

# Excellent Graduation Theses of 2019\*

## The Impact of the JET programme on Participants and Japan's Future

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### Introduction

One day, my English teacher at high school said he wanted to quit his job. I was very shocked. He was from America and came to Japan to work as an ALT, Assistant Language Teacher. The reason why he wanted to quit the job was because both the Japanese-English teacher and he had different ideas and sense of values, and it was difficult to cooperate with each other. Then, when a year passed since he started his work at school, he went back to the U.S.. I still remember that I was disappointed and irritated that I was helpless. I couldn't do anything for him.

I have met many ALTs in my school life and got huge support from them for my English learning. I appreciate all previous ALTs and what they have done for me. To make the working environment more fascinating, in which they can keep working without feeling stressed and making bad memories, and also to increase the number of international teachers to accommodate to globalization in Japan, I would like to think deeply about working conditions for them. This time I focus on the JET program, standing for The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, which is the program of working as English teachers in Japan known as ALT. Time goes fast and now it is my international friends' turn to take that position.

This thesis will consist of four parts: the first one is a literature review including the current situation of the JET program and JET participants (JETs), the general problems they have, and so on. Then, in the second part will be methodology. I took a survey targeted at people who work for the JET Programme and I will summarize how it was conducted. Therefore, the next part will be results and findings from the survey. Lastly, I will try to find some improvements for the future success of the JET Programme.

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\* 掲載にあたってはゼミ指導教員により学術論文としての基準が保証されている。

## I. Literature Review: current situation of JET workers

### 1.1 What is it all about?

First, the JET Programme is an enterprise, started by CLAIR, Council of Local Authorities for International Relations: a government-affiliated general incorporated foundation. According to the official website of CLAIR, they work for promoting the internationalization efforts of local governments in Japan through information provision, dispatching a staff, conducting surveys, holding joint international conferences and starting sister city relationships and so on by using their extensive data cultivated in the last 27 years. The JET Programme was one of the projects and activities which they started for fostering internationalization efforts of local governments in Japan. They have offices not only in Japan but also in seven other overseas cities such as London, Beijing, Paris, and New York. To make a relationship between Japan and the world stronger and deeper, CLAIR in these 7 countries manages to collect and provide information about local governments overseas. As for its role in the JET Programme, it also manages to connect three Ministries which have supported the JET Program besides CLAIR; the Ministry of International Affairs and Communications (MIC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT).

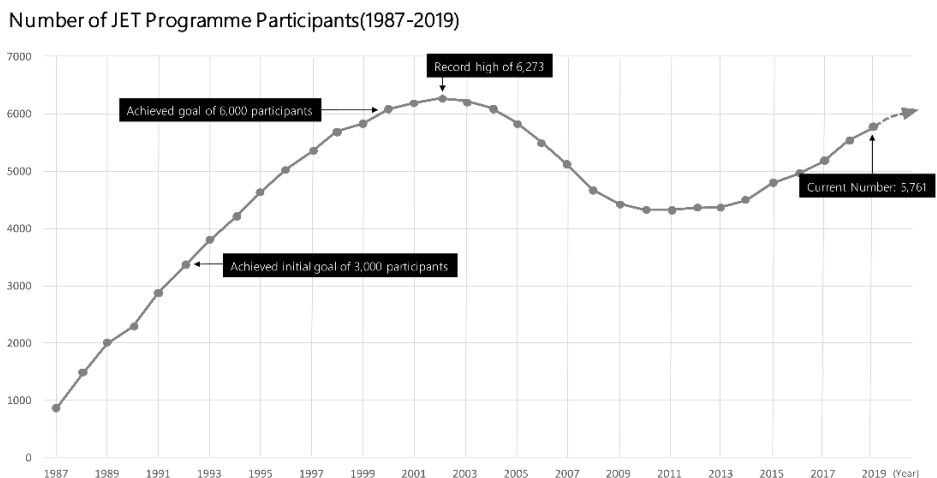
Second, I will summarize what participants do in the program in brief, based on the information from the official website of the JET Programme. JET participants (JETs) are divided into three occupational groups: ALT, CIR, and SEA. As I mentioned earlier, ALT stands for Assistant Language Teacher and 90% of participants take this position. Their typical duties are assisting with classes taught by the Japanese Language Teachers (JLTs), and also team-teaching, assisting in the preparation of teaching materials, and participating in extra-curricular activities with students. Then, 10% of participants are CIRs, Coordinator of International Relations, or SEAs, Sports Exchange Advisor. CIRs will be placed in local government offices and engaged in internationalization activities and translation/interpretation. Their duties also include receiving guests from abroad, editing and producing pamphlets in Japanese and English and so on. Therefore, high-level Japanese skills are required.

As for SEAs, they must have knowledge and experiences as a sport player of any sports, and they promote local internationalization by assisting training, events, and projects related to sports. Regardless of the occupation, their period of participation is a year in principle, however it is possible to renew it for an additional year up to five years if their work performance meets the required standard assessed by their own CO. The official site of JET doesn't identify the average length of term on JET but according to Interac, the dispatch agency which hires ALTs, the average length of service is 2.96 years.

To apply for the Programme, there are some requirements. Applicants must be interested in Japan, be a national of the country where the recruitment and selection procedures take place, and have at least a bachelor's degree or obtain such qualification by the designated arrival date. It doesn't have to be a degree in language or even education. They don't need teaching experience either. However, a friend of mine who works for the JET Programme now told me that as a part of the interview, applicants would be asked to simulate teaching to be judged if they are suitable for JET or not. Therefore, people who are a certified teacher or have experience of teaching would get a high valuation. CIRs need high-level Japanese skills as I mentioned earlier. They are required to have "functional command of the Japanese language which is equivalent to N2 or higher of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test," CLAIR says. (JET Programme leaflet, 2018) The reason why CLAIR does not demand high-level Japanese skills or teaching experience is that the purpose of having the JET Programme is promoting internationalization effort of local governments.

For better or worse, regardless of their academic or career backgrounds, the pay is common to all (It might be low for certified teachers or people who have teaching experience, but it might be good for fresh graduates or people with no working experience). Their salary goes up every year. It starts at 3,360,000 yen the first year (280,000yen/month) and will be 3,960,000 yen (330,000yen/month) if they keep working for more than four years. It is extraordinarily higher than the average monthly income of fresh graduates in Japan, which is 206,700 yen/month. (Starting pay in Japan in 2018) They also can get paid vacation for up to 20 days and some extra days off during summer or around the New Year. In summary, the employee benefits are sufficiently guaranteed. (Remuneration, 2015)

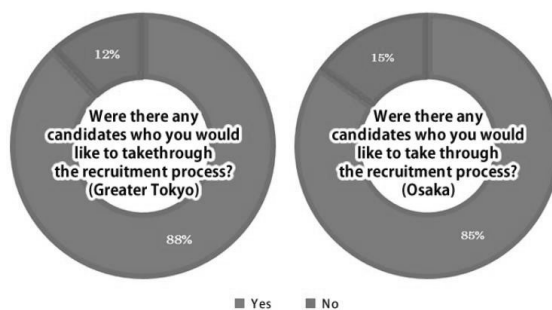
## 1.2 The trend of the number of JET participants



In the past thirty years, as the graph from the official JET's website shows below, the number of JET participants (JETs) has been rising year by year, which is 6.5-fold, in the increasingly globalized world. The JET Programme was started with 840 participants from just four countries, in which English is their first or dominant language: The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. In 2019, more than 5,500 people from 75 countries have joined (see Appendix 1). It seems that JET Program is getting known worldwide but still JETs coming from inner circle nations account for the majority of the whole number. The website says they work in approximately 1,000 cities/towns in 45 prefectures in Japan. (History, 2015)

### 1.3 Services provided by CLAIR

CLAIR considers the future vision of JETs and hosts career fairs every year as a step to get a job in Japan after JETs finish the program, with the cooperation of local and foreign chambers of commerce. More than 100 companies which seek multilingual global personnel, from various industries, such as IT,



consulting, manufacturing and so on, have joined. They host the events mainly in major cities in Japan such as Osaka, Tokyo, and Fukuoka, but CLAIR has been trying to host the same event in local areas as well. Only JETs who plan NOT to work for the JET Programme next year can participate in this career fair. (JET Programme Career Fair, 2019) 88% of companies which attended the career fair in Tokyo in 2016 (graph at left) and 85% of ones which joined one in Osaka in 2017 (graph at right) found at least one candidate they would like to take through the recruitment process. This result means the degree of satisfaction among companies is high. (Information for companies, 2018) While satisfaction among companies is high, participants are also gratified with the event. These are some feedback as anecdotal evidence:

"Those companies which I'd been sure I wouldn't have any interest in and had no expectations about, actually turned out to be very interesting!"

(Participant from Tokyo career fair)

"I was able to learn a lot about the process of finding employment, and I hope to be able to use the techniques I learned to find somewhere to work after I complete the JET Programme."

(Participant from Osaka career fair)

In addition to career fairs where JETs are able to obtain precious information and talk with personnel personally, CLAIR offers them internship programs as well. After JETs apply for it, CLAIR considers the suitable company for the applicant, and once they pass the interviews, they are able to work for five days at the company as internship personnel. (JET internship program, 2019)

Besides career fairs, CLAIR provides TEFL courses (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) so that JETs can upgrade their teaching skills. This would be meaningful for someone who wants to keep working as an English teacher in the future. In addition, CLAIR offers an online Japanese course, which helps them learn Japanese outside of the class or at home, for free too (The JET Program, 2019). In fact, many JETs come to Japan to improve their Japanese skills with some different reasons by JETs. Some of them want to get a job in Japan and others need to grow their language skills for their study at graduate school. (survey results, 2019).

To sum up, JETs are able to get opportunities to find a job, to improve their teaching ability, and to encourage their Japanese study while teaching.

#### 1.4 General problems JETs have in common.

In this section, first, I will state some general problems concerning JETs. Through YouTube or the internet where a large number of JETs share their experiences of working for the JET Programme, I found that there are some problems they have in common (Storer, Coco Rittle, Jarrod Ariola, and Rudy).

The first problem is "ESID: every situation is different" which makes it hard for most JETs' working and living environment. Every person on the JET Programme with different academic or career backgrounds would be assigned to the different placement with different Japanese teachers or any people at work, which means there is no way to know or expect what their own life on JET will be like. Therefore, there are likely to cause a big gap between their ideal or expectation and the reality. A girl, Rudy, teaching English at Kobe commercial high school, proved this fact on YouTube. She said her role in the class was totally different from what she had heard and expected:

Japanese teachers that I would be working with let me know that I would be teaching seventeen classes a week and I would be doing the majority of the lesson planning and executing in class by myself, so I was shook when I heard that. I didn't really know what to do or how to do it, so I just didn't really prepare during the month of August like before school started which looking back at I'm just like what were you thinking. And I also didn't tell the teachers at the time that I wasn't comfortable doing that so in orientation they told us like you are the assistant and the Japanese teachers is leading the class and now that I am at school they saying you are going to be leading the class

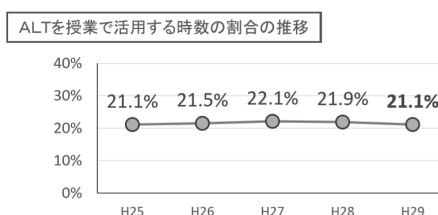
so I was just confused and I didn't really know how to stand my ground either.

(Rudy, 2018)

Another problem is that the workload is very different from person to person. For example, Evan Storer, who shared his experience on QUORA, says he taught in 6 junior high schools and one out of 6 had two ALTs which means they could share their tasks. Most weekdays he taught 2 to 3 classes. On the other hand, there are many schools which has just one ALT and do everything by him/her self. A friend of mine, Coco Rittle, a current JET, says she teaches in a school and has 25 classes in a week. Another friend of mine, Jarrod Ariola, has worked for 5 schools including elementary school, junior high school, and special education schools. The point is since every situation is different, they tend to compare to others' situation and focus on their own bad points.

### 1.5 Current condition of ALTs

According to MEXT, junior high school use ALTs in only 21.1 percent of total English classes, which is about just 10 minutes per class, which means their task in the classes is considerably limited. This number tells us that team-teaching is not really accomplished. It is hard to



believe that it happened actually but some of my respondents for my survey about the JET Program revealed this fact. They said, "A lot of time spent doing nothing at school" (No.14 ALT in Miyagi) and "Not being in control of the classroom." (No.15 ALT in Niigata)

### . Methodology

To get more real authentic current voices from JETs, compared to the information from the internet, I conducted a qualitative survey targeted at people who work for the JET Programme now and recent alumni of the program. The main reason for taking this survey was collecting data of their experiences and opinions as a JET. What I used for the survey was Google Forms, which has a function of listing the data in a spreadsheet automatically which is helpful to analyze. The procedure for obtaining the data was asking some of my international friends who used to be a JET and a current JET, Coco Rittle, James Kiger, Paul Racz, and Jarrod Ariola, to answer this survey. In addition, Coco and James had a great connection with other JETs so they were willing to distribute the survey to groups related to the program: Coco sent it to a group of current JETs who have participated in the program from this September, and James did to groups of Kansai area and Kanto area, and a group of AJET in Shizuoka Prefecture. These groups include both current JETs and alumni.

Survey execution period was ten days, from October 20 to November 1<sup>st</sup>. Then I got 58 responses in total.

I asked 12 open-ended questions in all (see Appendix 2). Three of them are about JETs' background: their nationality, major, and age when they are/were working for the program. The next three questions asked basic information about their situation in the program: prefecture they were assigned, a length of time they work, and their position (ALT/CIR/SEA). The next six questions asked their experiences and opinions as a JET: reasons why you joined the JET Programme, advantages of being a JET, disadvantages of being a JET, problems in terms of cooperating with JLT or other people at work, if they have a plan on working as a JET next year, and if they have a plan on working in Japan after finishing the program (alumni: whether they worked in Japan after the program).

After getting the data from the Google form, I read the data and highlighted potential themes and developed a coding scheme to categorize common responses. (listed in the data analysis section)

### III. Data Analysis

In this section, first, I will summarize responses for each question. After that, I analyze JETs tendency of what/how they think about their jobs, Japanese Language Teachers or any people at work, or vision of their future as a whole.

#### 3.1 Basic information of JETs situation: responses to Questions 1 to 6

As I mentioned, I got 58 responses, 23 from recent alumni and 35 from current JETs. Their average age is 24.5 years old. The breakdown of their positions is 2 CIRs, 56 ALTs, and no SEAs. I got responses from Tohoku, Kanto, Tokai, Kansai, Chugoku, and Kyusyu areas: 23 prefectures in total. It includes not only major prefectures such as Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima but also regional ones such as Miyagi, Gunma, Oita. Their university major is very diverse: not only Japanese or education but also economics, political science, and anthropology. Furthermore, some of them are majoring in international relations or journalism. In other words, participants do not always have an academic interest in Japan. Their length of work for JET covered a wide range, from less than 1 year to 5 years as the table shows below:

length of work	Current ALTs	Alumni	Current CIRs	Alumni
Less than 1 year	21	0	1	0
1 year	5	3	0	0
2 years	3	3	0	0
3 years	4	7	0	1
4 years	1	1	0	0
5 years	-	8	-	0
total	34	22	1	1

Current JETs haven't decided how long they would work as a JET yet, but after calculating the length of work of alumni, it can be said that the average of their length of work is 3.34 years, although the official website of the JET Programme doesn't show the average.

### 3.2 The reason for participating in the JET Programme

Question 7 is about the reasons for participating in the program. Most respondents had more than two reasons and I divided JETs into 7 categories by their reasons for participating:

1. Being interested in "Japan" (34/58)
  - 1-1 To grow their Japanese skills (14/58)
  - 1-2 Being curious about culture or history of Japan (14/58)
  - 1-3 To experience living in Japan (14/58)
2. To experience working/teaching in Japan/abroad (14/58)
  - 2-1 Working: 5/58
  - 2-2 Teaching: 9/58 (3 are interested in education system in Japan)
3. For career development (to make their resume fascinated) (4/58)
4. To get a job in Japan (2/58)
5. To reconnect with their friends or second family in Japan (5/58)
6. As a long-term holiday (7/58)
  - 6-1 To save money (1/58)
  - 6-2 To take a break from working/before graduating school (3/58)
  - 6-3 To travel in Japan (3/58)
7. Friends' recommendation (3/58)

As you can see, more than half of respondents mentioned that the reason for participation was curiosity about Japan. For example, "... a deep love and respect for many facets of Japanese culture." (No.9 ALT in Aomori) or, "I wanted to learn Japanese and immerse myself in the language while also working and living in Japan." (No.12 ALT in Saitama)

There were also some who were eager to work or teach in Japan. Some of them were



certified teachers in their home country and interested in the education system in Japan, and others utilized this program to think about their permanent job as a teacher in the future. No.10 ALT working in Iwate said, "I am a certified elementary teacher looking to learn international best practices in teaching and improve career options in teaching." In addition, others said, "To kickstart a lifelong dream of mine to be an English teacher in Japan." (No.54 Nara) and "To figure out if I wanted to pursue teaching in the future." (No.29 ALT in Wakayama)

While many participated in the program with some goals or achievements for their academic or career advancements, some participated in it as a long-term holiday: "To take a break before graduate school." (No.17 ALT in Aomori) and "A break from full-time teaching in Australia." (No.23 ALT in Mie)

As you can see from category 2-2 above, only 9 out of 58 JETs participated in order to experience teaching in Japan. This number proves the fact that CLAIR seeks people who are interested in Japan for promoting internationalization efforts, and also, that it doesn't matter if applicants have teaching experience or not for acceptance to the program. The reason for this small number is because the biggest goal of The JET Programme is not fostering JETs' teaching ability, but promoting internationalization efforts of the local governments in Japan.

### 3.3 Advantages of being a JET

I identified 8 categories from question 8 about advantages of being a JET. Similarly, most respondents think there are more than two advantages of being a JET:

1. Good support system (43/58)
  - 1-1 Higher pay compared to other ALT positions (24/43)
  - 1-2 Good benefit package (8/43)
  - 1-3 Supportive network of other participants and JET alumni (15/43)
  - 1-4 Good support system for living (18/43)
2. Anyone regardless of qualification or academic/career backgrounds are able to participate (15/58)
3. Good balance between work and life (9/58)
  - 3-1 Easy work (3/9)
  - 3-2 Good working hours (2/9)
  - 3-3 Lots of free time (4/9)
4. Cultural exchange (8/58)
5. Being able to improve Japanese (7/58)
6. Reliable due to the government program (4/58)
7. Fun job (2/58)

## 8. Career fairs (2/58)

43 out of 58 respondents, which is 74%, felt an attraction of the good support system. As I mentioned in part 1, the pay for JETs is higher than what a fresh graduate gets on average in Japan, and many regard it as an advantage of working as a JET: "Higher pay than other ALT programs." (No.26 ALT in Shizuoka) In terms of support system for living, No.5 ALT in Shizuoka said, "They also sort out all the things you need, apartment/phone plan/bank. It's very convenient."

In addition, existence of other participants and JET alumni through their network made many JETs feel relieved or supported. For instance, "There is a good network of other participants, and my area had many JETs, so it was easy to make friends and not feel isolated (not everyone has this experience though)." (No.43 ALT in Chiba), or "There is also a really good support system and community that's been around a while, that all JETs know they can reach out to if they need help with anything (including language and cultural barriers)." (No.2 CIR in Shimane)

Category 2 above tells us that application requirements make some JETs feel attractive. Again No.2 CIR in Shimane mentioned, "It's a unique opportunity to live and work for the government program in another country, even as a fresh college graduate." Another respondent said "Being able to get the opportunity to teach while not having to have a full teaching degree. Teaching is always something I've wanted to do." (No.25 ALT in Mie)

In terms of learning Japanese, some are satisfied with their progress in Japanese including No.38 ALT in Osaka: "I also get to be surrounded by friendly Japanese speakers and Japanese language materials every day, so it's a nice study environment for me."

In regard to career fairs, unfortunately, fairly few numbers of JETs draw advantages from this opportunity.

### 3.4 Disadvantages of being a JET

I identified 11 categories from question 9 about disadvantages of being a JET. In the same way, most respondents answered more than two disadvantages:

1. Not being able to choose their placement and housing (18/58)
2. Useless position (12/58)
3. Hard to keep high motivation (10/58)
4. Being homesick/culture shock/loneliness (8/58)
5. Time is limited, non-permanent job (7/58)
6. Poor ties with Japanese Language Teachers (7/58)
  - 6-1 JLTs don't always utilize JETs skills properly (4/7)
  - 6-2 Poor communication (3/7)

7. Mismatch between experience and what is expected from your CO (5/58)
8. Lack of training (5/58)
9. Low pay (2/58)
10. No private class for learning Japanese (2/58)
11. Multiple work locations (1/58)

As you can see, the situation of the absolute randomness of placements made many feel disappointed. No.25 ALT in Mie mentioned the reason why it is unacceptable: "I am from a very large city so adjusting to a very small town has been a bit of a struggle."

About category 2, a lot of respondents regard their position as useless since there are unnecessarily long hours or not being in control of the classroom. For example, "In my case, a lot of time spent doing nothing at school." (No.14 ALT in Miyagi) or "You might have less control over your job, you're not a real teacher." (No. 21 ALT in Aomori)

In terms of the difficulty in keeping their high motivation for working, No. 57 ALT in Shizuoka conveyed powerful messages of why it is hard: "... as a person with a teaching license, the fact that I had no chance to become a real member of the Japanese education system was frustrating. No pay raises, no promotions, no way to build a successful career. It definitely felt like we were disposable goods on the part of the BOE if not on the part of the schools."

Category 6 above also proved that JETs have poor ties with JLT, and that has an effect on their work: "Poor communication between JETS and JTEs and the school in general. Being expected to lead a class right before you're about to go to the class." (No. 15 ALT in Niigata) Some respondents mentioned that JLTs do not know how to use ALTs in the classroom and also "Japanese teachers do not always utilize your skill set appropriately" (No. 10 ALT in Iwate)

While many regard the application requirements as an advantage (Part 3.3), some take it as a problem which causes a mismatch between JETs' ability and what their school demands. For example, No.23 ALT in Mie indicated that "Other disadvantages are the lack of qualifications for many JETs. There is no requirement for any teaching degree or experiences, and I've seen a lot of new JETs flounder and struggle at first due to the mismatch between experience (lack of) and what is expected from them at their schools."

Two people think their pay is fairly low while half of respondents think it is decent. (Part 3.3) This time I cannot ask the two why they think it is low, since I did not obtain their contact information. For the future study, it would be useful if I ask respondents to write an email address if they don't mind, so that I can get in contact with them and ask some extra questions.

### 3.5 Problems in terms of cooperating with JLTs or other co-workers

I asked YES/NO questions about if they have any problems with Japanese Language Teachers or any people at work. The purpose of asking this question was to verify how important the relationship with JLTs is for working as a JET.

Then the two CIRs answered that they haven't/didn't had/have any problems with people at work. As for ALTs, 21 ALTs out of 56 ALTs chose "NO, I haven't had any problems /I didn't have any problems", and other 35 ALTs chose "YES, I have/did."

JETs choosing NO think JLTs are:

- Kind
- Friendly
- Supportive
- Cooperative

In summary, ALTs who answered NO/have kept good relationship with their JLTs. On the other hands, it is also a fact that 35 ALTs marked YES and the kind of problems they had are mentioned below:

Problems gaining attention are:

1. Closed-minded for JETs' ideas or suggestion for Team-teaching (8/35)
2. Language barrier (9/35)
3. JLTs underutilized JETs (7/35)
4. Sexual harassment/power harassment (5/35)
5. JLTs are not unmotivated (5/35)
6. Poor communication (3/35)

No.10 ALT in Iwate mentioned the problems he/she has, and it could be a short summary of categories 1 and 3: "I feel that, as an experienced and certified teacher, Japanese teachers do not always know how to use my skills effectively in the classroom and are not always open to suggestions to improve our team teaching."

First, in regard of category 1, many responded that JLTs are closed-minded for JETs' ideas or team-teaching, for example, "I dislike the structure of one of my teacher's classes and she doesn't seem to understand when I tell her I would like to change." (No.22 ALT in Yamanashi) or "...one JLT did not let me be involved in the class he taught, and I never was able to use lessons or games I prepared for that class."

Second, as for category 3, some people think their position is useless since their JLTs don't use them effectively and appropriately: No.26 ALT in Shizuoka said, "The one issue I've had is that I sit too much in the teachers' room doing nothing because my JLTs don't schedule me in classes." and another respondent said, "Yes. I was frequently ignored/

forgotten about/not told about or included at work." (No.42 ALT in Shizuoka)

While many voiced their discontent with not being in control of the classroom, some have different problems due to unmotivated JLTs. In every field, there are some people who don't care much about their jobs and can't be bothered to put forth effort, and it happens at school as well. Some respondents have trouble because of these unmotivated JLTs, such as "I did have a JTE last year who was extremely lazy and left everything to me." (No.32 ALT in Nara) and "Some homeroom teachers have no interest in teaching English, so they leave everything to the ALT. But the ALT isn't a trained teacher, so it doesn't make sense." (No.37 ALT in Osaka)

As regards the matter of category 6, according to No. 43 ALT in Chiba, poor communication results from not only language barrier or closed-minded relationship, but also "... the pressure of work of JLTs, and JETs cannot talk about their lesson before the class."

### 3.6 Plans on working as a JET next year

Continuation Length of work	YES	NO	Total (people)
Less than 1 year	19	2	21
1 year	3	2	5
2 years	2	1	3
3 years	1	3	4
4 years	1	0	1

As I mentioned earlier in Part1, their period of participation is a year in principle, but they are able to renew it for an additional year if they want. To get to know what stimulates JETs to keep working as a JET next year and what motivate them to pull up stakes and go back home, I asked the current JETs whether they plan on working as a JET next year. This time, I categorize JETs by the length of work, from less than 1 year to 4 years, then I explain their reason for their decision for each category. There is no column for 5 years since there are no current JETs who have been working for 5 years.

Concerning the reasons for the renewal, first, it turned out that JETs working less than 1 year had a common reason: "It takes a long time to get situated in japan." (No.16 ALT in Shizuoka) and "One year isn't enough to fully experience JET." (No.8 ALT in Aomori) Someone said it is too short to see and comprehend Japan and others said 1 year is inadequate to acquire sufficient Japanese skills for getting a job in Japan such as "I intend to continue gaining work experience and language fluency here so I can move here permanently and find a good job." (No.10 ALT in Iwate) In addition to these reasons, there are some who decided on continuation simply because they enjoy their job as an ALT, and many working more than 1 year also had the similar reasons, for example, No.34 ALT in Okayama having worked for 3 years mentioned that "I enjoy the program, and I want to do

all five years."

Then again, several people for each year decided to resign for various reasons, such as family reason, feeling homesickness or loneliness, or to return to her/his college to get a master's degree. Additionally, a couple of them decided to leave the JET Programme to start a career. I will share the comments by No.35 ALT in Osaka as an example: "My Japanese is N2 level and I want to work in a globalized position."

From another point of view, unfortunately, there are some who would quit this year owing to no support from their school or being abused at work.

### 3.7 Future career plans

In this section, I will present the responses to the question about JETs' career plans. To the current JETs, I asked whether they plan on working in Japan after finishing the pro-

	YES	NO	Total
Current JETs	15	20	35
JET alumni	17	6	23
Total	32	26	

gram, and I asked the JET alumni whether they worked in Japan after the program or even now. Then, I asked respondents who said YES to mention why they would like to work in Japan, and what kind of job they want, and asked respondents who said NO to mention why not. The purpose of this question was recognizing how the JET Program impact on the society in Japan.

First, as for current JETs, I got YES from 15 out of 35 JETs, and NO from the remaining 20 JETs. The most respondents choosing YES found Japanese culture or people fascinating, and regard Japan as a good place to live. (1) The occupations the current JETs desire and, (2) the ones experienced by the JET alumni are listed below:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(1) The occupation the current JETs desire:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English teacher (4/15)</li> <li>2. Translator/interpreter (4/15)</li> <li>3. Job with international companies</li> <li>4. Others<br/>Ex.) Kendo player<br/>Hospitality job<br/>Scientific work</li> <li>5. Undecided</li> </ol> | <p>(2) The occupations experienced by the alumni:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English teacher (9/17)</li> <li>2. Direct-hire job by BOE</li> <li>3. Work for Kansai Tourism Bureau</li> <li>4. Others<br/>Ex.) Work for a game company<br/>Work at a hotel<br/>Accountant<br/>Marketing</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

Some of the current JETs are longing to be an English teacher once more as the categories show above. One said ALT position would be suitable, but others had different opinions as follows: "I intend to move here permanently and continue teaching English here, hopefully

as a fully certified teacher. I would like to have my own classroom rather than being an assistant." (No.10 ALT in Iwate)

More than half of the JET alumni continued teaching in Japan after finishing the program. Their job is generally the same or similar, but working environments differ from person to person, for instance, "I continued teaching, working for a municipal board of education. (No.46 ALT in Shizuoka) or "I worked at a cram school for returnee students for 6 months and then at a university teaching writing course for 2 1/2 years." (No.52 ALT in Yamaguchi)

Others got the non-teaching job in the different field as listed above. It may not be easy for non-Japanese people to get a job in Japan actually. One respondent mentioned how hard finding a suitable job was: "I work in Tokyo at a game company in language quality assurance for the English version of one of their titles now. I had a really hard time finding a job in Tokyo at the end of JET and ended up teaching at an English preschool/daycare for a year while continuing to job hunt. I should have looked into a Japanese recruitment company much earlier." (No.53 ALT in Shizuoka)

Next, I will inform about respondents who would like to leave Japan and work in their home country or other places. As the table shows, 20 out of 35 current JETs, and 6 out of 23 alumni chose not working in Japan. The reasons are categorized and listed below:

1. Missing their home/family (7/26)
2. Difference of the foreign and Japanese work ethics (7/26)
3. Language/culture barriers (5/26)
4. Others

Ex.) To learn another language

"As much as I love Japan, I do miss home and would like to settle down closer to my family." (No.25 ALT in Mie) This is what others mentioned as well. Their home is still home, and they have something important there.

In terms of language barrier, there are some who don't have the choice to work in Japan from the beginning due to their low Japanese level, and the one thing they are able to do without Japanese is be an English teacher which they don't want to: "My Japanese isn't good enough to take on a better job and I don't want to continue being an English teacher." (No.37 ALT in Osaka) While the many feel barriers of different language or culture, living with a minority of non-Japanese people also makes some stressed: "I don't really fit in with the tiny expat community." (No.22 ALT in Yamanashi)

Several were displeased at the Japanese work ethic in the aspect of the strict vertical relationship peculiar to Japan, or the circumstances which "... continually violate their own labor laws for mandatory unpaid overtime." (No.34 ALT in Okayama) Others also

commented on the Japanese work culture: No.29 ALT in Wakayama mentioned that "I can't stand the Japanese workplace mentality and company style. Plus, I don't want to deal with Japanese doctors." and No.50 ALT in Osaka said, "... also, I actually would hate to work under a Japanese workforce. I got the easy pass as a JET because I was a temporary ALT. If I was under a more formal recognition, I would suffer from the same poor time management and overworking problems that Japan is privy to."

There were not only negative results but also positive reasons: "I was able to use JET as a launching pad to a career in EdTech in the USA." (No.41 ALT in Shizuoka)

#### IV. Results and Findings

Based on the data analysis, this study obtained rich data which reveals four main themes that stand out about the JET Programme in Japan. They are:

1. There is a huge motivation gap in their thoughts on working as a JET between each of them, and there are three main types: (1) those who joined the program as a short-term chance to experience living in Japan and learn about another culture and language, (2) those who use the program as a way of trial to think whether they are suitable for the job in the education and pedagogy in the long run, and (3) those who want to see the work culture in Japan. Then, from the data through Q2, Q7 and Q12 (see Appendix 2), I found some tendency for those three types of people: (1) people tend to leave Japan after finishing the program. This time, more than half of respondents in group (1) decided to work outside of Japan. People in group (2) are more likely to keep working as an English teacher in Japan. And there is a possibility that (3) people also stay in Japan and work only if they think they would fit in the Japanese work culture through working as a JET.
2. It can be inferred that JETs feel less attraction for their job, and what they are able to acquire from the job. This indication is based mainly on the results of advantages and disadvantages considered by JETs. As I mentioned in part 3.3 and 3.4, they mainly regard the support system including the pay, benefits, and supportive network, not the contents of their job, as advantages. At the same time, they consider that their position is useless since their JLT does not always utilize JET effectively or they are not in control of the classroom. Thus, overall satisfaction in terms of support system is high, but low in their job, especially as an ALT.
3. The lack of qualifications of education or teaching tend to cause a problem in the class. If they do not have any experiences of teaching, they are more likely to struggle with meeting the expectation of JLTs. However, it seems that it is hard for JETs to learn and improve their teaching ability for some reasons: (1) CLAIR doesn't provide adequate



contents of training, as some respondents mentioned, and (2) also most JLTs are busy with preparation for other classes or club activities, and they might not be available to JETs for teaching what to do or how to teach in the class. Furthermore (3) JETs are often underutilized in the class and don't have enough opportunity to teach.

4. "Every Situation Is Different" is not a problem, the actual problem is that the definitions of duties of ALTs, "assistance with the class" or "team-teaching", differ from JET to JET, and JLT to JLT. That might be the actual reason for making every situation different.

As I mentioned in Part1.3, their placement or who they work with are totally different from person to person and these are undoubted facts. However, the main contents of work which are officially established by CLAIR are supposed to be the same. But then again, in fact, they are not the same now, as the survey respondents revealed that while some had nothing to do in the class or were not scheduled in the class, others were asked to lead the class without preparation. JETs have many complaints regarding their duty in the class, or JLTs.

Their duties are mentioned on the official site, however it doesn't define what "assistance" is, or what "team-teaching" means. A JLT might think team teaching is just bringing JETs to the class, and another one might consider it as just sharing the textbook with JETs and asking them to do a lesson in their way.

If JLTs are able to utilize JETs effectively, many things could be improved.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the number of participants in the JET Programme is increasing year by year and is known worldwide in the last 30 years, as a result of organizing and providing a sufficient support system guaranteed by the government. CLAIR secures their life in Japan financially and mentally by making a supportive network of other participants and JET alumni. On the other hand, the number of JETs who continue working as a JET for 5 years is small and just a half of JETs stay and work in Japan after finishing the program. Considering the fact that schools use ALTs only 22.1% of the whole class (Part1.5), and the problematic relationship between JETs and JLTs learned by the survey, CLAIR hasn't completely established JETs' status or position, especially for ALTs in the class. As I mentioned in category 5 in Part , the definitions of their main duties, "team-teaching" or "assistance with the class", tend to be different from JETs to JETs and JLTs to JLTs. I assume that if CLAIR defines them more clearly, JETs would be able to expect exactly what they would do in the class, and JLTs would also be able to utilize JETs effectively and appropriately. Then, both are more likely to organize more meaningful and enjoyable lessons. In addition,

when JLTs understand how valuable working in a team is, and that JETs should be treated as not only as an English teacher but also an international exchange personnel, the rate of using ALTs in the class, which is only 22.1% now, would be automatically higher. The more JETs blend in to the school community through team-teaching, the deeper JETs will comprehend Japanese work culture or education system/industry essentially. And only after that, will JETs be able to think of their future direction: whether they stay and work in Japan or what they would do in the future. CLAIR provides career fairs or internship programs and is already prepared to support JETs who would like to get opportunity to work in Japan after finishing the program. Therefore, what CLAIR should do now is to review the contents of their work and the relationship between JETs and other people at work. Then, the JET Program would be able to get higher overall satisfaction and get even more applicants from around the world.

This time, I conducted the survey targeted at foreign JET participants, so trying to learn what Japanese Language Teachers think about JETs, would be the possible area for further research. When we have a point of view from both sides, other improvements must surely come out.

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The Impact of the JET programme on Participants and Japan's Future

Appendix 1

Number of Participants by Country 2019-2020

As of 1 July 2019

Country	Year	ALT	CIR	SEA	Total
United States	1st Year	1,058	61		1,119
	2nd Year	378	41		419
	3rd Year	511	24	1	536
	4th Year	298	15	1	314
	5th Year	213	4		217
Total	2,958	145	2	3,105	
United Kingdom	1st Year	222	13		235
	2nd Year	175	9		184
	3rd Year	63	6		69
	4th Year	38	2		40
	5th Year	32	2		34
Total	528	32		560	
Australia	1st Year	119	6		125
	2nd Year	86	9		95
	3rd Year	68	3		71
	4th Year	35	2		37
	5th Year	13	2		15
Total	321	22		343	
New Zealand	1st Year	77	2		79
	2nd Year	87	6	3	96
	3rd Year	28	4		32
	4th Year	25	2		27
	5th Year	19	1		20
Total	236	15	3	254	
Canada	1st Year	188	4		192
	2nd Year	173	11		184
	3rd Year	84	7		91
	4th Year	58	4		62
	5th Year	28	2		30
Total	531	28		559	
Ireland	1st Year	39	4		43
	2nd Year	32	3		35
	3rd Year	18	2		20
	4th Year	9	1		10
	5th Year	7	1		8
Total	105	9		114	
France	1st Year	1	4		5
	2nd Year	1	9		10
	3rd Year	7	7		14
	4th Year	2	3		5
	5th Year	4	23		27
Total	15	47		62	
Germany	1st Year	8	8		16
	2nd Year	1	3		4
	3rd Year	1	3		4
	4th Year	3	3		6
	5th Year	1	1		2
Total	13	28		41	
China	1st Year	1	41		42
	2nd Year	3	12		15
	3rd Year	7	7		14
	4th Year	3	5		8
	5th Year	1	5		6
Total	15	65		80	
Korea	1st Year	15	15		30
	2nd Year	11	11		22
	3rd Year	1	13		14
	4th Year	8	8		16
	5th Year	1	3		4
Total	36	50		86	

Country	Year	ALT	CIR	SEA	Total
Russia	1st Year	1	5		6
	2nd Year		2		2
	3rd Year	1			1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	2	9		11	
Brazil	1st Year	8	8		16
	2nd Year		2		2
	3rd Year		3		3
	4th Year		4		4
	5th Year		1		1
Total	8	17		25	
Peru	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Italy	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Mexico	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
South Africa	1st Year	51	51		102
	2nd Year	40	40		80
	3rd Year	24	24		48
	4th Year	15	15		30
	5th Year	6	6		12
Total	136	136		272	
Argentina	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Belgium	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Finland	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Mongolia	1st Year	3	3		6
	2nd Year	2	2		4
	3rd Year	6	6		12
	4th Year	1	1		2
	5th Year	1	1		2
Total	13	13		26	
Austria	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Switzerland	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
India	1st Year	2	2		4
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	2	5		7	

Country	Year	ALT	CIR	SEA	Total
Philippines	1st Year	52	1		53
	2nd Year	41			41
	3rd Year	15			15
	4th Year	22			22
	5th Year	6	1		7
Total	136	2		138	
Netherlands	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year	5	1		6
	4th Year	1	1		2
	5th Year	1	1		2
Total	8	5		13	
Poland	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Republic of Bulgaria	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Turkey	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Hungary	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Republic of Kazakhstan	1st Year	27	9		36
	2nd Year	23	2		25
	3rd Year	8	3		11
	4th Year	4	1		5
	5th Year	1	1		2
Total	63	14		77	
Singapore	1st Year	2	1		3
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	2	5		7	
Kingdom of Norway	1st Year	23	23		46
	2nd Year	31	31		62
	3rd Year	28	28		56
	4th Year	18	18		36
	5th Year	14	14		28
Total	111	111		222	
Thailand	1st Year	2	2		4
	2nd Year	3	3		6
	3rd Year	1	1		2
	4th Year	1	1		2
	5th Year	1	1		2
Total	7	7		14	
Malaysia	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Barbados	1st Year	3	3		6
	2nd Year	4	4		8
	3rd Year	2	2		4
	4th Year	2	2		4
	5th Year	3	3		6
Total	14	14		28	
Trinidad and Tobago	1st Year	14	14		28
	2nd Year	19	19		38
	3rd Year	16	16		32
	4th Year	9	9		18
	5th Year	3	3		6
Total	61	61		122	

Country	Year	ALT	CIR	SEA	Total
Slovenia	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Kingdom of Sweden	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Kingdom of Denmark	1st Year	2	2		4
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	2	6		8	
Latvia	1st Year	2	2		4
	2nd Year		2		2
	3rd Year		2		2
	4th Year		2		2
	5th Year		2		2
Total	2	10		12	
Fiji	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Kingdom of Tonga	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Vietnam	1st Year	3	3		6
	2nd Year	3	3		6
	3rd Year	4	4		8
	4th Year	7	7		14
	5th Year	1	1		2
Total	18	18		36	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Uzbekistan	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Seychelles	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Croatia	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
United Republic of Tanzania	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Republic of Malta	1st Year	4	4		8
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	4	6		10	
Republic of Estonia	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	1st Year		1		1
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total		5		5	
Republic of the Union of Myanmar	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Republic of Chile	1st Year	1	1		2
	2nd Year		1		1
	3rd Year		1		1
	4th Year		1		1
	5th Year		1		1
Total	1	5		6	
Total	1st Year	1,855	203	3	2,061
	2nd Year	1,602	138	6	1,746
	3rd Year	867	101	3	971
	4th Year	532	53	1	586
	5th Year	348	19	1	368
Total	5,234	514	13	5,761	

Appendix 2

- Q1. Where are you from?
- Q2. What is your major?
- Q3. Current JETs, how old are you?  
Alumni, how old were you when you participated in the JET Programme?)
- Q4. Which is your position? (ALT/CIR/SEA)
- Q5. What prefecture were you assigned?
- Q6. Current JETs, how many years have you worked for the program?  
Alumni, how many years did you work for the program?
- Q7. Why did you join the program?
- Q8. In your opinion, what are some advantages of being a JET?
- Q9. In your opinion, what are some disadvantages of being a JET?
- Q10. Do/did you have any problems in terms of cooperating with JLTs or any people at work?
- Q11. Current JETs, do you plan on working as a JET next year? Why and why not?
- Q12. Current JETs, do you plan on working in Japan after finishing the program?  
Alumni, did you work in Japan after finishing the program?  
If yes, why and what do you want to do? What did you do?  
If no, why not?