja- panese women can be difficult	High Female managers' working experi- ences in Japan
Napier, N.K., and Taylor, S. : <i>Expe- riences of Women Professionals Abroad: Compari- son across Japan, China and Turkey</i>	2002	Q: Who are these women professionals and what chal- lenges and advantages they encountered working and living abroad?	Difficult to establish credibility (especially young women) Visibility and re- sponsibility are high	High Female managers' working experi- ences in Japan

Source	Year	Research Questions/ Hypotheses	Theories and Key Topics (presented and de- veloped)	Relevance
Peltokorpi, V.: <i>Cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Japan</i>	2008	<p>H1: Cultural distance has a negative impact on non-work- and work-related adjustment.</p> <p>H2: Female expatriates experience a lower degree of non-work-related adjustment than male expatriates.</p> <p>H3: Japanese language proficiency has a positive impact on non-work- and work-related adjustment.</p> <p>H4: OEs (Original Expatriate) experience a higher degree of work-related adjustment than SIEs (Self-Initiated Expatriates)</p> <p>H5: Expatriate personality traits of cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility have a positive impact on non-work and work-related adjustment.</p>	<p>Adjustment difficulty due to collectivism and verticality</p> <p>OEs and SIEs made different experiences</p> <p>Language is an important adjustment facilitator</p> <p>Cultural intelligence, empathy is a facilitator</p>	<p>High</p> <p>The research includes male and female expatriates, but it has important findings about the expatriate experience</p>
Froese, F.J. and Peltokorpi, V.: <i>Cultural distance and expatriate job satisfaction</i>	2010	<p>H1: National culture distance has a negative impact on expatriate job satisfaction.</p> <p>H2: Expatriates who work for foreign supervisors show higher job satisfaction than those who work for host-country national supervisors.</p> <p>H3: Expatriates who have greater proficiency in the host-country language show higher job satisfaction.</p> <p>H4: OEs experience higher job satisfaction than SIEs.</p> <p>H5: Expatriates who work for foreign companies show higher job satisfaction than those who work for host-country companies.</p>	<p>Culture distance has negative impact on the satisfaction</p> <p>Nationality of supervisor has impact on job satisfaction</p> <p>Type of expatriation has an impact on job satisfaction (OEs higher satisfaction)</p> <p>Language knowledge and origin of company has no impact on job satisfaction</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Includes male and female expatriates, but it has important findings about the expatriate experience</p>

Source	Year	Research Questions/ Hypotheses	Theories and Key Topics (presented and de- veloped)	Relevance
Caligiuri, P.M., and Tung, R.L. , <i>Comparing the Success of Male and Female Expatriates from a US-based Multinational Company</i>	1999	Q: How cultural values affect the acceptance of host na- tional women?	<p>High power distance countries (patri- archic) prefer men as managers</p> <p>In collectivist soci- eties women are less likely to achieve top positions</p> <p>=> difficulty for fe- male expatriates, no impact on success</p>	High
Peltokorpi, V.: <i>Intercultural communication patterns and tac- tics: Nordic expa- triatees in Japan</i>	2007	<p>Q1: How do differences in communication style, national culture, and language influ- ence intercultural communica- tion in Nordic subsidiaries?</p> <p>Q2: What tactics do expatri- ates use to increase the fre- quency, depth, and spread of intercultural communication?</p>	<p>Verticality has nega- tive impact on com- munication</p> <p>Collectivism has two-sided impact: positive in-group, negative across hi- erarchies</p> <p>Honne and Tatemae</p> <p>Tactics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - networking to facil- itate communica- tion - skip-level meetings - hire Japanese with higher English knowledge - send expats who know the language and the culture - deep involvement in daily business 	<p>Medium</p> <p>Includes both gen- ders, the research focus is on communi- cation</p>
Westwood, R.I. and Leung, S.M., <i>The female expa- triate manager experience: Cop- ing with gender and culture.</i>	1994	Q: Female manager experi- ences in Hong Kong	<p>Country difficulty</p> <p>Gaijin syndrome visibility, curiosity,</p> <p>Difficult to establish credibility (especially for young women)</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Includes female expatri- ates, but not in Japan</p>

4.2.1. Experiences of Female Expatriates in Japan

In this subchapter, I review studies, which were looking into the experiences of non-Japanese female expatriates to Japan. The most cited study researching expatriate female managers is Adler's (1987), being the pioneer of female expatriate research.

The purpose of her study was to find out if North American female managers can be successful in the Pacific Rim being the fastest growing business in the world. In general, there were very few female managers in North America, even less who got the chance to go abroad. As that time 70% of the North American businesses had operations abroad, Adler believed it was crucial to investigate if cultural barriers impede or not the success of expatriate women to a culturally very different continent as Asia. Knowing the patriarchal Japanese culture, it could be a logical decision to send only male expatriates not risking success, as male leaders are more accepted in such cultures. After the introduction, she presented the male breadwinner theory and summarised the important characteristics of the Japanese working culture originated in Confucianism. She highlighted that Japan is a role-based society where the traditional female roles play an important role. Women are mainly seen as homemakers who work until marriage or until they give birth to their first child. So commonly they were not seen as decision makers or people with authority which images or characteristics were associated with management roles. The number of female managers is low in Asia - 25% of the 52 women whom she interviewed had management experience in Japan, which might give the impression to North American sending companies that non-Asian women will have difficulties doing their job. Nearly one-third of them was below thirty years of age and two-third of them were single, and some of them were married to other expatriates. Her initial belief was that those women will be presented with a series of disadvantages due to gender-based discrimination, but more women found being a woman rather advantageous (42%) or neutral (22%) than negative (20%). They mentioned curiosity (being a foreigner) and visibility as advantages. The so-called *halo-effect* also worked to their advantage, being women their business partners easily remembered them.

Expatriate women in Japan believed that as a woman they could take advantage of their good interpersonal skills which are crucial to be able to build relationships in many Asian countries. They had difficulties with the sending companies, fellow Western colleagues and the host nationals not letting them to communicate with customers. They considered convincing their sending company that they were an eligible expatriate candidate was one of the most challenging part of their experience. One of the critical findings of Adler's study (1987) was that in Japan women reported as they were seen first as *gaijin* (foreigners) and not as women. Therefore the expectation towards them was not that they were supposed to behave as local women do. Adler's study was conducted three decades ago (1987) and since then several significant changes happened. In 1989 the Japanese "economic bubble" burst and the so-called "lost decade" from the 1990s brought economic, social and political challenges (Kingston, 2004). The Japanese economy in size has lost its second place after the US and was overtaken by China in 2010. Due to globalisation and advances in technology at the end of 20th century travelling to another country,

studying and living there became less of a privilege than it was before. Besides the traditional expatriates sent by their companies abroad, a new pattern emerged in expatriation with the so-called self-initiated expatriates (explained later in this chapter). Adler (1987) did not specify if the expatriates interviewed by her were original expatriates. The women she was interviewing were managers. As the numbers of self-initiated expatriates increased, foreign women nowadays are represented on several hierarchical levels in companies in Japan. Due to verticality, the importance of hierarchy in the Japanese society, the experience of managers and non-managers can also differ considerably (Peltokorpi, 2008). Adler's (1987) aim was to justify or debunk three myths about female expatriation experience in Asia. One of the countries she studied was Japan, but not the only one. In the Japanese context, one of her significant findings was, that expatriate women in Japan are not treated as women, but as a foreigner. Adler studied North-American women. Their experience due to their cultural background can differ from the experience of other women (e.g. European women). Although her study has limitations, for example, the size of the sample, Adler's study is essential as it initiated a discussion about the experience of female expatriates in Asian countries.

In 1992-1993 Taylor and Napier (1996) conducted research about female expatriates in Japan. The reason for their study was that the number of female managers in need of international experience in the US increased since the number of female managers increased. Also, the number of dual-career couples grew considerably. The researchers chose Japan as a country due to its importance in the world economy and the complexity of its culture. One of the key findings of their study was that only 5-10% of the women (members of an organisation in Tokyo called Foreign Executive Women) were so-called traditional or original expatriates. They introduced two other expatriation categories: independents and trailers. To the former category belong women who went to Japan on their own initiative and the latter are partners of original expatriate men. Women who went to Japan on their own initiative were highly qualified professionals with a broad skill set. Taylor and Napier (1996) studied how well foreign women adjusted to working and living in Japan and the factors which affected the adjustment such as the type of job, language ability and age. Regarding the type of job many reported that they got higher authority than in their local country, however on the negative side others experienced conflicts due to unclear tasks and duties below their level. Such duties included serving tea to customers or seeing them to tea when entertaining. Many women reported sexual harassment issues or sexual remarks which were considered offensive from colleagues. Japanese were talking openly about the physical attributes of waitresses and criticised the look of a translator.

Language ability and age emerged as critical factors for adjustment. Those women who had contact with external clients needed a higher level of Japanese language knowledge, but those high in the organisation were successful regardless of their Japanese language proficiency. The other important factor for adjustment was age. In Japanese working culture organisational hierarchy is important, young people usually hold lower level positions, while the ones in higher ranks are older. Another key question of the study was how successful foreign female professionals were in their work and if they have any advantages compared to male expatriates. Taylor and Napier's research similarly to Adler's (1987) reports about the advantages of being a woman, mentioning visibility and advantages due to interpersonal skills. Others felt being a woman was neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. Some of them talked about their difficulties working together with Japanese women. The expatriates were wondering if those Japanese women felt jealousy given the fact that the non-Japanese women were given opportunities that the Japanese women were not.

Taylor and Napier (1996) researched adjustment, and their findings are relevant for foreign women who were considering to undertake an assignment to Japan. They also offer valuable recommendations to firms who are sending female expatriates to Japan or even to other countries giving directions on topics like hiring, training, job support and repatriation. Disseminating their findings, they were able to illustrate some of the challenges foreign women face when working in Japan, but the character of the study did not allow them to elaborate further on specific topics or experiences. Just like Adler's (1987), their sample consists of one nation as they are only studying American women.

In 2002, Napier and Taylor published a new study and this time besides Japan they also included China and Turkey. They used once again mixed method research using surveys and interviews. All the twenty women they interviewed in Japan were Americans. One interesting characteristic of their sample was that despite women who participated in the research had various marital states, none of them had children. This research included two new countries but did not provide further insights compared to their previous study.

4.2.2. Experiences of Male and Female Expatriates in Japan

This subchapter includes studies on the topic of expatriate adjustment and satisfaction to Japan, including both male and female participants. Peltokorpi (2008) studied the cross-cultural adjustment of expatriates in Japan surveying 110 expatriates, both men and women. Similarly to Taylor and Napier (1996), he chose Japan due to its

complexity for expatriates. Compared to Adler (1987) and Taylor and Napier (1996), Peltokorpi (2008) looked deeper into the particularities of the “culturally, racially and linguistically homogeneous” Japanese culture, mentioning verticality and collectivism as difficulties considering expatriation. The term verticality is used to describe the long vertical chains of superior-subordinate relationships, but also strict behavioural norms and close reliance on superiors (Nakane, 1972 in Peltokorpi, 2008). Peltokorpi (2008) also explained why strict behavioural norms, gender, age and group cohesion were essential factors for adjustment. As Taylor and Napier (1996), he also differentiated between the various types of expatriation. He borrowed two terms from the expatriate literature and investigated the organisational expatriates (OEs), who are sent by their organisations to external posts and the self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), who decided to work in another country on their own. Peltokorpi (2008) tested several hypotheses to investigate if the experiences of these two groups are different. For my study, his hypothesis about work-adjustment is the most relevant, where he states that OEs experience a higher degree of adjustment than SIEs. He argues that OEs mainly communicate at work in English while SIEs have to learn Japanese. SIEs are also not supported by the company the same degree OEs are whose organisational status is usually higher, and they receive high monetary incentives from the company. His findings showed however that SIEs are better adjusted. He wonders if this is the case because SIEs spend a long time in Japan and they more often interact with locals. As they decided to move to Japan by themselves, their motivation to learn the language and the culture is most probably higher than of the OEs.

Cultural distance as a theory is presented in the study, describing the difference between the host country and the home country (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1984 in Peltokorpi, 2008). In culturally similar countries life and adjustment for foreigners are less demanding, while in countries where the cultural difference is more prominent, the adjustment is more difficult (Hofstede, 1980 in Peltokorpi, 2008). The first hypothesis of Peltokorpi (2008) therefore is that cultural distance has a negative impact on non-work and work-related adjustment. The research confirms this hypothesis, the author mentioning verticality or hierarchy as one of the possible difficulties in work adjustment.

Looking into the work-related experiences of female expatriates in Japan, Peltokorpi (2008) highlights a particularity of the Japanese working culture. A so-called *two-track employment system* supports the idea that women should take a child-rearing role, instead of having a career outside of the home. He cites former studies suggesting that female expatriate adjustment in masculine cultures is not problematic (Adler, 1987; Napier and Taylor, 1995; Caligiuri and Tung, 1999). Although women in these previous studies reported some inconveniences such as performing tasks be-

low their level, others mentioned advantages such as visibility and curiosity. Peltokorpi's (2008) work-related hypothesis is, that female expatriates experience a higher degree of adjustment at work than male expatriates was not confirmed.

His hypotheses that Japanese language knowledge and personal traits such as cultural empathy, open-mindedness and flexibility facilitate the adjustment was confirmed for both business and private life. Establishing his hypothesis about Japanese language proficiency he argues that Japanese people do not speak very well English which is indicated by the country's ranking regarding TOEFL English exam result (Peltokorpi, 2008). He mentions another crucial point elaborating on Hall's (1976 in Peltokorpi, 2008) *low-context* and *high-context* cultural specifications. Japan is a *high-context* culture where the communication is somewhat indirect, and they make a considerable distinction between insiders and outsiders. Cultural empathy means that a person can accept and respect cultural differences. Those who possess this trait were able to adjust better according to the research. Huff (2013) in his study researching language, cultural empathy and expatriate success had similar findings as Peltokorpi (2008). Interviewing English language teachers in Japan, Huff (2013) found that expatriates who did not have any Japanese language skills had a difficult time to adjust. His study also suggests that culture difference plays a crucial role in adjustment.

Peltokorpi (2008) studying cross-cultural adjustment in Japan established five different hypotheses based on the findings of previous researchers on the topic of expatriation and cultural adjustment. These five hypotheses were:

- H1. Cultural distance has a negative impact on non-work- and work-related adjustment.
- H2. Female expatriates experience a higher/lower degree of work-related adjustment than male expatriates.
- H3. Japanese language proficiency has a positive impact on non-work and work-related adjustment.
- H4. OEs experience a higher/lower degree of general living adjustment than SIEs.
- H5. Expatriate personality traits of cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility have a positive impact on non-work- and work-related adjustment.

While my study only deals with the realm of work, Peltokorpi (2008) was looking at both private and work-related adjustment problems. Due to the survey style of the research, he was able to establish correlations showing an association between variables about the stated hypotheses, but answering the questions why his results were positive or negative he could only rely on previous research or speculations due to the chosen methodology. As he explains the expatriates who are culturally

adjusted, can open to the host culture and add new behaviours, norms and rules to the set they acquired in their home cultures. Poorly adjusted expatriates on the other hand experience anxiety in extreme cases to the degree that they believe host nationals deliberately try to make their lives difficult. Expatriates who cannot adjust culturally usually also perform worse and are not satisfied in their jobs. While in previous studies about female expatriates in Japan the sample only included North American women (Adler, 1987; Napier and Taylor, 1996), Peltokorpi (2008) included 21 nationalities. Still, most of the participants were American (24%), followed by 16% of UK citizens and 15% of French citizens. Peltokorpi is not disclosing the other 18 nations, although he reports that the majority were Caucasians (76%), while other 18% were Asians and 6% Blacks. Another interesting aspect of the sample is that 37% of the people participating were language teachers in Japan.

In 2010, Froese and Peltokorpi studied expatriate job satisfaction in Japan conducting a hypothesis testing study based on the survey method. 148 expatriates participated in the research, with an average age of 34 years. They were in general highly educated, 36% of them were managers and had been working for more than four years in Japan. 68% of them were male, and 70% of them were not married. They were all together coming from 23 countries, one fifth from the US, 16% from Germany, 13% from the UK and 12,5% from France. 67% of them had local contracts and identified as SIEs.

National culture distance has a negative impact on expatriate job satisfaction according to the study. Expatriates who are coming from a more individualistic country can find the Japanese collectivistic culture challenging (Hofstede in Peltokorpi, 2010). It is also probable that Japanese people find it also difficult to accept the personality of some expatriates coming from such countries. To ease this difficulty, the researchers recommend companies to invest in cultural training. Pre-departure training for expatriates are also necessary, but local employees should also get cultural training to increase their acceptance of foreign nationals.

The nationality of the supervisor also had an impact on the job satisfaction. Expatriates working for foreign supervisors were more satisfied than the ones, who had Japanese supervisors. The researchers believe one of the reasons for this can be that locals did not provide as much guidance as foreigners in the new environment as foreigners. It is also possible that they were culturally ignorant and they did not understand the problems of the expatriate. Froese and Peltokorpi (2010) recommend organisations to assign a foreign manager as a mentor to expatriates to help them in their integration and increase their job satisfaction.

One of the other hypotheses which were tested stated that the type of expatriation influenced job satisfaction. OEs (Original Expatriates) showed higher job satisfaction

than SIEs. The reasons can be that OEs enjoy financial benefits which help them to have a more comfortable life in Japan. Similarly, they do not always have to rely on local support as they also get much from the headquarters. The researchers believe that companies should be more careful when contracting SIEs. They believe that SIEs may accept any job to stay in the country and leave if they find something better. They highlight though that they can be equally effective as OEs and require less compensation. I think the researchers should be more careful when formulating such recommendations. Even though they are less satisfied, it does not mean as the researchers also put that they are less productive.

The nationality of the company and language knowledge according to the results does not have an impact on job satisfaction. Most of the expatriates are contracted for specific jobs where local language knowledge may be less relevant. The study also indicates that cultural empathy also has an impact on job satisfaction. The researchers recommend screening expatriates using a Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire. This way they could measure emotional stability, open-mindedness, interest in foreign cultures and interaction with locals.

Organisations sending expatriates to Japan should consider the findings of the research of Froese and Peltokorpi (2010). Although the researchers offer various practical recommendations, companies may not be able or may not want to implement some of them. Finding an appropriate expatriate can be an overwhelming task for a company. The candidate has to be available at the same time the job posting is open. He or she has to be willing to relocate to another country which can be challenging for families and dual-career couples. Another question is what is the intention of the company sending an employee overseas. If it is only to make some overseas operation successful, it surely has to make all the effort possible to facilitate a smooth working environment to the employee where he or she can excel and do his or her job the best. However, if the expatriation experience also serves for the employee to be challenged, to learn how to cope in a different environment and different culture, the company may want to let the expatriate work himself or herself through the barriers, learn from these experiences and grow.

In a previous research Peltokorpi (2007) interviewed Nordic male expatriates in Japan in the context of intercultural communication. The study reveals key characteristics of the Japanese society which most probably affect all foreigners who are working there. He argues that although communication, culture and language are distinct entities, they often provide a partial explanation of each other. His findings include explanations about the two kinds of truths in Japan, the way how Japanese use *yes* and *no* and how some expatriate managers felt themselves excluded and got filtered information. One interviewee explained that Japanese people do not like sharing their ideas, because of the fear of losing face in case the idea is wrong.

Young, low-rank employees are not sharing their opinion openly, but they discuss those previously with their colleagues, they are hesitant to do anything which makes them stick out. If they are asked to formulate an opinion on any topic, those will mirror the opinion of senior people in the organisation.

Japanese people try to maintain the harmony, so they often give unclear answers. There are two kinds of truths, a generally accepted one and a personal one (*tatemae and honne*). Japanese are using the words *yes* and *no* in a different way. They do not say often *no*. The word difficult is often used, and by that, they often mean it is impossible. Although some expatriates experienced that Japanese verbally agreed to do certain tasks which they at the end did not do.

Staff and managerial meetings are used to announce a decision, and they have a top-down character. Expatriates who had a higher rank in Japan found it challenging to stimulate Japanese employees to give their opinion or ideas on a particular topic. They also complained that local Japanese staff often filtered the information which reached them. Due to the lack of language knowledge, one expatriate talked about two parallel organisational realities which did not overlap. On the one hand, it looked like the foreigner upper manager was making the decisions, but the reality was something else. To find out what Japanese managers think it can be useful to spend plenty of time with them, conduct private discussions, do some networking. For younger, lower-level members of the staff, skip-level meetings can be successful. If the organisation is a foreign subsidiary in Japan, it makes sense to concentrate on the level of English knowledge when recruiting local Japanese employees. Also, when sending expatriates to Japan, if possible it would make sense to send people who already have certain knowledge about the culture and the language. Nordic expatriates reported that some SIEs serve as a connection between expatriate managers and local Japanese people.

Peltokorpi's study (2007) about Nordic expatriates provides a uniquely valuable insight due to the character of the study. In comparison with other studies conducted by him (Peltokorpi, 2008; Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010), this time he used qualitative interviews. While the other studies testing various hypothesis proved or disproved certain theories, he had about expatriation to Japan, about the reasons behind these relations he did not gain further insight. In his study about Nordic expatriates, the interviewees offered several tactics how to improve communication between foreigners and Japanese. Peltokorpi (2007) interviewed 30 Nordic expatriates, who all had very high managerial ranks at Nordic subsidiaries in Japan. All of the interviewees were male. So due to the structure of its sample, the study is not providing insights into the possible experiences of expatriates in middle management or non-managerial rank. As all the interviewees were male, the study was not able to reveal possible issues in communication female expatriates have when working in Japan.

4.2.3. Female Expatriates in Hong Kong

Westwood and Leung (1994) researched the experience female expatriate managers made in Hong Kong. Several difficulties the participants encountered had to do with the country difficulty or the cultural toughness. Peltokorpi (2008) had similar findings in Japan almost 15 years later. Participants mentioned hard work, long working hours and high task commitment as challenges they encountered working in Hong Kong. Some interviewees highlighted that they believed people work hard, but not effectively. Most of the employees work until late, but they also come to work late, take long lunch breaks, cannot prioritise and distinguish between urgent and non-urgent issues.

Another topic was communication issues, as only a few expatriates were able to speak the local language. They also mentioned social position, authority, the pressure to maintain harmonious relations and conflict avoidance as challenges for expatriates. The foreign women working in Hong Kong missed open communication and were surprised by the character of meetings which were only convened to distribute information. The participants felt, that to be successful in their new environment if they had to tone down their usual style, otherwise, they would have been too direct and confrontational. To fit in, they tried to be more diplomatic and restrained, maintain more harmony.

Discrimination at work was not a significant issue; women did not feel discriminated at the workplace because of their sex; however, they perceived the society as discriminating against women in social settings. In Hong Kong in the society due to its patriarchal character women always had a lower status than men. Most of the women did not experience any difficulties because of their gender. They believed if they performed at a high level, locals saw them as professionals than women. These findings are very similar to Adler's (1987), who calls this the *gaijin* (*foreigner*) *syndrome*. They highlighted however that being a woman, they always had to work harder and outperform men to prove their presence is justifiable. The young women who had gender-related difficulties mentioned they were often not taken seriously; they had difficulties to establish credibility. Others believed the glass ceiling was still a challenge for many women as men occupied most of the positions in senior management.

The interviewees mentioned curiosity and visibility as advantages, men were also not behaving with the expatriate women in a competitive way. This behaviour, on the

other hand, indicates again that most probably they were not taken seriously or men did not believe they had to.

The study also suggests that women positively benefitted from some feminine characteristics such as relationship orientation and attention to details.

Although Westwood and Leung (1994) researched expatriate women in Hong Kong, their findings are very similar to the findings of researches studying the experiences of foreign expatriates in Japan (Taylor and Napier, 1996; Peltokorpi, 2008).

4.3. Gender-related Challenges for Female Expatriates

4.3.1. Expatriate Glass Ceiling

Having expatriate experience abroad is a criterion at most multinational companies (MNCs) for employees, who would like to be promoted to upper management. According to Insch et al. (2008), the phenomenon *expatriate glass ceiling* prevents women from receiving foreign management assignments abroad. Similar problem as glass ceiling exists regarding expatriation according to Insch et al. (2008). On the one hand, as women were not promoted to positions on the upper management level, there was no necessity to send them to international assignments. On the other hand, at most of the organisations, the international assignments are masculinised, and they are considered as inappropriate for women (Fischlmayr, 2002). There is also a common misconception that women are not interested in international careers (Linehan, 2002). Female candidates are often only considered for assignments when all possible male candidates have turned down the position.

Women face several barriers on the way to the top, like “obligation to balance home life and career, isolation and loneliness, constantly being aware of being a woman in a men’s world, having to prove themselves to others, and having to work harder and be better than their male counterparts, the lack of mentoring and networking relationships, various types of discrimination or harassment (sexual, class, ethnic, against foreigners), less corporate activities available for women (fast track programmes, individual career counselling, and career planning workshops)”. At MNCs, as men dominate top-level positions, the number of female mentors is also deficient (Insch et al., 2008).

4.3.2. Dual Roles, Spillover Theory

Most of the traditional expatriates (OEs) are men, and they are single, or they are accompanied by their family. Although the number of dual-career couples is increasing, most commonly, the wives of the expatriate men are stay-at-home wives. They usually take care of the challenges of the daily life in the new setting, including the support of their children. Not only in the expatriate setting, but also in general, married men with stay-at-home wives have the highest career satisfaction. (Schneer and Reitman, 2002 in Insch et al., 2008). When living abroad, the wives besides taking care of the household responsibilities and childrearing, they also provide counsel and work assistance to their husbands. Executive women do not benefit as much as men from spousal support (Insch et al., 2008). It is common that a wife or a female partner accompanies an expatriate, but it is less typical, that a trailing spouse is a man. Men are often not ready to give up or pause their own career, and in some countries, work-permits are difficult to get for the accompanying partner (Linehan, 2002). Therefore often such families choose to live separately for the time of the assignment (Hutchings et al., 2008). Linehan (2002) interviewed 51 female managers who were on international assignments to five Western European countries from all over the world. Almost all of the participants (92%) believed that the success of their assignment was directly linked to the happiness of their spouses. Two-third of the participants believed, one of the biggest reasons why women are not going on international assignments had to see with the issue of the male trailing spouse.

According to *spillover theory*, “there is a reciprocal relationship between the affective responses in one's work life and in one's family life. We talk about a spillover when employees carry their positive or negative emotions and attitudes from their work life into their family life and vice versa” (Caligiuri and Cascio, 2008). Expatriates working abroad often have higher responsibilities and especially original expatriates (OEs) work at a higher organisational level than before the assignment. Due to these higher responsibilities, the new environment and the possible cultural differences, international jobs are usually very challenging (Mäkelä et al., 2011). Most of the research done in the area is related to the effect of work having on family life or private life; however, the theory suggests that the family life also has an impact on work-life (Caligiuri and Cascio, 2008). Expatriates, who have children face additional difficulties when going abroad. It is a common misconception that women are not interested in international assignments. Based on research done in this area, this conception seems to be false, except when the women, who are offered the position have children (Hutchings et al., 2008). When children are involved, the two major problem areas are education and social networks. In some countries, the expatriates can find schools, which follow the education system of their own country. When this is not available, children can join an international school or a local school, where the language of education is often a foreign language for the students. Also, once a child is

out of the national education system of his or her country for some years, rejoining it later may be extremely challenging or almost impossible. In most families, where the man is an expatriate, and the wife is not working, she is fulfilling the role of a supporter of the child or children. However, when the expatriate is a woman, regardless if her husband is working or not, she still has to take care of this support (Caligiuri and Cascio, 2008; Linehan, 2002).

On the other hand, Richardson and McKenna (2003) studying self-initiated British expatriates abroad found, that most of the families described the expatriate experience as very rewarding for their children. They admitted that having children, they would not accept assignments to certain countries, where the health care system is not so developed, or safety can be an issue. Families, who had been living there without children could not imagine having a child or having a child around, because of the challenges and responsibilities that implicates. The assumption that having children is a barrier to taking an overseas appointment may not be correct. Another important issue when going abroad besides immediate family according to expatriates is that in the new country they do not have support from their extended family, such as parents and friends (Richardson and McKenna, 2003).

Because of the lack of role models and support from the organisations, women might believe that it is impossible to balance work and family roles if one would like to go on an international assignment (Hutchings et al., 2008). Due to the reported increase in responsibilities and the extremely long working hours, this assumption may not be wrong (Mäkelä et al., 2011). Women may also recognise, that they have the higher chance to build a managerial career when they remain childless. This recognition might be one of the reasons, why in all studies about female expatriates, the majority of the women, who participated were childless (Adler, 1987; Taylor and Napier, 1996; Westwood and Leung, 1994).

The expatriate literature mainly includes studies about single expatriates or expatriates with a trailing spouse. Some research has also been done on dual-career couples (DCCs). However, as Fischlmayr and Puchmüller (2016) highlights, modern family models are much more complicated. There are also expatriate families, where both parents have careers, so-called dual career families (DCFs), female breadwinner career families, single parent career families, stepfamilies and same-sex families with career and children.

Linehan and Scullion (2004) suggest, that when considering expatriation, most of the companies still have the assumption that an expatriate is a man from a traditional family. He is working as a sole *breadwinner* and has a *homemaker wife* who also raises the children. Most of the female expatriate managers, who are in a relationship, have partners with professional careers while this is not always the case with

male expatriate managers. Dual career couples are a challenge for organisations as it is often difficult to provide opportunities to the partner of the expatriate. Therefore women who have a husband with a career may avoid expatriation even if there are some opportunities for her. Unfortunately, in most of the cases, this has an adverse impact on the career of these women. Women who are at the same time expatriate managers and mothers can experience frustration because of role conflict. They usually feel that they are not good mothers as they cannot spend enough time with their family. Although it is evident that the existing career models pose plenty of challenges for women, there are only a few companies who developed career models for women. If a female manager wants to reach a senior position, she often has to choose between career and family which is seldom the case for men (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). According to the *family power theory* (Harvey, 1998 in Shortland, 2011) the career of the family member with the most power, usually in a financial sense, enjoys a priority and the other party is expected to make sacrifices. In the case of dual career couples, the career of the man is in most of the times the one, which is given priority (Linehan and Scullion, 2004).

4.3.3. Gender-based Behaviour

Due to their upbringing and societal expectations, women are often decreasing their value, when talking about their own success. Women tend to hide their opinion; they are worried that they are seen as too emotional. If something goes wrong, women tend to blame themselves first. Contrary to this, men usually highlight their achievements; they are proud of their status, they come across as strong and powerful (Fischlmayr, 2002). Besides the stereotypical views personnel managers and supervisors may have about women and the belief that women may face prejudices abroad, women are themselves responsible for the lack of their own success in career advancement. Women tend to underestimate their capabilities and often demonstrate little self-confidence. Due to their socialisation, they are less attracted to power than men. As in organisations women are usually less valued than men, they are often not able to get essential tasks and are not being promoted. Women also have less access to networks, which could help them to climb the career ladder or get international assignments. In the survey Fischlmayr (2002) conducted in Austria, a female expatriate manager said, that although she knows, that male colleagues often go out with senior managers to talk about professional topics and their career, she as a woman feels this too embarrassing, given the fact that she is a woman. She is also worried that such an invitation could be misunderstood. The participants highlighted though, that the situation becomes better with age, as older women did not have similar fears anymore. One of the surprising findings of this

study was that the participants in the study were well aware of their own behaviour. They are consciously trying to change this, and the opinion of those around them, but they recognise, that certain habits, which are very embedded in the culture are difficult to be changed by one generation.

4.3.4. Gender-based Discrimination

When talking about acceptance in the new country of expatriation, one of the most important factors to consider is culture-related. Especially gender-related stereotypes have to be mentioned here. In different cultures worldwide, the role of women is seen differently. Culture-related factors affect the acceptance of both host- and home-country women. There are some stereotypes, which often derive from the host nation's ideas on the role of the woman as wife and mother (Hutchings et al., 2008). Women are often victims of *foreigners' prejudice*. As men in certain cultures believe, that women are ineffective managers, they project this view on foreign women, too. As personnel managers are often aware of this, they may decide to stop women from getting assignments to certain countries, for example to Japan and Korea (Hutchings et al., 2008). However, according to Adler's findings (1987), foreign women in these countries are not seen and handled as local women.

There is another culture-related challenge, women may encounter, especially if they have a family. In a country, where the homemaker role of the women is more emphasised, women, who are not living their lives according to this role may be judged by the society (Fischlmayr and Puchmüller, 2016).

Besides possible discrimination from the host country national, there are other types of discrimination expatriate women can face, when working abroad. In the study of Linehan (2002), conducted with 51 female expatriates on assignments to Western Europe found several indications for gender-based discrimination. The participants for example highlighted, they were aware of the fact, that their salaries were lower than the salaries of their male counterparts. The majority of the participants said, that their gender was an obstacle, especially at the beginning of their careers. They believed, they had to work harder than men to demonstrate, they were in their positions for a reason and that a woman can only make it to the top if she is very, very good, better than men.

4.4. Summary

In the first part of this chapter, I included the most relevant academic literature about the experiences non-Japanese made in Japan. I started the chapter by presenting Adler's (1987)'s study, according to which, foreign women are not seen as women in Japan but as foreigners. Then I summarised the findings and shortcomings of the research of Taylor and Napier (1996), who highlighted, that Japanese culture has a significant impact on the adjustment of non-Japanese women in Japan. Peltokorpi (2008) confirms the findings of Taylor and Napier regarding the importance of culture on the adjustment of expatriates. His study suggested that original expatriates and traditional expatriates make different experiences in Japan. Other concepts as the importance of age and the language and culture (Taylor and Napier, 1996; Caligiuri and Tung, 1999) were also included in this chapter.

The second part of Chapter Four included concepts about the difficulties foreign women may encounter when they are working abroad. I introduced the concept called *expatriate glass ceiling*, which argues that women are not sent on assignments abroad, either due to the fear that they would fail or because of their other obligations inside the family. I also explained the challenges dual-career couples face and what impact the private life can have on work-life and vice versa. This explanation was followed by a review of female behaviour and its impact on career. I closed the chapter with a summary about how-gender based discrimination can be present in an intercultural setting.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

5.1. Introduction

After summarising the academic literature in the previous chapters, in this chapter, I present the conceptual framework, which encapsulates the most important theories related to the topic “non-Japanese women working in Japan”. The framework includes four different boxes. Each box encapsulates a different perspective, including the theories, which are connected to these perspectives as described in the next subchapter.

5.2. The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework as presented in Figure 5-1. is built up from three different boxes. All boxes contain various ideas and theories relevant to the research topic. The plus sign (+) is assigned to those, which support either the adjustment or the satisfaction of the expatriates, or both. The minus sign (-) indicates difficulty considering the adjustment or the satisfaction of the expatriates, or both. One box describes the most critical issues identified in the literature related to the *Japanese working culture* from the perspective of expatriation, regardless of gender. Another box on the top shows the ideas and theories linked to the subtopic *Expatriate adjustment and satisfaction*. The middle box called *Women* summarises the most relevant contemporary challenges of women, bearing in mind their career chances. This box overlaps the two others visualising that there are some advantages and challenges considering expatriate adjustment and satisfaction, which are only applicable to women. The same way, some issues are looking into the Japanese business culture, which are only related to women.

5.2.1. The Japanese Working Culture

Peltokorpi (2008) suggests that the Japanese culture has a significant impact on the adjustment of expatriates in Japan, especially *verticality and collectivism*. In the Japanese business culture superior-subordinate relationships are crucial (verticality), in the workplace the Japanese has to follow strict behavioural norms.

Non-Japanese women working in Japanese organisations

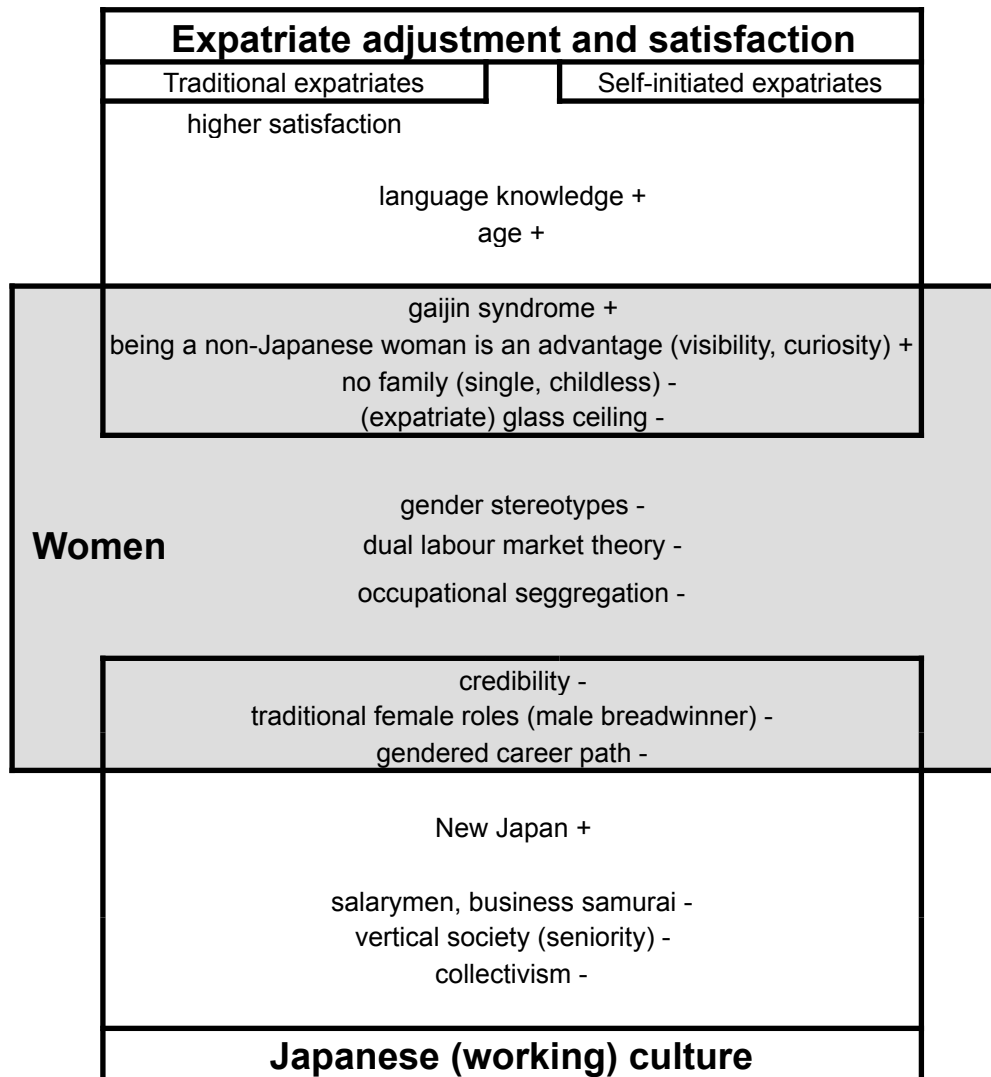


Figure 5-1. The Conceptual Framework: Non-Japanese Women Working in Japanese Organisations

In Japan, the decisions are made collectively, and the responsibility lays in the group. Individual ambitions are not appreciated, the most important is group harmony. If a person stands out of the group, he or she will be criticised (collectivism) (Hidasi, 2002). The status is not measured by performance, but by the length of membership in the group (Sugimoto, 2002). Foreigners not knowing or not respecting these rules may have difficulties in Japan. Peltokorpi also introduces *the cultural distance theory* in his research (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1984 in Peltokorpi, 2008). The adjustment for foreigners is supposed to be less demanding in culturally similar countries and more difficult in countries, where the cultural difference is more prominent. As the Japanese culture is very different from most of the Western cultures (Hofstede, 1980 in Peltokorpi, 2008), expatriates from the West suppose to have difficulties with the adjustment. This theory is also supported by the research of Froese and Peltokorpi (2010).

The career of the Japanese salarymen starts with recruitment. Japanese university students are usually not applying to specific positions based on their majors, but they are selecting the companies, where they would like to work. Their remuneration follows a straightforward pattern; their salaries are increased year by year. As in Japan salaries are defined based on the length of service, most of the employees have no motivation to change the workplace during their career (Sugimoto, 2002). The Japanese salarymen are famous for their devotion to their companies and their endless working hours. Overtime is an essential part of the Japanese working life, which is sometimes paid and sometimes it is not (*service zangyō*). Japanese employees are entitled to up to 20 days of holidays a year; however most of them are only taking the half of it, while some of them are not taking any (Kingston, 2011; Sugimoto, 2002).

The term *New Japan*, introduced by Matsumoto (2002), describes the ongoing changes in the Japanese society, including the shifts in the Japanese value system. It talks about a new generation, whose members are more individualistic. They value their free time, want a good work-life balance and a performance-based salary system.

5.2.2. Expatriate Adjustment and Satisfaction

Studies by Peltokorpi (2008) suggest that original expatriates and self-initiated expatriates make different experiences when working in Japan and, that original expatriates are more satisfied while working in Japan. Adler (1987) did not describe her sample considering the way of expatriation. Taylor and Napier (1996) some years

later noticed, that the ways of expatriation of the foreign women working in Japan is or became more diverse. While Adler (1987) focused on traditional expatriates (OEs), Taylor and Napier (1996) highlighted that most of the North American female expatriates were not belonging to that category in their sample. There were various dual-career couples and also self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). Peltokorpi (2008) setting up his hypotheses makes a clear division between the two groups, original expatriates (OEs) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and assumes that foreigners belonging to the one group or another make different experiences in Japan. While SIEs have to learn the language in most cases if they want to find a job in Japan, OEs can communicate in English. SIEs most of the times know the Japanese culture and its rules; usually, they also stay longer in the country, they interact with the locals more frequently, so this may be the reason why they seem better adjusted in Japan as OEs. On the other hand, OEs receive plenty of support from the sending company and the receiving company, for example, high monetary incentives, training and so on. In the study of Froese and Peltokorpi (2010) OEs showed higher job satisfaction than SIEs. The reasons according to the researchers could be, that OEs enjoy financial benefits which help them to have a more comfortable life in Japan.

Taylor and Napier (1996) and Peltokorpi (2008) suggest that knowing the Japanese language and the culture has a positive impact on expatriate adjustment and satisfaction in Japan. Due to seniority, higher age is also considered as positive. While young women found it difficult to gain credibility, older women encountered fewer problems (Taylor and Napier, 1996; Caligiuri and Tung, 1999). Westwood and Leung (1994) studying expatriate women, who had been working in Hong Kong had similar findings of age and its impact on credibility.

5.2.3. Women

One of the most interesting findings of Adler (1987) was that in contrary to her initial believes, most of the women did not report disadvantages due to their gender, but they believed their gender either did not play a role or in some instances it was even an advantage. Adler (1987) described this phenomenon as the *gaijin (foreigner) syndrome*. If the *gaijin syndrome* theory applies, it would mean, that expatriate non-Japanese women were not victims of *expatriate gender stereotyping*. Regardless of how Japanese women are seen and what the society expects from them, the Japanese would not project this view on foreign women (Hutchings et al., 2008). Non-Japanese female expatriates mentioned some advantages they experienced while working in Japan, such as visibility and curiosity. Given the fact, that there are not so many foreign career women in Japan, their customers could better remember them

(Adler, 1987; Taylor and Napier, 1996). In 2008, Peltokorpi hypothesised, that female expatriates experience a higher degree of adjustment in work than male expatriates based on the findings of Adler (1987) and Caligiuri and Tung (1999). However, this hypothesis was not supported by the study.

Studies about the family situation of the expatriates suggest that for women it is more challenging to create a balance and combine family and career. Only about 27% of the traditional male expatriates are single in contrary to 89% of the traditional expatriate women (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010). The majority of the participants in Adler's study (1987) were single and childless, as combining their roles as an expatriate manager and a mother seemed to be very difficult or even impossible. Napier and Taylor (2002) interviewed twenty women about their expatriate experiences in Japan, China and Turkey. In their sample, all the women happened to be childless, too. In Tzeng's (2006) study about gender issues and family concerns of traditional female expatriates in Taiwan, 76% of the 21 participants were childless.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the most prevailing family model was the *male breadwinner model*. The household consisted of a working and income providing man and a wife, who took care of the household. The productive work was done by men, while women were responsible for the unpaid housework (Hanappi-Egger, 2014). In Japan, this model is still widely present, especially in the families with children. Women after finishing their studies start to work, but they often give up their jobs to focus on childrearing. Later, when the children are older, women return to work, usually on a part-time basis. In the companies, there is a *two-track employment system* (Peltokorpi, 2008), which considers the lifestyle mentioned above and the preferences of women. The two-track employment system creates for women a *gendered career path*. Their advancement opportunities become limited. Some companies are not investing in the training of female employees, given the assumption, that they will not stay in their position for a long time. This behaviour leads to discrimination, as not all women have the same preferences. With the rise of a new generation, the number of Japanese women, who are interested in a career is increasing, and they demand equal opportunities in the workplace and better work-life balance. For Japanese women, it is difficult to return to work, after the birth of their first child. Therefore the majority of them decides to give up their job. However, the latest statistics show, that the proportion of women keeping their job and taking childcare leave increased by 10% in the last ten years (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018). It is not clear though if these women decided to keep working for the sake of their career or due to economic pressure.

Glass ceiling describes the phenomenon when women are not able to get high-level leadership positions (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Worldwide, women are representing

almost the half of the workforce. In the United States, the ratio of female managers was 43% in 2014. The same figure was 36% in the United Kingdom and 30% in Germany (Goldman Sachs, 2014). Considering the top thirty listed companies in each country, the percentage of women in boards are in around 25% in the United States, 20% in the United Kingdom and 12% in Germany (Deutsche Welle, 2018). The proportion of female CEOs is even lower. Only 3% of the CEOs of the biggest 500 companies worldwide are women. In Germany, none of the 200 biggest listed companies is led by women (Manager Magazin, 2018). In Britain, there are seven female CEOs on the head of the FTSE 100 listed companies. In the United States, 24 of the Fortune 500 companies' CEO position is occupied by women (New York Times, 2018). In Japan, in private corporations, the proportion of female managers is 10.6% in 2011, and it remained at a similar level in 2018. Only 6.6% of the general managers are women, and 3.7% of the executives in listed companies are female. None of the CEOs of the top NIKKEI (Tokyo Stock Exchange stock market index) companies is female (Goldman Sachs, 2014; Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018).

Expatriate glass ceiling means that women face barriers to receive international management assignments abroad. To be promoted to upper management positions, in most of the multinational companies, assignment to a foreign country is the primary criterion (Insch et al. (2008). There are several reasons behind, why women are not sent abroad. First, there is an assumption, that they are not interested. According to Adler's (1987) study, women were as interested as men to go overseas. However, once women have children, combining work and family abroad, may be indeed a challenge.

5.3. Summary

In this chapter I presented the conceptual framework, highlighting the most important concepts and theories in the literature relating to this study. I shortly explained, how the framework is built up, and I summarised, what the concepts in my model mean and why they are essential to this research. Chapter Eight includes the revised conceptual framework, which will demonstrate, which concepts were confirmed and which not and the new insights I got after I analysed the collected data.

CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY

6.1. Introduction

In Chapter One, I presented the three research questions of the thesis:

Q1. What are the experiences of non-Japanese women who work in Japan?

Q2. What are the difficulties non-Japanese women face when working in Japan?

Q3. Which factors can help non-Japanese women to be successful in their job in Japan?

These research questions were guiding me during the study and delimit the most important choices I took, selecting the methodology, defining the population and the sample, deciding what data to collect and how (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012). The existing academic literature presented in Chapters Two, Three and Four were undertaken more than 20-30 years ago (Adler, 1987; Taylor and Napier, 1996) or they had another focus (Peltokorpi, 2008; Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010). Therefore to answer the research questions, I conducted exploratory research to find out, what is happening in the area.

Chapter Six is organised into ten sections. After the introduction, I explain the philosophical assumptions of the research, the ontological and epistemological positions, the axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions I took. In section three I justify why I chose phenomenology as the methodology of my research over other possible ones I considered. In the fourth section, I present, how sampling in this thesis was done. The next section explains, how the empirical data was collected via phenomenological interviews. This part is followed by the presentation of the process of data analysis. Section seven explains, how the collected data was written up, followed by a section about the criteria of qualitative data. Section nine deals with research ethics and the tenth section summarises the content of Chapter Six.

6.2. The Philosophy of the Research

Research philosophy as a term relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of knowledge. When a researcher decides to carry out a study, he or she generates knowledge in a particular field. The philosophy of research includes assumptions about the worldview of the researcher. The two most important ways to think about research philosophy is ontology and epistemology (Saunders et al, 2009).

The ontological position this research takes is subjectivist. Ontology is the study of reality, being and existence (Bryman, 2012). It has two aspects: objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism states that reality exists apart from consciousness. When human beings recognise it, they are discovering a meaning (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012; Crotty, 1998). Subjectivism rejects this view and states that there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it. Meaning is constructed and not discovered; even concerning the same phenomenon, people may construct different meanings (Crotty, 1998). The creation of meanings is a continual process, and social phenomena are constantly revised by the process of social interaction. This means, that different individuals perceive different situations in varying ways depending on their own worldview.

From the ontological point of view given my research questions, I believe that the reality is subjective and there are multiple realities. Describing these multiple realities, I use quotes from the interview participants trying to present different perspectives. My study will only be able to capture one part of the experience of non-Japanese women working in Japan. When I synthesise my findings, that will only represent ideas at a particular time and space from my individual point.

This research takes a constructionist - interpretivist epistemological stance. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, a way of understanding 'how we know what we know' (Crotty, 1998; Wilson, 2014). It also tries to answer the question of what is regarded as appropriate knowledge or if the social world can be studied according to the same principles as natural sciences (Bryman, 2012; Wilson, 2014). As researchers, we bring several assumptions, and we have to state what our assumptions are. Our view of the human world will be our theoretical perspective. Table 6-1. summarises the most important implications of two different epistemological stances I present in this chapter. Positivism is a research paradigm adopted from natural sciences. According to positivism, there is a reality, which is independent of us and doing empirical research theories can be discovered (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The observer is independent of the observed, and the research is free of values. Positiv-

ists aim to identify casual explanations and fundamental laws hypothesising fundamental laws and define concepts, which enable quantitative measurements. Positivists reduce problems to the simplest elements to understand them better. They generalise from the specific and select their samples accordingly. They use cross-sectional analysis comparing variations across samples enabling them to identify regularities (Easterby-Smith, 2012). Positivist studies are and written up in the style of scientific reports, mainly carried out with quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2007). Constructionism criticises positivism stating that people cannot be separated from the social context in which they exist. Researchers are not objective, but part what they observe. Reality is not determined by objective external factors, but by people. Constructionism focuses on the individual and collective feeling and ideas of people. (Easterby-Smith, 2012). The research is relying on the views of the participants. The background of the researchers influences their interpretation, and the researchers acknowledge this. The interpretations they make are influenced by their own experiences (Creswell, 2007).

	Positivism	Social constructionism
The observer	must be independent	is part of what is observed
Human interests	should be irrelevant	main drivers
Explanations	demonstrate causality	increase general understanding
Research progresses through	hypotheses and deductions	rich data gathering, idea inductions
Concepts	need to be defined to can be measured	incorporate stakeholder perspectives
Units of analysis	reduced to simple terms	include the complexity of whole situations
Generalisation through	statistical probability	theoretical abstraction
Sampling requires	large numbers selected randomly	small numbers chosen for specific reasons

Table 6-1. Implications of Positivism and Social Constructionism
Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012. p. 24

This research tries to understand what experiences the non-Japanese women made who have or had been working in Japan and this way increase general understanding. It is relying on the personal experiences of the non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japan.

When we talk about philosophical assumptions, we also have to mention axiology. Axiology is a part of philosophy, which studies judgements about value. Values play a role in the whole research process, for example at the selection on the topic, at the choice of the philosophical approach and also at the data analysis. When a researcher selects a topic, it means he or she thinks this topic is more important than another. By deciding, that I do interviews rather than questionnaires, it means, that I value the personal interaction with the respondents over an anonymous survey. The conclusions I draw in this research due to my value system may also be different, than the ones, which another researcher would draw (Saunders et al., 2009). Reflexivity is a way to improve the credibility of the research. It is a process of self-awareness by looking at how the researcher and the research process shaped the collected data (Wilson, 2014).

Research methodology is our action plan, a design justifying our choices of methods (Crotty, 1998). I chose phenomenology as the methodology of my research. Research methods are the concrete techniques and procedures we use. The method used in this study is phenomenological interview. We can classify research based on its methods as quantitative and qualitative. The used research method will be phenomenological interview. This research is qualitative as it emphasises the qualities of the entities, it is not experimentally examined or measured concerning quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Wilson, 2014).

Table 6-2. summarises the practical implications of the philosophical assumptions, which were described above. Because of its subjectivist ontological stance, the different perspectives of the participants will be presented by using quotes from the participants. Given its constructionist - interpretivist epistemological stand, the researcher is not seeing the participants as research objects, but rather as participants. From the axiological point of view, this is value-laden research. Values are openly discussed, to improve credibility, reflexivity is practised. This research from a rhetorical perspective is informal, uses first-person singular sentences. The logic of the study is inductive; it is moving from the particular to the general.

To make sure, that I can carry out the research, I also had to look at practical considerations. I made sure I have the necessary writing skills, text-analysis skills, library skills to carry out the planned qualitative research.

Assumption	Question	Characteristics	Implications for Practice (Examples)
Ontological (subjectivism)	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is subjective and multiple	Researcher uses quotes and themes in words of participants and provides evidence of different perspectives
Epistemological (constructionist - interpretivist)	What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?	Researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself and that being researched	Researcher collaborates, spends time on the field, becomes an insider
Axiological (value-laden)	What is the role of values?	Researcher acknowledges that research is value laden and that bias is present	Researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes his own interpretation.
Rhetorical (informal, personal style)	What is the language of research?	Researcher writes in a literary, informal style using personal voice	Researcher uses an engaging style of narrative, may use first person pronoun and employs the language of qualitative research
Methodological (inductive logic)	What is the process of research?	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses an emerging design	Researcher works with particulars (details) before generalizations, describes in detail the context of the study and continually revises questions from experiences in the field

Table 6-2. Philosophical Assumptions in Qualitative Research With Implications For Practice
Creswell, 2007 p.17

Based on the outcome of the research it is basic research, it will contribute to general knowledge and theoretical understanding and not try to solve a specific problem. However, based on the character of the study, it can be used to gain insight into the problem of foreign professional women expatriates in Japan. The logic of the study is inductive; it is moving from the particular to the general, the theory is developed from the “observation of the empirical reality” (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

6.3. Phenomenology

Based on the research questions and the character of the research, the epistemological stance this study takes is constructivist or interpretive. There are two methodologies, which I considered carrying out the research: ethnography and phenomenology. The difference between ethnography and phenomenology is that while the former mainly focuses on the collective experience of the community, the latter is more concerned about the individual ones, trying to understand the lived experiences of those individuals.

As ethnography emerged from cultural anthropology, it studies the social settings and documents the culture of the people in the setting (Crotty, 1998). Doing ethnography, data is collected being constantly on the field, mainly via observations, but also interviewing members of the community. The data is the researcher's construction as he is the one who via observations creates meanings.

Ethnography is difficult to be defined, but can it be characterised as a research:

- which requires overt or covert researcher participation in everyday context for an extended period of time
- where the researcher collects all available data possible watching, listening, asking questions via informal or formal interviews, collects documents, artefacts
- where the data collection is unstructured, there is no fixed research design; interpretations are created through data analysis
- which begins with an interest in an area of social life and its orientation is exploratory
- where there are initial research questions, but those are formulating during the research and they can be changed
- with a focus on few, small-scale cases where in-depth study can be done
- where during the data analysis the researcher tries to find meanings and identify patterns (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007)

The research topic focuses on the foreign women working in Japan and their individual experience. I discarded ethnography, as my study is not looking into how the participants interact in the community. From a practical perspective, it was also not possible to carry out an ethnographic study due to the difficulty of gaining access and build confidence with possible participants.

To carry out the research, I used phenomenological analysis, for which I adapted Moustakas's framework (1994). The word phenomenology appeared first in Kant's writings in 1765. The word itself has Greek origins. The word phenomenon comes from the Greek *phaenesthai* meaning to flare up, to show itself. It is constructed from *phaino*, which means to bring to light, to place in brightness, to show itself in itself (Heidegger in Moustakas, 1994, p. 26).

Edmund Husserl (1859-1953), the founder of phenomenology was a German philosopher. The phenomenology he developed is called descriptive or transcendental phenomenology. Husserl believed that it is possible that the researcher sets aside all personal assumptions to gain an understanding of a phenomenon. The observer is always separated from the observed world and he tries to minimise the influence on the study. Another core concept Husserl used was intuition which according to Descartes is a 'primary, inborn talent' can be used to 'produce solid and true judgments concerning everything that presents itself.' (Descartes in Moustakas, 1994, p. 32). Husserl invites us to step outside of the everyday experience, to adopt a phenomenological attitude, to disengage from our everyday activities and have a look at our taken for granted experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Doing phenomenological research all previous habits and thoughts have to be set aside, 'we have to learn to see what stands before our eyes'. (Husserl in Crotty, 1998 p. 80) We have to open our eyes, keep them open, look and listen, not get blinded (Heron in Crotty, 1998 p. 80). We have to leave the taken for granted (Wolff in Crotty, 1998) and try to recover fresh perception, one which was not influenced by acculturation (Sadler in Crotty, 1998, p. 20).

Husserl recommends starting the phenomenological reduction with the so-called Epoche when the researcher sets aside the preconceptions and opens the research interview with an unbiased, receptive presence.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was working initially in the area of theology. He was teaching together with Husserl in the city of Freiburg. Although Husserl considered him as a successor of his professorship, the existential phenomenology Heidegger developed is fundamentally different from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. While Husserl believed, it was possible and necessary that the researcher sets aside all the biases and assumptions, Heidegger denied this. According to him, hu-

man beings as part of the world are not capable of doing so. *Hermeneutics*, the theory of interpretation was originated as a technique used to interpret biblical texts. It influenced Heidegger, and he introduced it to phenomenology. Heidegger created an interpretative phenomenology, which was influenced by the researcher's preconceptions.

Taking Husserl's or Heidegger's work as a basis, in the 20th century philosophers developed several forms of phenomenology, such as existential phenomenology (Sartre), gender phenomenology (de Beauvoir), hermeneutic phenomenology (Gadamer), embodiment phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), deconstruction phenomenology (Derrida) and others (van Manen, 2014). There are two essential methods in phenomenology; one is *epoche* (suspending or bracketing the everyday attitude), and the other is *reduction* (creation of meaning). However, the role of these two methods and the way to do them are also differing by the different schools. The ultimate goal of phenomenology is to create an understanding of a phenomenon based on human experience. It aims to provide full and rich interpretation to give a picture, what it means to be a person in that particular world or setting, which is continuously changing.

I used Moustakas' (1994, pp. 180-182) *Outline Summary of the Phenomenological Model* as guidance doing phenomenological research. This model consists of four main process steps: Epoche, Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative Variation and Synthesis of Composite Textural and Structural Description. In this section, I present the first step, Epoche. The rest of the steps are presented in section 6.6.

Epoche means that we set aside prejudgements to be able to start the research with an unbiased, receptive presence. The Greek word itself means stay away from. According to Husserl, empirical interpretations and existential affirmations must be excluded when doing research. We have to stay free from suppositions, set aside our prejudgements, biases and preliminary ideas. We should let the epoche to clear our mind, bringing a clear vision, suspending all our judgements. Heidegger, Gadamer and other phenomenologists, who support a more interpretative approach say that this is not possible entirely.

I had been working in Japan for 3,5 years as a self-initiated expatriate (SIE). I had my assumptions and experiences about the phenomenon: working in Japan as a non-Japanese woman. I also conducted an excessive literature review before doing the interviews and the ideas I encountered by reading also influence my understanding about this topic. However doing the interviews, I had to set aside these ideas as much as possible to be able to listen to the participants and discover new ideas and new meanings. To do so, I looked again at my research questions and the

conceptual framework and summarised based on the literature what I believed was relevant to my topic. Then I looked deeper into my own experiences and jotted down some keywords, some events, which were very meaningful for me. I found this process very helpful to be clear about my pre-assumptions. However, I do not believe I could bracket my pre-assumptions fully. Even if I set them aside, my previous knowledge, my own experiences were still with me, when I was carrying out the interviews and when I was analysing the data. However, recognising them helped me to be able to look at the insights the participants brought with them and which were new to me. I also was able to accept that different people experienced the phenomenon in other ways I did and my previous knowledge and experience was only a slice of the phenomenon itself.

6.4. Sampling

Undertaking the research, it would be impractical to ask the whole population, so we need to do sampling. The size of the population is too large and not everybody is accessible. There is neither enough time nor enough resources to be able to complete the research without sampling (Wilson, 2014). Most phenomenological researches are using a small number of participants as the aim is to learn about the experience of individuals. The sample used is usually homogeneous (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

In phenomenological research, the participants must have in common that they experienced the phenomenon which the study is about (Moustakas, 1994). They also have to be available and willing to share their experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). As my goal was to learn about the experiences of foreign women working in Japan to answer the research question I had to interview them. I used purposeful sampling. I combined this with snowball sampling during the selected participants provided more contacts (Wilson, 2014; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). An overview of the requirements for participation is shown in Table 6-3. One of the most essential inclusion or exclusion criteria was citizenship or origin. In the research, I am studying foreign women and not Japanese ones. I also tried to ensure cultural homogeneity, as much as possible. Another criterion was that they work in Japan and they are women. These criteria are also exemplified in the research problem and the research question. Those women, who are engaged in manual labour in Japan may face different issues than those who do non-manual labour. In the focus of my study are white-collar employees. I did not specify in exactly which city the participant should have made their experiences, but I excluded

Qualifier	Definition	Action to be taken	
I. Citizenship/ Origin: non-Japanese	The research studies the experiences of foreign women working in Japan. <i>Reason for exclusion:</i> Japanese women have different experience than foreigners based on the literature.	If no, not eligible for interview	If yes, continue to point II.
II. Working country: Japan	The participant works or had been working in Japan in the past 15 years. <i>Reason for exclusion:</i> The Japanese society and value system is changing, those who had been working in Japan a long time ago could have very different experiences.	If no, not eligible for interview	If yes, continue to point III.
III. Gender: Woman	The research focuses on the experiences foreign women made in Japan. <i>Reason for exclusion:</i> Japan is considered a traditionally masculine society so men and women have different work experiences.	If no, not eligible for interview	If yes, continue to point IV.
IV. Type of occupation: White collar employees / non-manual labour	The research only includes white collar employees (company employees), possibly lawyers, teachers. <i>Reason for exclusion:</i> People doing manual labour can have different experience.	If no, not eligible for interview	If yes, continue to point V.
V. City of residence: Major Japanese cities	The research includes women who had been working in major Japanese cities (Tokyo, Osaka) <i>Reason for exclusion:</i> According to the literature working practices in big cities can be different than those in the countryside.	If no, not eligible for interview	If yes, continue to point VI.
VI. Availability and willingness to participate	Availability and willingness to participate are the basic requirements for phenomenological research. <i>Reason for exclusion:</i> If the interviewee is not ready to participate, rich data cannot be obtained.	If no, not eligible for interview	If adheres to all these parameters, interview is scheduled.

Table 6-3. Data Collection Concept

remote and countryside locations. One of the most important criteria was the willingness of the participants to be able to comply with the ethical standard that all interviewees participated based on their wish to support the study, but also that they were open to sharing rich data with me.

Table 6-4. is an overview of the most important demographic characteristics of the participants. Ten of them were coming from Europe: Seven were from Western Europe and three of them from Eastern Europe. One participant was from the American continent, and one was from Asia. Regarding age, all participants were between 25-50 years of age. Three participants were between 25-30, three between 30-35, two were between 35-40 and four above 40. Considering their marital status, five of them were single when working in Japan; three participants were in a relationship with a non-Japanese partner, three either were in a relationship with a Japanese man or married to a Japanese man. In the case of one participant, the marital status was not discussed. None of the participants had children when working in Japan. All of the participants were white-collar employees. One participant had been working in Japan as an engineer, three in the financial sector, one in marketing, two in sales, one in administration, one participant is a translator, and one is a journalist. The participants spent at least between 1,5-2,5 years in Japan. Four of them had been working in Japan less than five years, eight participants more than five years. Three women had been staying in Japan for 10 years or more. Two of them are traditional expatriates (OEs) sent by their companies abroad, the rest of them were self-initiated (SIEs). Three of the self-initiated expatriates were trailers, accompanying their husbands or boyfriends to Japan. One of them is still living in Japan, two of them are temporarily abroad, and the rest are not living in Japan any more.

Regarding their Japanese language skills, all participants can speak at least some basic Japanese. Two women have an elementary proficiency. Three can speak Japanese at a lower intermediate or intermediate level and the rest of them were either fluent or very close to fluency. Both traditional expatriates sent by their company were fluent in the Japanese language. Only two participants had nothing to do with the Japanese language and the culture. The rest of them all had some previous interest in Japan, some Japan-related hobby. Five of them majored in Japanese studies at the university; the other five also had been learning the language and knew the Japanese culture at least at some degree. All of the participants resided in major Japanese cities or the close vicinity of them; almost all the participants had been working and living in Tokyo city.

	Name	Age group	Marital status	Lead. role	Child	Profession (in Japan)	Origin	Time spent in Japan	Still in Japan	Japanese language knowledge	Type of expatriation	Knowledge about the Japanese culture
I1	Katie	40-45	single	no	none	engineer	Western Europe	2,5 yrs	no	Low intermediate	self-initiated	some
I2	Jane	30-35	single	no	none	financial	Asia	1,5 years (3 times)	no	Fluent	traditional	Japanese studies
I3	Anna	25-30	single	no	none	financial	Eastern Europe	6 years	no*	Almost fluent	self-initiated	some, language studies
I4	Lily	25-30	relationship w/JP	no	none	administration	Eastern Europe	2 years	no	Intermediate	self-initiated	some, Japanese language at university
I5	Caroline	30-35	married w/JP	yes	none	marketing	Western Europe	10 years	no	Fluent	self-initiated	Japanese studies
I6	Elizabeth	above 40	?	yes	none	translator	Eastern Europe	20 years	yes	Fluent	traditional	Japanese studies
I7	Julia	25-30	single in JP	no	none	financial in luxury industry	Western Europe	5 years?	no	Fluent	self-initiated	Japanese studies
I8	Samantha	35-40	in a relationship w/JP	yes	none	university professor, freelancer journalist	America	10 years	no*	Fluent	self-initiated	Japanese language at university
I9	Rose	above 40	in a relationship	no	none	project management	Western Europe	5 years	no	Low intermediate	trailer	family ties, Japanese lessons
I10	Ava	above 40	in a relationship	yes	none	sales	Western Europe	5 years	no	Beginner	trailer	Not much
I11	Sophie	35-40	in a relationship	no	one	sales	Western Europe	4 years	no	Beginner	trailer	none
I12	Isabella	30-35	single	no	none	Business English trainer	Western Europe	12 years	no	Almost fluent	self-initiated	Japanese studies

Table 6-4. Participant Demographics

6.5. The phenomenological interview

Phenomenological studies are working with rich and detailed personal accounts collected from participants who are willing to give their view about the phenomena (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Evidence is yielded from first-person reports of life experiences (Moustakas, 1994). To answer the research questions doing phenomenological research I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 12 women.

Some of the participants I knew from earlier, others joined the study as people who had been participating in the study recommended them. In November 2017, I also asked my friends and acquaintances on social media, if they could refer me other participants. Six potential participants were introduced to me this way; two of them joined the study. I contacted all the participants via my university email address. I introduced the study and myself and asked them if they would like to join the study. I sent them the Participant Information Sheet and the Participant Consent Form (Appendix 1 and 2).

When doing the interview, to facilitate an interaction I had to make sure the participant feels comfortable in the setting. Five interviews I have done in person and the others via Skype. When there was no physical distance, I always did the interview in person. Especially for the interviews via Skype, the initial contact I made via e-mail played a key role. It helped to prepare the participants what the study was about and what will happen during the interview.

In October 2017, I carried out a pilot interview with the participation of one of my friends who also qualifies for the study. During the interview and after it I got several valuable feedbacks from the participant. Although I had a set of topics where I wanted to hear the participant's experiences, I did not want to guide her with questions. However, as it was also common later during the interviews, most of the participants were used to interviewing techniques where answers follow concrete questions. Therefore, I decided to prepare more questions than I initially had done which later helped me to avoid a long pause or a break during the interview. However, I only used them when the natural flow of the interview was not working anymore. The pilot interview I conducted also helped me to build confidence as an interviewer.

I started the interviewing process in November 2017, and the last interview was taken in July 2018. It was challenging to find a good location for the interviews. As the interviews were audio-recorded, I had to make sure the setting is quiet. I interviewed two participants at home, the rest at public locations. For all the interviews I

used two recording devices to make sure in case of technical problems, the data would not get lost. I did not experience major technical problems during the process. One interview, which I conducted via Skype, did not go well at the beginning due to problems with the internet connection. This issue was very frustrating for me and for the participant, as we continuously had to make sure the other party was still on the line and could hear the conversation. Fortunately, the problem was solved after 15 minutes, and the interview was successful in the end. As it is a phenomenological study, it would have been very difficult or most probably impossible to carry out the data collection without audio recording, as rich data could not have been collected. Also concentrating on writing up the answers of the participants and the same time being able to react on what was said would have been very challenging. I also wanted to use direct quotes in the study, which would not have been possible without the recording. Half of the participants were not having any concern about the interview being audio recorded. The other half may have felt uncomfortable at the beginning and wanted to know why the recording had to be done and what would happen to the recording later. They also wanted to know how I safeguard their personal information in the study. I answered all their questions before the interview (mainly via email), and at the end they agreed to the recording.

All interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, on average one hour. They started with a small talk and an introduction from both sides in case we did not know each other from before. I continued confirming with the participants if they still had some questions regarding the study. I shortly reminded them about their rights to refuse to answer, continue or withdraw until data analysis and told them, when I started the audio recording. The role I tried to take was of an active listener which I often found challenging. It was difficult to decide if to interrupt with some questions or just let the conversation flow. When I interrupted with a question, I also interrupted the free flow of the conversation, and maybe this way lost the dynamic of the conversation. I always tried to ask open questions to encourage the participant to describe her experiences. At the beginning of the interview, descriptive questions were asked to create comfort, and then I moved on to more analytical ones. Sometimes I also used probing questions to find out more about a particular experience.

Table 6-5. shows some of the questions which were used during the interviews. During none of the interviews were all the questions asked. Once I explained to the participants, what the study was about, most of them did not need any guidance to describe their experience. Some participants started about non-work related topics or got into storytelling about experiences other people made they knew, in this case, the prepared questions were useful to bring the focus back to my study.

Subtopics, Theories	Research Questions Q1-Q3 Interview questions 1-12
description of the sample	1. Could you tell me what you do for living; what is your job or what kind of area you are working in?
description of the sample	2. Why did you go to Japan and what did you do there?
description of the sample	3. Could you speak any Japanese when you went to Japan?
	Q1: What are the experiences of non-Japanese women who work in Japan?
general inquiry - experience	4. How was it working in Japan? Was it like you expected it or different? Why?
<i>Japanese working culture</i>	11. Can you recall a situation that now thinking back you would say: that happened in Japan, but it could never happen in your country?
	12a. Imagine that you get an attractive position in Japan now. Could you imagine go back to Japan and eventually live and work there forever? Why yes/no?
	12b. Do you plan to return to your home country/leave Japan or could you imagine staying there forever?
	Q2: What are the difficulties non-Japanese women face when working in Japan?
<i>Adjustment theory - language</i>	3. Could you speak any Japanese when you went to Japan? 3a. Did you have any difficulties communicating with your colleagues?
<i>Japanese working culture - salary-men</i>	5. Could you tell me about your working hours in Japan?
<i>Japanese working culture - patriarchy; salarymen</i>	6. How was your relationship with your manager? / 6. Did you have any difficulties when working with superiors? / 6. Hierarchy in Japan - is it different than in xy country?
	7. How was your working relationship with Japanese women?
<i>Japanese working culture - patriarchy; salarymen</i>	8. How was your working relationship with Japanese men? (peers)
<i>Japanese working culture - salary-men</i>	9. Tell me about the working environment in Japan? 9. Was office life a pleasant experience?
<i>Japanese working culture - dual labour market theory, human capital theory, gender roles</i>	10. What do you think about the career opportunities of women in Japan? How about Japanese women? How about foreign women?

Table 6-5. Research Questions Linked to Interview Questions and Theories

Subtopics,	Research Questions Q3
Q3: Which factors can help non-Japanese women to be success-	
<i>Female expatria-</i>	10. What do you think about the career opportunities of women in
<i>Female expatria-</i>	6b. (How was your relationship with your manager?) Do you think he
<i>Female expatria-</i>	8b. (How was your working relationship with Japanese men? (peers))
<i>Adjustment theory</i>	2. Why did you go to Japan and what did you do there?
<i>Adjustment theory</i>	3. Could you speak any Japanese when you went to Japan?

Table 6-5. Research Questions Linked to Interview Questions and Theories (Continued)

In the beginning, after the introducing questions, I always asked the participants to describe the area or industry they are working in and the country they are coming from. I also wanted to know if they went to Japan on their own initiative, sent by a company or accompanied someone. Another necessary for the study was to know what level they were working at, whether they work as young professionals or whether they had a leadership role. According to the academic literature presented in Chapter Four, the knowledge of the Japanese language and the culture could influence the adjustment of an expatriate in Japan (Taylor and Napier, 1996; Peltonkorpi, 2008). Therefore if not mentioned by the participant, I asked if they studied the language and the culture before and if yes, in which depth. Inquiring about their experience, I asked the participants if their initial impression when they started to work in Japan was similar or different from their expectations. This question usually generated answers summarising the biggest surprises the participants experienced when working in Japan or their major cultural shocks. More than half of the participants moved automatically from these questions to issues like working hours, hierarchy, career chances of women in Japan. If not, I guided the participants and asked questions about these issues as listed in Table 6-4. (questions 5-10). When describing the working style in Japan and the career chances Japanese women have in Japan, most of the participants automatically made a comparison with their

own case. I wanted to know if working in Japan altogether was a pleasant experience for non-Japanese women or not. The final part of the interview was inquiring about the plan of the participants. If they still have been living in Japan, I asked them if they were planning to return to their country of origin. If they have already returned to their home country or moved to another country, I asked them if they plan to return to Japan or if they could imagine returning to Japan in case an attractive offer would come up.

Besides some minor technical issues with the audio recording I mentioned before, there was another challenge I encountered when doing the interviews. Before starting the interviews as described, I bracketed my experiences, which was very helpful. Still, when I was listening to the stories of the participants, I often had to think about my own experiences. It was sometimes difficult not to get into a conversation with the participants about several topics. The participants often challenged me by asking, how I experienced certain topics or what I read in the literature about a particular phenomenon. They wanted to know if their experience was unique or common. However, I knew this was not my role and getting into a conversation with the participants could have jeopardised the success of the interviews. Therefore, after the second or third interview I decided that if there was a wish from my side or the side of the participant to get into a discussion, I just noted the topic and told that at the end of the interview we could discuss it, once the recording would be stopped. Listening and only listening to the participant without interpreting what I heard and without trying to connect the experience of one participant to the experience of another or mine was a challenge.

6.6. Data Analysis

The phenomenological data analysis is a thematic analysis. Table 6-6. shows the steps of thematic analysis.

The first step of the analysis is the transcription of the interviews. Once I finished an interview, I transcribed it immediately before moving to the next one. Before doing the transcriptions, all identifying information (names of individuals, companies, and so on) were coded and left out. Transcribing the interviews was very time consuming, it took between four and seven hours per interview. After transcribing the text, I also cleaned it up, I removed some errors, and I formatted the text.

Familiarising with data	Transcribing data, reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas
Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic map
Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis for refining the specifics of each theme and the overall story that the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and

Table 6-6. Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Two of the interviews I made were in another language than English as the participants felt more comfortable to tell about their experience in another language. Naturally, there was a risk that doing the translation, part of the meaning can be lost or misunderstood. However, I believed that the value of the story of these participants was very high and decided to include them in the study translating the interview to English by myself. The other interviews were in English, and the English level knowledge of all the participants was very high. However, in three cases, I had to ask the participants after the interview to explain or confirm that my understanding of their answer to one or several questions was correct. During this process, the answer to one question in an interview was changed later.

Before and after doing the transcriptions I listened to all the recordings several times, at least two or three times. When I was doing the interview, I was focusing on the data gathering itself, that I can ask the correct questions if necessary and take as rich data as possible. Doing the transcription, I was focusing on the written text to be able to prepare it for analysis. I tried to make sure that I understand what the participants told me and if not, I asked for confirmation. Listening to the audio recording, I tried to understand each case, the story of each participant. Once or twice, I listened to the text without making any notes and later I still added some key terms I believed were important.

The next step of the analysis is the generation of initial codes and searching for themes. These steps are called phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). The process of phenomenological reduction requires that the researcher looks and

describes and revisits the phenomenon repeatedly. This way the researcher can have a more profound view of the phenomenon.

The phenomenological reduction includes:

- Bracketing the Topic or the Question: the focus of the study is bracketed, so the process is only dependent on the research topic and the research question
- Horizontalization: every statement has equal value, but later the irrelevant, repetitive ones are deleted
- Clustering the Horizons into Themes
- The Horizons are categorised into Individual and Composite Textural Descriptions

After I transcribed an interview and listened to it several times, I started with the data analysis. The interviews yielded around 150-200 pages of data, so I was sure, I wanted to use a tool to be able to organise it. My first approach was to feed the transcription to the NVivo tool and carry out the analysis there. I did a training in NVivo beforehand, and I found the possibilities the tool offered fitting to my approach. However when I started the analysis, I felt that I needed more contact with my data to be able to look better into it, to be able to read and reread the thoughts of the participant, so first I used a print version for all the interviews. I printed the text in a landscape format, leaving the right side of the paper empty. When I was reading the text, I highlighted parts of it. I wrote comments, ideas and keywords on the right side of the paper. I wrote more sentences in the beginning, not worrying about how smart they were, I just tried to generate meanings. I turned the sentences into keywords. At this point, it became complicated to handle the coding manually, so I started to use NVivo. I coded the text using the keywords. I repeated the coding with all the interview texts. Once I had a list of keywords, I started to create themes. Doing this process in NVivo, now I had verbatim examples to all of the meaning units and themes. Then I started to write up the experiences of the participants using direct quotes or paraphrasing without any further analysis or explanation of the experience.

The next step, the development of structural themes is called imaginative variation in phenomenology. Using imagination and checking different perspectives, the researcher seeks meanings in the data by:

- Varying Possible Meanings
- Varying Perspectives of the Phenomenon

- Developing Structural Themes: derive themes from textural descriptions which were created via phenomenological reduction
- Creating Individual and Composite Structural Descriptions

I printed the codes I had in NVivo. First, I checked which keywords were still overlapping, which were referring to the same idea. If I was not sure if two keywords were referring to the same idea, I had to look again at the texts to make sure I was correct categorising them as overlapping. Once the number of keywords was reduced, I started to group them. First, this way, I created some sub-themes. These sub-themes were merged later together, as they were describing an experience of the same category. During the process, some ideas or keywords were moving across sub-themes, and some keywords did not create a theme. At this stage I was ready to create structural descriptions, describing what the participant was telling me. The list of the codes is included in Appendix 3.

In a phenomenological analysis, the final stage of data analysis is the writing up phase which I describe in the following section.

6.7. Writing up the Data

According to van Manen (2014) phenomenological writing does not only mean writing down the result of the research but via writing the researcher keeps reflecting and reaching deeper meaning. It is recommended to do the writing up right after the data analysis phase. Writing means drafting and re-drafting the text (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). After analysing the data, I had a list of themes. I grouped them into two major categories: Challenges and Advantages and Enablers. Starting with the challenges, I described them one by one, presenting the verbatim or paraphrased data from the participants. Using NVivo computer software, it was easy to find the corresponding quotes to the themes and include them in the study. I tried to take the most relevant quotes from the participants. Later in the discussion part, I explained, what each theme meant and created a dialogue between my findings and the existing literature. As it is presented in the revised conceptual framework in section 8.3, there were some new topics, which emerged during the data collection.

6.8. Criteria of the Qualitative Social Research

To judge the trustworthiness of the qualitative research according to Lincoln and Guba (in Bryman, 2012) the following criteria has to be checked:

Credibility or internal validity deals with how believable the findings are. It tries to prove that good practice was applied when carrying out the research and it confirms that the researcher has correctly understood the social world. One way of raising the credibility of the research is doing respondent validation (Armitage, 2013). This means, that the researcher provides an account of the interview or observation feeding back the participant the impressions or some of the writing giving the participant the chance to react to it. To increase the internal validity of the research, I used respondent validation or so-called member checking. After the interviews were transcribed and some initial were established I invited five participants to evaluate them and offer their views. Two participants confirmed that my understanding of their answers was correct. One participant asked me to change her answer to a question, which I did not capture correctly. There were two participants, who helped me to understand their experiences even better, as ambitious non-Japanese women working in Japan by discussing the conducted interview again. Another technique to address internal validity is triangulation. There are several forms of triangulation (Easterby-Smith, 2012), such as investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation, triangulation of theories. The fourth form of triangulation strategy is data source triangulation, which I used in this study. It suggests, internal validity can be increased, if data is collected at different times or from different sources. As I collected data from twelve different sources, this research fulfils the requirements for data source triangulation.

Transferability or external validity check tries to reveal if findings can be generalised across social settings. This can be complicated in the case of qualitative studies done on a small group. The goal of the qualitative research is not generalisation per se; usually, that is not even possible due to the lack of the replicability of most of the studies given the complexity. However, what is possible is to connect other studies, which were carried out in the same field, to support an emerging theory. In Chapter Eight, Discussions, I connected my findings to the existing academic literature. In Chapter Nine, I highlighted, how this study contributes to knowledge, to which theory it adds or which theory it does not confirm.

Dependability or reliability refers to the degree to which a study can be replicated. To conduct reliable research of all phases of the process records are kept. The problem formulation, the selection of the participants, interview transcripts and data analysis

methods are all clearly stated and accessible. Writing up the research I tried to describe as well as possible how it was done to increase reliability; these steps are included in the current chapter, Chapter Five.

Confirmability or objectivity checks if the values of the researcher were discarded and if personal values influenced the findings. Qualitative studies are not objective per se, but doing the research, I was focusing on reflexivity. As described earlier, doing the Epoche part of the research I looked at my own values and standpoint I was bringing to the research.

6.9. Research Ethics

In any kind of research done research ethics play an important role. Unethical behaviour can jeopardise the research and can even lead to legal consequences. The researcher should prioritise the physical, social and psychological well-being of the participant. The research should be based on informed consents as much as possible, and participants have to be given rights to refuse participation, to anonymity and confidentiality and the purpose of several actions such as taking research notes should be explained. (Brewer, 2000, p. 89)

In the following list of the fundamental ethical principles (Bryman, 2012) I explain, what I have done to safeguard them.

1. No harm should be done to the participants.

It is essential, that research respects the dignity of the participant (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012), and avoids stress and disturbance as much as possible (Bryman, 2012). I explained to the participants beforehand, how the research process and the interview process are done. They were free to answer or refuse to answer the questions. When doing the interviews, I asked the participants if they wanted to talk about certain topics and gave them the chance to look at the transcripts again.

2. Fully informed consent is necessary

I informed my participants about the study and gave them the opportunity to decide if they wanted to participate or not and I offered them the opportunity to refuse participation. At the end of the interview, I informed them, until which point a withdrawal was still possible (until the start of data analysis).

3. Protection of privacy is essential

The confidentiality of the data and the anonymity of the participants is respected. The data I collected in audio and written format will be destroyed, after the end of the study. I tried to remove as much as possible all the information, which could reveal the identity of the participants, such as names, country of origin, names of companies, and so on.

4. Deception must be avoided

I tried to establish a good relationship with the participants. I was available for their questions and answered them thoroughly. I kept reminding them of their rights before, during and after the interviews. I tried to present the findings of my research honestly and transparently.

The Research Ethics Sub Committee of Anglia Ruskin University approved, that I carry out this research. In the next part, I present the most critical risks I identified at the time of the application for an ethical approval and how I tried to minimise those risks.

Risk of compromising the anonymity or confidentiality of human participants:

The research is based on interviews conducted with human participants about their own personal experiences. The data collected will be handled with appropriate care. It will be stored in an anonymised format. Data stored on a computer will be password protected, encrypted and only the researcher will have access to it. All audio-recorded material and transcription will be destroyed once the researcher will have submitted her PhD dissertation. The participants are informed in the participant consent form that the researcher will make every effort to remove all identifying information relating to participants, but no unrealistic promises are made. Direct quotes from the participants will be used with special care regarding confidentiality. This is also stated in the consent form.

I understood the eight principles of the Data Protection Act and I will undertake the research according to them.

Research requiring the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the human participants

To collect the participants for the research, purposeful and snowball sampling will be used. Volunteers from the peer group will participate. Some of them may be approached through friends. The participants can decide voluntarily if they want to participate without any coercion, they can also withdraw from the research. I do not think that I or a gatekeeper may heavily influence the participants and their answers, but to minimise the risk the voluntary character of the participation will be emphasised.

Research undertaken outside the UK:

The research is mainly undertaken in Europe (Hungary, Germany, The Netherlands) and partly undertaken in Japan and it complies with English and Japanese laws. There is no additional local ethical approval required in Japan; however the research has to comply with the Code of Conduct for Scientists.

There are no conflicts between the requirements of Anglia Ruskin University and the above mentioned Code of Conduct. Special attention is to be paid though when criticising the work of other researchers as the Japanese culture is very sensitive regarding critics.

Research involving direct contact with human participants:

Interviews will be used in the study for data collection until saturation is reached. The participants will be recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling techniques. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are clearly defined: foreign women who are or had been working in Japan as white-collar employees in the last fifteen years. In the first round, I would like to invite European women to be part of the research. I would like to invite participants who have or had been living in big cities like Tokyo and Osaka. The participant information sheet and consent form will be sent or given to the participants at least 24 hours before the interview. The participants can refuse to participate in the study. They can also withdraw from the study at any time without consequences of returning the form, which can be found at the bottom of the Participant Consent Form. The participants are also informed about a possible risk of emotional distress, should it occur, the interview will be immediately suspended. The interview can be stopped or postponed, as the participant wishes. I do not expect

such a situation occur. In case I notice that the participants feel uncomfortable talking about certain topics, I will try to change the topic.

6.10. Summary

This chapter, Chapter Six started with the philosophical underpinnings of the research. I explained, why this study has a constructionist, subjective stance. The methodology of this research is phenomenology, which helped me to look into the experiences of the participants and give them a voice. Using purposeful and snow-ball sampling, twelve participants were identified and available for an interview. In the second part of this chapter I explained, how I carried out the thematic analysis, I used, writing up the individual cases and the emerged themes as cross-cases in Chapter Seven. I explained why research ethics is important and how I tried to make sure, that I carry out this research ethically. In the next chapter, Chapter Seven I present the data, collected during the phenomenological interviews.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSIS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter includes the analysis of the data collected during the phenomenological interviews. How the data was collected and analysed was explained in Chapter Six, Methodology. The literature reviews shown in Chapter Two, Three, and Four were the basis of the conceptual framework, which was explained in Chapter Five. The coding used for the data analysis was based on the conceptual framework. In this chapter the experiences of the twelve non-Japanese women are included, who had been living and working in Japan in the last ten years.

In subchapter 7.2. I present the stories of the participants one by one. The first part describes the profile of the participant, followed by the experiences she made in Japan. In the third section of the chapter, the cross-case analysis is included, explaining the main challenges and risks and the most important advantages and enablers the participants named during the interviews.

This chapter aims to present the data, which made it possible to answer the three research questions stated in Chapter One. The first part, presenting the experiences of the non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japan responds to Q1: *What are the experiences of non-Japanese women who work in Japan?* The second part, Cross-case analysis includes data to answer the two remaining questions, Q2. *What are the difficulties non-Japanese women face when working in Japan?* and Q3. *Which factors can help non-Japanese women to be successful in their job in Japan?* The data shown in this chapter is the basis of the following chapters, Chapter Eight: Discussion and Chapter Nine: Recommendations and Conclusions.

7.2. Case Profiles

7.2.1 Interview 1: Katie

(a) Profile and background

Katie is Western European, around 45 years old, single and has no children. As an engineer, she had been working with Japanese people, and this raised her interest for the language and the culture. Katie had been attending Japanese classes, and she had a beginner level Japanese language knowledge. Later in Japan, she improved her Japanese to a lower-intermediate level. Katie was actively looking for an opportunity, and she was happy when one came up, which made it possible to transfer to Japan for three years.

(b) Experiences in Japan

As her Japanese was not fluent, Katie mainly used English at work beside some small talk, which she could do in Japanese. She explained that she experienced many communication difficulties as her colleagues could not speak English very well.

Katie was very excited about her job in Japan, and she did not have clear expectations towards it. She believes many European people have a stereotype about Japanese, that they are very hard-working and that they are very kind.

The...the picture that we have here in Europe and the one I got before going to Japan was... that...mhh...the Japanese are working pretty hard the whole day and after I was in my company... mhhh...I could see that the people were there...in the company, but that was not pretty hard work..there were many hours in the office, but no effective work...and...that was something like cultural, that they need to be in the office, so...but the work was not performed...So in my case, I got no reference...from my supervisor that I should do it the same way. I didn't change to integrate me in the Japanese way to stay many hours...in the office.

When Katie started to work in her department, she noticed that her Japanese colleagues needed some time to get used to the fact that she was there. She did not think it was because she was a non-Japanese woman, but because she was a foreigner in general. Some weeks or months later when the curiosity wore off the initial shyness of the colleagues went away.

Being an engineer, most of her colleagues were Japanese men. Working in Japan as a foreign woman she said she did not experience any discrimination when working together with Japanese colleagues and this was not different either on a higher level of the hierarchy.

Honestly, I could not feel something wrong...because I was a woman with Japanese men...so I can say...the relationship with my colleagues was...pretty good, I never could feel that they rejected me to be a woman or even to be a foreigner.

At her department, Katie felt respected and supported and felt that office life was pleasant and similar as it was in Europe.

...it was friendly. But to be women, they respect me in some way.

What she also noticed is that Japanese expect a certain kind of lady-like behaviour from women which was very astonishing for her. As she has a strong character, her colleagues were surprised by the way she was acting, more open and carefree and that time to time as a joke she used some swear words.

She also realised that some of the Japanese colleagues behaved one way or another depending on the situation and who was present and that Japanese were often hiding what they were thinking.

But the Japanese have...also one cultural thing, that is the..in face of someone they show you something...but the reality is total...totally different. That is also the typical "tatemae"...in Japanese...so what they show to you and what they really think...

Although Katie said she did not feel discrimination when working in Japan, she mentioned two situations where she believed she got in a disadvantageous position for being a self-initiated expatriate instead of a local employee. In one case she was working on a project, but when the company had to send somebody to present the results to the headquarters, they chose a Japanese man instead of her. She believed they did so to show to the European colleagues that the idea was coming from Japan and decided to eliminate the fact that the idea and the project belonged to a European working in Japan.

...but we got the task to present the result in Europe. Ok? Andddd...here comes a conflict, because when I start the preparation going to Europe to present the results, they stopped me. And decide...no, you cannot go. And I said: why, sorry? Yeah, you cannot go. Mhhh...one of your colleagues will go, one Japanese and I say why? They say, no, this is Japan, it need to be one Japanese who presents this result...we cannot send one foreigner and even...and a woman...to present a result we made it here in Japan...and they removed my name from all the documents and they sent...so...one Japanese guy to present all the results and, but I prepared everything, all the documents, the presentation, but it was nothing it could relate this information with my name. And this is...honestly...that could not...that cannot happen in Europe.

The other situation had to do with career and promotion. Based on discussions with traditional expatriates she did not believe her experience as a self-initiated expatriate was fundamentally different from theirs. However, while some traditional expatriates got support from central departments in topics like career and promotion, she as a self-initiated was in competition with the local employees for the limited promotion opportunities. Katie got clear feedback; her superiors preferred to support the local Japanese people and sign them up for promotion.

When I asked her if she could imagine moving back to Japan and working there forever her answer was no. One of the reasons was the issue with support and promotion as described and the other thing was due to the difficulty of working together, understanding each other with the Japanese.

the way of the Japanese are thinking, the logic of the Japanese is really different than the logic that we are having in Europe. The example I have is to make a schedule for a project...I made my schedule for me it was

perfect...everyone can understand this and the Japanese was totally off...out...they could not understand nothing. This was..they said, please do it yourself..and they...they performed something...but what they did...it was impossible, it was impossible for me to understand. The way they put the dates, the way they put the events... It was a really different logic. And yes, it was causing many conflict...between the foreigners and the Japanese working together.

7.2.2 Interview 2: Jane

(a) Profile and background

Jane is under 35, single, she is working in finance and is originally from one of the countries of the Four Asian Tigers (Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea). At university, her major was Japanese studies. The first time when she spent some time in Japan on a short-term assignment was when she was still a student. In total, she had been for 1,5 years in Japan. The last time she had been working in Japan was when the Japanese company where she is working at a local branch in her home country offered her a short-term assignment in Tokyo.

(b) Experiences in Japan

As Jane is speaking Japanese fluently, she did not have communication issues with her colleagues. She highlighted that she found certain rituals in the Japanese company, like the meetings wasted time.

They like to, they usually they are having a lot of meetings. For example every, every beginning of the week they gather everyone from the floor together just to talk about some very simple things which could have been done through emails. When they have some small group meetings we got one topic usually it takes very long time...when that meeting started before then nobody was really thinking about what they want to talk about, just very general topic. And then when people just started to discuss ...they don't really know... sometimes, not everybody, but sometimes they don't really know what are talking about what they want to achieve in the meeting. And then... we have like a one-hour meeting but then no conclusion is made and nobody really knows what to follow up after the meeting.

She did not like the way how sharing of information was organised, and often she did not find the discussions on these meetings useful. She also mentioned that she and other team members had no chance to speak up due to the Japanese business culture.

For example, there is a seniority...issue as well...so if there is somebody senior in the meeting room than usually the senior person talks...and the junior people just try not to say much. And sometimes there is also a meeting when everything was actually decided, and that meeting is just a kind of formality...to speak...to let the senior people to speak about their opinion...and yeah... such kind of things happened actually quite often.

Jane worked longer in the office in Japan than back home, which was often due to peer pressure. Some female colleagues, especially the secretaries always went home in time, but others stayed longer. Sometimes she felt they did so, because the others stayed or because the manager stayed.

if I have something very urgent to do of course we have to stay back home until very late, but there is also no expectation to just stay there just...just because...the manager is still there.

Jane found it very conservative that there was seldom communication cross-levels. Senior clients were in contact with senior people in her company. Although the junior staff did all the work, everything was reported to the upper management. The junior staff had to give advice which questions should be asked, which topics should be discussed. Jane found this practice very frustrating.

It was a surprise for Jane, that male and female colleagues seldom spent time together in mixed groups. They had separate discussions; they ate lunch separately. She also believed that the manager was more keen to talk to male colleagues about the business than to females.

Although she had a friendly relationship with her female coworkers, Jane preferred to discuss work and business with her male colleagues.

Because in my workplace back home the women treat themselves the same as other men....but in Japan sometimes I feel like because they are woman so they don't need to do as like mens. Yeah...that's something I felt and when I discussed about...when we discussed about business. I think...I had more business conversation with men.

Jane believes a lot of Japanese women take a conscious decision not pursuing a career at the office. They know that combining work and private is too difficult, so as they want to get married, they are not motivated to get a more senior position. She believes there are hard-working Japanese women in the office in Japan, but they are not aggressive about their advancement.

I do find something like a very hard-working woman in the office. She works...she has a family, she has kids and she also works very hard at the office, very busy and then she is quite smart compared to other males and...mhh...but then...I don't...don't really see...that she has a particular advantage because of her diligence and mhhh...and good...very good working style. But then when I talk to her whether is fine about it...she tends not to be so aggressive in it... it's fine just let the men do it...in a more senior...senior position just let the men do it I can do what I am doing now...mhhh..I don't need too many responsibilities...but actually she is doing already a lot. So I am a bit confused...basically I don't know whether she is happy about it or not happy about it.

She believes that there is a big gap between the career chances of men and women in the office in Japan seeing several men who are not particularly talented, still having good positions. Jane believes women have it easier in Japan, as the expectation towards them is not so high, so when she did something right, she got a very high recognition for that.

Mhhh...I think the advantage...if you are a woman...men or people in general I think including the management they have the expectation that you don't need to work so hard...if you have a good idea..then they will somehow also appreciate it...so then they would give you maybe higher recognition than you expected.

As a disadvantage of being a woman Jane mentioned that as many women are not interested in building a career, it is a general belief that no women are interested.

the disadvantages...yes, you get people appreciate you, but then they think you are not...you don't really need to be promoted or something because eventually if you get married... and then the men will...contribute to family financially...so to me...to women they...me compared to those men who are already married they have more urgency to get promoted and earn more... than women.

Her home country management sent her to Japan to gain more experiences, but she believes she was not challenged very hard given the fact that she was a woman. They did not have any specific expectation towards her; they got very astonished when she achieved things at work.

Jane also noticed Japanese have a clear idea what role a woman should fulfil in life and if a woman failed to follow this idea they gave the impression that something was wrong with that woman. She explained that even the government tries to encourage women to do more at work, but the progress is slow.

if the woman is too strong they are thinking... ahhh...this woman is not working properly at the family...and if she is not married then she has a problem and such and such...so there is a lot of thing for a woman...sometimes being too aggressive sometimes being too relaxed...you are not very important in the company. If you present yourself as a very strong person they think why you are not going out with the guys...why you are not staying at your family...why can you just not enjoy being as woman out there...just stuff like that...

If she had the opportunity to work in Japan again, Jane would most probably refuse it. She would find a job more attractive if it were a more senior position. However, she still believes she would learn more working at a company in her home country than in Japan.

One surprising experience for Jane was to see how important relationships are for Japanese in the business culture. She was surprised that essential questions were not asked, unfavourable business conditions were accepted only because of the long relationship between companies.

7.2.3 Interview 3: Anna

(a) Profile and background

Anna is Eastern European, below 30 years old, single and has no children. She had been working in Japan more than five years in finance. During her studies at the university, Anna became interested in the Japanese language and culture. Finishing university, she decided that she would look for a job in Japan. First, she got a temporary opportunity which later turned to be a permanent one. Her Japanese language knowledge was around intermediate level when she went to Japan. Later as she wanted to stay permanently, she worked on her Japanese and reached a high-intermediate, close to fluency level knowledge.

(b) Experiences in Japan

When Anna started working in Japan, she joined a countryside location of the company and later she was transferred to a location close to Tokyo. The communication with the colleagues was at the beginning in English which was not always easy as the English knowledge of most of the colleagues was not very high or their written English was better than their conversational. There is a Japanese English, and once one is used to that, it is easier to communicate. Later she used Japanese at work where she was the only foreigner in her team. One of the challenges was to learn the appropriate language.

...the other problem was that they were guys, and I was still learning and taking over the Japanese language and the specifics of the Japanese language as many people know that you have female and male speech and if the whole day I am listening to the male speech I would take over the male speech and on the weekends when I would go out with my female friends, Japanese friends I would make myself a complete...yeah embarrass myself because I would be talking as a Japanese ojīsan (grandpa). But it was also something fun to learn and experience such embarrassing topics as well.

Before she went to Japan, she read several books about the Japanese culture. One of the biggest surprises for her was how accurate those descriptions were and that they were true. The strangest was that some people fell asleep on meetings.

Something very ridiculous on the first sight, but they really happen in real world, and the biggest one was that people do sleep on the meetings. I mean you always...everyone talks about this that Japanese people don't say no or difficult for me or such language topic, but this sleeping in the meeting was for me as an eye-opening as it can be.

Working in Japan doing overtime was familiar for her, but it depended on the workload. One of her longest working days was when on a Friday she worked from 7 am until 2 am on the following day. It happened that for some weeks she had to work until midnight or post-midnight, but there were also easier times.

...but also I had quite good days where I can come 9, leave at 6 or even earlier...and I am the person who would take basically the entire vacation days and longer than few days in a row so I would say that for me personally I was able to manage and I would not complain. Yes, it is probably more than in Europe I still have to experience that but I also worked over some weekends, but I would not say that it was the most critical point for me working in Japan.

According to Anna, there are several reasons why the Japanese are working long hours. One reason is that from the European perspective some people are not efficient and another one is that work is not fairly distributed inside the team. While some people have a hefty workload, others are not very busy, despite pretending to be. In some companies, even in hers, in various departments, there is the expectation that employees are not leaving before managers or managers before directors. However, one of the primary reason for doing overtime is according to her, that in many companies, including hers overtime is paid, and it is the part of an employee's salary. As young people are not earning so well, they need this additional income and older people who have no motivation to hurry back home rather stay and earn more.

When talking about hierarchy or seniority, Anna mentioned a so-called foreigner card meaning that foreigners can pretend they do not understand the strict rules of the Japanese hierarchy system and can excuse themselves.

if you don't behave in the way which is expected to behave from a Japanese person they would say...oh, stupid foreigner, they cannot do anything about

it, he is not Japanese. It is not your fault to be a stupid foreigner to begin with, it is given that he will mess up and he will be rude or something. And if you act nicely they are surprised, it is very appreciated. I think it is a very big plus to know when to use this foreigner card to your advantage.

I asked her if she thought there were female specific advantages, but she did not think so. She explained that ladies' first is not a custom in Japan. Once a Japanese man was letting her go into the room first, most probably because he knew there was such a custom in Europe but did not offer the same treatment to a Japanese lady who also wanted to enter the same room. She had an excellent relationship with her coworkers, who took care of her, but this was most probably the case because she also spent much effort building a relationship with them. This extra effort included being attentive, going out with them after work on team-building events. Although she was often frustrated at work because of other topics, never had problems with coworkers or the working environment.

Her biggest frustration in Japan was regarding the Japanese promotion system which she said was changing, but which she still considered very unfair. The promotion system is more age or service-based than performance-based in her company. As a standard Japanese practice, the company is taking new graduates from university.

When you take a person from university, without sometimes even checking the educational background, the person is not always asked where he wants to work, just put him in some department, they go through the education by the department, and there they supposed to work and wait...and wait and probably wait a little bit more and then the management will decide what to do with them. Where they should go and which career they should build up...mhhh...it is what my impression how it has been happening. The big factor is always your manager, what kind of person he or she is, most of the cases it is a he...how good he can support you and listen to you. So there once we can talk about Japanese people and foreigners and foreigners usually have the tendency to be more vocal about what they want do where they want to go, while Japanese people tend to accept these rules of the game...

She was not happy about this system, but she mentioned that she heard more extreme cases. In other companies women were told to wear skirts, distribute sou-

venirs and that young people did not have a right to an opinion at all. What she also mentioned that the system in the same company in different departments is also not the same. Depending on the management some departments are very conservative and others more open.

Good performance meant a higher raise, so in theory, the company was rewarding the performance. However, after each individual evaluation, the team balance also had to be checked. If there was a top performer, there could not be another one, and somebody also had to get lower grades. The evaluations were rotated yearly, so there were years when one benefitted from the system, but another year was left behind. Given her frustration, once she asked in a bigger circle if people considered this system to be fair and a manager replied to her.

Well, we hear that many foreign employees complain about this rotational system, so he really stressed the topic that only foreigners complained about it. This is why I had the discussion later with Japanese colleagues one on one without the management being present, and I understood that they are also not happy, but they are not willing to speak up. This is quite often so with many topics that Japanese people say let it be how it is...

Anna also highlighted that in Japan to be a manager the most important is that they are good at their field, but this does not mean that they have the skillset to manage people. The number of female managers was not high in the company, but according to Anna this also depended on the willingness of the women. She heard Japanese women refusing chances because they were just not interested.

I think one topic is that they need to make a manager's job attractive, because there is still the prejudice that the manager they don't have the overtime limitation and they work a hell crazy overtime and that if some girls would still would like to have a family and a kid they would still think that it is not for me...

When talking about Japanese girl, Anna believed that her, being European was mentally stronger than most of the Japanese girls, but the same time she considered Japanese boys or younger men less harsh than their European peers.

I am not a very girly girl, to begin with. So for me, it was never, I never put makeup on, so it was never something that I would enjoy discussing about at the toilet. I also never had so many female colleagues working around...now I cannot tell if it is just me or a general trend, but I think Japanese girls are mentally weaker, if compared to foreigners or compared to me personally, it is harder to say, because I think I am on the harder part compared to a normal person who had a different background growing up, but there were different cases where the Japanese girls even if they are more on the European side that they were crying in the bathroom...and having these mental breakdowns, but I have the belief that they are less tough than European girls and maybe also that the Japanese boys are also less tough and then we come to the topic that Japanese are less vocal than the foreigners.

When Anna once went out with her colleagues to socialise, a Japanese male colleague joined, who is different from his co-workers or managers. As her wife working in the IT industry has a higher salary than him, he slowed down his own career and took more care of managing the tasks of their small family of three. She felt unfair that when he left a drinking party early, the other colleagues mocked him for being how he is.

They have a kid, and he has been more the housewife, the wife has more working hour, and he likes to work his eight-hour working day and do his job really well, but then go home, pick up his kid from kindergarten or school and enjoy some time together, to cook dinner. I think for me he is an ideal of a person, it doesn't matter if female or male, of balancing work and private, family with kid. And so we met for the first round of nomikais where he joined of course, and for the second round we were planning to go he said no guys, I had an agreement with my wife that I come, that time she was taking care of the kid, but now I am going home, bye bye. And for me, it was like ok, the guy wants to go home. On the other hand the rest of the manager guys they were starting to say what a pussy, look at him, he is going back home to his wife, like how weak is that...

Anna is not living in Japan at the moment; however, she has plans to go back. I asked her if she could imagine to go back to Japan and live their forever.

For me, it is no topic to go back to Japan forever or not. I do like living abroad, so I would definitely imagine and go back to work in Japan and stay there for another 5-6 years and think about the next stage. If there is some interesting job in Japan, then I can imagine staying there longer...if there is something more interesting at some other location then I would also consider it...And why? Living in Japan is definitely fun, it is very comfortable, there is a lot of perks you can enjoy. Working in Japan can be a nightmare for some people, but also can be quite good, quite interesting. So so far I am planning to come back.

7.2.4 Interview 4: Lily

(a) Profile and background

Lily is originally from Eastern Europe; she is 26 years old. When she was choosing a university, she got very excited to hear that the one she preferred offered business Japanese courses. When Lily was in elementary school, she had a friend who had been living in Japan earlier. Listening to the stories of the friend as a little girl, she got interested in the country. Studying economics and Japanese language at the university, she won a scholarship to go to Japan where she spent two years. She spent two semesters studying and a bit more than a year working in an administrative job at the university.

(b) Experiences in Japan

Her Japanese language knowledge was at an intermediate level when she went to Japan. With other students from abroad, she was communicating in English and with the Japanese in the office in Japanese. During her studies, she had fewer opportunities to speak Japanese, so her Japanese improved a lot when she started to work.

Lily's first challenge was to get used to working in a foreign country in general, as this was her first job.

In the beginning, it was tough. Because at home I didn't...I mean for me this was my first so-called real workplace. One challenge was working eight

hours a day and the second one was that everybody was speaking Japanese around me. I was very, very tired during the first couple of months, but then I got used to it and in the end, I really enjoyed working there.

In Japan Lily had a fix working time, starting at nine o'clock in the morning and finishing at five including a one-hour lunch break. As at the university some students also have classes on Saturday, every second Saturday she also had to work. Although at some departments her colleagues had to do some overtime, Lily and her colleagues seldom had to do any.

There were three men and six women in Lily's department. She found it very surprising that men and women were always having lunch separately. She also noticed that male employees always had more to do than females.

At lunch, they were having lunch separately, and everybody had its own small group with whom he or she had lunch. It was not typical at all that people changed groups. I believe men had to work harder and they had more responsibility. My boss was a 55-year-old man, and he always gave the hardest task to the youngest man. There was a rotation among the departments, so the colleagues changed every year.

There were two young women in the office, but the rest of the women were a bit older, and all of them had children or grandchildren. Lily thought that this might have been the reason why the expectation was that men are working longer hours than women are because women had to go home earlier. At some departments where there was a lot to do women also had to do overtime, but in her group, it was always the youngest man, who was still single.

Lily had a good experience working in Japan. Her colleagues were very kind to her. They did not discuss private matters. There was one exception when a young recently married female colleague shared with the others a private topic. As the colleague explained, in Japan is normal that after marriage the wife handles the salary of the husband. Her husband did not want to follow this tradition, and in the end, his parents of the husband had to convince him that this is the way to do it.

She also had an outstanding relationship with his boss. Even after returning to her home country from Japan, they are still in touch. Lily had the impression her Japanese boss was behaving like a father to her.

Lily explained that when she was working in Japan, all women had to wear uniforms at the office.

We all had to wear uniforms, but only women. In April they communicated that, it was not obligatory to wear it anymore, I think because of gender equality. From September, they prohibited it. I was happy once it was not obligatory, but many Japanese women said that they were not happy about it, because it is much more comfortable and easier this way, having a uniform. Yeah, they found it more comfortable or easier, but now it is prohibited. In other Japanese companies, I know that in production people have to wear a uniform, but in the office, it is not typical.

Although there were more female teachers at the university than male teachers, the university is mainly led by men.

Lily was working in administration and time to time; she had to organise some events. This task was challenging for her, because of the Japanese mentality and rules.

Well, in Japan everything must be so complicated. It always takes more time to arrange something than in my country. We have to discuss and align everything, we have to ask for permissions all the time to do things one way or another. When you asked permission from one person, he was not sure or he thought he could not decide it on his own, so another person had to be involved. So it always takes a lot of time..how to say...it takes a lot of time to arrange everything. It was hard, but after a while, I realised it is easier if I accept it as it is and I don't get frustrated about it, because it only gets harder for me. I always thought they did so many things which just didn't make any sense. They did it this way, because last year they did it this way, too.

Lily did not have much freedom when carrying out her tasks. Usually, she was told what she had to do. Once she had a small project where they allowed her to elaborate on her own idea. Many found her idea good, however, as a last minute decision, they said they better do it as they did the years before. Of course, Lily was disappointed at the end.

In the beginning, Lily planned to work six months in Japan, which got extended to two years. She could have stayed longer, but she wanted to continue her studies, so she returned to her home country.

As she liked her job in Japan, she could easily imagine returning to Japan. What she finds challenging about a possible relocation is of private origin. As the physical distance between Japan and her home country is significant, she would only have a limited chance to see her family and friends.

7.2.5 Interview 5: Caroline

(a) Profile and background

Caroline is in her mid-thirties, and she was born in Western Europe. At university, her major was economics and Japanese studies, and during her studies, she had a chance to spend a short time in Japan. Later Caroline joined as a self-initiated expatriate a local foreign company in Japan in the marketing area. When she went to Japan, she could already speak Japanese at an intermediate level, being able to communicate with her colleagues in Japanese at the office. As her female colleagues could not speak English very well, they were not keen to switch to English, which helped her to improve her Japanese. She did not have problems with communication internally, and she did not have to communicate with stakeholders outside the company.

(b) Experiences in Japan

There were two surprising things for Caroline when starting to work in Japan. One was the environment. She thought to work in Tokyo, the “city of the future”, everything will be well connected, but the office was at a remote location, so she had to walk to get there. The office itself was a bit old, not modern and very tightly packed. People were sitting in the office very close to each other. The other topic was her contract, specifically her salary.

Basically afterwards I realised that huge part of my salary was based on overtime, so if you don't do this overtime, you have much lower salary then you expected. So this aspect of service zangyō (overtime)... In the begin-

ning, it was difficult to do this overtime, because I was very bored at my job, and to force myself to stay even longer, no, I could not really cover this overtime. It would have been one hour longer every day to compensate this...

Later when her tasks changed as she explained it was not typical for her to do overtime either. However, her colleagues were working until late and doing much overtime. Although she could not judge, she believed that her coworkers were not always efficient.

One thing why I cannot judge, because we were working flexibly, some people stayed very long, but when you think about it they also might have come later, the other thing was meetings are very very long, and these meetings were also lacking efficiency So I think if you would cut the amount of meetings or the duration of meetings alone, already I think that a lot of people could have left much earlier. And I had a feeling that a lot of rework had been done. Things which were already perfectly fine were just redone just for the hack of it to generate some work. So I had the feeling often some waste was generated just to look busy.

Caroline is a very ambitious woman, but as she explained she did not meet many ambitious Japanese women. Describing the ones who had ambitions, she explained they were from other aspects also different from other Japanese women. They acted, behaved and even dressed differently than their peers. However, she also noticed that even if some women had ambition, they did not act upon it. They believed if they worked hard, their hard work would be recognised and compensated. Working there, Caroline never got into a competitive situation with a local Japanese woman.

Working with her direct colleagues and supervisors, Caroline did not have any negative experience. However, she believed some people would have wished that she acted differently, more according to the Japanese standards towards women.

I mean I was more outspoken or pushier or louder. More ambitious or in a different way. I would not say, it is an assumption that I say I was more ambitious, maybe it was more visible or I showed it in a different way. And I think my bosses usually they accepted that and I think they liked it. That was my feeling because they supported me. And those who did not like it and give

me indirect feedback about it, yes, it is not that they wanted to harm me, but I think they did not like the way I was doing things, maybe. They were expecting me to act differently. ...if we had those discussions in a mostly indirect way it was mentioned that be more patient, think about the balance, think about the others, you are still young, those kinds of things.

When she was changing her position, she tried to encourage Japanese women to take her old one, but several women she asked declined it. Caroline believes most of them made career decisions based on the expectation of others: their bosses, their husbands, the society and so on. As she explained even the ones who stepped up and did the same jobs she did later got satisfied with a lower compensation for the same position.

I had the feeling they don't think about themselves, they always think: What are other people expecting from me to do in this situation. And this was not to go there, not to do it. Even if they were capable to do it or they wanted to do it.... So also they don't do it because of own decision, but because it was an expectation from somebody. And one thing, what I also have to mention that those Japanese women who followed in my position took the same position that I did in a lower rank. So let's say if I had a salary level of level 10, they agreed to do the same work on level 8.

Caroline could imagine to go back to Japan and work there again, but only if the conditions are comparable to the ones which she is having now. Being a self-initiated expatriate posed several challenges for her; therefore she would not choose this option again; she would be a traditional expatriate instead.

Mhhh...Like something similar like here in Japan. I would go back, but I could not say that I would go back forever and I would not go with a local contract. But this has nothing to do with the country but more with the company policy I would say. And yes. If the working conditions, the office size, the freedom I have were be available, I would go, yes.

7.2.6 Interview 6: Elizabeth

(a) Profile and background

Elizabeth is above 40; she is from Eastern Europe. Her major at the university was the Japanese language, and she had been working for almost twenty years in Japan in various fields, first as a translator and later in diplomacy. Elizabeth is a traditional expatriate, sent to Japan by her company and later by the government. First, for seven years she had been working for a Japanese company as a translator traveling to Japan several times a year, spending there weeks and months. Later, she had been working in the Tokyo-based representative office of an Eastern European company and finally for the government. In these latter two posts, most of Elizabeth's colleagues were foreigners and her business partners Japanese.

(b) Experiences in Japan

The Japanese language was Elizabeth's major at the university, and she had been working part-time as a translator even before finishing her studies. Although she had a solid basis of the Japanese language when starting to work, she had to learn a specific technical vocabulary which at the beginning was a challenge.

Elizabeth found it at the same time strange and fascinating how the same situation could be interpreted in two different ways in her native culture and Japanese.

When working in Japan, she came across a lot of Japanese women working at the company, mainly at the production and in administrative functions, but not in the management. It did not happen very often that she had to deal with Japanese women in her daily work as a translator. Most of the people regardless of gender were very surprised meeting her, given that she was not only a woman but a young, foreign woman.

Elizabeth had often been doing some overtime as she had to prepare some materials urgently for the next day, or she had so much to do, that she had to stay longer. However due to the character of her job she believes that in Europe she would have done as many hours as she did in Japan.

Me, personally, I don't believe that I am working more or less in Japan, I think that is the same. It is not depending on the country where I work more or less.

When she started to work in Japan, first she was stunned at how the factory looked like. The one in her home country had been recently built and the Japanese one was very old. At the end of the nineties in Japan, smoking was allowed everywhere, while in her country there was a designated smoking area. Working in smoke was very challenging for her.

Once, being a translator of a group she made a unique Japan-specific experience.

When they were training people how to produce, they put the foreign workers on the line, the ones who had to go back later to their countries and keep manufacturing these products. But they also told the engineers who were responsible for this particular product to go to the line and keep doing the same what the operators were doing. The engineer did it for a while, kept doing the manual work, but after some time he started to complain and said he did not want to continue anymore as he is not the one who will be doing this back home. But the Japanese were thinking, this is exactly the reason why he had to do it because he had to know the product and the process inside out, and the way to learn this is to work on the line for a while.

She highlighted that Japanese people spend much time with their colleagues also outside of work. It is not the case that everybody has a good relationship with the others. Although even if they have some conflicts with each other, for the time of common drinking they leave these problems behind. The colleagues who have good relations with each other spend many evenings together, even sometimes at weekends.

Although Elizabeth had been working all her life with Japanese and most of her adult life she had spent working in Japan, she considers over and over to move back to her home country. There are things, which she would miss too much from Japan, others are somewhat difficult to handle.

Regarding work, I have been living for twenty years in Japan, and there are certain things I highly appreciate like being punctual, the given word, in a

sense that if they say, tomorrow I am there at 10 o'clock they will be there for sure. Although if they say they will be there at 10, most probably they are already there at half past nine. And what is sometimes daunting is that if you expect that they would come some minutes before ten, you are wrong, because the Japanese are much earlier there and if you are not, well, that is embarrassing. I just cannot be punctual enough. We said 10 o'clock, they were there at half past and sometimes it turns out to be a negative experience. The Japanese party says it would take an hour because they calculate with the fact what if it takes longer and what if something happens, but the whole meeting is not longer than twenty minutes. I believe it would take an hour, they have a completely different sense of time, because if they say an hour, not that it takes an hour and ten minutes. And I think I have to be free for an hour, but actually, we are only talking about twenty minutes.

7.2.7 Interview 7: Julia

(a) Profile and background

Julia is a 29-year-old Western European woman who had been working in finance in retail and the luxury industry in Japan. As a high school student, Julia was fascinated with the Japanese culture. She liked reading and watching Japanese cartoons (manga and anime). At high school, Julia had the opportunity to do a student exchange programme in Japan. That time she decided that once she graduates university, she would like to return to Japan.

(b) Experiences in Japan

When Julia started to work in Japan, she could already fluently speak Japanese, and her language knowledge was at such a high level that she gained respect for that from Japanese people. In her first job in retail, all the spoken and written communications she was conducting were in Japanese.

Before going to Japan, Julia had an expectation that being a young woman it would not be easy to work in Japan. However, the reality sometimes exceeded her expectations.

some of the things I expected...it is going to be hard, especially for women, always taking very seriously everything...and yet, still sometimes I thought it was even more than that. Even harder than what I was being told. I mean especially being a young woman at work in Japan, sometimes I felt almost... I don't know the word...from some male Japanese colleagues, especially the elders, it was sometimes hard to take. Especially, I don't want to be disrespectful, when I say that some people were exactly very good at the jobs but they were still ordering you around and always implying that you were stupid which was very hard to take. As a young woman in Japan I was expecting to be modest...to have to be modest, to respect my elders, to learn from them to respect them, but maybe I wasn't expecting to get such attitude towards me...they don't show you any respect, they don't treat you with respect sometimes.

Julia believes that regardless of the country there are colleagues who are friendlier and others are not so friendly. However, she believes in Japan seniors often fail to show any respect for young people and mistreat them.

Even if they were not her direct managers, some senior managers were behaving very bossy around her which she found very disturbing. As she was familiar with the Japanese business culture, it did not come as a surprise for her that such thing can happen, but still some days she found it hard to cope with it.

Julia had two female bosses in Japan, both were Japanese and her experience there was mixed. With one of the bosses, she did not have a good relationship meanwhile with the other one she had a good one.

I had two. The first one was I think harder than a man...much much harder. It was very nasty, she didn't like me I was the only person under her, and she was trying constantly to undermine me. I am not sure if it is a representative experience. I think it is not so relevant, because she was really hard on me. But the other one, she was very nice, she was trying to understand me and she had experience abroad, she was very open-minded, we went along very well. In both cases, it was very different experience I had with Japanese male coworkers, in both good and bad ways. It was very different attitude from Japanese males. ...jealousy, there was some jealousy clearly; I guess it was being in Japan...it is for all women hard to be a manager. I think some women struggle to get there, so they might be a bit bitter, maybe and they had a tough time, so they get defensive, they want to protect their status,

and maybe they feel threatened by any other women who want to go...who have any kind of ambitions. It can also happen in Europe, but it can get more uglier in Japan because it is even harder.

As she was not very busy, Julia at the beginning did not have to do many extra hours. However, Japanese people start working late instead. Therefore even when she only did seven or eight hours, she left the office later than she would have in Western Europe. In Europe in most of the countries staying until 9 pm would be already late. However, in Japan people did not feel that staying until 9 pm or even later would be something special. Julia had another position later, having a lot of tasks and responsibilities and there she had to work often until very late, not leaving the office until 10 or 11 pm every day. She was very busy in this job because the team she was working with was very small and every member of the team had just too much to do.

In the other position she had, Julia felt that people were merely wasting too much time and they were carrying out their task in an ineffective way.

Not in that same job, but other times, yes, I thought that with purpose or not they were doing the way that it was taking way too much time. Sometimes I just didn't understand the way they were working. Especially when it came to computers and technology. Sometimes...I just don't get it. I have a simple example that I got several times, people sending me images, pictures because I was needing it at work, but they paste it in an excel file and send the excel file attached. I got this several times from different people.

Julia explained that in the office in Japan during working hours people are not talking to each other about non-work related topics. She did not find this disturbing, she was happy about it as she could this way easily concentrate on her work. Returning to Europe, this was one of the things she was missing as constant small talks bothered her a lot.

Julia believes that there are limited career opportunities in Japan for both foreign and local women. She thinks that for a Japanese woman at a Japanese organisation is very difficult to reach a management position, maybe manager/section leader (*kachō*), but not easy. At a foreign-based company, it depends on the nationality of the management and the ambition of the Japanese women. She had seen an example of this, a Japanese woman being hard-working and ambitious could reach a management position. These women had later challenges too, as Julia believes Ja-

panese men do not like to be managed by a woman. Julia says that depending on the case, non-Japanese women may have even more difficulties as if they know the Japanese culture too well, they may be treated as Japanese women.

I felt if you behave like...you understand Japanese culture...mhhh...Japanese tend to treat you exactly like you are Japanese. I think...foreign women who can get manager position were the ones who were really behaving like foreigners.

One thing, which came as a surprise to her, was that only women served beverages, mainly tea to the customers.

The patriarchy is very strong in Japan..I saw in both Japanese companies in Japan of course, but also in foreign companies in Japan, it is always always women serving tea. I have never seen even one guy serving tea to the customers, clients visiting. Of course, it is Japan, but come on, it is crazy.

Before she had been working in Japan, Julia, being fascinated by the Japanese culture for a long time had the plan to stay in Japan forever. However, for several reasons, both private and professional she decided to return to Europe. One of the professional reasons was the lack of career opportunities. As she explained she would not describe herself as very ambitious, however, Julia would like to advance in her career, and in Japan, she only saw limited opportunities to do that. The other thing which was bothering her and which she described earlier was the way how she often was treated by Japanese higher managers. She believes, in the end, she could not stand the Japanese working environment. Another difficulty was a possible work-life balance. Julia does not have children yet, but she would like to have in the future.

...first, well of course because of working hours, either you have career or kids. You can have both if you are a woman in Japan and if you have kids, anyways you can go home earlier, but people are not going to trust you. It is stupid, working less it does not mean you are not doing significant stuff, I mean, this way in Japan, I mean if I get married in Japan, and I have a husband, he can never support me. Because people expect him to work late

anyways because that is the way is done for men. No, I...on that point, a very obvious not.

Besides she believes from a private perspective raising a child in Japan is not an easy task. Causing trouble in Japan is seen very badly, and her experience is that people are looking bad at noisy children, some restaurants are adults only. Although her fascination with Japan is still there, she finds daily life too complicated.

I don't want to spend my life in Japan...I think I would like to go again, but not in that way, I do not want to be tied up there. Although I really love the country, I love tourism there, it is really worth to visit Japan, there are so many great, so many different places. The food is also great and the culture I mean it is so interesting. But still, for a day to day life, it is too hard... in such a condition. I lived in Japan for some years when I was single and that was fine, but that is not the...I don't want to be there other ways. It is very good when you are young and single, but I don't want to be a couple, let alone a parent with children.

7.2.8 Interview 8: Samantha

(a) Profile and background

Samantha is from the US, she is below 40, and she is living in Europe. She had been working in Japan for ten years. Samantha started working there as a university teacher. Later she quit that job and worked as an editor at a digital magazine and as a freelancer in various projects. She had an interest in the culture and the language since she was a child. Samantha's father had worked in Japan before she was born. Although the family never visited the country together, they had a lot of Japanese friends, visited cultural programmes and Japanese restaurants together.

(b) Experiences in Japan

Growing up, Samantha was always attracted to things which were less *obvious*. This is the reason why instead of learning languages like French like her classmates, she

chose Japanese. When looking for a job Samantha was applying for positions in Europe and Japan. In Japan, she got an offer, and they arranged her visa, too. Initially, Samantha planned to stay in the country for one or two years, but in the end, she stayed for ten years. When she started to work in Japan, she could already speak the language. Although she had a lot of previous knowledge, it was very challenging for her to live in Japan.

I was that...Japan is two things to me, it is an archipelago of paradoxes, it is one extreme or the other, but it is rarely anything in the middle... It is like when you are there, you are using the culture and experiencing it, and the surface wears away a little bit, you are realising...you knew it or you thought you knew it, you understood it, or you thought you could master it. And when one little layer disappears, you are realising that you do not know anything at all. It is a constant mind shock.

First, she had been working at a university as a lecturer. Samantha believes that although the university tried to position itself as a modern one, it was very traditional. There were international lecturers working there, but the heads of the faculties were always Japanese. Later in the magazine, the working culture was also traditional. Many people did very long hours staying until the boss stayed. However, the atmosphere there was very dynamic as it was very international and they had many women even in the high management.

Working for the magazine was however this weird combination of...we are a chic digital magazine outside of Japan, but we are gonna run it, and we have a cool office, and we try to look more like a European startup, but we are gonna run it exactly the same style, like we are not leaving before the boss does and we are always being available for these things that they are very much just like accepted natural rules of the traditional Japanese corporate workplace... Somehow it is so deeply engraved that no matter how hard people try to move away from it, it is very difficult.

Being the only foreigner in the group, Samantha believes she had a certain kind of rights and privileges others did not have. The Japanese expected that she would integrate into the group, which she did and earned the respect of the Japanese. However, at the same time, the foreigner status allowed her to be more direct and outspoken than a Japanese person.

For me the biggest thing that I found was that when I was in a group of Japanese people who were part of a traditional company and I was the only foreigner in the group, I was given a lot of leeway to do things which somebody who was Japanese in my position would never be able to do or be allowed to do. But the same time because I was the only foreigner in the group, I was equally expected to put in the time, to show up, to be the team-player like everybody else was in a Japanese way.

Samatha when working at the magazine had very long working weeks; she was working 80-90 hours a week. Her boss would sometimes call her at unreasonable times. Working so hard, she had a burnout, and this is why she decided to leave Japan. That time her father got terminally ill, and she wanted to visit him for the last time. First, her boss did not want to grant her a leave, despite the conditions and finally when he did, he deducted this time from her monthly pay.

I had asked for some time off to see my family to fly from Tokyo back to the States...this would have been probably the last chance to see him. I have never once taken a vacation or asked for a day off and I was working seven days a week when I was there...I asked for two weeks off to go home and do this thing, and they were like no...he said you can have three days. And I was like I don't think three days are enough, it will only get me three days to get there, and he was like...everybody else gets three days. I said...I cannot do this in three days. He was like ok, then go and co-work, but when I came back, they decided to give me only half a month pay. Even though I had co-worked the whole time when I was gone.

Samantha left Japan for various reasons. Some of them were more private and others had to do with the Japanese working habits. She decided if she wanted to improve her mental health, it is better to choose another place to live. Many friends of her, who had been living in Japan for five or six years also decided to leave. Her father fell ill and died later. She also had a very tough working life. Samantha was very often sick; she felt lonely. She is visiting Japan on a regular basis for work.

...at this point of my life, I definitely would not like to go back and live there, but I think that is also something...like I say no and it is forever no.

7.2.9. Interview 9: Rose

(a) Profile and background

Rose is above 40, she is in a relationship and has no children. She is working in the commercial area. Rose is half-Japanese, but culturally she identifies herself as Western European and was raised monolingual. It was her childhood dream to live and work for some time in Japan. Therefore she was pleased when an opportunity came up that she and her boyfriend can move to Japan to work there for some years. Her boyfriend was sent there as a traditional expatriate, and she got a local contract there.

(b) Experiences in Japan

As Rose was raised monolingual, she did not speak Japanese at home. Although she believes it helped her to learn the language that as a child she often heard her mother or relatives speaking Japanese. When she went to university, she learned some basic Japanese. As preparation for their new assignment, Rose and her boyfriend went to an intensive language training course. Rose while living in Japan was speaking Japanese at a level that she could navigate through daily life. However, at the office, she spoke English with her colleagues. The communication was not difficult with the colleagues, as many of them had been on an assignment abroad before and could speak English.

As a child and a teenager, Rose visited Japan several times. She always made an outstanding experience as a tourist, finding people very kind, the food tasty and the hospitality as extraordinary. Her mother and friends told her about the working style in Japan, yet she was amazed experiencing it by herself.

I knew that working life is quite tough, so I also wanted to experience how the real life is more or less. And you know, it was hard, because you know about the working hours, but I was quite surprised how hard it is in reality. And I think the company, which was foreign-based compared to other Japanese companies is still on the bright side more or less. If you compare like holidays, working hours, health issues and so on. It is quite shocking.

Rose was not unhappy, considering her working conditions in Japan. Usually, she had to work around ten hours a day, plus breaks, starting at 9 a.m. and finishing around 8 pm. As she did not have direct contact with the customer, she believes her working time was more normal than the of other colleagues. Considering the number of hours, it was not longer than in Europe. One difficulty for her was, that while in Europe she was starting at work very early, around 7 a.m., in Japan she started later. So she had to reorganise her daily routine completely. As her function at the company was new, she did not have a comparison considering her efficiency. She heard that some people needed longer to finish their tasks than in Europe, but she did not experience this by herself.

I also heard that, and I know there are those discussions and colleagues might take longer for their tasks in Japan than in Europe, but I do not have really, how can I say, an example which I experienced in reality... The only thing that I experienced which was quite funny, that although we were on good terms, he (a colleague) very often wrote me an email although he was sitting next to me...instead of talking, so that was quite strange, but yeah. It would have been easier to talk directly, I think it would have been faster, but yeah. He wrote an email, but I was answering him directly.

Rose found it pleasant to work with Japanese colleagues in the office. With Japanese men, she only had good experiences. Rose was not a manager, and she is not on a career track, assisting and supporting the team in their daily job, so they were pleased having her. She had a bitter experience with a Japanese female colleague though, who was telling bad things behind her back to their superior. Only the two of them were women at the department, the rest of the colleagues were men.

I just had some problems with a female colleague who was trying to blackmail me at my boss, that was quite shocking because it was an experience I had for the first time in my working life...Yes, I think she saw me as a rival. Just that. And I heard it from somebody else who had the same experience. A little bit different, but quite surprising for me. I was pretty lucky because I had my separated area. At the beginning it was that I should have taken over from her some tasks and it was fine, but the second month it suddenly started, so I was quite surprised, but as we had separated departments at the end, it was ok, because I had my own area and my own boss, therefore I was pretty lucky.

...the first time when I started, she was very friendly, and we also went to lunch all the time, and suddenly it changed. Suddenly, very unexpected. That time I was thinking it was maybe...how Japanese women were handling rivals, but looking now back, I think it might be that you also have this experience in Europe. I was surprised that another colleague had a similar experience.

In the beginning, Rose had lunch with her female colleague, but after the incident, she went with other European co-workers from the company. In her working area, there were some other European women, some secretaries and Japanese men. The secretaries went to have lunch together, so did the Japanese men.

With her bosses, Rose had a good relationship. They were people with international experience. As she was in a support function, they did not put much pressure on her. Rose believed they were not even so interested in what she was doing.

So, I didn't have any problems, but sometimes I also had the feeling, how can I say, they were not really into what I was doing...They gave me some tasks, of course, mhh...which were more or less a challenge, but they never put any pressure, and I was pretty lucky... Yeah, overall I really need to say, work was fun, it was also sometimes a little bit challenging, but more concerning the subjects I was working on, not very much on the personal level, the cultural level. I consider myself as pretty lucky for these five years.

Rose believes that one of the reasons why her work experience in Japan was so positive was the fact that she was not on a career track. As she was in an assistant function, her colleagues were just thankful for getting support from her. In Europe at the company where she had been working before, there was also not much emphasis on career. Rose heard from several expatriate colleagues while working in Japan that they were frustrated due to their career ambitions, but it was not the case for her.

Working at a foreign-based company in Japan, Rose noticed that depending on the country where they were coming from; foreigners were also treated differently. The foreigners who were coming from the European mother company enjoyed high status and got more respect and support from the Japanese. They also had support from the mother company, even if they were “only” trailers, accompanying their partner. Foreigners from other countries like Iran or Bangladesh, although having the

same contract as she had much less favourable conditions there, considering support.

in the beginning, I did not want to see that as a fact, because we are from a country in Europe, and we are working in Japan for a European company, we were treated differently. Definitely. A person from Iran or Bangladesh was differently treated as I was treated as a European person, although we had all a local contracts...In Japan, it seems there are good foreigners and bad foreigners.

As her boyfriend was a traditional expatriate, Rose believes he had a double pressure. One from the sending mother company and another from the local bosses. On the other hand, Rose recognises that traditional expatriates had more support from the mother company. The expatriate status also raised jealousy from the locals, as they believed they got unrealistically high salaries.

Rose and her boyfriend returned to Europe recently. She could not imagine working and living in Japan forever, but she would go on an assignment again, maybe after she had been living in Europe for some time. If she returned to Japan, she would miss the European work-life balance, being able to take two weeks holidays in a row without hard feelings. In Japan, this is not possible or people are just not doing it.

7.2.10. Interview 10: Ava

(a) Profile and background

Ava is a Western European engineer in her forties. She had been living in several Western European countries before going to work in Japan. Ava visited Japan as a tourist before and found it very exciting. Working in Europe she had some contacts with the Japanese branch, and when her boyfriend got an offer to go to Japan as an expatriate, she found the opportunity very interesting and decided to move there with him. Besides having some working relationship with the Japanese, she did not know much about the country or the culture. Ava attended an intensive Japanese language course with her boyfriend before going to Japan.

(b) Experiences in Japan

The first difficulty Ava encountered was that although in Europe she had an established career on her own, in Japan everybody thought she only got there an opportunity because of her boyfriend. That time when she went to Japan around 2010, the wives or girlfriends of most of the other expatriates were not working. Later, after the earthquake (Tōhoku earthquake, 2011), many young couples arrived where the girlfriends were also working, but it was not typical.

Working in Japan, Ava had two different positions. In her first position, she did not have any difficulties.

they were ok with me because they did not feel I was a threat for them. So they did not...for them I was ok, they did not care so much. And they were happy when I was doing my job properly, so I was not a threat. I think it changes when you are a threat or when they consider that you are a threat, it is the same in Europe, only when you don't speak Japanese or you do not understand, and you do not know the rules, then it is more critical.

It was typical for Ava that she had to work long hours in the office. She believes that most of the management meeting was done after 7 p.m. on purpose.

I have the impression that many meetings were done on purpose after 7 with managers, because the colleagues have to go after 8-10 hours, and then managers can talk alone or do their nemawashi (pre-alignment) or do their who is who and who is going to support me for the next meeting and this was in the later hours, I had this impression.

After working there some time in Japan, Ava wanted more challenges, and she took another position. Compared to her earlier one, this was a line manager job. Inside the organisation, some other managers and superiors could only very hardly put up with this new situation. It was tough for the Japanese to accept, that a foreign woman could assume a position on their level.

I wanted to do a new job, and I was at that time a manager. And then they had the discussion among managers if I deserve a window seat. They had

the discussion, and they said, no, it cannot be true that she gets a window seat and then they went on...my future boss came to me and said, can you stay seated where you are, and I was like I can't. Then I will do another job. Then one of the European upper managers called me and asked, how is your seat? And I was like...give me a seat, and then I will sit there and move to a window seat. No, no, you know how important it is, you have to sit there since the beginning, at the window seat. One week later, one of the Japanese top managers came to me and told me: I was asked by the colleagues if you deserve a window seat and I gave my ok. Yes, she will have the window seat...and I got a window seat. So hierarchy and rules and how to say...everyone has to have his place and know who is who. And this is still important in Japan...But I was thinking it was challenging for me, but for them...they have to see that a woman is on the same level, is more challenging or more cultural shock.

Ava had been working with Japanese women, too. Especially with one, who had already a management position herself. Working some time together, they started to respect each other mutually and the relationship got better and stronger. They are still in contact, supporting each other from time to time. Considering young Japanese female engineers at the company, she believed if they wanted to climb the career ladder, they had to fight it out by themselves. Nobody could do it instead of them, neither the male top management nor foreign female managers.

I thought, hey ladies, if you are not doing it on your own, no one will do for you...either you break the rules on your own or yeah...or forget it. I think the culture can only be changed from the inside. Of course...you can get impulses from the outside, but if you want to change the culture, you have to do it from the inside.

Ava believes, if the Japanese want to change the work situation of women, men also have to change. Although she believes there is a need from the side of the younger generation for a change, most of the men are still very comfortable with the existing role distribution in the family.

...many women, they are very comfortable with the situation, they know if the men are not changing, it will also not change, the women's situation. The men, they are happy, some of them not, the younger generation, it is chang-

ing a little bit, but many men are happy that they do not have to see the wife and the wife says it is ok, I get the money, why should I...should I do something differently...

Ava thinks that integration to work in Japan is not easy, but her previous life experiences helped her to overcome this challenge successfully. Working in Japan was difficult for her as during the week she had no time for anything besides work.

She believes for women worldwide nowadays is still challenging to combine their roles at work and home. In Europe, it got easier in the past years, but it is not perfect either.

...women who are making a little bit of career are not married, and they do not have children..you have to choose, never ever you can have it all. It is the same when you study, you have to choose, do you want to go out or pass the exam. And when you work, you have to choose, do you want to see your children every day at two in the afternoon or it is ok when you see them in the evening...

Ava believes if you are an expatriate, regardless if traditional or self-initiated, building a good network is essential. Although you can earn a lot of respect from the Japanese, if you are a foreign woman and you are working hard, you will most probably not have a lot of career support from them.

Ava could imagine returning to Japan if she got a good career chance, but most probably if she could choose, she would go somewhere else. The pros of living and working in Tokyo are that there is always a lot to see and a lot to do on weekends. The food is delicious everywhere; life is very well organised and comfortable. However during the week if somebody is working, she does not have time for anything else besides work.

7.2.11. Interview 11: Sophie

(a) Profile and background

Sophie is working in sales, she is above 35; and she is Western European. She accompanied her boyfriend to Japan when he got an opportunity to relocate there as a traditional expatriate. Sophie also managed to find a job there, which according to her was typical at the company. Among the people she knew, the men were traditional expatriates, and the women accompanied them. Before going to Japan, Sophie did not know much about Japan. She did not know the culture or the language beforehand.

(b) Experiences in Japan

When Sophie arrived in Japan, she started to take some Japanese lessons. This knowledge was good enough for the everyday life, to go shopping, to go to a restaurant and order some food or to take a taxi. However, she was not able to understand a conversation in Japanese, not more than some words. The communication in the office was in English. Working at a foreign-based company in the sales department, most of the colleagues could speak English at a high level. Communicating in English outside the company was very difficult though, most of the Japanese people even in the Tokyo area could not speak Japanese, not even in the restaurants.

It was not easy for Sophie to work in Japan as she could not understand the local language and the working culture was also different. She had especially a hard time when she noticed, that even she had an opinion or an idea, she was not supposed to tell it.

...you can think about new ideas or something, but you should not tell. in meetings, like department meetings, they say you can bring any idea, or you can maybe have a different opinion, but I know, the feeling is that they don't want to hear it. And that is hard, because when you are an open person, and you also want to go change things, maybe you see something you can...or it could be better, you could do it a different way, but they are not interested. It is better to stop thinking...yes, it is true. Because otherwise, you feel bad.

According to Sophie the only person who was talking in these meetings was the manager. Japanese people were not saying a lot, and not only in a meeting, but they were not saying a lot in the office either.

That is really Japan. Yeah, working...it is like they...you are going to your office every day, and you spend a lot of time there, but it is not like open, like Europe. Different mentality. They don't say also anything outside of the meeting.

Sophie was not working long hours, but this was a conscious decision from her side. She was the only one who left earlier than the others. Sophie believed Japanese managers liked when people were staying long and staying long was associated with dedication, so it had a positive impact on the career of a person.

So normally the management likes to see you stay long, even if you don't have enough to do. So they all stay longer than me, and maybe they also expected from my side to stay longer, but I think when the work is done, the mentality in my country is to leave and when we had a lot of work, to stay, but not to stay only for being in the office. In Japan, they do. My colleagues, also the sales colleagues, some of them have a lot of work to stay, but maybe the half and the other half, they don't have, and they only stay to be visible. If they don't stay longer, they have no chance to go forward.

Sophie believed that many of her colleagues came to work later than they could have more overlap with the European headquarters. Some people started very late, even around 11 a.m., which would not have been acceptable in Europe.

Managers in Japan when they are giving an instruction or a feedback to an employee do it in a way which feels much stronger, much harder and in a very direct way. They are not caring so much about the feeling of the employees. This was very surprising for Sophie as Japanese, in general, are very polite, especially to customers.

She liked working with Japanese women, more than with Japanese men. She found Japanese women had a softer attitude. It was easier for her to talk to them and they seemed to be more open-minded. She also had been working with a Japanese woman, who was a manager. To Sophie, she was very open and friendly, but she noticed that with other colleagues, especially with Japanese male managers she

was behaving in a more masculine way. Sophie believed this stricter behaviour was necessary for her survival in the management.

Sophie felt a more significant distance when working with Japanese men. She had the impression that Japanese men often felt a bit uncomfortable when talking to a foreign woman. In the beginning, she always had lunch with her colleagues, but this was very difficult for her. Her colleagues tried to speak English with her, but this was most probably tiresome for them. So then very quickly they changed to Japanese which she could not follow anymore. Considering that lunch was the only long break she took during the day, she did not want to feel frustrated constantly.

I changed my mentality for working in Japan. I stopped being that much social. It is really true. In the beginning, you come there, and it is so different to European culture that they really don't say so much. They say good morning and really that's it. You are working nine or ten hours, and you are not talking to anyone or anyone to you...or to me. And then after maybe some weeks, I noticed that it is not a happy situation, but to survive, you have to leave it as it is because you cannot change them, you can maybe change one, but not most of them. So I stopped to be so social as I am normally here. And then I could survive...otherwise I every day coming home and think why don't they talk to me and why...we are working every day together, why they don't have interest in any social contact or private whatever topics.

Sophie tried to socialise with her colleagues outside of work, but there she had a similar experience as at lunch. The colleagues very quickly switched to Japanese and Sophie could not follow the conversation anymore. She did not feel well after these social events.

She believes that Japanese women have some chances to build a career in Japan, but not much. She thinks that this is not different in some other parts of the world, even in Europe. Women have some chances, but not the same as men. Considering expatriates, Sophie thinks that expatriate women may also have fewer chances to build a successful career than expatriate men. Self-initiated expatriates have it even harder as they start building their career from a lower level.

they start from a lower level, so they need more steps to go up and to get a new position, and the difference is also if you are traditional expat you have support from the headquarters and you have a little bit more power behind

you. The other one they do everything on their own and they have to fight alone. It is like local conditions, no different to Japanese employees. And they have to work harder, and I think more and also they are not so visible as an expat or a trailer expat.

Sophie could imagine returning to Japan, accompanying her husband, but she could not imagine working there again. She did not like it and found it very hard. Thinking back, she does not want to have the experience again and feel herself the same way again. Sophie finds it very unfortunate that work-life balance is not as good in Japan as in Europe, so combining work and family would be more difficult than in Europe.

7.2.12. Interview 12: Isabella

(a) Profile and background

Isabella is below 35; and she is from Western Europe. She has recently returned from Tokyo, where she had been living and working for twelve years as a business English trainer. Isabella studied Asian Studies at the university with a specialisation in Japanese Studies. In her second year, she spent one year in Japan. She could speak Japanese at a high-intermediate level when she went to Japan.

(b) Experiences in Japan

Isabella was working as a business English trainer based in companies like Mitsubishi and Toyota. She gave business English lessons, she checked and proofread different texts in English for her clients. In her daily communication with the clients she used English, and in the office, she was speaking Japanese with her colleagues.

Besides an Australian person, Isabella was the only foreigner at this rather small Japanese company. As most of them were used to interact with non-Japanese people, there were no significant problems with the communication.

Isabella had flexible working hours, which meant sometimes she was busy, sometimes she was somewhat free. However, being busy in Japan meant very long working hours.

...it was quite flexible working hours, mhh..I had some times when I was very busy, some times when I was quite free, but when I was busy, I was extremely busy and my...like... I would leave at 7 o'clock in the morning and get back at 10 o'clock at night at times...that is what everyone does in Japan. There are times when everyone would have to...for some people depending on their job is constant they always have to work until 9 or 10 o'clock at night and...but everyone would be expected to do that some point, I think.

When she had to work so long, it was definitely for a good reason, but she knows that this was not the case for everybody.

I know that people often, they couldn't leave because their boss was still there and...I think that mhh..for some people, they just got so overwhelmed and they got so tired, that they couldn't work efficiently anymore, and they just couldn't work fast...do you know what I mean? They would work, for example, they would work until 7 o'clock or 8 o'clock, but they still have a lot of stuff to do, but that time they would be so tired that they couldn't do anything any longer, but they felt also they couldn't leave because they had so much to do. So you know, they would tell me that they would just sit around in the office and they would do nothing...cause they couldn't concentrate anymore, but they just couldn't go home. So yeah...

In her company, the tasks were categorised into management tasks, sales tasks and administrative tasks. Women did most of the administrative tasks, and men did the rest. Although Isabella never heard or experienced any direct discrimination against women, the distribution of the tasks made her believe that men had better chances to get good positions and promotions. There were some women at her company who assumed some interesting or high positions, but they did not have a family.

...there was a young guy who got promoted very very quickly to a...he became the head of the region for example for no discernible reason over women...the thing I noticed the women who were salespeople and the

women in my company who were there for a long time they were single and childless.

One of the things, which Isabella found very strange in Japan was the way how she received feedback. In the Japanese culture, direct feedback is not appreciated and feedback is given carefully. However, for a European, this way of giving feedback is somewhat rigid and illogical. This way minor mistakes seemed to be huge.

I often found at very very minor things which could have been brought up to me directly at the time by someone weren't. For example like I was doing something slightly late or I spoke too fast or something that could have just been addressed directly at the time by saying speak a bit slower or could you try and get your reports in a bit earlier, because I need them, would be... instead of that person saying directly to me, that person would say it their boss who would say to their boss, who would transfer it to my line manager, who would then make a note of everything and tell me like six months later. For example that was a very rigid system for giving feedback, I think because often people find it, people stick very strictly to hierarchy and they feel uncomfortable saying things like that face to face and so they saw it as a smooth way of giving feedback, I tried to be open-minded about that, but for me mhh...it seemed really inefficient. At first they had been making a note of all these things and I would get it six months later, I remember that...that was a problem. The fact that you have involved people greater than you make it seem like...as you made a huge mistake.

Isabella left Japan after twelve years because she did not have any career prospects. She felt her company did not want to invest in her training. She felt this did not have to do with the fact that she was a woman, instead that she was non-Japanese.

I think that because for me it wasn't specifically related to being a woman, it was more being non-Japanese. I think they didn't...I think I provided a function in the company and they didn't see any need to develop me any further than that. And mhh...I also just think, I never really thought so...mhh...also Japan doesn't have promotion system in the same way as the West does that you are promoted through your ability or through your qualifications, in

Japan, you are promoted through how long you have been in the company, mainly. And so I wasn't really willing to stick around for 40 years.

Due to the lack of her career chances, the lack of work-life balance and a narrow identity as a foreigner in Japan, after living there for twelve years, Isabella decided to leave Japan. She does not believe that she would like to return to work there again in the future.

No, I don't think I would. Because the other reason why I left was...in Japan I always had a really narrow identity as a foreigner. And no matter how good my Japanese was or how integrated I was in society or how comfortable I felt or I identified Japan as being my home, people around me would always see me as like a foreigner and someone, who they could use to have an intercultural experience or practice their English or as like a novelty, and it became really tiring..really really really tiring after a while and that was...a reason why I left...Now that I left I don't think that I ever want to return, unless I had a really really good reason.

7.3 Cross-case Analysis

This research aims to describe the working experiences of non-Japanese women working in Japan. While in the previous subchapter the individual story of each participant was presented, in this subchapter I highlight the most common themes I found during the analysis. The list of the cross themes is shown in Table 7-1.

The themes are divided into two main categories. In the first part, I will present the themes the interview participants named as challenges they encountered when working in Japan. In the second part, I will include some enablers they named, which either made their adjustment easier or they believe it helped their career advancement.

Themes across 12 interviews

Themes/Interviews	Katie	Jane	Anna	Lily	Caroline	Elizabeth	Julia	Samantha	Rose	Ava	Sophie	Isabella	Link Conceptual Framework
Challenges/Risks													
1. Japanese working style	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Salarymen, business samurai
Long working hours		X	X			X	X	X		X		X	Salarymen, business samurai
Japanese working hard but inefficient	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	Salarymen, business samurai
Hierarchy, Seniority, Obedience		X	X	X			X			X	X	X	Verticality, collectivism
2. Limited career chances	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	(Expatriate) slass ceiling
3. Expectations female behaviour/female roles	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	Traditional female roles
4. Career and family		X	X	X			X			X	X	X	No family
Themes/Interviews	Katie	Jane	Anna	Lily	Caroline	Elizabeth	Julia	Samantha	Rose	Ava	Sophie	Isabella	Link Conceptual framework
Advantages/Enablers													
5. Knowing the language and the culture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Expatriate-adjustment
6. Acting like a non-Japanese/ Foreigner card	X	X	X		X		X	X		X			Gaijin syndrome
7. Support from the boss		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				new
8. Mentoring, networking			X		X		X			X	X		new

Table 7-1. Themes Across 12 Interviews

7.3.1 Challenges non-Japanese Women Face Working in Japan

7.3.1.1. Japanese Working Style

The major challenge the interview participants were facing, when working in Japan had to see with the Japanese working style. This theme includes several sub-themes. The most important sub-themes are *long working hours; Japanese working long and hard, but inefficient and Hierarchy, seniority and obedience*. Other codes in this category were work-life balance; giving feedback; working ambience; honne and tatemae.

a) Long Working Hours

All participants mentioned that Japanese people are working very long hours. Seven of the twelve participants had to do overtime by themselves. Working long hours did not have to see with the ranking of the participants in the company; half of the participants on the non-managerial level were also required to work long hours. In case of the women who were on a managerial level, doing long hours seemed to be an expectation. Working until late did not have to do with some particular project they were working on or some target they wanted to reach, it was just common at their companies. It did not seem to be sector specific either. Participants working in traditional industries were equally affected by it as participants working in modern industries.

Ava said the long working hours would be one of the reasons why she would not go back to Japan.

I think they work a lot, for me I always said I do not want to go back to Japan to work because of the long working hours. In Japan what I did not like in the office is that during the week I had no life, it was too long working hours.

Anna also had to work several times long hours in Japan, although she found it still manageable.

I had bad days when I had to work a lot, and in my case, it was driven by too many tasks, and I think my worst horrible working day was from 7 am till 2

am in the following day on a Friday...mmh...I had weeks when I had to work until midnight or past midnight, but also I had quite good days...

Most of the participants had to work long hours during the week, but at least they could relax on the weekend. Some of the participants, such as Samantha, who also worked as a freelancer, did not only work a lot during the week but also on the weekends.

...it was definitely a very abusive workplace. They gave me a lot of problems, I actually burned out. I worked for them for two and a half years, and I burned out, I had to quit, and that was one of the reasons why I decided to leave Japan actually. Because I like, I was working like 80-90 hours a week...

The participants who did not work long, often made this decision consciously, like Sophia.

So normally the management likes to see you stay long, even if you don't have enough to do. So they all stay longer than me, and maybe they also expected from my side to stay longer, but I think when the work is done, the mentality in my country is to leave and when we had a lot of work, to stay, but not to stay only for being in the office...

The participants also gave some indication of why they believed Japanese people were staying late at work. Most of them said that this is part of the Japanese culture, an expectation from management, an investment to be able to move up the career ladder. According to Ava, the Japanese management stayed until late that they can do *nemawashi*, a Japanese decision-making practise. Sophia said that staying late in Japan definitely has a positive impact on the career of an employee and if somebody is not staying late, he or she may have no career chance. Isabella thinks that staying late in the office is an expectation everybody is facing who is working in Japan. Jane believes all the employees remained in the office until the boss left, only because this is how it is done in Japan. Julia was stunned that when people were staying until late at the company in Japan, often until midnight, nobody was surprised about that, although in Europe many would think of it as “crazy”. Anna and Caroline highlighted though that at most of the Japanese companies the overtime is

paid. As especially young people do not have high salaries, they are ready to do overtime to increase their monthly salary.

Japanese are not only working long but are not taking their paid holidays, even if they are entitled to it. Samantha almost never took holidays while working in Japan and when she needed some time off for private reasons, they did not want to grant her a leave. Rosa said that her Japanese colleagues were always shocked that she took two weeks of holidays in a row.

b) Japanese Working Hard, but Inefficient

Japanese are working long, but eleven participants mentioned directly or indirectly that the content of this work is often not comparable with the work in Europe and that Japanese people are often not efficient. As Katie said, the employees are present at work, but this does not mean they are working hard. According to Sophie, only half of her colleagues had to stay late, because they had something concrete to do. The other half stayed just to be visible. As Isabella explained, in the office there was always a lot to do, but most of the time the employees were very exhausted at the end of the day. They believed leaving the office would be inappropriate as the work was not done yet; however, they were too exhausted to perform it. Jane suggested that several practices Japanese do in the office like most of the meetings are only adding to the already very long days.

For example various events they are organising...they share some very simple details which just takes time to talk about it. But in fact, to me, I think it wouldn't be necessary if this information is distributed from emails...And sometimes there is also a meeting when everything was actually decided, and that meeting is just a kind of formality to speak...to let the senior people speak about their opinion...and yeah... such kind of things happened actually quite often...is not effective at all. Yeah...But..but in that kind of environment it is also hard to say..it is also hard to complain, right?

Lily finds that having something arranged in Japan takes a much longer time than in Europe. In every topic, Japanese make several discussions, and most of the people are not authorised to make decisions, so almost every decision has to be escalated, which takes a lot of time. She always believed that things could have been solved much simpler. There are a lot of documents to be prepared, but later nobody asks for these documents, and nobody looks at them. When she asked for the reason,

why they do the things in a certain way, the answer was that they did it last year the same way and that is how things are done.

Caroline also thinks that meetings are taking a lot of time in Japan. Another problem according to her is rework. Japanese are often way too maximalists, and they are redoing work, which was already perfectly fine in the first place. She found this even more disturbing when people were doing this to keep themselves busy.

Samantha was stunned that even new and modern companies were run by the Japanese management in the same way, how old companies are run in Japan. They requested presence and availability all the time, they could not imagine working differently.

Rosa also faced situations, when she believed, a quicker solution would have been possible.

...although we were on good terms, my colleague very often wrote me an email although he was sitting next to me...instead of talking, so that was quite strange, but yeah. It would have been easier to speak directly, I think it would have been faster, but yeah. He wrote an email, but I was answering him directly.

c) Hierarchy, Seniority and Obedience

Jane found it very frustrating, how communication and decision making was working at her company in Japan. When they had a customer meeting, the junior staff had to explain the topic to their bosses, prepare all the materials and propose ideas. Their bosses talked to the senior management. The senior management of her company participated in the meeting together with the senior management of the client. No junior staff was allowed to participate in such meetings.

As Isabella explained, the Japanese never gave her direct feedbacks, even when it was about minor things, like speaking at a slower pace. Instead of talking to her directly, the person spoke to his boss, who would speak to the boss of Isabella. Then six months later, when having a discussion with her boss, she got this criticism, and there was a written report about it.

Lily had a hard time when she had to organise an event. She was not given any responsibility to carry out this task. She was told what to do and how to do it, describing the smallest details.

Sophie believed that Japanese meetings were very discouraging. Although the management said they were open to hearing the ideas of the employees, she had the impression, that this was not the case. As she is coming from a Western European country and is used to share her points and ideas, it was astonishing for her that in Japan people are expected only to sit there and listen to the manager. Sophie thinks, the best is to stop thinking about improvement ideas, as nobody is interested in them.

Hierarchy is strong in Japan, according to Sophie. The boss always makes clear, who is the leader and who is the employee.

...the manager also let you know that he is a manager...and you also know always that you are an employee and not a manager. And the way of doing...compared to Europe it is maybe stronger. I really felt that the manager has more power than a different one and also, every Japanese employee is like doing everything for his manager.

Samantha had a boss in Japan with unrealistic expectations.

I was working like 80-90 hours a week, and my boss, he wasn't like this just only with me, but with everybody from the staff. He would call us at three or four o'clock in the morning and be like I just emailed you, why haven't you responded yet. And I was like are you kidding me?

The experiences of these five women did not have to do with gender. However, Ava and Julia felt they were discriminated against, because they were women.

At Ava's workplace, being a line manager meant, that the person was entitled to sit next to a window. There were not many female line managers at the organisation. Ava was a foreigner, and her boyfriend also worked at the company as an expatriate. After being promoted to a line manager, the management tried to convince her to stay at her current place as they were afraid, what other people in the organisation would think. Finally, she got her window seat, and after a while, everybody got used to the situation.

Julia felt very bad about how she was sometimes handled by older Japanese men. She believes in Europe is also possible that somebody has a bad boss, but Julia thought this behaviour in Japan was rather ordinary.

As a young woman in Japan I was expecting to be modest...to have to be modest, to respect my elders, to learn from them to respect them, but maybe I wasn't expecting to get such attitude towards me...this could also happen in Europe, but it would be mostly exceptional, depending on the character. In Japan, it is pretty common. And even if some Japanese guys don't show you directly that you are stupid, some of them, the others still behave like it is so obvious, yeah, they don't show you any respect, they don't treat you with respect sometimes.

7.3.1.2. Limited Career Chances

Only two of the twelve participants were traditional expatriates (OEs), the other ten women were self-initiated (SIEs). Three of the ten self-initiated (SIEs) were trailers, accompanying a husband or a boyfriend, who was sent to Japan as a traditional expatriate.

Jane, a traditional expatriate, was sent to Japan to gain experience at the headquarters of her company. Completing the assignment and receiving good feedback in Japan had a positive impact on her career, but her evaluation was still done at the local branch. She explained, that women have a more limited career chance in Japan, regardless of being Japanese or foreigner due to the expectation of the society towards the roles of women discussed in the previous subchapter. Jane believes the reason, why women are not provided with adequate training and are not getting challenging tasks is the assumption that ultimately women will get married and have children. Jane believes her assignment was successful, but she could have done more and learned more while working in Japan. This is one of the reasons why she is not sure if she would go back to Japan, as working in her own country she would always gain more knowledge and experience.

I imagine if I get a little bit more senior and I am sent to Japan for a longer time I would take it...I would become over some more things I would like to achieve there...but at the end of the day I would compare it to my country where I would learn things more here than in Japan. Cause if I don't get a

chance to make a decision myself, every time I have to talk to the senior which I don't think they are smarter than me, then I don't think I would like to go for it. Cause I would not be learning enough...

In the bank where Jane was working there were less female managers as in her local branch. She was working together in the office with a woman, who despite having a family, was very hard-working. However, she was not very aggressive or outspoken. Jane believes in Japan women can hardly combine their role as mothers and working women, especially if they are interested in a career.

Elizabeth, who is also a traditional expatriate, due to her profession, was not on a career track. Working as a translator for a big Japanese automotive company, she made similar observations as Jane. The Japanese management was always male, and the operative or administrative staff was female. There were some female managers, but less than in Europe.

Lily, Rose and Sophie were self-initiated expatriates, but they were not on a career track. Their Japanese superiors appreciated the work they have done, but they only had limited challenges at work. Lily's coworkers were Japanese. Regarding the career chances of Japanese women, she made similar observations as Jane and Elizabeth. The management at the university, where Lily was working was male. Women did not assume leadership roles, they left earlier, and they were all having families. Rose, who accompanied her boyfriend to Japan, believes, one of the reasons why she had a stable peace of mind in Japan was the fact, that she did not have career ambitions. Her colleagues were grateful for the work she has done, and there was no rivalry with her colleagues. Rose believes in her company foreigners were also not treated the same, even if they were all self-initiated. Foreigners from the country of the mother company were handled the best, also regarding of opportunities. They were followed by other Caucasians. Foreigners from other Asian countries had the least support and the least opportunities. Sophie also went to Japan as a trailer. She did her job as good as she was able to, but she did not change her working style. When the task was ready, at the end of the day she went home, the same as she would have done it in Europe. Sophie believes self-initiated (SIEs) expatriates had limited career chances in her company in Japan. As she explained, all traditional expatriates (OEs) had a mentor from the mother company in Europe. They also had more support from the headquarters, including financial benefits. The trailers benefited from this support and they were more visible. The self-initiated (SIEs) expatriates had the hardest time. They had a local contract. They were treated like a local Japanese employee. They started from a much lower level, they had to work their way up by themselves.

...if you are traditional expat you have a mentor, and you have a little bit more power behind you. The other one they do everything on their own and they have to fight alone. It is like local conditions, no different to Japanese employees. And they have to work harder, and I think more and also they are not so visible as an expat or a trailer expat.

The other seven participants (Katie, Anna, Caroline, Julia, Samantha, Ava and Isabella) were self-initiated expatriates. They were all ambitious and interested in building a career. They were highly-educated and spoke several languages. Two of them, Katie and Ava, already had several years of working experience in Europe. Working in Japan, all the seven participants had local contracts, so their evaluation was done in Japan, based on the Japanese standards. All of them found the Japanese working style demanding, especially the long working hours. However, the most critical point and the reason, why five of them left Japan was that their company in Japan offered limited career chances for women.

Katie had a European boss and working in Japan, she did not feel any discrimination for being a woman. However, when she asked her boss, if she could get the necessary training to be a manager in the future, her boss told her it was not possible, as the Japanese upper management did not support her case. The reason why she did not get support was not the fact that she was a woman, but that she was a foreigner. The Japanese management preferred to support the Japanese employees.

Julia also thinks that women have a hard time if they want to be managers in Japan. A woman may reach the position of *kachō* (section manager). However, it is also difficult in Japan, especially if the woman is working in an entirely Japanese company. If it is a foreign company with international management, highly-skilled, ambitious women can get higher positions. However, working as a manager, leading Japanese men is also challenging. As Japanese men are not used to be lead by female managers, Julia noticed several conflicts while working there, as both of her bosses were female (Japanese) with leadership responsibilities.

Julia's opinion is that young, ambitious self-initiated expatriate women can have a hard time in Japan, especially if they know the culture. Once the Japanese learned, that a person knew the culture and even the language, they started treating her immediately as a Japanese. At her company and among her friends only those non-Japanese women were successful in their career, who did allow this to happen.

I think that the only women, foreign women who can get manager position were the ones who were really behaving like foreigners...either they did not speak very good Japanese, and they did not try to...they kept speaking English, not to be treated as a Japanese woman. Or sometimes, I knew one who was, I mean she was half-Japanese half-European, and her Japanese was perfect, and she was hiding that...in a way of behaving, speaking she was never so Japanese...I mean she was very straightforward, she had a very strong character all the time...Japanese women tend to make themselves transparent or invisible and if you do that I think you cannot be a manager. So in some ways, you have to not behave in a female Japanese traditional behaviour.

Isabella also left Japan, when she realised that as a foreigner, she would never be able to get support to go higher on the career ladder.

...they just couldn't offer me the training that I needed in order to progress, and I think that because for me it wasn't specifically related to being a woman, it was more being non-Japanese...I think I provided a function in the company and they didn't see any need to develop me any further than that.

Anna had a hard time to understand and accept the Japanese salary system. She explained that in her company most of the new employees joined as university graduates. Regardless of their degrees, they were assigned to departments, which needed people. The salary of the employees depended on their salary level. Every year their performance was evaluated, and they could get a higher salary level. Anna thought the system was fine until she found out, how strongly the level of the employees correlated with their years of service in the company and how little with the individual capabilities or even performance of a person. Japanese people accepted the system and did not complain, but all the foreigners found it unreasonable and unfair.

Isabella working as a business English instructor had a similar opinion.

Japan doesn't have promotion system in the same way as the West does that you are promoted through your ability or through your qualifications, in

Japan, you are promoted through how long you have been in the company, mainly. And so I wasn't really willing to stick around for 40 years.

Anna believes, the reason why in Japan there are not many female managers is, that the job of a manager is usually not attractive to a woman. As the requirement of a good manager in Japan is still to be always available, women who also want a family are not able to assume this role. According to her, there are female managers in Japan, even in the top management and they often have one thing in common. They are not married, and they do not have children.

At Isabella's company, the situation was the same.

I think the main thing and also the thing I noticed the women who were salespeople and the women in my company who were there for a long time, they were single and childless, so the woman who was the head of HR, she didn't have children, the women who were salespeople they were often very young or they were single and childless. So I think that definitely reflects something.

Ava sees it the same way, and the situation reminds her of how the career chances of European women were many years ago.

I think it is like many years ago in Europe, but there it is still like that. Where the women who are making a little bit of career are not married, and they do not have children...

Ava had the impression though that most of the Japanese women were satisfied with their own situation. They had a good life, good health, they were relatively wealthy on an international standard.

One of the reasons why Julia left Japan was that she could not imagine having children living in Japan. She believes that if a woman has children in Japan, she does not have any chance to have a good job, as she cannot stay long at the office. The husbands even if they want, they cannot support their wives in childrearing, as they always return home late.

It is very good when you are young and single, but I don't want to be a couple, let alone a parent with children.

Ava believes that self-initiated expatriates in foreign-based companies can have good career chances if they have a good contact with the foreign management. If a non-Japanese woman works very hard, she may earn the respect of the Japanese people, but they will most probably not be able to support her career.

Caroline was promoted to a manager while working in Japan as a self-initiated expatriate. She is living in Europe now. She can imagine returning to Japan to work there, but she would never go there again on a local contract. Caroline suggests that a good network is indispensable if a non-Japanese woman would like to achieve something in her career working in Japan. There were not many female managers in the company, where Caroline had been working. Once she changed her job, she hoped that a Japanese woman would take over her position. Several women, who were offered the job, declined this opportunity.

...the reasons mentioned were: I promised my boss not to move. I promised to stay, where I am or my team is expecting that I stay where I am or I cannot switch my position, because then I would earn more than my husband. And he would not be able to accept that. And yeah... I had the feeling they don't think about themselves, they always think: What are other people expecting from me to do in this situation. And this was not to go there, not to do it. Even if they were capable to do it or they wanted to do it. The only women who would move were mostly unmarried or even single, no kids, a little older...

Anna heard similar comments from her Japanese peers that they would rather look for a good husband, than for an attractive job. Their primary goal was to be a housewife, which according to Anna is completely fine. She believes the situation becomes hard and complicated, when a woman, Japanese or non-Japanese has the ambition to go higher.

The frustration comes when a person wants to do something more, and this opportunity is not given, or it is restricted.

7.3.1.3. Expectations Female Behaviour, Female Roles

a) Lady-like Behaviour

Katie as an engineer felt very integrated into her department, where besides her, only two Japanese women were working. The rest of the employees was men. Katie often went out with her colleagues after work or on special occasions. She tried to be respectful and follow the rules, but she did not adjust her behaviour to the Japanese standards excessively. Once they were discussing the status of a project. To describe the status, she used a soft swear word, which her male colleagues were often using.

...everyone was laughing after this, but in the very beginning, it was a really shock, because it was not normal to hear one woman speaking this way... after this it was funny, but at the beginning was shocked, because really they were not expecting to hear this word from a woman.

Katie also noticed several times, that her female colleagues or female friends behaved very differently when they were surrounded by men and when they were alone.

...when they are with men they are very polite, but when they are together or they have some drinks they are really like European woman...

Caroline, similarly to Katie knows the Japanese culture. Trying to be all the time as respectful as possible, she kept behaving as herself, a young European woman. Her direct boss supported her, but she received criticism from other people.

They were expecting me to act differently...in a mostly indirect way it was mentioned that be more patient, think about the balance, think about the others, you are still young, those kinds of things...I mean I was more outspoken or pushier or louder.

b) Gender Roles

Jane was at the beginning very shocked, how little time the two sexes spent together at her workplace. Men and women were not often discussing topics together, they did not have lunch together. What bothered her more was, that the general manager was rather discussing business related topic with the male staff.

usually the conversation amongst the men...and conversation amongst the ladies is separated. For example in our ladies' team would do like girls' lunch and then men...the gentlemen never think of joining the girls' lunch and this is actually quite obvious.

...whenever the general manager has some serious discussion about business, he would...he tends to talk to the men instead of the women...

At the university, where Lily was working, male and female staff were also always having lunch separately. Lily thinks her boss gave the most tasks to the youngest male colleague in the department. This person stayed some years at the department and was rotated to another one later. Another surprising thing for Lily was, that as administrative staff at the university she was required to wear a uniform. While the male colleagues could wear any formal attire, all women had to wear the uniform.

Two participants, who had young colleagues mentioned that in their departments everybody was having lunch together.

Jane was sent to Japan as a traditional expatriate to learn more and gain experience. However, she believed that the Japanese management did not take her seriously. Being a woman, they did not think, she would have to work hard, because of their assumption that she would eventually get married and have children. Therefore during her assignment, the Japanese management did not spend a lot of effort in her training and never put pressure on her. Rose had a similar experience. She got all the necessary support from her superiors, but she believed her boss was not so interested in what she was doing. Rose believed, the reason was, that she did not have direct contact with the customer and was not responsible for any project. She never got any pressure from her boss.

Jane knew some women in the organisation, who were managers. She noticed that if a woman was too strong and had a career, she was heavily criticised. The reason

for this criticism was that this woman did not fulfil her role as a wife and a mother, so something must be wrong with her.

While Jane heard criticism about the role, women are supposed to fulfil, Anna was the victim of such criticism. One of the senior managers ended up pitying her as there were no available single men at her department she could marry.

...throughout this evening one of the managers whom I met the first time he was starting to ask me this cycle of questions... How long am I staying in Japan... Then the question was what does my husband do? And I said: There is no husband...then asking how many single guys are in my department. And I said, only two, X and Y because he knows them...at this moment he really stops, looks at me and tells me: Oh...so no more chance for you. Because there are no really single guys in my group, in my department, like this would be the only reason why I would go work to find a husband in my immediate workplace...how I see it that they make such comments not because they want to be mean or they want to insult me, but the guy was in a way genuinely worried about me. So his idea is that a woman should have a husband and he was worried about me, that I might miss the chance to get myself a husband.

Ava explained, that until she was not in a line manager position, nobody cared about her presence and what she was doing. Afterwards, it became more challenging for the Japanese to accept her presence in the organisation.

...they did not care so much, because like I said, this is not a threat...It was more challenging when you had to work with them. But I was thinking it was challenging for me, but for them,...they have to see that a woman is on the same level, is more challenging or more cultural shock.

7.3.1.4. Career and Family

All of the participants of this study were childless, when working in Japan (one of them had a child during the assignment, but she did not return to work), therefore they did not experience challenges of combining career and family. The half of them were in a relationship or were married, but they did not mention any negative impact

of their assignment on their relationship. Eight participants highlighted, how difficult is in Japan to combine career and family in general.

Jane said, she was not surprised, that most of the Japanese women were not interested in a career, as it would have been too difficult to combine work a private. She had a hard-working Japanese colleague, who was a mother. Jane did not understand, why she was doing, what she was doing or if she was happy. Because on the one hand she was sacrificing a lot of her free time and she was also smart, but she was not aggressive about her position. She was rather submissive and accepted, that she was ignored, on the other hand, she tried to demonstrate how much she can do.

Anna explained that most of her Japanese female friends' dream is to become wives and mothers. They are not interested in having a career, and therefore they are not inputting too much energy in their actual job either. Anna was once pitied by a Japanese higher manager, a man, who felt sorry for her, given the fact that there were no available single men at her department and this way, she cannot get married yet.

At Lily's department at university, were relatively a lot of women working, all of them trying to combine their roles as a mother, wife or grandmother. They were happy with their rather dull, not challenging jobs, they went home early, leaving the interesting tasks to the young, ambitious male colleagues.

The main reason, why Julia decided to leave Japan was that she could not have imagined having children in Japan.

...because of working hours, either you have career or kids. You can have both if you are a woman in Japan and if you have kids, anyways you can go home earlier, but people are not going to trust you... if I get married in Japan, and I have a husband, he can never support me. Because people expect him to work late anyways because that is the way is done for men.

According to Ava, the situation in Japan is not very much different from the situation in Europe. No woman can have it all, and it is about preferences, one takes.

women who are making a little bit of career are not married, and they do not have children..you have to choose, never ever you can have it all.

Sophie had a child when living in Japan. She stayed at home with the baby and then they returned to Europe. According to Sophie, work-life balance compared to Europe is not so good in Japan. So combining work and family would be for her more difficult in Japan, than it is now in Europe.

Isabella noticed in the office, that if women had interesting and challenging jobs in Japan, they were single and childless. The ones, who had a family could work, but they were only responsible for administrative work.

7.3.2. Enablers which Helped non-Japanese Women

7.3.2.1. Knowing the Language and the Culture

Seven of the twelve participants could speak Japanese fluently or almost fluently, including the two traditional expatriates (OEs). Three participants had a lower-intermediate or intermediate proficiency, one of them was a trailer, and two of them were self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). Two participants had some basic knowledge, both of them were trailers. Only two of the participants did not know anything about the Japanese culture before going to Japan. Five participants did some sort of Japanese studies at university, the other five studied the language and to some degree the culture either at university or later due to a hobby.

Jane's major was Japanese Studies at the university. She had been to Japan several times, three times for longer assignments. She knows the culture very well and speaks the language fluently. Therefore she believes she did not have a culture shock when she was working in Japan. Although she understood why certain things were happening, this does not mean she didn't feel frustrated about specific topics. When working in Japan, she was speaking Japanese with her colleagues.

Anna is an economist. When she was studying at university, she got interested in the Japanese culture and Japanese traditional arts as calligraphy, ikebana and tea ceremony. The same time Anna had been learning the Japanese language. She was actively looking for an opportunity to go to Japan. One of the conditions to get an unlimited labour contract was that she learns the Japanese language at a high-intermediate level. Anna managed to build an excellent social relationship with her colleagues. She also became successful at work, where she was speaking almost only Japanese.

Lily got interested in the Japanese language and the culture at a young age, as one of her friends had been living in Japan as a child. She got encouraged to start learning the language at the university open day. She went to study in Japan with a scholarship for a year, and she stayed there another year working as an administrator at her university. As her colleagues could not speak English very well, she was talking with them in Japanese. In the beginning, this was very challenging for Lily, but with time she got used to it.

Caroline majored in Economics and Japanese Studies at university, and she could speak Japanese at a low-intermediate level when she went there. As the communication was almost all the time in Japanese with her colleagues, her language knowledge improved and she reached fluency after some years. Caroline was very successful, when working in Japan, as she was promoted to a manager at a very young age. She managed to build a good network, which helped her career.

Elizabeth also majored in Japanese Studies at university, she was fluent in the language when she graduated. She started to work as a translator at a prominent automotive company in Europe and did several assignments to Japan. Without speaking the language and knowing the culture, she would not have been able to do her job.

Julia got interested in the Japanese language and culture in high school. Once she finished high school, she went to Japan to do a student exchange programme. When Julia graduated from university, she actively looked for a job in Japan. That time she could already speak Japanese fluently. With this achievement, she earned the respect of her Japanese colleagues and friends. At work, she was only communicating in Japanese. Julia believes the knowledge of the Japanese language and the culture is useful, but it can have a negative impact on the career chances of young non-Japanese expatriate women. If a foreigner behaves like a Japanese, she will be treated as a Japanese.

When Samantha was a child, her father told her a lot about the culture of the country, where he had been working before the birth of his daughter. When deciding what language she would like to learn, Samantha chose Japanese as it seemed to her more challenging than other options, for example, French. When looking for a job, Samantha either wanted to go to Europe or to Japan. As she got a good offer and a visa from Japan, she decided to go there and stayed for ten years. She was working in different jobs, but in all of them, the knowledge of the Japanese language and culture was a prerequisite.

Isabella's major was Asian Studies at university with a specialisation in Japanese Studies. She spent one year in Japan during her studies and once she graduated she found a job as a Business English trainer in Tokyo. The reason why she chose Japan as a destination was her interest in the Japanese culture and language. With her clients, she was speaking English, but with her colleagues Japanese.

Katie was practising martial arts in her free time, and she got interested in the Japanese culture and the language. She was glad to get an opportunity to go to Japan, where she planned to continue her hobby. Once she was there, she kept learning the language, and she reached a low-intermediate level. Her interest in the Japanese culture helped her to integrate into her group, her coworkers always recommended her some *anime* (Japanese cartoon). As she had some basic language proficiency, she could socialise with her colleagues during her free time.

Rose is half-Japanese. As she was raised monolingual in Europe, she considers herself a European person. As a child and teenager, Rose often visited her relatives in Japan, and it was a dream for her to live one day in Japan for some time. She took some Japanese lessons at university and later in Japan, she could speak Japanese at a low-intermediate level. At the company she was mainly communicating in English and her mother tongue. She did not have difficulties as her colleagues had a lot of international experience.

As I am half-Japanese, I always wanted to go to Japan. So it was like a kid's dream. I wanted to somehow experience a little my mother's home country, and I was looking for some possibilities after university, but as my mum also said it is quite hard, so I just skipped that in the first place and afterwards I was in the lucky situation that my partner got an offer as an expatriate from his company and I was lucky to get a local contract because of him. Purely luck...

Ava went to Japan once as a tourist to visit one of her friends, and she worked with some Japanese colleagues together at her international company. Otherwise, she did not have any connection with Japan. Ava neither knew the culture too well nor the language. She participated in an intensive language course when her boyfriend got an assignment as an expatriate to Japan. She found a good position at the Japanese branch of her company and later she had been working as a line manager there. Although she did not speak the language well, she was successful in her job.

Among the participants, Sophie had the least knowledge about the country and the culture before going to Japan. Her boyfriend was sent to Japan as an expatriate and, as she also found a job there at a local branch of her company, she decided to join him.

Never been to Japan...I never thought about Japan anything...not the culture, not the language...I knew it was existing, but I never think I would go to Japan. I knew it was an island somewhere. Nothing about the culture, nothing. Of course, I knew the language was different, but nothing in detail.

7.3.2.2. Acting like a non-Japanese, Foreigner Card

Katie explained that when she was working in Japan, a lot of non-Japanese expatriates adapted the Japanese rules and worked according to them. Regarding the working hours, they started late, but they also finished very late. Katie did not change her working habits, and once she was ready with her tasks, she went home.

Sophie had the same principle, once her job was done, she went home.

So normally, the management likes to see you stay long, even if you don't have enough to do. So they all stay longer than me, and maybe they also expected from my side to stay longer, but I think when the work is done, the mentality in my country is to leave and when we had a lot of work, to stay, but not to stay only for being in the office. In Japan, they do.

Although Sophie did not do long hours, she adjusted herself in other ways. In Europe, at her workplace, she always has been social and she also actively contributed in meetings. In Japan, she noticed, that such an attitude was not expected and maybe not even welcome. Therefore Sophie decided to keep her ideas and opinion for herself. In Japan, one of the biggest challenges for her was to accept, that even after working for several years together with her Japanese colleagues, she still did not know anything about them.

Anna believes that while the Japanese have to follow the strict rules of the Japanese working culture, non-Japanese can pretend, even if they do understand the rules, that they do not. This way they can act or talk in a certain way, which would not be acceptable for Japanese people, but it is tolerated for foreigners.

The foreigners have this pass free card, the foreigner card and they can play the foreigner card... I am a stupid foreigner I don't understand how Japan works how the rules work I think it is a very big plus to know when to use this foreigner card to your advantage.

Samantha also had a similar experience. She noticed that being a foreigner, Japanese allowed her to behave in certain ways or say things, which they would never tolerate in the case of Japanese women. Sometimes Samantha felt, that it was even an expectation from some of her colleagues, that she does or says certain things, which the Japanese did not dare to say or did not dare to do.

...sometimes I felt like my role in the group was to do and say the things they couldn't say because they were Japanese. I could just take it a little bit further. I wasn't being disrespectful. But I could say something tricky or a little bit more directly other people couldn't. I couldn't do it too much of course.

Julia suggests that non-Japanese women should consider hiding, that they know the Japanese language and culture very well. Otherwise, they run the risk, that Japanese people will handle them as Japanese women. She highlighted, that at her workplace only those women were successful, who kept acting as foreigners. Even if they knew the language, they kept using English and acting as European women and not like Japanese.

Caroline knows the Japanese culture very well and speaks the language fluently. However working in Japan, she also decided not to change her behaviour at work. Her bosses accepted and liked her way of working, even if other people criticised her from time to time. Some Japanese told Caroline that she should think about the balance, be more patient when it came to topics like career. Caroline was very successful in Japan, she was promoted to a manager there.

Ava started to build her career in Europe. When she went to Japan, in the beginning, she could not speak the language, but as time went by, she picked up the vital vocabulary. This way Ava could work successfully with the local engineers. However, she would not recommend women to go to Japan without either work experience or Japanese language knowledge.

When she was working in Japan, Ava tried to learn about the business culture as much as possible. Some of the elder Japanese colleagues would have liked it, if she followed the rules herself, too.

...sometimes he was explaining how it is in Japan and what you have to respect...but he was getting on my nerves because he...I was not...this senpai-kōhai, I was not really a kōhai. I would say I will do it this way, like this, and this was a little bit difficult.

Ava thinks, that if a non-Japanese woman works at a foreign company and wants to build a career in Japan, she definitely has to try to build a good network with the foreign managers and if possible find a mentor. Working hard in Japan, a non-Japanese woman can get the respect of the Japanese bosses, but they will most probably not be able to support her career.

7.3.2.3. Support from the Boss

Anna highlighted that her Japanese boss was very supportive of her. She appreciated the feedback she got and that he was frank with her regarding her career chances in Japan.

I got a lot of support from a higher Japanese manager...he is really outgoing, and he really appreciates the diversity...He was quite straightforward with his feedback...when he likes something he says so, and he was very clear about his promises what he can do and what he cannot and frankly speaking I have confined a good trust in his word.

Lily is still in touch with her former boss in Japan, who was like a second father to her.

My boss was like a second father to me. I am now back in Europe for five months, but we still talk on the phone every week. He sends me pictures of his grandchild. His daughter is my age. Maybe it was empathy, he could imagine how I felt...he was behaving in a fatherly way with me.

Samantha had several different positions in Japan, so she also had several bosses. She did not have a good relationship with all of them, but she had a female boss she appreciated a lot.

...my editor in chief was there she would send people home like you can go home now, don't wait for me. She really meant it. Because she was very wonderful, she is like another mother to me, we are still very close...

Although Jane, when being on an assignment in Japan, would have wished for more challenges from her Japanese superior, she appreciated his support.

...direct supervisor...he is a Japanese...so he is also being very...nice to me...and try not to give too much pressure...make sure I am well...so well actually it is not a bad thing...

Rose had a similar experience as Jane. On the one hand, she was slightly frustrated sometimes, that her boss was not so interested in what she was doing, on the other hand, they had a good relationship, which she appreciated a lot. Caroline mentioned during the interview, that once when she got promoted, she got support from her non-Japanese superior, but the second time her Japanese superiors were, who helped her.

Julia had two bosses, while she was working in Japan, both of them were women. With one of them, she did not have a good relationship, but the other one supported her, and she liked working with her.

...the another one, she was very nice, she was trying to understand me, and she had experience abroad, she was very open-minded, we went along very well. In both cases, it was very different experience I had with Japanese male coworkers, in both good and bad ways. It was very different attitude from Japanese males...

Julia also noticed, that older Japanese men like to teach younger employees, to behave like a *sensei* (teacher).

Japanese men like to be like sensei, they like to be in a position, in a powerful position...in a fatherly way. It is being protective but empowered.

7.3.2.4. Mentoring, Networking

Five participants talked about the importance of networking and mentoring as methods to improve career prospects as an expatriate woman. Anna's mentor is a Japanese top-manager at her company, who supports diversity. He was clear to her about the possibilities he can imagine for Anna at the company. Anna believes, without his support, her career chances in Japan would have been limited. Caroline believes in the importance of networking. She managed to build a good network in Japan, including Japanese managers and managers at the European headquarters of her company. Her promotion was supported by one of the European managers, but the Japanese were the ones, who offered her a good position later inside the company. Julia thinks that it is complicated for self-initiated expatriate women to build a career in Japan. If the company is foreign-based and a woman has good contact with the upper management, this can help her case. However, the chances are limited to get a top management position. As Sophie explained, the main advantage original expatriates (OEs) and their partners have in Japan, that they got a mentor assigned, when they start their job. Self-initiated expatriates do not have this advantage.

Ava would recommend to all self-initiated expatriate women in Japan, to build a good network with the foreign management.

...you might even have good chances if you get the right contacts to the management. Because often these foreign companies have expatriate or foreign management...

7.4. Summary

Chapter Seven included the data, which I collected during the twelve phenomenological interviews. The chapter was built up from two main sections. The second subchapter, 7.2., included the stories of the twelve participants, starting with their

profile and then continuing with the individual experiences of the participants. The third subchapter, 7.3., presented the cross-case analysis. First, it summarised the challenges, non-Japanese expatriate women were facing in Japan, such as the *Japanese working culture*, *limited career chances*, *expectation female behaviour and female roles* and *career and family*. Then it discussed the enablers, which helped the participants to adjust themselves better in Japan or supported their career. In the next chapter, Discussions, I will present, how the findings can be connected to the academic literature and I present the revised conceptual framework.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

8.1. Introduction

This study aims to expand the knowledge and understanding of the experiences non-Japanese women made, who had been working in Japan in the last ten years. It also intends to reveal, which difficulties and which advantages foreign women had when they were working there. The main challenges, which emerged from the collected data were the *Japanese working culture*, especially *long working hours*, *effectiveness and obedience and seniority*. Other difficulties were the *limited career chances* non-Japanese women had, the *expectations regarding female behaviour and female roles* and combining *career and family*. The advantages the participants named were less related to gender, but more to the fact that they were foreigners. *Knowing the language and the culture* was the most significant enabler according to the participants. Other enablers were *acting like a non-Japanese*, *support from the boss* and *mentoring and networking*.

In this chapter I present the difficulties non-Japanese women experienced when they were working in Japan, followed by the advantages and enablers they named. I also link my findings to the literature. In the second part of the chapter, I look again at the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Five. I explain, what my findings mean to the framework and I adapt it based on the data.

8.2. Challenges

There are four main challenges the interview participants named considering their experiences working in Japan. The challenge, all interviewees mentioned was the *Japanese working culture*, followed by the *limited career chances* and the *expectations regarding female behaviour and female roles*. The fourth category, *career and family* emerged from the study. Table 8-1. shows how the presented themes can be linked to the academic literature.

	Themes	Link in the Literature
1.	Japanese work- ing style	
	<i>Long working hours</i>	Long working hours are part of the Japanese working culture (Sugimoto, 2002; Kingston, 2011) In Asia long working hours in general are a challenge for expatriates (Westwood and Leung, 1994) During overseas assignment long working hours are one of the main difficulties expatriates face (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010)
	<i>Japanese working hard but inefficient</i>	At meetings only information is shared, decision-taking process is long (Peltokorpi, 2007) Westwood and Leung (1994): according to expatriates Hong Kong people are working inefficiently, are not able to prioritise, most meetings are useless
	<i>Hierarchy, Senior- ity, Obedience</i>	Importance of group cohesion and <i>senpai</i> (senior) - <i>kōhai</i> (junior) relationship (Sugimoto, 2002 and Hidasi, 2002) Age is basis for respect (Taylor and Napier, 1996; Sugimoto, 2002)
2.	Limited career chances	Non-career track women get limited challenges and support in Japan (Brinton, 1992 and Matsumoto, 2002) Discrimination against foreigners, good foreigners - bad foreigners (Tzeng, 2006) Self-initiated expatriates have a more limited support (Peltokorpi, 2008) Higher age is an advantage to gain acceptance (Taylor and Napier, 1996) The Japanese salary and promotion system is based on service (Matsumoto, 2002), but it is changing to a merit oriented system (Aronsson, 2014)
3.	Expectations female be- haviour/female roles	Japanese women are expected to behave lady-like at work (Sugimoto, 2002; Westwood and Leung, 1996) Women should be kind and helpful, but not assertive and direct (Eagly and Karau, 2002) Women, who are too aggressive and masculine are criticised (Linehan and Scullion, 2004) Young expatriate women had difficulties to establish credibility (Westwood and Leung, 1994) Japanese women are supposed to fulfil their roles as wives and mothers (Sugimoto, 2002; Aronsson, 2014) Are foreign women seen as women or as foreigners? (Adler, 1987) Women have to perform tasks below their level (Taylor and Napier, 1996)
4.	Career and fami- ly	The majority of female expatriates are childless (Tzeng, 2006) The majority of female managers are childless (Linehan and Scullion, 2004) Having a child, while working abroad is difficult, but not unmanageable (Richardson and McKeena, 2003) The ongoing changes in the Japanese culture can mean a possibility to balance career and families (Mastumoto, 2002)

Table 8-1. Challenges Linked to Academic Literature

8.2.1. Japanese Working Style

8.2.1.1. Long Working Hours

For the traditional Japanese *salaryman*, the company should be the most essential thing in life, and he is expected to devote himself to it. This devotion also includes being present all the time, often from the early morning, until late night (Sugimoto, 2002, Kingston, 2011). In the most extreme cases, Japanese employees work themselves to death, called *karōshi* (overwork death). The medical reasons behind the death of this overworked, overstressed employees are heart attack and stroke.

All participants in this study mentioned that the Japanese have very long working hours in general. Seven of the interviewees (two OEs and five SIEs) had to do a lot of overtime themselves. Those, who were managers were expected to do long working hours; however, most of the participants on the employee level also had to stay long. Working every day until late was described as a common thing and not something related to a particular task or a project. According to the participants, one of the reasons behind the long working hours is an expectation from the management and should be seen as an investment in the future. The overtime, which the employees are expected to do are in some companies paid, in others it is not. Anna and Caroline mentioned that the paid overtime is making the situation worse, as young employees, who would like to earn some additional money are more than ready to spend their time at the company. Ava found the long working hours so disturbing; she named this as the main reason, why she would never go back to work in Japan. Julia said that it very often happened that people stayed at the company to as late as midnight or sometimes even later.

According to Sugimoto (2002), in Japanese companies, most of the employees are not taking all of their holidays, even if they are entitled to them, and there are still employees, who are not taking any holidays at all. Samantha, who also had to work on weekends, regularly worked above 80-90 hours a week. While living in Japan, she never took a day-off. Being overworked, she had a burnout. Long working hours are not only typical in Japan but in other Asian cultures, too. Westwood and Leung (1994) studied female expatriates, who had been working in Hong Kong. The participants in the study also mentioned the long working hours as one of the difficulties they had. The young generation in Japan is challenging the system, as they also value their free time and they are not willing to sacrifice their lives for the company (Kingston, 2004). According to Ng and Yik (2012), the long working hours is the number one reason cited by Japanese women, why they are not interested in a management position.

Working long hours in case of expatriates is not only related to the local culture. Long-working hours were named as one of the primary stressors for expatriates. In a survey conducted, two-thirds of the expatriates stated, that they had to work longer during their assignment than usually. One reason they mentioned was the culture, which can also be relevant for Japan, but others were the high volume of work, meeting their own high standards in order to advance in their careers. Most of the expatriates felt overworked and overwhelmed. In their cases, it was also typical that they did not take any annual leave. Burnout was mentioned as a common consequence of this behaviour (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010).

8.2.1.2. Japanese Working Hard, but Inefficient

As discussed in the previous subchapter, in Japan presence at work is very important, most of the times even more important than performance. Japanese in general like to organise many meetings, but those are used to announce a decision and have a top-down character. Usually only the superior talks, the employees are not keen to share their opinion, as the fear of losing face is high. As they are not taking decisions during these meetings, they have to carry out many side discussions on the corridors, called in Japanese *nemawashi* (Peltokorpi, 2007).

The study Westwood and Leung (1994) conducted in Hong Kong had similar findings. The expatriates in their study said people were working very inefficiently. People were staying late, but they were also coming late, and they were not able to prioritise or distinguish between something urgent and non-urgent. They also mentioned that they found meetings very ineffective. Eleven participants in this present study said, that the content of the work Japanese do is not comparable with the Western standards. They also called Japanese people inefficient. Katie said, that while presence is everything, that does not mean people are doing work. Sophie believes that more than 50% of the people who stay late do not have a concrete task to finish, they only stay to be visible. Isabella found that late in the evening her colleagues were so exhausted, they were not able to perform any task, but they still stayed.

Jane mentioned that the content of most of the meetings could have been easily communicated via email. During the meetings, she was invited to only one senior person talked and the rest only listened. Nobody asked questions, and no decision was taken. Caroline had the same experience with meetings. Lily talked about the endless runs of discussions about even the smallest topic. One of the words she

heard the most was *kakuninshimasu* (I will confirm it/check it with another person). Organising an event, she had to prepare a lot of documents, which were later never used. The Japanese reasoning was to everything that they are doing certain things in a way because they were done this way last year and the year before. Caroline found rework very frustrating. When the Japanese were ready with a task, and they had nothing to do, they kept redoing it over and over to keep themselves busy, as they were staying at work anyway until late. Samantha believes there is no difference between modern industries and the old type of industries when it comes to the way of working. In the beginning, Rose was very offended, that her colleague, who was sitting next to her sent her questions via emails rather than asking her directly. Later she realised, that is the way, how most of the Japanese people do it. They do not want to bother, which Rose found considerate, but all together the process seemed to be very inefficient to her.

8.2.1.3. Hierarchy, Seniority, Obedience

Japan is a collectivist society, where the emphasis is on the group and not on the individual. The interests of the group are superior to the ones of the individual, who if necessary have to make personal sacrifices to keep up the group cohesion. As Japanese say: *deru kugi wa utarareru* (the nail, which sticks out will be hammered). This educational basis perfectly supported the Japanese mass production. One status is depending on the length the individual spent in the group. The *kōhai* (junior) has to respect its *senpai* (senior) (Sugimoto, 2002 and Hidasi, 2002). No wonder, that expatriates are feeling excluded from these traditional groups, when they are living and working in Japan (Peltokorpi, 2007 and Peltokorpi and Froese, 2009).

In the Confucian value system being older is a base for respect and a higher age also indicates more experience (Sugimoto, 2002). This respect is most probably the reason, why in the study of Taylor and Napier (1996) older female expatriates had fewer difficulties to be accepted as managers as young ones. All of the participants except one of this study were coming from Western cultures; they were more used to systems, which were performance-based and not seniority-based. Jane found the Japanese negotiation and decision making system very ineffective. As a junior person, she was never allowed to present any idea or status to the upper management herself, only and exclusively via her superior. Japanese bosses give a minimal authority to carry out even simple tasks. Lily when organising an event was told what to do, up to the slightest details. Sophie, when working in Japan believed it was easier when she stopped thinking altogether. She just followed the instructions, how she was told, this way she avoided frustration. Sophie believes this is what her colleagues were doing, too, as they never pose any question and never questioned

any decision. Managers like to make sure with the way they are acting, that they are in control, according to Sophie. Employees are expected to behave towards them with much respect, listening to them carefully, never interrupting them. Julia felt that older Japanese people often handled juniors, including her with disrespect. She had the impression seniors thought she was stupid.

8.2.2. Limited Career Chances

Two participants were traditional expatriates (OEs). Jane was sent to the headquarter of the Japanese company, where she was working in her home country. Her evaluation and career chances were not directly depending on the management of the expatriate location, it was important, that she gets good feedback at the end of the assignment. Getting positive feedback was not a problem, still, Jane did not feel satisfied with her assignment. She went there with the hope that she gets some challenging tasks, which helps her to gain experience, but this was not the case. Jane believes that because of her gender she was not challenged and most probably her superiors had the assumption that due to her age she would soon get married and have children. The limited chances to learn new things, grow professionally was the most important reason, why Jane said, she would not go back to Japan. The other original expatriate, Elizabeth, due to her profession as a translator was not on a career track. In Japan, especially the older generation still has a conservative view of the roles, which men and women are supposed to fulfil in the society. Therefore some managers decide not to invest in the training of female employees, as they assume they will quit their job after the birth of their first child (Brinton, 1992 and Matsumoto, 2002).

Glass ceiling describes the situation when women are not able to reach higher management positions. (Eagly and Karau, 2002). The expression *sticky floor* is used, when women are not climbing the career ladder at all. In Japan, most of the women are not on a career track. The reason has to see with the childbearing, childrearing role of the women and the consideration, if investment from the side of the company makes sense or not (Matsumoto, 2002; Peltokorpi, 2008). In Japan, when considering the content of the tasks of an employee, a lot depends on the fact, if somebody is on a career track or not. Three of the self-initiated expatriates, Lily, Rose and Sophie were not on a career track. Rose and Sophie went to Japan as trailers, and they knew that they would only work in Japan until their partners' assignment is ongoing. All three of them felt, that their Japanese superiors appreciated the work they have done, but their superiors did not put any pressure on them.

Limited career chances were the reason, why five of the seven participants, who had career ambitions, left Japan. Seven participants of this research were self-initiated expatriates with career ambitions. All of them were highly educated and spoke several languages. In Japan they all had a local contract, so their evaluation and their possible promotion were only decided by their local superiors and human resources managers.

Two expatriates faced discrimination because they were foreigners and not Japanese. Katie and Isabella both wanted to have a position with more responsibilities, but they were both denied the necessary training. Katie was directly told, that the Japanese upper management did not want to support her, because she was a foreigner. Isabella was not directly told, that this was the reason, why she could not advance further, but this was her own conclusion. So, in this case, the problem was not, that Katie and Isabella were women, but that they were foreigners.

Four expatriates believed that the reason, why the chances were limited was the self-expatriate status. As Rose explained: those self-initiated had the best chances, who was at least coming from the country, where the headquarters were located. Caucasians were also treated relatively fair. Foreigners from other Asian countries had a hard time, as they also had to face ethnic discrimination. Tzeng (2006) studying the adjustment of expatriates in Taiwan also found that ethnicity played a role when considering acceptance of foreigners. As Sophie explained, while original expatriates (OEs) had much support from the headquarters, for example mentoring, self-initiated expatriates were on local contracts, and they were treated as local Japanese female employees.

Age as a factor was also mentioned during the interviews directly or indirectly. Most of the self-initiated expatriate women, who participated in this study and were ambitious, can be considered very successful considering Japanese standards. They did receive recognition, promotions, admissions to management programmes. However, the speed of their advancement was not comparable to Western standards. This means the Japanese also recognised and rewarded their efforts but on the Japanese promotion system, which is still seniority-based and not performance-based. The Japanese salary system works the same way; it is also seniority-based (Kingston, 2004; Sugimoto, 2002). Western women, who are used to a performance-based remuneration system usually have a hard time to adjust to the Japanese one. As Anna explained, almost regardless of their performance, they were getting a raise year-by-year. She found the system very demotivating. She also mentioned, that most of the foreigners were unhappy with this system, while the Japanese had no choice, but to accept it. Isabella talked about the Japanese promotion system, which does not give rewards based on abilities, qualifications and per-

formance, but based on how long one is working for the company. As discussed before, especially young Japanese are interested in a more merit-based evaluation system. Such a system would be able to better recognise the contribution of women at the workplace (Aronsson, 2014).

Taylor and Napier (1996) highlighted that the adjustment for female expatriates, who were older was easier. Japanese did not question their authority as they were seniors.

8.2.3. Expectation Female Behaviour, Female Roles

a) Behaviour

In almost all cultures there is a difference between male and female roles. Men and women are expected to behave in certain ways in almost all the societies. (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). Japan is no exception. Regarding behaviour, women are still expected to behave in a feminine way. Women, when speaking are using a higher pitch and a softer language. There are certain words, which women would not use at all, there is a male and female vocabulary. The language of men is somewhat aggressive, while the female one is soft, polite and submissive (Sugimoto, 2002). Katie as an engineer felt very integrated into her group and often spent some of her free time, too with her colleagues. She knew the Japanese culture and the language to a certain degree, but she was not behaving like a Japanese woman. Once she used a soft swear word and her colleagues were shocked. They did not expect to hear this word from the mouth of a woman. Katie was always stunned to see, how Japanese women were behaving when they were together with other women and how drastically they changed their behaviour in front of male colleagues. When they were alone, they behaved very openly and free, but in front of men, polite and submissive.

It is a challenge for an ambitious woman to decide, how to behave in the work realm, not only in Japan but worldwide. The expectation from the society is that a woman is rather kind and helpful, while men are more assertive and direct (Eagly and Karau, 2002). The preferred behaviour of a manager or a leader has more to see with the above mentioned masculine characteristics, than with the feminine ones. So if a woman behaves in a too feminine way at work, she runs the risk that nobody will take her seriously. However, if she behaves in a slightly masculine way, that may elicit negative feelings both from her male and female colleagues and superiors. Successful women are often targets of criticism and rumours by men, but also very often by other women (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). Female expatriate

managers in Hong Kong felt they had to tone down their standard style and not be too direct. They tried to be more diplomatic instead, to maintain harmony. The participants, who experienced gender-related difficulties were younger women. They felt that they were not taken seriously and they had difficulties in establishing credibility (Westwood and Leung, 1994).

Frequent feedback, what interview participants in this study received from their superiors in Japan was that they are too young, they should slow down, they should mind others. Considering the Japanese behavioural standards for women at work, ambitious Western women were seen as pushy, loud and they complained too much. According to the manager of one of the participants, this is one of the reasons, why the Japanese do not like to hire non-Japanese people in general. Because eventually, they will criticise the system and not maintain the harmony as it is expected from the Japanese.

b) Roles

In Japan boys and girls socialise separately which is in modern societies rather uncommon. Men are joining male groups and women are forming groups with fellow women. In adult life the situation remains similar, Japanese men look for hobbies, which they pursue in their free time with other men. It is not typical that husband and wife have common friends and they go out together (Sugimoto, 2002; Hidasi, 2005). Some participants mentioned, for example, Jane, that she found it very surprising, how little time the two sexes spent together at work, for instance discussing a topic. Women and men always had lunch separately in groups. She was very bothered by the attitude of the general manager, who never went to a woman to discuss an important topic. He always only talked to men. Lily made the same experience, lunch they were eating in separate groups, and the manager was giving the exciting tasks to the male newcomer. At the university, where she worked, all female colleagues were required to wear a uniform. Men did not have an official dress code.

In Japan, marriages were traditionally arranged in the past, and both parties were expected to fulfil their roles. The wife was expected to provide a stable background, and the husband was the only breadwinner in the family (Sugimoto, 2002). In the last decades, Japanese women, after finishing their studies, entered the workforce, but in most of the cases after marriage or childbirth, they gave that job up and devoted themselves to their obligations at home. One of the reasons is that balancing work and family is almost impossible in Japan, considering the working hours and the long commuting time (Kingston, 2011). Therefore is the labour pattern of women *M-shaped*, indicating that although the number of working women before their 30s is

high, then the number drops as women get into the childbearing age. The number increases again in their 40s, but it never reaches the same employment level as before their 30s (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018). The Japanese government recognised that increasing the female work participation would be very beneficial for the Japanese economy, and the Abe government started in 2013 its famous *Womenomics* (women + economics) programme. By 2016, the government managed to increase the female employment rate to a desirable level, but 55% of the female workforce is still engaged in some part-time or non-regular work (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018). Such jobs mean lower job security and lower wages (Kingston, 2011). Japanese women named housework and working hours as the two main reasons, why they only work part-time. They also highlighted, that in housework they do not get almost any kind of support (IMF, 2012a). Considering the Japanese working hours, this is understandable. The primary goal of women, including highly educated ones, is to get married. Those women, who are successful and financially independent have difficulties to find a suitable partner, who does not find the situation intimidating. The Japanese society still expects from women to fulfil their traditional roles as mother and wives (Aronsson, 2014). The success of a Japanese woman is measured by how her child performs at school (Matsumoto, 2002). The proportion of those women, who do not want to marry at all is continuously increasing, and marriage is postponed as much as possible (Hidasi, 2005). According to the study of the Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office (2018), almost half of the men surveyed wholly agreed or somewhat agreed to the quote: "Husband is expected to work outside the home, while the wife is expected to take on domestic duties". 37% of women shared this opinion. In the industrialised world, Japan has the most significant wage gap, in 2002 50% for the whole working population and 35% for full-time employees (Matsumoto, 2002).

Female expatriates may become a victim of gender stereotypes when working abroad. We talk about gender stereotyping when people form an opinion about a person based on his or her gender. In the expatriate context, it is common, that the host nationals' expectations about the appropriate female behaviour and actions are projected on the expatriates. So the female expatriates would be judged not on their job performance, but on their unfulfilled role as a wife as a mother (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998). Adler (1987) tried to debunk this myth and stated that female expatriates are seen as foreigners and not women, calling this theory *gaijin* (foreigner) *syndrome*. She argued that foreign women are not expected to act like locals, and local rules are not applicable to foreign women. However, the findings of this study would rather support an argumentation, that the North American female expatriate managers in Adler's (1987) study were not handled as a woman, because they were managers and most of them were not young.

Five participants mentioned that her gender had an impact on their work in Japan. Jane explained, that although she went to Japan to get new challenges, her boss did not put pressure on her and did not offer her the same amount of training, he offered to another foreigner, who was a man. Rose had a similar experience, as her boss until she was doing her job fine, was also not so interested in her and did not get any pressure. Jane also mentioned, that she heard her colleagues continually criticising a Japanese woman, who was ambitious. They did not understand, what she was doing in the company and why she was not fulfilling her role as a wife and a mother. Anna, when working in Japan was pitied by a Japanese manager when he learned that all the men, who were working at the department, where Anna works were taken. She was not offended by the comments of this man, as she recognised, he was genuinely worried about her and her future. He found the idea that Anna would not be able to find a husband simply too sad and worrying.

Ava was working with one of the top managers at her company, who happened to be a foreigner. None of the Japanese cared about her presence as she was an assistant, which role Japanese still often mistake for the position of a secretary, especially if a woman does it. Later she became a line manager, and the attitude of the Japanese changed. Ava believes they were shocked when they learned that a woman would bear a role at the same level they had. They needed some time to get used to this in general. No wonder, that at some companies, the idea of a female manager is still nowadays a novelty. The career chances of Japanese women, in general, are low and of those, who have children is even lower. In 2018, the proportion of female section managers is around 11%. Only 6,6% of the general managers and 3,7% of the executives are women in Japan (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2018; Goldman Sachs, 2014). In the early 2000s, more than 70% of the Japanese women, who had a position of section head and above, did not have children.

One of the reasons, why the number of managers in Japan is so low is that the job of a manager is in general not attractive for Japanese women. The long working hours were the main reasons for the Japanese women, why they were not interested. The less interested in a management position were young women, most probably due to the difficulties already mentioned. Older women on the other had a higher interest (Ng and Yik, 2012). Four participants of this study told that the job of the manager is not attractive for a woman in Japan. According to Anna, a good manager in Japan is the one, who is always available. Being available all the time is seldom possible if somebody has a family. Therefore the women, who assume a management role in Japan are most of the time single and childless.

In corporate Japan, similarly to the Western world, the first roles women occupied at companies were the role of secretaries. Their tasks regardless of their skills were rather simple (Ng and Yik, 2012). Although since then the customs changed a lot and at most of the companies even secretaries are not serving drinks, women are still often asked to carry out easy tasks, which are below their level. These include photocopying or serving drinks to customers (Taylor and Napier, 1996). It was very astonishing, that one of the participants mentioned, that this custom is still there. Julia said that she has never seen a man in the office offering tea to a customer, but all the women had to do it, including herself.

Several participants recommended, that foreign women, even if they know the Japanese culture, they should try to act as foreigners and not as Japanese. This way they can avoid to be treated like a Japanese woman.

8.2.4. Career and Family

Female expatriates are more often single (89%) than male expatriates (27%) (Fischlmayr and Kollinger, 2010). In the non-expatriate, but managerial context the situation is slightly better. In the UK, 93% of male managers are married compared to 58% of the female managers (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). In the present study, one of the traditional expatriates was single, in the case of the other the marital status was not mentioned. Four of the self-initiated expatriates, who were not trailers were also single; another three had been living in a relationship with a Japanese. The three trailers were living in a relationship. Looking at the relationship status and the age of the participants, the present study shows a more balanced picture, as around half of the participants were living in a relationship.

The female participants of the expatriate studies very seldom have dependent children. Tzeng (2006) studied gender issues and family concerns of traditional female expatriates in Taiwan. 76% of the 21 participants were childless. Adler's famous study (1987), which looked into the experiences of North American female expatriates in Asia, only three of the 52 participants had children. In this research, none of the interview participants had children when they had been working in Japan. One participant, Sophie, who accompanied her husband to Japan got a child when living in Japan and afterwards she quit her job. Balancing career and family is a challenge for women worldwide. Most of the female managers in the UK and France are either childless, or if they have children, they only have one (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). Women are often employed in lower-paying jobs worldwide, and one of the reason is their childbearing responsibility. They are for some time outside of work, often work part-time, therefore have lower salaries (Stier and Yaish, 2014).

Being a manager and being an expatriate and the same time a mother seems to be a very challenging task. Most of the women, who are on expatriate assignments could not imagine having a child due to its implications. Families, who were working abroad and had children though believed, that although it required a lot of organisation and sacrifice, it was still manageable. Having a child was a barrier, but not an unmanageable one. (Richardson and McKeena, 2003).

While in some countries it is normal, that dual-career couples (DCCs) share the responsibilities regarding childrearing, the situation of expatriates is often more complicated. As trailers mentioned, their partners only would have been allowed to take a very brief time to support in case of childbirth, due to expatriate contracts.

One of the reasons, Julia left Japan was, that she could not imagine having a child there. Working hours are long in Japan, and she believes, as women, who have children have to go home early, they have no chance at all to have a job, which is fulfilling. Another reason is, what Julia mentioned that a woman in Japan could also not expect any support from her partner, if he is working in Japan, again, due to the long working hours. She believes it was an outstanding experience to live and work in Japan when she was single, but she cannot imagine having children in Japan. Isabella also told that all female colleagues, who had exciting jobs were women without children. Ava also mentioned, that women, who were successful in their career in Japan, regardless if Japanese or foreigner were all childless. She believes women have to choose if they want to have children or a good career.

Women still face difficulties worldwide, combining their responsibilities at work and home. When a woman is a manager and an expatriate, she may face extra challenges, due to higher expectations. Although there are a lot of women worldwide, who still manage to combine these roles, Japan due to its working culture, meaning also long hours. Considering the challenges described above, a woman, who is ambitious may choose to remain single, either forever or until her career expectations are met. One of the participants, Ava highlighted, that in most of the European countries the situation was very similar in the past as how it is now in Japan. Women had to make a clear choice if they were interested in their career or they wanted to have a family. Matsumoto (2002) argues that the expectations of the young generation in Japan are also different. Ambitious young Japanese women also try to find and create a balance between work and family. Once their number is more significant, corporations will have to adjust to their expectations.

8.3. Advantages and Enablers

There was one advantage, *knowing the language and the culture*, which emerged from the interviews. Additionally, there were three enablers named by the participants: *acting like a non-Japanese/foreigner card*, *support from the boss and mentoring and networking*. Table 8-2. includes the links to the existing academic literature.

	Themes	Link in the Literature
	Advantages/Enablers	
1.	Knowing the language and the culture	Expatriate women with external focus had advantage if they spoke the Japanese language Expatriate women in upper management were not required to speak the language (Taylor and Napier, 1996) Not knowing the language adjustment is difficult (Peltokorpi, 2008) Knowing the language and the culture is an advantage (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010)
2.	Acting like a non-Japanese/ Foreigner card	Women in Japan are seen as foreigners and not as women (Adler, 1987)
3.	Support from the boss	The Japanese superior is supportive, offers guidance to the employees (Matsumoto, 2002)
4.	Mentoring, net-working	Women have less chances to get a good mentor, this has a negative impact on their career advancement (Insch et. al, 2008)

Table 8-2. Advantages and Enablers Linked to Academic Literature

8.3.1. Knowing the Language and the Culture

Taylor and Napier (1996) found language knowledge as one of the most essential factors for adjustment when studying North American expatriate women, who had been working in Japan. If an expatriate woman had to do with external clients, Japanese language knowledge was very essential. When somebody was more internally focused, it was less critical. Also, women who assumed higher ranks were not required to speak Japanese. Peltokorpi's (2008) findings show that expatriates in Japan, who were not able to speak the language had a hard time to adjust. Knowing the language and the culture had a positive impact on adjustment in the study of Froese and Peltokorpi (2010), too.

All participant in this research believed that knowing the Japanese language and the culture is an advantage, regardless if themselves belonged to this category or not. Two of the trailer participants, who accompanied their husbands to Japan did not have prior knowledge about the Japanese language and the culture. Ava did not speak the Japanese language very well, but she was still successful in Japan. She believes that the reason was, that although she did not know the language and the culture, she had working experience in her field. Sophie had minimal knowledge of Japanese, and this caused her some frustrations. She was not able to follow the conversations in Japanese during networking events, and therefore she stopped going to these parties altogether.

Three participants had a lower-intermediate or intermediate proficiency, one of them was a trailer, and two of them were self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). Katie had learned some Japanese before going to Japan, and she kept up with her studies in Japan. Knowing the language and the culture, she believes helped her to integrate at her work. She was also able to socialise with her colleagues, which helped her to build stronger relations. Rose also found her low-intermediate knowledge useful in her private life. At work, she was mainly speaking English. She considers herself lucky that her colleagues could speak very well English. Lily was partially working in English at university, but Japanese was the language of the communication with her Japanese colleagues. Without knowing the language, Lily would not have been able to get this job in Japan. All three of them knew the Japanese culture to some degree before going to Japan.

Seven of the twelve participants could speak Japanese fluently or almost fluently, including the two traditional expatriates (OEs). Similarly to Lily, they stated, that without Japanese language knowledge they would not have been able to get the position. Another thing they had in common, that they chose Japan as a country, where they wanted to go. Five of them did Japanese studies at university, most of them had several hobbies, which had to see with the Japanese language and the culture. Most of them described the chance that they could go to Japan as a dream.

Although all of them described the language and the cultural knowledge as something positive, five participants mentioned that knowing the language and the culture too well can turn into a challenge. If they know the culture, they most probably adapt their behaviour to the Japanese standards. However, this can lead to gender stereotyping, according to the participants. Their colleagues and managers will handle them as Japanese women, which can reduce their career chances.

8.3.2. Acting like a non-Japanese, Foreigner Card

The challenges expatriates face, when they are working in Japan and trying to do their job successfully were reviewed by many researchers (Adler, 1987; Taylor and Napier, 1996; Peltokorpi, 2008). Traditional expatriates (OEs) and trailers, who accompany them, are living and working in the country of assignment for a certain time, usually between 2-4 years. It is essential, that they can adjust to the new working environment as well as possible, that they can focus on their work. Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) are usually staying in the country for a longer time. In this study, SIEs stayed in Japan between 2,5 and 20 years. For some of them, it was enough to adjust their behaviour, style and mentality to the new host country for some time, for most of them Japan became their new home.

Most of the participants applied some strategy to avoid assimilation. Katie explained, that although most of the non-Japanese people adapted themselves to the Japanese working hours, she did not do so. When she was ready with her duties, she just went home. Sophie did the same. She was a trailer, accompanying her partner, so when she was ready with her tasks, she went home. What Sophie believes for Japanese staying long is an investment to their career. As she was not aspiring for one, she did not follow the example of the Japanese. She made adjustments in other areas. She was a very social person in Europe, but in Japan, the rules at work are different. People are not doing small talks. She also accepted, that her opinion will not be asked, for example at meetings. To avoid even more frustration, she decided to accept the situation as it is. Caroline speaks the Japanese language fluently and knows the rules of the Japanese culture very well. However, she decided to act as much as a foreigner. This strategy worked out for her well; she got support from her superiors. She knew that a lot of Japanese managers did not like her direct and assertive behaviour and criticised her directly or indirectly. She decided not to change though because otherwise, she believed she could not reach her career goals. Julia believes, there is only one way a non-Japanese woman can be successful in Japan, and that is when she keeps acting like a foreigner. Once a foreign woman starts acting like a Japanese, her colleagues and superiors will handle her as a Japanese woman. Ava thinks that the reason, why she managed to get a good position in Japan was, that she already had a certain level of experience at the headquarters of her company. She also had a good network.

Foreigners are required to respect the Japanese rules; however, Japanese know, that they are not aware of all of them or they do not know, how to use them properly. Therefore they allow foreigners to break them from time to time. Some participants are well aware of this and mentioned it as their excuse to keep behaving in a Western way. Anna explained that using this strategy, she could sometimes act or talk in

a certain way, which would have never be acceptable to Japanese people. However, as she was a foreigner, who still had to learn, her acts were tolerated. Samantha had the same experience. She used the strategy sometimes, too. She even felt that Japanese colleagues expected from her to react as a foreigner, to be direct and confront management. Because this is, what the Japanese also wanted to do, but they did not disrespect the rules of their own culture.

8.3.3. Support from the Boss

In the Japanese culture, bosses are expected to take care of the employees. This does not only include the work realm but the private, too. Japanese bosses are often acting as matchmakers for their employees to find a suitable partner (Matsumoto, 2002).

Although Jane would have wished for more challenges at her workplace in Japan, she highlighted, that she had an excellent relationship with her Japanese boss, who was very kind to her. Rose felt that her boss was not very much interested in her task until she was doing it fine, but on a personal level, he was very kind to her and tried to support her well-being. He accepted her request to take three weeks of holiday that she can visit her family in Europe, which was standard in her country, but not typical in Japan. Julia had two bosses in Japan. The relationship with one of them was not good at all. However, from the other one, she got much support. As she had some experience abroad, she could understand, how Julia felt like a foreigner, when working in Japan. She also highlighted, that Japanese bosses love to act like *sensei* (teacher), explain how things are working.

Anna had a good relationship with one of her superiors from upper management, who also acted as a mentor. He explained, what chances he sees for her in Japan and what she is required to do to reach her career goals. Lily said that her boss was like a second father to her. They are having regular contact, even now, that Lily is back to Europe. Lily felt, that her boss, who had a daughter her age was supporting her out of empathy, as she was alone in Japan without her family.

8.3.4. Mentoring, Networking

One of the career issues women seem to have is that they cannot find a mentor and establish a good network, which could help them reach their career goals (Insch et al., 2008). In companies, men have more frequently a chance to join some *old boy networks*, where senior men support the career of younger men, but these networks are not open for women (Linehan and Scullion, 2004).

Five participants with career ambitions mentioned, that networking is crucial if a non-Japanese woman would like to be successful in Japan. As Sophie explained, traditional expatriates (OEs) often have a good network and even a mentor already in the headquarters, but self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) have to build contacts by themselves. Although Japanese direct superiors seem to be very kind and supportive as described in the previous chapter, Ava explained, that they are most probably not able to provide excellent career support. Ava believes, if a non-Japanese woman is working hard, she can gain the respect of the Japanese, but due to the Japanese cultural norms, often this will not give a boost to her career. For the women, who are working for a foreign-based company, she would suggest, that they build a network either with the local or with the international foreign management. Caroline also emphasised that a good network is indispensable if one would like to achieve something in her career working in Japan. All five of them also highlighted the importance of mentoring. Anna had a Japanese mentor. This Japanese upper manager was very open-minded and believed in diversity, so she provided guidance and career support for Anna. The other four participants believed, a mentor, who is a foreigner can understand the career aspirations of non-Japanese women better and support them.

8.4. The Revised Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework based on the reviewed literature was presented in Chapter Five. The revised conceptual framework based on the findings of this study is shown in Figure 8-1. As explained, it was built up from three different boxes. This structure remains unchanged. One box describes the *Japanese working culture* from the perspective of expatriation, regardless of gender. The second box shows theories and ideas in the subtopic *Expatriate adjustment and satisfaction*.

Non-Japanese women working in Japanese organisations

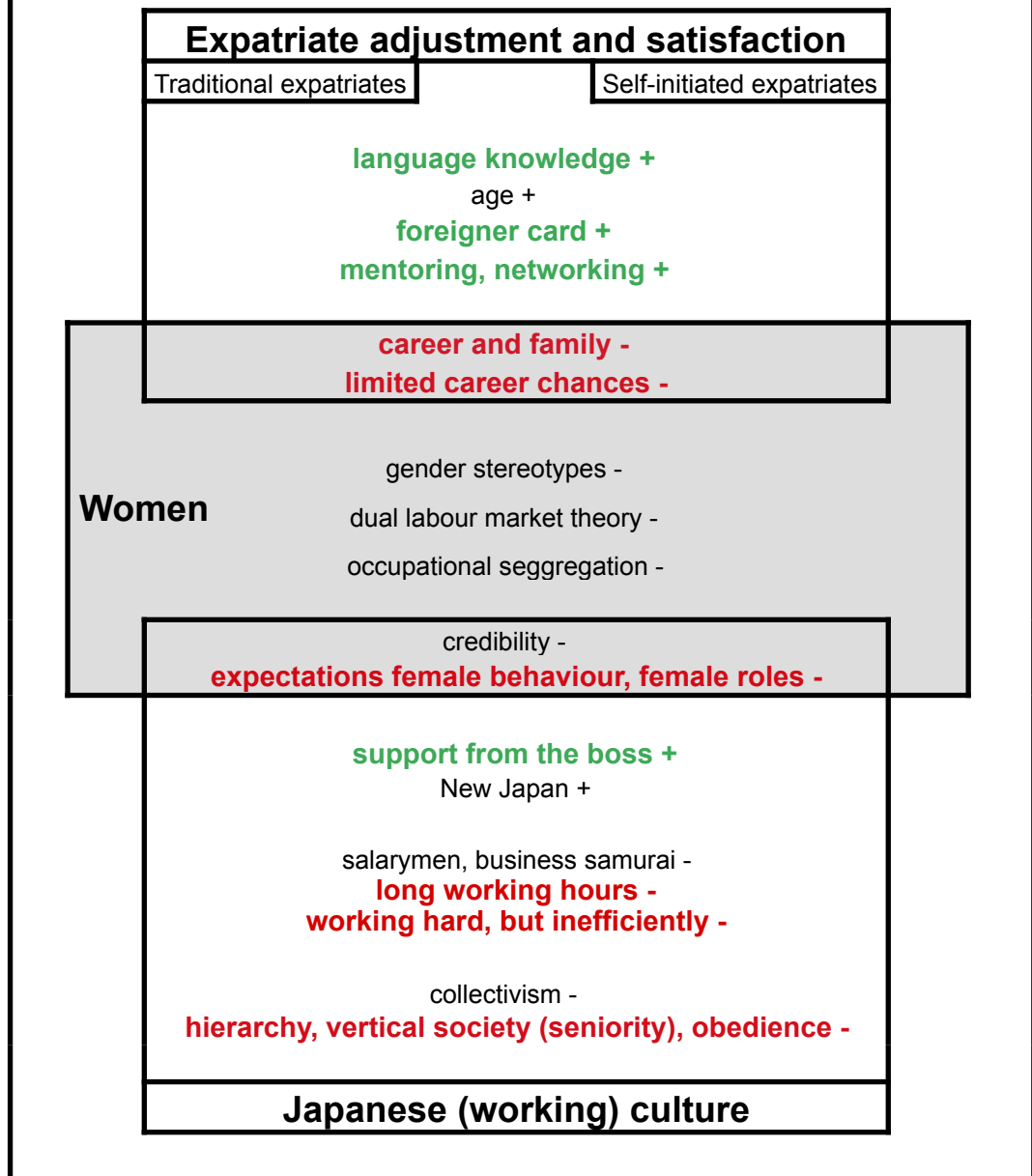


Figure 8-1. The Revised Conceptual Framework

The middle box, Women, summarises the most critical career challenges women face. The plus sign (+) indicates support and the minus sign (-) means a difficulty considering the adjustment or the satisfaction of expatriates. The most prominent findings are written in bold letters; the four main enablers for support are written in green and the six significant challenges in red.

8.4.1. The Japanese Working Culture

One of the main challenges, which emerged from the study was the *Japanese working style*, which included three sub-themes: *long working hours, working hard, but inefficiently and hierarchy, seniority and obedience*. The first two subtopics were included in the original conceptual framework with the term *salarymen, business samurai*. It refers to the Japanese prototype company worker, who is devoting himself to the company, works long working hours. (Sugimoto, 2002). The way, how Japanese make decisions (long process), how they support decision making (plenty of supporting material), how meetings are led (only to share information) is most probably a novelty for most of the non-Japanese women, who start to work in Japan. The third subtopic, the participants mentioned was *seniority, hierarchy and obedience*.

As Japan is a collectivist society, where the emphasis is on the group, rather on the individual, the individual's most important contribution is obedience to maintain the harmony and make sure, that a group as a whole move forward (Sugimoto, 2002). In the Confucianist value system, the base of respect is age. Age is also associated with experience and the salary and promotion system is based on seniority and not on performance. As the non-Japanese women, who were participating in this study were used to a performance-based system, found the Japanese practice frustrated.

The participants suggested that *support from the boss* was a factor, which helped their adjustment in Japan. Non-Japanese expatriate women appreciated the attention and care they got from their Japanese bosses, which helped them to feel better in their new environment.

More than half of the participants indicated that they heard and noticed, that the Japanese working style is changing. Japanese women and men have more and more opportunities to establish a better work-life balance than the generation of their parents. The *New Japan* concept is therefore partially confirmed, but the changes are according to the participants were slow.

8.4.2. Expatriate Adjustment and Satisfaction

Ten of the twelve participants in this study were self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), and only two of them were original expatriates (OEs). Therefore the findings of this study are principally illustrating the self-initiated expatriate experience and could not support with evidence theories, which argue, that OEs show higher satisfaction (Peltokorpi, 2008).

Previous studies suggest (Taylor and Napier, 1996 and Peltokorpi, 2008), that expatriate adjustment and satisfaction is positively influenced if the expatriate speaks the Japanese language or knows the culture. Only two participants could not speak Japanese at least at an intermediate level, and both of them believed, this was a disadvantage. One of them could not establish good connections with her coworkers, and the other one suggested to all expatriates, who go to Japan to invest in language learning. In case of the other participants, language knowledge was not an advantage but rather a prerequisite, that they could find a job in Japan. Although Japanese language knowledge is seen as an advantage, one participant highlighted, that in some cases it can also be a disadvantage. If a person knows the language and the culture very well, the Japanese colleagues will treat her as a Japanese. Due to gender discrimination, according to Julia, this can have a negative impact on her career. As already discussed, in the Confucian value system, higher age means higher respect. The participants of this study also believed, that for younger people it was more challenging to adapt, especially accept the Japanese promotion and remuneration system.

Adler (1987) believed that expatriate women would have difficulties working in Japan, because of patriarchy. However, her research participants found gender either not relevant or advantage due to visibility and curiosity. She described this concept as *gaijin syndrome*. Adler argued, that non-Japanese expatriate women were not seen as women in Japan, but as foreigners. My study did not confirm this finding. The young (below 35 years old) participants of this research were often victims of gender stereotyping. Her colleagues and bosses had an expectation towards their behaviour based on Japanese standards. There are two possible explanations for the reason behind, why the findings do not support Adler's theory. The research participants of Adler's study were expatriate female managers. Bearing in mind seniority, those women got respect from their coworkers because of their rank. So they were not treated as foreigners, but they were treated as managers. The other reason can be, that traditional expatriates (OEs) usually stay for three or four years in a country, while self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) stay longer. Three participants mentioned, that because of this, OEs are often handled by the Japanese differently. As they will leave in a definite time, the Japanese would ignore it, if their acts or beha-

viour are not appropriate according to the Japanese culture. Self-initiated expatriates can also benefit from such handling according to some participants in this study. One of the themes, which emerged, called *foreigner card* refers to this phenomenon. It is important to highlight, that the participants did not believe, this advantage given to expatriates were only including women, but it was relevant for both genders.

One of the enablers, which according to the participants supported the career chances of non-Japanese expatriate women was *mentoring and networking*. In the academic literature, one of the barriers women face in career development is, that they have more limited networking chances than men and they seldom have a mentor (Linehan and Scullion, 2004). Five participants in this study emphasised the importance of a good network too, and two of them mentioned mentoring as an enabler.

8.4.3. Women

Although none of the participants had children, when working in Japan, seven of them mentioned, that they believe in Japan it is almost impossible to combine *career and family*, because of the Japanese working style. So considering the career advancement of the participants, actually not having children made their adjustment easier.

In the conceptual framework, the theory of *expatriate glass ceiling* was included, referring to a phenomenon, that women are not getting expatriate assignments. As the majority of the participants in this study were self-initiated expatriates, this concept could not be illuminated by this research. However, one of the main challenges, the participants of this study mentioned was *limited career chances*. Eleven participants believed that the career chances for women are very limited in Japan, regardless of being Japanese or non-Japanese. *Sticky floor* is a term that describes the situation when women are not being promoted, they are not on a career track, they do not get the necessary training and are not being challenged to grow. Five participants described situations, which could be associated with the term sticky floor. Four participants, considering Japanese standards were successful in their job. They were getting stimulating tasks, promotions, admissions to management programme. However, the speed of their advancement as they argued was not comparable to their European peers. They also believed, although they had an exciting job, they were underpaid.

In contrary to Adler's (1987) findings, nine participants in this study reported gender-based stereotyping. The theme emerged from this experience was called *female behaviours, female roles*. Non-Japanese women working in Japan mentioned that they were told they are too pushy, loud, they complain too much. Their behaviour did not resemble the expected behaviour from Japanese women.

8.5. Summary

This chapter had two main goals. One was to present the findings of the research, based on the data which was presented in Chapter Seven, linking them to the existing academic literature. Table 8-1. summarised the challenges, non-Japanese expatriate women had, when working in Japan. Table 8-2. shows the enablers, which supported them in the adjustment and to reach their career goals. Both tables include the links to the literature. The second goal of this chapter was to present the revised conceptual framework, included in Figure 8-1. After reviewing the literature, in Chapter Five, I presented the conceptual framework. The revision of the framework in this chapter showed, how my findings modify the list of theories and concepts, what I presented earlier.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. Introduction

In Chapter Seven, I showed the data I collected during the twelve phenomenological interviews I carried out, including the main themes, which emerged from the data. The presented themes were included in two main categories: challenges non-Japanese expatriate women faced when working in Japan and enablers, which helped non-Japanese women during their time in Japan. In Chapter Eight, I discussed the findings, and I established connections with the existing academic literature regarding Japanese business culture and the challenges expatriates face in Japan, with a particular focus on gender. I looked again at the conceptual framework, which I presented in Chapter Four after reviewing the academic literature. I adapted the framework based on the findings of this study. In this chapter, based on the discussions in the previous chapter and the revised conceptual framework, I highlight the contributions of knowledge of this present study.

Chapter Nine includes eight sections. In section two, I summarise the findings of the study. The third section highlights, how this research contributes to knowledge. The answers to the research questions follow this. In section four, I give recommendations to multinational companies, who employ non-Japanese women and to female expatriates, who are working in Japan or who are considering it. The fifth section discusses the limitations of the study, followed by section six, which deals with recommendations for future research. In section seven, conclusions close the chapter and the thesis.

9.2. Summary of Findings

In this thesis, I identified four major challenges non-Japanese women are facing, when working in Japan, alongside with four enablers, which supported them either in adjustment or in career advancement. The only studies, which were mainly focusing on the expatriate experiences of non-Japanese women, who are working in Japan were done by Adler (1987) and Taylor and Napier (1996). Although some researchers were looking into adjustment and career success of expatriates in Japan (Peltokorpi, 2007; Peltokorpi, 2008 and Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010), their focus was not on gender.

There are four significant challenges the interview participants mentioned. The first, most often stated challenge was the *Japanese working culture* with three subtopics. The first one was *long working hours*, which is a core element of the Japanese working style. Japanese companies still emphasise a presence culture than a performance culture. More than half of the participants mentioned, they were often exhausted, one of them also had a burnout. The Japanese working style does not make a good work-life balance possible, so it is the main reason, why participants also believed they could not combine work and career in Japan. The second mentioned topic was *ineffectiveness*. Non-Japanese expatriate women, who participated in this study think, that the Japanese are working hard, but rather ineffective. Decision-making is too slow, there are too many meetings, and Japanese colleagues often redo tasks because of maximalism. The last topic they mentioned as difficulty was *hierarchy and seniority*. Being young in Japan was very challenging for most of the participants, as the decisions were always taken only by top managers. In meetings, only the boss or senior manager talked and they also had to follow the instructions of senior coworkers. Although Japanese working culture was a challenge for the participants, four of them decided to leave Japan because of the *limited career chances*. Two of them believed, they were discriminated against, because they were foreigners. Another two were not put on a career track, because their bosses knew, they were trailers and eventually would return to their home country. The other participants mentioned young age as a barrier to more chances in Japan. They did not believe their limited chances had to see with their gender, but with their young age. The third major difficulty mentioned had to see with *expectations about female behaviour and gender roles*. In contrary to Adler's findings (1987), the participants of this research felt most of the Japanese saw them as women, and they felt victims of gender stereotyping. The reason behind may be, that most of them were either not managers or not top managers and young. The last difficulty is the combination of *career and family* in Japan. Due to the expectations of the company regarding the constant presence, lack of support from the partner and so on, the participants believed it would have been difficult to combine family and career. All of them were childless when they had been working in Japan.

There are four enablers, which emerged from the data regarding adjustment and career success. The first is the *language knowledge and culture*. Ten participants knew the Japanese culture and had a certain Japanese language proficiency. One of the participants, who did not know the language had difficulties because she could not socialise with her colleagues. Ten participants said that in their case the language knowledge was not only an advantage but a requirement to be able to work in Japan. One pitfall though, they mentioned was, that the more they knew the language and the culture, the higher risk they run that they would fall victim to gender stereotyping. The second enabler was *acting like a non-Japanese, foreigner*

card. Some of the participants mentioned, that Japanese often accepted it, that they acted like foreigners. If the participants wanted to be more outspoken or direct, they even pretended they did not know the appropriate Japanese behaviour, to be able to get away with their behaviour. The *Japanese boss is very supportive* according to the participants, and this helped them in the adjustment in Japan. Some of them mentioned they have a parent-daughter like relationship with their former bosses. Although their bosses helped them to feel good at work, the participants mentioned the importance of *networking and mentors*. They suggested that non-Japanese women should try to build a good network, if applicable, with foreign managers. These foreign managers in contrary with the Japanese will be able to understand their ambitions and motivations and support them in their career.

9.3. Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis contributes to knowledge by narrowing the gap in the academic literature on the experiences of non-Japanese women working in Japan, especially considering the expatriate experiences of self-initiated expatriate women. It highlights possible challenges female expatriates may come across when working in Japan and it also deals with the enablers non-Japanese women mentioned, which helped them to either adjust better in Japan or which supported their professional career. Considering a broader perspective, this study also contributes to knowledge by adding to the literature about self-initiated expatriates and advances the understanding about the female expatriate experience in general to the existing literature in international human resource management (IHRM), especially in the area of cross-border assignments and expatriation.

9.3.1. Answering the Research Questions

In this subchapter, I answer the original research questions from Chapter One. I link them to the academic literature and the findings and highlight their contribution to knowledge for non-Japanese women, who had been working in Japanese organisations.

Q1. What are the experiences of non-Japanese women who work in Japan?

As visualised in the original (Figure 5-1.) and the revised conceptual framework (Figure 8-1.), three significant factors shape the experiences of non-Japanese women, who work in Japan. Table 9-1. summarises the three most important components, which has an impact on the experience.

Research questions	Identified themes	Contribution to knowledge
Q1. What are the experiences of non-Japanese women who work in Japan?	Japanese working culture	Reinforces findings that one of the most important challenges non-Japanese female expatriates experiences were related to the Japanese culture and the cultural difference (Peltokorpi, 2008; Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010; Caligiuri and Tung, 1999)
	Women	Did not confirm the findings of Adler (1987) regarding <i>gaijin syndrome</i> , that expatriate women are treated as foreigners and not as women. Women of higher age and higher rank have less issues to gain credibility, but young women, who are not (senior) managers are victims of gender stereotyping.
	Expatriate adjustment and satisfaction	Confirms findings in the literature that the experiences of original expatriates (OEs) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) may differ (Peltokorpi, 2008). Advances knowledge in the topic of self-initiated expatriate(SIE) research in Japan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by giving recommendations how to improve their adjustment (support from the boss) - by giving recommendations how to improve their career chances in Japan (networking, mentoring) - that language knowledge is key and can be even a prerequisite for expatriation. - by giving recommendations how to avoid rigid Japanese behavioural rules (foreigner card)

Table 9-1. Contribution to Knowledge - Experiences

As the participants of this study were mainly self-initiated expatriates (ten out of twelve), so the findings are illustrating the experiences of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs).

The most important factor, which shaped their experiences was the Japanese working culture. This finding confirms previous studies (Peltokorpi, 2007, 2008; Caligiuri and Tung, 1999, Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010). The participants believed that the Japanese were often working ineffectively. They organised many unnecessary meetings, reworked tasks too often and so on. The decision-making process was prolonged and the organisation rigid and hierarchic.

The second important element was gender. The study did not confirm previous findings in the literature that gender was an advantage (Adler, 1987, Taylor and Napier, 1996, Caligiuri and Tung, 1999) or neutral (Taylor and Napier, 1996). The participants of this study reported gender-based stereotyping. Their Japanese colleagues and managers expected them to behave in a feminine way and they assumed, that foreign women thought the same way about career, as most of the Japanese women do.

The last component was expatriate adjustment and satisfaction, which describes, how well non-Japanese women adjust to their new work environment and how satisfied they are in Japan with their work situation. This study presents evidence that SIEs make different experiences than OEs. SIEs are not benefitting from any additional support from the company, such as extra financial support, housing, insurance and so on. However, SIEs have another kind of benefits, such as language and cultural knowledge, which helps their adjustment. What they do not have is an opportunity for networking and a mentor to support their career advancement, which OEs do have.

Only one of the participants is living in Japan at the moment. All interviewees mentioned, that private life in Japan is extraordinary, bearing in mind the beauty of the landscape, the opportunities big cities offer, the food and the comfort of life. However, half of the participants said, they do not want to return to Japan, even if they get an opportunity. The main reason was that work life is very exhausting and work-life balance is much worse than in their home countries. Most of them mentioned long working hours, as an issue, followed by the Japanese business culture. Another aspect was career advancement. The participants, who do not want to return believe, that compared to their home country, their career advancement would be slower, or they could not reach the same positions in Japan as in their home countries. The other half of the participants, who could imagine working in Japan again highlighted that it very much depends on the position they would be offered and they would like to return as traditional expatriates (OEs) and not self-initiated expatriates (SIEs).

Q2. What are the difficulties non-Japanese women face when working in Japan?

The main difficulties emerged from the study were *Japanese working style, limited career chances, expectations female behaviour, female role and career and family*. The themes and their contribution to knowledge are summarised in Table 9-2.

Research question	Identified themes	Contribution to knowledge
Q2. What are the difficulties non-Japanese women face when working in Japan?	Japanese working style	<p>Confirms the findings of existing studies on the experiences of expatriates, who had been working in Japan, that adjustment in Japan is difficult due to collectivism and verticality (Peltokorpi, 2008) and patriarchy (Caligiuri and Tung, 1999).</p> <p>Furthermore, that cultural distance has a negative impact on the satisfaction of the expatriates (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010)</p>
	<i>Long working hours</i>	
	<i>Japanese working hard but inefficient</i>	
	<i>Hierarchy, Seniority, Obedience</i>	
	Limited career chances	<p>Advances knowledge about the career chances of self-initiated expatriate women (SIEs) in Japan, providing evidence, that self-initiated expatriates do experience gender stereotyping.</p> <p>Reinforces the role of age (higher age, better career chances) due to seniority (Taylor and Napier, 1996).</p> <p>Confirms that women may have difficulties to establish credibility (given their young age) (Napier and Taylor, 2002)</p> <p>Confirms that the experiences of traditional expatriates (OEs) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) differ.</p>
	Expectations female behaviour/female roles	Did not confirm Adler's (1987) theory called <i>gaijin syndrome</i> (expatriate women are treated as foreigners and not as women). Women of higher age and higher rank may have less issues to gain credibility, but young women, who are not (senior) managers may be victims of gender stereotyping.
	Career and family	As in this research all participants were childless, they only described their experiences about others. More research is needed to understand if for female expatriates combining career and family in Japan is a challenge or not.

Table 9-2. Contribution to Knowledge - Difficulties

Q3. Which factors can help non-Japanese women to be successful in their job in Japan?

There is one advantage, which emerged as a theme from the research: knowing the language and the culture. Furthermore, there are three enablers, which research participants highlighted: *acting like a non-Japanese, foreigner card, support from the boss and mentoring, networking*. Table 9-3. is summarising the contributions to knowledge considering enablers.

Research questions	Identified themes	Contribution to knowledge
Q3. Which factors can help non-Japanese women to be successful in their job in Japan?	Knowing the language and the culture	<p>Confirms findings in academic literature that language knowledge is key to the adjustment of expatriates, who are working in Japan (Taylor and Napier, 1996; Peltokorpi, 2007; Peltokorpi, 2008)</p> <p>Advances knowledge in the topic of self-initiated expatriate(SIE) research in Japan with supporting findings, that language knowledge is not only an advantage, but often an expectation as self-initiated foreigners are required to have similar skills as local employees.</p>
	Acting like a non-Japanese, Foreigner card	<p>Did not confirm Adler's (1987) theory called <i>gaijin syndrome</i> (expatriate women are treated as foreigners and not as women). Women of higher age and higher rank may have less issues to gain credibility, but young women, who are not (senior) managers may be victims of gender stereotyping.</p> <p>Advances knowledge in the topic of self-initiated expatriate (SIE) research in Japan, giving recommendations for self-initiated expatriates, how to avoid rigid Japanese behavioural rules.</p>
	Support from the boss	Advances knowledge in the topic of self-initiated expatriate (SIE) research in Japan, giving recommendations for self-initiated expatriates, to rely on the support from their (Japanese) bosses, as this can help them in their adjustment in the Japanese working culture.
	Mentoring, networking	<p>Reinforces academic findings regarding to the importance of networking and mentoring for women.</p> <p>Advances knowledge in the topic of self-initiated expatriate (SIE) research in Japan, giving recommendations for self-initiated expatriates, how to improve their career chances in Japan.</p>

Table 9-3. Contribution to Knowledge - Enablers

9.4. Recommendations

This subchapter highlights the practical significance of the study by listing recommendations for self-initiated female expatriates, who are working in Japan or who are considering it and for multinational companies, which employ non-Japanese self-initiated expatriate women.

In 2008, PwC examined the expectation of work of more than four thousand Generation Y (people born between 1980-2000) graduates. Almost 80% of the interviewees (also 80% of the two thousand female participants) stated that they were planning to work outside their home country during their career. 70% of them expected to use other languages than their mother tongue during their career. Japan was the 8th most desired country, where millennials wanted to go (PwC, 2011). While in the past finding a job in another country was considered complicated, as the findings of Taylor and Napier (1996) suggests, already in the middle of the 90s most of the North American female expatriate women working in Japan were self-initiated expatriates (SIEs).

9.4.1. Recommendation for Expatriate Women

The recommendations for expatriate women are included in Table 9-4. The majority of the self-initiated expatriates, who participated in this study, did not accidentally ended up in Japan, but they were looking for opportunities to go there. The base of this motivation was often an interest for the language and the culture. The findings suggest, that if a non-Japanese woman has a keen interest to go to work in Japan, but at the same time she is ambitious, she should try to get employed by a foreign-based company. The chances are higher that those foreign-based companies have a performance-based evaluation system. The same time such companies are often led by foreign management, who can support the career of talented young people if they are showing good performance. Given the listed challenges by the participants, a non-Japanese female expatriate has to be ready to accept though, that there is a higher probability, that the career chances she may have in Japan are more limited than the ones she may have in her home country.

The most important enabler for adjustment and career success according to the findings was the knowledge of the Japanese language and the culture. Non-Japanese women, who are interested to work in Japan should educate themselves about the Japanese culture and learn the language at a high proficiency.

Recommendations	Advices	Challenges to implementation
Self-initiated expatriate women should try to work at foreign based companies in Japan, if they are interested in career building	Try to get employed by a foreign based company	-
Self-initiated expatriate women should have a high degree of knowledge about the Japanese culture and the language	Try to educate yourself about the culture and learn the language at a high level	The Japanese language is one of the most difficult languages to learn for English speakers
Self-initiated expatriate women should try to preserve their foreigner status	Respect the rules of the Japanese culture, but do not blend-in completely	Possible conflicts with Japanese colleagues and management
(Self-initiated) expatriate women should consider working in Japan at the beginning of their career, when they are most probably childless or at a later phase, when they do not have dependent children anymore	Do a conscious life and career planning, if possible	Timing of the assignment may not always only depend on the person (unexpected opportunities, career of the partner)
(Self-initiated) expatriate women should build a good network and get a mentor, if interested in building a career.	Try to build a good network, if possible including foreign management. This way try to find a mentor, who will support your career.	Expatriate women may not have the opportunity to establish contact with foreign top-management
(Self-initiated) expatriate women should build a good network with fellow women for better work-life adjustment in Japan	Network with fellow expatriate women	Expatriate women may not have the opportunity to contact other women with similar background

Table 9-4. Recommendations for Expatriate Women

Learning the Japanese language is hard; it is considered to be one of the most difficult languages in the world for English speakers (Sugimoto, 2002).

Regardless if a non-Japanese woman is a traditional or a self-initiated expatriate, she should try to preserve her identity as a foreigner. Due to their local contracts, as also explained by the participants of the research, self-initiated expatriates may fall victims to gender stereotyping.

Japanese colleagues and managers may have the same expectations from them as they have from local staff. If they blend-in, they will not be treated differently and will not benefit from the special foreign woman treatment, described as *gaijin syndrome* by Adler (1987). The support of her Japanese boss, if offered, can help non-Japanese women in their adjustment in Japan. However, according to the participants networking with foreign management and a mentor are things, which can increase the career opportunities of foreign women.

As the findings of the study suggest, in Japan, it may be challenging to combine work and family, due to the Japanese working practices, especially the long working hours and the presence culture. Non-Japanese women, who would like to work in Japan for some time, should adjust the timing of their assignment to a life phase when they still do not have children or their children are not dependent anymore. This way they can avoid a negative impact from a possibly stressful private life on their equally stressful working life.

The importance of a good network and possibly a mentor is stressed in the academic literature in various contexts. First of all, having a good network and a mentor is mentioned as essential to the advancement of career-oriented women. In the expatriate literature, its importance is also emphasised. Five participants in this study also mentioned it as the key to career advancement for (self-initiated) expatriate women. The literature suggests that in ideal case a mentor should be a woman, who could offer additional support sharing with the mentee her own obstacles and challenges from the past.

The participants of this study suggested that networking with Japanese colleagues can help to understand the Japanese working culture and increase understanding. However, they may not understand the challenges non-Japanese face, when working in Japan. All participants mentioned, that spending time with other non-Japanese women helped them to reduce stress, as they could discuss the challenges they all face.

9.4.2. Recommendation for MNCs

Table 9-5. summarises the recommendations of this research to multinational companies (MNCs). There are various reasons, why MNCs decide to send an expatriate on an assignment. One of the reasons can be that they want to broaden the experience of their talents from the headquarters. Another reason may be, that at their foreign subsidiary there is a position, which cannot be filled in by a local and they an expert, who can take this position or build up knowledge there.

Bearing in mind the findings of this research, one of the most critical enablers for adjustment and success was *knowing the language and the culture*. Taylor and Napier (1996) believe, that language knowledge is one of the most crucial adjustment factors for expatriates, who are working in Japan. Peltokorpi (2007, 2008) suggests that MNCs should invest in the pre-departure language learning of expatriates.

Recommendations	Advices	Challenges to implementation
MNCs should heavily invest in the language and cultural training of expatriates	Regardless of their gender and the type of expatriation, provide cultural and language trainings	Even language training is provided, an expatriate may not be able to learn the language (lack of time, skills)
MNCs should expand the pool of candidates of the organisation by contracting more self-initiated expatriates in Japan	Try to contract foreigners in Japan	Possible implementation difficulties due to lack of support from local human resource managers
MNCs may consider to increase the number of expatriate women, to initiate a change in organisation culture	Try to contract more non-Japanese women to support organisational change	Possible implementation difficulties due to lack of support from local management Possible difficulties finding candidates
MNCs should invest in the talent management of the self-initiated expatriate women in Japan	Talent management (individual career counselling) focusing on self-initiated expatriates Coaching and mentoring, if possible by female managers, who had similar experiences in the past	Possible implementation difficulties due to lack of support from local human resource managers

Table 9-5. Recommendations for MNCs

Considering the academic literature and the findings of this study, I believe, MNCs should invest in Japanese language training regardless of the type of expatriation and encourage their foreign employees to learn the language as good as possible. However, the effort of the MNCs alone is not enough. More than half of the participants in this study explained, that although original expatriates (OEs) in their companies are provided with a free Japanese language training, most of them never reach the intermediate level. The reasons behind may be, that they do not have time and they do not have an interest.

Expatriate assignments are very expensive for the companies, including special compensation packages, travel, housing, insurances, school fees of children and so on. In cases, when some particular expertise is needed, but it is not a requirement to know the organisation well, to reduce costs, MNCs could consider employing self-initiated expatriates. As the existing academic literature suggests (Peltokorpi, 2008), self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) can function as a bridge between Japanese and Western staff and management, as they most of the times have a very high understanding of both cultures and in most cases, they also speak the Japanese language. Therefore MNCs should evaluate if SIEs can help them to reach their targets abroad. If yes, they should consider to broaden their candidate pool and contract more self-initiated expatriates in Japan.

Increasing the number of (self-initiated) expatriate women, MNCs can speed-up organisational change regarding the acceptance and development of female leaders. The academic literature suggests that Japanese women also have better career chances at foreign companies, where gender stereotyping may be not prevalent (Taylor and Napier, 1996). As suggested by the participants, the Japanese working culture is changing, but very slowly. However, MNCs can implement measures, which can bring short-term benefits by changing the organisational culture.

According to the academic literature and the research participants, MNCs take care of the talent management of their original expatriates (OEs) and the trailers (accompanying partners of OEs). However, self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) are seldom offered any additional support. If SIEs have an importance for the companies, MNCs should consider investing in the talent management of them in Japan.

9.5. Limitations

It has to be recognised that qualitative research is value laden, where personal values shape and influence the choices made at each stage of the research process, for example, the study was conducted from a western perspective and within the context of non-Japanese literature sources and theories. As such, the findings are contextualised by non-Japanese literatures when presenting what non-Japanese women described as the advantages and disadvantages of working in a Japanese culture and providing recommendations to perspective western women wishing to work in Japan how to inform their career choices within this environment. When contextualising workplaces in Japan it is suggested that an alternative lens could have been used. For example, research done by a Japanese woman on female western expatriates using organisational multi-case study research, and mixed methods data collection might illuminate alternative findings. Research using ethnography as methodology or a feminist research lens could also lead to further insights. What follows are more specific limitations of the study.

First, as indicated previously, was the dearth of academic literature in relation with the topic. Although I extended the literature review to studies concerning female expatriates and to other Asian countries, the number of available sources was nevertheless limited. However, those studies that were found to be of relevance suggested that there was a need to fill the gap in the literature, and a further need for research as discussed in the literature review chapter.

Second, this being a phenomenological study, and considering the limited number of participants who took part in the research, generalisations cannot be made. Rather, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, qualitative research seeks the transferability of findings that are intended to illuminate the lived experience of the participants so as to build upon and contributing to the existing knowledge of other studies.

Third, as I interpreted the data, it may be contaminated with my personal bias i.e. value-ladenness. To ensure the internal validity of the study, I carried out a clear and transparent research design to explain how I carried out the study. I also adopted the reflexive turn, whereby I was aware how and why research choices were made. Furthermore, the findings are contextualised with existing studies as a mean to ensure external validity.

Fourth, it has to be noted, that the composition of the participants could have a strong influence on the findings. Although the participants are from different countries and they had been working at different companies, it is recognised, as in all types of qualitative studies, that alternative findings may have been found amongst a different group of participants.

Fifth, because interviews were used, researcher-participant power relationships must be guarded against. The participants may have felt obliged to have given me a response they thought I wished to hear: a selective account or interpretation. To avoid any power imbalance I created an accommodating environment and establish trust. By asking further questions and encouraging the participants to talk about their own experience I tried to mitigate participant bias.

9.6. Future Research

The objective of this research was to describe the experiences of non-Japanese women by conducting phenomenological interviews. The twelve participants offered new insights into topics like female expatriations, ten of them especially into the experiences of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). However, considering the limitations of this study, further studies could strengthen its findings.

The data collected during the research suggest that the experience of SIEs and original expatriates (OEs) differ. One of the most significant findings was that the data did not confirm Adler's (1987) theory about *gaijin syndrome*, that female expatriates in Japan are not seen as women, but rather as foreigners. The participants of my study did experience *gender stereotyping*, which they believed limited their career

chances in Japan. It is not clear if the findings contradicted each other due to the different type of expatriation (OEs vs. SIEs) or because of other factors like age and rank. As in my study, only two participants out of twelve were traditional expatriates, these differences could not be juxtaposed. Future research including both OEs and SIEs as participants could test these findings on a larger scale.

Another aspect, what further research could test is how (self-initiated) expatriate women can balance career and family. All participants in these study were childless, and one of the challenges they mentioned was to combine their job with their private life. They stressed their fear, that once they would have children, they either could not keep working in Japan or not have challenging tasks.

This study aimed to introduce the experience of non-Japanese expatriate women, who are working in Japanese organisations. However, among the four challenges and four enablers identified, which had an impact on the experience of non-Japanese expatriate women, only three of the difficulties were gender-specific: limited career chances, career and family, and expectations female behaviour and female roles. Building on some of the findings of this study, an interesting aspect would be to check, what are the experiences of self-initiated expatriates in Japan, including both genders.

This research was focusing on Japan, but further studies could test, if its findings are also valid in other countries, which have a similar cultural background, considering, for example, Hofstede's dimensions (South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong).

9.7. Summary

Despite its limitations, this research reached its aims and objectives. It contributes to the International Human Resource Management (IHRM) literature, advancing the understanding about the experiences of non-Japanese women working in Japanese organisations. This chapter started with the summary of the findings of the study. It explained the themes, which emerged from the data, summarising the challenges non-Japanese women had when working in Japan and highlighting the enablers, which helped them in the adjustment in Japan or which increased their career chances. The subchapter contribution to knowledge includes the conceptual implications for non-Japanese women working in Japan, providing a link to the existing academic literature. Answering the research questions it highlights, which concepts and theories are supported by this study and which not. It also discusses the unique findings of this study. In this chapter, the recommendations of the thesis are also

included. First, I present the recommendation for female expatriates, especially for self-initiated expatriates, who are working in Japan or are considering to work there. Then I give recommendations to multinational companies, who are operating in Japan. The limitations of the study follow the recommendations. Bearing in mind the findings and the limitations, I include suggestions for future research.

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Appendix 1. Participant Information Sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Section A: The Research Project

1. Title of the project: Non-Japanese Women Working in Japanese Organisations: A Phenomenological Study
2. Purpose and value of study: The aim of the study is to learn from real life experiences of foreign women who had been working in Japan.
3. Invitation to participate: I would like to invite you to be part of this study participating in an interview and telling me about your experiences.
4. Who is organising the research: This research is organised by Nikoletta Molnár, a research student at Anglia Ruskin University.
5. What will happen to the results of the study: The results of the study will be disseminated as a PhD dissertation by Nikoletta Molnár. The researcher may also use the data to publish a journal article, a conference paper or a book. The data collected during this research will not be transferred to other researcher.
6. Source of funding for the research: The researcher (Nikoletta Molnár) is funding this study.
7. Contact for further information: The researcher: Nikoletta Molnár,
The supervisor: Dr Andrew Armitage,
The university: Anglia Ruskin University, Lord Ashcroft International Business School, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ, United Kingdom,
<http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/faculties/aibs.html>

Section B: Your Participation in the Research Project

1. You have been invited to take part in this interview as I would like to collect data from non-Japanese women who had been working in Japan in the last fifteen years.
2. You can refuse to take part in this study without any consequences.
3. You can withdraw at any time returning the form you can find at the bottom of the Participant Consent Form without any consequences and any further explanations about your withdrawal necessary.
4. If you agree to take part you will be invited to an interview in person or via Skype. After answering all your questions related to the research the interview will start using audio-recording. You will have to discuss topics related to your personal working experiences in Japan and general opinions. The discussion will be guided by questions. The interview session will take about 1 or 1,5 hours. After stopping the audio-recording further questions related to the research are welcome. In the later stage of the study when the researcher makes data out of the interview and she has findings, she may contact you again for further support. (It depends on the findings how many participants from the initial interviews will be invited to participate in the later stage if any). The researcher may ask you if you are available for a second interview where you should read certain parts of her findings and tell give her feedback.
5. Please mind that recalling memories and personal stories during the interview, although not expected, some participants may become emotionally distressed. The researcher tries to minimise this risk and should it occur, the interview will be immediately suspended.
6. Agreement to participate in this research should not compromise your legal rights should something go wrong.
7. Would you participate in person, the research will take place as much as possible at a convenient location for the participant upon discussion, but the participation may involve some travelling to the interview. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed.

8. Besides the opportunity to discuss personal experiences, gender and career topics with the researcher, there are no other clear benefits (e.g. financial) from taking part.
9. The data collected from the participants will be stored in anonymised format. Data stored on a computer will be password protected, encrypted and only the researcher will have access to it. All audio-recorded material and transcription will be destroyed once the researcher will have submitted her PhD dissertation.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS TO KEEP, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF
YOUR CONSENT FORM

Appendix 2. Participant Consent Form



Participant Consent Form

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

Title of the project: Non-Japanese Women Working in Japanese Organisations: A Phenomenological Study

Main investigator and contact details: Nikolett Molnár,

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded and the researcher will make every effort to remove all identifying information relating to participants.
4. I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded.
5. I understand that because of the character of the research, direct quotes from the interviews may be used (in English).
6. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
7. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to the University¹ processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print).....Signed.....

Date.....

Name of witness (print).....Signed.....

Date.....

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

¹ "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its partner colleges

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: Non-Japanese Women

Name
Adjustment
Interest for Japan besides work
Japanese language, culture
Kendo
Language knowledge
English knowledge
Supporting factors
Type of expatriateness
Discriminating locals for expats
Discrimination not being Japanese, but SIE
independent
OE vs SIE
traditional expatriate
Being a woman as advantage
Being a woman as neutral
Curiosity
Extra respect
Foreigner card
No expectation - higher recognition
Career Japanese women
Difficulties
Career exclusion of women
Exclusion as a foreigner
Honne Tatemae
Japan is Nr 1.
Japanese logic
Obedience
Relationship over common sense
Work life balance
Living in Japan forever

Segregated gender socialisation and roles
Different behaviour foreigners vs Japanese
Division of genders
Expectation - female behaviour
Expectation - male behaviour
Men are preferred for business
Surprising after starting to work
Working style
Ambience
Foreigners' working style
Ineffective meetings
Japanese working hard but ineffective
Long working hours
Normal working hours
Salarymen, corporate samurai
Japanese boss
Japanese style
Seniority
Sleeping on meetings
Socialising
Working with Japanese men
Working with Japanese women

Working in Japanese Organisations: A Phenomenological Study

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

S i g n e d : _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3. Unstructured Coding