

Study Abroad Decision-making of Chinese International Students: The Role of Universities' International Environment and Overseas Publicity

Noboru Miyoshi* and Qiuqing Pan**

Abstract. In the world today, there are 5 million international students studying abroad, including those at the universities in Japan. This research investigates the factors influencing the study abroad decision-making of Chinese international students, based on the results of two surveys and semi-structured interviews. It focuses on the universities' international environment and overseas publicity. The results were used to test the following hypothesis: "Chinese international students who decide to study in English-speaking countries/regions are more affected by universities' international environment and overseas publicity than those who decide to study in non-English-speaking countries/ regions, such as Japan." Sample size emerged as a limitation of this study. Thus, future research should conduct analysis based not only on the "JASSO Study Abroad Fair," which provided the sample for this study, but also on a variety of study abroad fairs with larger sample sizes.

Keywords: decision-making, China, overseas publicity, international student, international environment, Japan

Introduction

In the world today, there are 5 million international students studying at universities abroad. The 21st century is said to be the century of a greater international student mobility, which will continue to increase in the future. It has been estimated that the number of international students worldwide will surge to 7.69 million in 2025, and that Asia will emerge as the largest international student market (Altbach & Balan, 2007; Umakoshi, 2004). Japan is no exception in this trend of international student

* Associate Professor, Office of Admissions, Hiroshima University, Japan,
email: miyoshi-noboru@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

** Ph.D. Candidate, Hiroshima University, Japan, email: panqj2017@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

mobility. In Japan, the goal to host 100,000 international students was attained in 2003. Subsequently, due in part to an excess in the supply of places owing to the demographic decline in the youth (aged <18 years) population, in 2008 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) announced that it would aim to host 300,000 international students. The outline of the plan to reach this number was adopted in 2009. According to this outline, the 300,000 students plan is positioned as part of a new global strategy which aims to attract outstanding international students and contribute on the global stage by improving support for these students from university enrolment to employment post-study (MEXT, 2008). Moreover, MEXT launched the “Top Global University Project” (TGU) to increase the number of Japanese universities at the top of the world rankings, and universities selected for this project have set specific goals to accept greater numbers of international students (MEXT, 2014). Due to these policies and projects, the number of international students in Japanese higher education institutions was 298,980 in 2019. A total of 114,950 (38.4%) international students were from China, 72,354 (24.2%) from Vietnam, 24,331 (8.1%) from Nepal, and 87,345 (29.3%) from other countries and regions (Japan Student Services Organization; JASSO, 2018).

As the number of international students continues to grow globally, it is said that not only a small number of elite candidates such as government-financed or sponsored international students will study at overseas universities, but also a large number of privately financed international students will soon have the same opportunity (Shiraishi, 2016). Among the international students studying in higher education institutions in Japan, the proportion of privately financed international students is high. It has been pointed out that these privately financed international students, especially from China, account for more than 60% of all privately financed international students (JASSO, 2011). Marginson and van der Wende (2007) point out that Japan, being a non-English-speaking country with a large population, is disadvantaged when it comes to attracting international students compared to English-speaking countries. However, many Japanese universities are still making concerted efforts to make it easier for international students to attend by, for instance, increasing the number of full-time foreign faculty members and Japanese faculty members who received their degrees from foreign universities, increasing the number of subjects taught in foreign languages, establishing degree programs in English, and developing English syllabi. In addition to these efforts to enhance their international environment, universities also actively engage in recruiting students through overseas publicity and recruitment activities, such as the “JASSO Study Abroad Fair” (Yokota, 2013). For high school students who want to study in Japanese higher education institutions, JASSO holds annual study abroad fairs in various countries/regions, such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Vietnam. About 30% participants in these fairs have gone on to study in Japanese universities, with the remaining 70% enrolling in other overseas universities in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Singapore (English-speaking countries/regions), and Taiwan, Korea, and China (non-English-speaking countries/regions; JASSO, 2015).

The purpose of this research is to investigate factors influencing the study abroad decision-making

of Chinese international students attending overseas universities in both English-speaking and non-English speaking countries/regions, using two surveys and semi-structured interviews. It focuses on the influence of universities' international environment and overseas publicity, based on new push-pull/micro and pull/macro models. The research aims to present an effective way of recruiting Chinese high school students and also promote the smooth transition of students from high schools in China to universities overseas, and contribute to Japan's success in the global university ranking, such as the QS World University Ranking.¹ Moreover, it is also expected that this research can offer useful suggestions for the plan to admit 300,000 international students and the TGU in Japan.

Literature review and discussion

Previous research on the decision-making of international students has clarified push factors in the sending country and pull factors in the receiving country. Ravenstein (1889) first explained the movement of immigration using this push-pull model in the 19th century, but Lulat and Altbach (1985) were among the first to apply it to explain the decision-making of international students going to overseas universities. Generally, according to Lee and Tan (1984), wealth and the GNP growth rate in the home country have some influence on decision-making of international students going to overseas universities. Agarwal and Winkler (1985) later pointed out that average income per person, the cost of education, and the availability of educational opportunities in the home country are further important factors for decision-making of international students. McMahon (1992) examined the flows of international students from eighteen developing countries to developed countries during the 1960s and 1970s, testing an outbound 'push' model and an inbound 'pull' model. The push model suggested the student flows were dependent on the level of economic wealth, the degree of involvement of the developing country in the world economy, the priority placed on education by the government of the developing country, and the availability of educational opportunities in the home country. The model suggested that pull factors influencing students' attraction to a host country included by the relative size of the student's home country economy compared to the host country, economic links between the home and host country, host nation political interests in the home country through foreign assistance or cultural links, and host nation support of international students via scholarships or other assistance. Furthermore, in their research on Chinese, Taiwanese, and Indonesian international students who opted for the US universities, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) showed that students' decisions were based on better educational opportunities as the principle pull factor. Moreover, according to Mazzarol, Soutar, and Seng (2003), Chinese international students went to UK universities due to better educational opportunities, cultural experiences, and employment opportunities after graduation.

¹ The index of the QS World University Ranking is composed of academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty student, citations per faculty, international faculty, and international students. Therefore, increasing the acceptance of international students by universities will lead to an increase in the world university rankings.

On the other hand, Nepalese (Sato, 2012) and Vietnamese international students who went to Japanese universities (Sato & Horie, 2015) made the decision based on lower tuition fees, the part-time-job permit allowing 28 hours of work per week, and increasing employment opportunities after graduation. Sato's (2005) research on Indonesian and Thai international students in Japanese universities shows that universities' international environment and overseas publicity influenced their decisions. Li's (2016) research on Chinese international students in Japanese universities showed that universities' international environment affected decision-making for all periods. Regarding universities' international environment itself, research by Miyoshi, Sugihara, and Nagata (2020) revealed that the presence of a sufficient number of Chinese international students and foreign faculty members had the greatest effect. Moreover, Miyoshi's (2019) research showed that direct overseas publicity, such as the JASSO Study Abroad Fair, had influenced students' decision to choose a Japanese university.

It is believed that international students first select a country in the decision-making process (Yokota, 2013). In addition, previous research on international students choosing Japanese universities has established pull factors at the national (i.e., tuition fees, part-time jobs, and job opportunities) and the university level (i.e., universities' international environment and overseas publicity) as motivating factors. Thus, it is important that research consider not only the factors that determine the decision to attend university in a particular country, but also that comparative research is conducted regarding university level effects. However, previous research lacks such comparative approach, and the effects of universities' international environment and overseas publicity on university selection are still not clear. Therefore, this research seeks to clarify differences in the recognition of universities' international environment and overseas publicity between international students who choose Japanese and non-Japanese overseas universities (English and non-English-speaking countries/regions).

Research methods and questions

“Before Studying Abroad Survey”

To capture the preferences of Chinese high school students who wished to study abroad in Japan, the researchers conducted a “Before Studying Abroad Survey,” at the JASSO Study Abroad Fairs that took place in Beijing (October 21–22, 2017) and Shanghai (October 28–29, 2017). These are the largest study abroad fairs for Chinese students considering Japan, held annually, and many applicants who desire to study in Japan attend from all over China. The surveys were distributed by cooperating universities. Two national universities and three private universities distributed the surveys in Beijing, as well as one national university and three private universities in Shanghai. The three cooperating national universities are TGU universities, while the six cooperating private universities are not. However, all of them actively promote internationalization. These universities distributed surveys to

432 students in Beijing and 319 students in Shanghai, and collected completed surveys from 385 students in Beijing and 245 in Shanghai. The recovery rate was therefore 89% in Beijing and 76% in Shanghai. After the surveys were collected, the data were entered, organized, and analyzed using IBM SPSS.

The “Before Studying Abroad Survey” consisted of the following four sections: (1) “About yourself” (gender, personal socio-economic background); (2) “About your currently desired career” (desired career, desired university name, desired university faculty name); (3) “Your reasons for choosing a particular university” (international environment, overseas publicity); (4) and “Foreign language learning experience and ability” (Japanese Language Proficiency Test, Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students, English External Examination Test Scores, such as TOEFL iBT, TOEIC, GTEC, IELTS, etc.). The specific survey items were created based on the TGU internationalization result index.² Moreover, participants provided e-mail addresses for continued correspondence after moving abroad, so that the “Follow-Up Survey” could be conducted.

“Follow-Up Survey”

Respondents of the “Before Studying Abroad Survey” were contacted for the “follow-up survey”. This survey was conducted in September and October 2019. We sent e-mails to 601 students and obtained effective responses from 509 (recovery rate, 81%). Of those, 334 students went to Japanese universities, and 175 students to non-Japanese overseas universities (Table 1). Of those outside Japan, 106 studied in English-speaking countries/regions—that is, the United States (45), Canada (29), United Kingdom (23), and Singapore (9)—and 69 in non-English-speaking countries/regions—that is, Taiwan (29), South Korea (21), France (10), and Germany (9).

“Semi-Structured Interview”

We then sought participation from the respondents in semi-structured interviews. We conducted semi-structured interviews via Skype in November and December 2019, asking questions to each student based on the thematic structure of the “Before Studying Abroad Survey,” for over an hour in English. After obtaining permission to record the interview in advance, it was transcribed in English. The interview outline and student profiles are shown in Table 2.

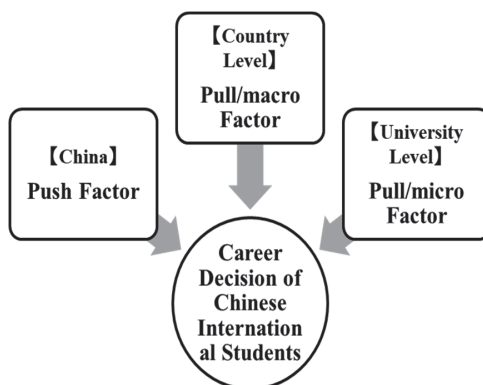
² TGU (<https://tgu.mext.go.jp/en/about/index.html>)

Table 1. Attributes of the person targeted

| | Sex | Age | Academic Fields |
|--|---|--|---|
| Japanese universities | Male (52.1% · 174), Female (47.9% · 160) | Age18 (64.3% · 215) , Age19 (35.7% · 119) | Humanity (32.9% · 110), Social Science (33.4% · 112), Technology (29.1% · 97) , Others (4.6% · 15) |
| Overseas universities other than Japan | Male (58.2% · 102), Female (41.8% · 73) | Age18 (67.2% · 118), Age19 (32.8% · 57) | Humanity (29.3% · 51), Social Science (33.4% · 58) , Technology (30.3% · 53), Others (7% · 13) |

Table 2. Interview profile

| | Sex | Age | Place of Birth | Target Country | Target University | Target Faculty |
|---|--------|-----|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| A | Male | 18 | Heikongjiang | Japan | Private | Economics |
| B | Male | 19 | Jilin | Japan | National | Engineering |
| C | Female | 18 | Liaoning | Japan | Private | Education |
| D | Female | 18 | Sichuan | U.S | State | International Relations |
| E | Male | 19 | Beijing | U.S | State | Science |
| F | Female | 18 | Shanghai | Australia | National | Liberal Arts |

**Figure 1. Research framework**

Hypothesis

In this research, analysis was conducted based on the research framework shown in Figure 1. The hypothesis of this study is as follows:

Hypothesis: Chinese international students who decide to study in English-speaking countries/regions are more affected by universities' international environment and overseas publicity than those who decide to study in non-English-speaking countries/ regions, such as Japan

Results and discussion

The relationship with personal socio-economic background

In this section, we examine whether Chinese international students' choice of overseas university was influenced by their individual socio-economic background (gender, birthplace in China, parents' educational background, and family's economic background).

The first question of the survey was "What's your gender? (1 = male, 2 = female)," and a greater number of respondents were female, at both Japanese universities (males, 43.2% [144]; females, 56.8% [190]) and non-Japanese overseas universities (males, 46.3% [81]; females, 53.7% [94]). Among the students opting for non-Japanese overseas universities, 47.2% (50) were male and 52.8% (56) were female English-speaking countries/regions, while 46.9% (32) were male and 53.1% (37) were female in non-English-speaking countries/regions. These results reflect the tendency of female students to be more oriented toward overseas universities than their male.

Second, there were remarkable differences based on respondents' birthplace in China. We asked, "Where do you come from in China? (1 = northeast China [Lioning, Jilin, Heilongjiang]; 2 = other places in China [including Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan])." While many from northeast China (77.8%, 260) went to Japanese universities, the majority of students from other places of China (80.1%, 140) attended non-Japanese overseas universities. The reason why many international students from northeast China choose Japanese universities could be because it was a Japanese colony during World War II, and is still influenced by Japanese culture and has many Japanese language learners.

Third, we asked, "What's your parents' educational background? (1 = graduated from high school, 2 = graduated from university or above)." Those international students whose parents graduated from high school had higher chances of attending Japanese universities (60.3%, 201) and overseas universities outside Japan (59.1%, 103). Among those studying in overseas universities, 52.3% (55) were in English-speaking countries/regions, and 47.7% (33) were in non-English-speaking countries/regions.

Fourth, we asked "What is your family's economic background? (1=poor, 2=slightly poor, 3=slightly rich, 4=rich)." The total number of students who indicated that their family economic background was "rich" or "slightly rich" was 216 in Japan and 125 among those who went to non-Japanese overseas universities. Of those in Japan, 28.9% (97) came from wealthy families and 35.6% (119) came from slightly poorer backgrounds. Of those attending non-Japanese overseas universities, 34.2% (57) were from wealthy families and 38.9% (68) were from slightly poor families. The above data show that the number of students who went to study in Japan or otherwise was not significantly different between wealthy families and slightly wealthy families. However, there were differences between respondents' language preference, evident in their choice of English-speaking countries/regions (39.2%, [42] vs. 38.1%, [40]) or non-English-speaking countries/regions (28.3%, [20] vs. 30.1%, [21]). It can be assumed that a certain level of familial economic security is needed before selecting overseas universities, which are much more expensive in both tuition fees and living costs than Chinese universities. The tuition fee is about 4,000 Yuan (582 USD) for a year, and the cost of living is about 2,000 Yuan (291 USD) per month in Chinese universities.

Relationship with the learning conditions before studying abroad

In this section, we examine the differences in respondents' choice of overseas university based on the study conditions (i.e., GPA, Japanese language proficiency test score, and TOEFL iBT score).

Regarding GPA, we asked, "What's your average GPA in high school? (1 = bad, 2 = slightly bad, 3 = slightly good, 4 = good)." Of the international students that went to Japanese universities, almost half considered their GPA as "good" or "slightly good" (19.8%, 66 vs. 25.3%, 85), while this was higher in overseas universities other than in Japan (32.3%, 57 vs. 42.1%, 74). Respondents' self-reported GPA was particularly high in English-speaking countries/regions (34.2%, 36 vs. 44.8%, 47), over and above non-English-speaking countries/regions (30.1%, 21 vs. 39.1%, 27). Compared with international students who attend Japanese universities, international students who attend overseas universities other than in Japan tended to report a better GPA. Among them, English-speaking countries/regions were particularly high. International students attending Japanese universities use the international student admission system. Although GPA varies depending on the education system and curriculum in home country, the international students' admission system requires a GPA value, an English external exam such as TOEFL iBT score, an Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students score (EJU), a written exam, and an interview as application requirements. GPA is only informative and is less emphasized, compared to other requirements. On the other hand, most overseas universities, such as in the United States, require GPA, an application essay, a letter of recommendation, evidence of extracurricular activities, an English external exam score, SAT, or Act. GPA is considered vital in US universities, therefore, it is essential in non-Japanese universities.

Second, there were clear differences in application patterns based on respondents' Japanese language proficiency test score (JLPT). We asked "What's your JLPT score? (1 = N1, 2 = N2, 3 = N3, 4 = N4, 5 = N5, 6 = none)." For the international students who went to Japanese universities, rates of possession of N1 and N2 were higher (18.9%, 63 vs. 25.8%, 86) than in those who attended non-Japanese overseas universities (5.8%, 10 vs. 6.2%, 4). Of those in English-speaking countries/regions, only 3.3% (4) and 4.8% (5) of respondents possessed N1 or N2 respectively, and this was only slightly higher in non-English-speaking countries/regions, at 4.1% (3) and 5.2% (4). Most Japanese universities do not ask for JLPT as an admission requirement under the international admission system. However, many Japanese universities conduct paper exams and interviews in Japanese. Hence, the international students who went to Japanese universities were bound to have some Japanese language skills and were likely to take JLPT. On the other hand, the rate of JLPT possession is lower for the international students who attend overseas universities other than Japan. This, of course, reflects the fact that JLPT is not necessary in overseas universities, such as US universities.

Third, regarding TOEFL iBT scores, we asked "What's your TOEFL iBT score (total 120 points)? (1 = over 60 points, 2 = 60 points or less, 3 = none)." TOEFL iBT scores differed by destination. Only 10.8%, (36) of international students who went to Japanese universities had over 60 points,

compared to 80.2%, (140) of those who went to overseas universities. In English-speaking countries/regions, 95.6% (101) scored 60 or above, whereas this rate dropped to 55.9% (39) in non-English-speaking countries/regions. For universities in English-speaking countries/regions, over 60 points is required for entry.

Relationship with push-pull/macro factors at the country level

In this section, to prove the push-pull/macro-pull/micro model, push-pull/macro factors at the country level are examined to identify effects on students' decisions. We start from the push factors.

**Table 3-1. Push-pull/macro factors
(Japanese universities vs. overseas universities other than in Japan)**

| | Japanese universities (N=334) | Overseas universities other than Japan (N=175) | t-test |
|--|----------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Push Factor | | | |
| Cultural similarity or geographical distance with your country/region | 65.2 (218) | 7.3 (13) | t(509)=11.76, p<.005 |
| Recommendation of high school teachers and parents in your country/region | 14.3 (48) | 20.4 (36) | t(509)=10.99, p<.001 |
| Difficult to enter the university in your country/region because of fierce competition | 38.4 (128) | 29.8 (52) | t(509)=12.32, p<.005 |
| Failed to enter university in your country/region | 4.3 (14) | 2.1 (4) | t(509)=9.81, p<.001 |
| The quality of the university education in your country/region was low | 45.2 (151) | 75.3 (132) | t(509)=12.01, p<.001 |
| Difficult to obtain good employment even if you graduated from university in your country/region | 10.1 (34) | 53.1 (93) | t(509)=9.92, p<.001 |
| Obtained scholarship in your country/region | 9.3 (31) | 67.8 (119) | t(509)=11.01, p<.001 |
| Pull/Macro Factor | | | |
| Pleasant climate in the country/region | 1.2 (4) | 1.1 (2) | t(509)=9.87, p<.001 |
| High safety in the country/region | 11.2 (37) | 0.6 (1) | t(509)=9.81, p<.005 |
| Interested in the country/region's culture | 59.1 (197) | 22.3 (39) | t(509)=11.99, p<.001 |
| There were parents in the country/region | 5.9 (20) | 9.8 (17) | t(509)=9.23, p<.001 |
| Long part-time work in the country/region | 53.1 (177) | 19.8 (37) | t(509)=11.94, p<.001 |
| Developed economy and technology in the country/region | 25.2 (84) | 40.1 (70) | t(509)=8.23, p<.001 |
| Travel expenses to the country/region were low | 13.4 (45) | 5.3 (9) | t(509)=8.56, p<.005 |
| Tuition fees for university in the country were low | 10.1 (34) | 7.2 (13) | t(509)=8.72, p<.001 |
| Living expenses at university in the country/region were low | 9.8 (33) | 4.1 (7) | t(509)=8.66, p<.001 |
| Many international students at university in the country/region | 29.1 (97) | 39.8 (70) | t(509)=8.72, p<.001 |
| Friends and relatives were studying at university in the country/region | 33.2 (111) | 32.1 (56) | t(509)=8.45, p<.001 |
| Research level of the special field was high in the country/region | 39.9 (133) | 43.3 (76) | t(509)=8.32, p<.005 |
| Authority of the degree was high in the country/region | 35.3 (118) | 45.2 (79) | t(509)=8.29, p<.001 |
| The quality of the university education in the country/region was high | 63.4 (212) | 72.4 (127) | t(509)=12.56, p<.001 |
| Employment opportunity in the country/region after graduation | 33.8 (113) | 53.4 (93) | t(509)=12.62, p<.001 |
| Employment opportunity in China after graduation | 29.7 (99) | 43.9 (77) | t(509)=8.12, p<.001 |
| Easy to get university information in the country/region | 32.4 (108) | 56.7 (99) | t(509)=12.01, p<.001 |
| Get the scholarship in the country/region | 2.1 (7) | 44.9 (150) | t(509)=8.26, p<.001 |
| Pull/Micro Factor (International University Environment) | | | |
| There were many classes in English | 51.1 (171) | 67.8 (119) | t(509)=14.62, p<.001 |
| The syllabus was in English | 48.3 (161) | 65.9 (115) | t(509)=14.56, p<.001 |
| The courses were in English | 38.9 (130) | 55.3 (97) | t(509)=8.29, p<.005 |
| There were many faculty members who acquired the degree at overseas universities | 27.6 (92) | 51.6 (90) | t(509)=8.21, p<.005 |
| There were many international students | 56.8 (190) | 72.9 (128) | t(509)=14.33, p<.001 |
| International student support was substantial | 31.2 (104) | 49.8 (87) | t(509)=8.18, p<.005 |
| International student dormitory was substantial | 25.6 (86) | 45.1 (79) | t(509)=8.11, p<.005 |
| Pull/micro Factor (Entrance Examination Publicity in Abroad) | | | |
| Saw the university homepage | 73.8 (246) | 69.3 (121) | t(509)=15.63, p<.001 |
| Read the university guidelines and pamphlet | 50.1 (167) | 62.1 (109) | t(509)=15.93, p<.001 |
| Participated in the university briefing session | 41.2 (138) | 71.3 (125) | t(509)=15.29, p<.001 |

**Table 3-2. Push-pull/macro factors
(English-speaking vs. non-English-speaking countries/regions)**

| | English-speaking countries/regions (N=106) | Non-English-speaking countries/regions (N=69) | t-test |
|--|--|---|----------------------|
| Push Factor | | | |
| Cultural similarity or geographical distance with your country/region | 81.2 (86) | 74.1 (51) | t(175)=12.62, p<.001 |
| Recommendation of high school teachers and parents in your country/region | 12.5 (13) | 9.7 (7) | t(175)=8.23, p<.001 |
| Difficult to enter the university in your country/region because of fierce competition | 51.2 (54) | 52.9 (37) | t(175)=12.56, p<.001 |
| Failed to enter university in your country/region | 0.9 (1) | 5.2 (4) | t(175)=8.36, p<.001 |
| The quality of the university education in your country/region was low | 72.3 (77) | 60.1 (41) | t(175)=12.52, p<.001 |
| Difficult to obtain good employment even if you graduated from university in your country/region | 12.1 (13) | 15.2 (10) | t(175)=8.42, p<.001 |
| Obtained scholarship in your country/region | 15.6 (17) | 11.1 (8) | t(175)=8.56, p<.001 |
| Pull/Macro Factor | | | |
| Pleasant climate in the country/region | 3.9 (4) | 4.7 (3) | t(175)=8.41, p<.001 |
| High safety in the country/region | 5.7 (6) | 6.2 (4) | t(175)=8.39, p<.001 |
| Interested in the country/region's culture | 70.9 (75) | 59.8 (41) | t(175)=12.32, p<.001 |
| There were parents in the country/region | 6.6 (7) | 4.3 (3) | t(175)=8.49, p<.001 |
| Long part-time work in the country/region | 69.3 (73) | 55.2 (38) | t(175)=12.29, p<.001 |
| Developed economy and technology in the country/region | 35.9 (38) | 31.4 (22) | t(175)=8.41, p<.001 |
| Travel expenses to the country/region were low | 3.9 (4) | 8.9 (6) | t(175)=8.36, p<.001 |
| Tuition fees for university in the country were low | 0.1 (1) | 6.8 (5) | t(175)=8.32, p<.001 |
| Living expenses at university in the country/region were low | 2.2 (2) | 9.8 (7) | t(175)=8.27, p<.001 |
| Many international students at university in the country/region | 37.5 (40) | 31.2 (22) | t(175)=8.45, p<.001 |
| Friends and relatives were studying at university in the country/region | 35.2 (37) | 26.8 (18) | t(175)=8.49, p<.001 |
| Research level of the special field was high in the country/region | 46.7 (50) | 32.1 (22) | t(175)=8.41, p<.001 |
| Authority of the degree was high in the country/region | 39.9 (42) | 28.7 (20) | t(175)=8.45, p<.001 |
| The quality of the university education in the country/region was high | 89.7 (95) | 70.4 (49) | t(175)=12.21, p<.001 |
| Employment opportunity in the country/region after graduation | 40.1 (43) | 29.1 (20) | t(175)=8.57, p<.001 |
| Employment opportunity in China after graduation | 30.2 (32) | 38.8 (27) | t(175)=8.51, p<.001 |
| Easy to get university information in the country/region | 38.6 (41) | 29.8 (21) | t(175)=8.49, p<.001 |
| Get the scholarship in the country/region | 22.9 (24) | 18.5 (13) | t(175)=8.42, p<.001 |
| Pull/Micro Factor (International University Environment) | | | |
| There were many classes in English | 91.2 (97) | 66.3 (46) | t(175)=14.87, p<.001 |
| The syllabus was in English | 95.2 (101) | 60.1 (41) | t(175)=14.81, p<.001 |
| The courses were in English | 48.2 (51) | 39.4 (27) | t(175)=8.38, p<.001 |
| There were many faculty members who acquired the degree at overseas universities | 38.2 (40) | 37.2 (26) | t(175)=8.35, p<.001 |
| There were many international students | 89.2 (95) | 65.2 (45) | t(175)=14.75, p<.001 |
| International student support was substantial | 45.7 (48) | 41.3 (28) | t(175)=8.32, p<.001 |
| International student dormitory was substantial | 41.9 (44) | 37.5 (26) | t(175)=8.39, p<.001 |
| Pull/micro Factor (Entrance Examination Publicity in Abroad) | | | |
| Saw the university homepage | 93.2 (99) | 61.3 (42) | t(175)=14.69, p<.001 |
| Read the university guidelines and pamphlet | 74.2 (79) | 60.2 (42) | t(175)=14.65, p<.001 |
| Participated in the university briefing session | 65.2 (69) | 53.2 (37) | t(175)=14.71, p<.001 |

Table 3-1 shows the results of frequency analysis on push, pull/macro, and pull/micro factors between Japanese universities and overseas universities other than in Japan. We asked respondents, “Why did you want to go to Japan or overseas countries/regions other than Japan?” providing multiple answers from which respondents chose to reply, whether they factor was Applicable (1) or Non-Applicable (2) to their decision-making. As shown in Table 3-1, respondents who went to Japanese universities international students indicated the importance of “cultural similarity or geographical distance with your country/region” (65.2%, 218), “the quality of the university education in your country/region was low” (45.2%, 151), and “difficult to enter the university in your country/region because of fierce competition” (38.4%, 128). On the other hand, respondents who attended non-

Japanese overseas universities valued these factors more highly, with the following proportions considering the same factors applicable to their decision-making: “the quality of the university education in your country/region was low” (75.3%, 132), “obtained scholarship in your country/region” (67.8%, 119), and “difficult to obtain good employment even if you graduated from university in your country/region” (53.1%, 93).

Table 3-2 shows the results of frequency analysis on push, pull/macro, and pull/micro factors between respondents studying in English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries/regions. Table 3-2 reveals similar patterns in English-speaking (81.2%, 86; 72.3%, 77; and 51.2%, 54; respectively) and non-English-speaking countries/regions (74.1%, 51; 60.1%, 41; 52.9%, 37; respectively). In both sets of respondents, a common factor of dissatisfaction was, “the quality of the university education in your country/region was low.” The quality of university education is not directly captured in this study, however, by looking at the world university ranking (e.g., QS World University Ranking) based on various indicators, it is true that many universities in the United States are near the top of the lists. In China, only seven universities (such as Tsinghua University, Peking University, Hong Kong University, and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) are ranked among the Top 100 of the QS World University Ranking.

Second, regarding pull/macro factors, the students that went to Japanese universities indicated that the factors “the quality of the university education in the country/region was high” (63.4%, 212), “interested in the country/region’s culture” (59.1%, 197), “long part-time work in the country/region” (53.1%, 177), and “easy to get university information in the country/region” (32.4%, 108) were particularly important. On the other hand, those who went to non-Japanese overseas universities were more likely to indicate that the following factors were particularly important: “the quality of the university education in the country/region was high” (72.4%, 344), “easy to get university information in the country/region” (56.7%, 99), and “employed after graduation from university in the country/region” (53.4%, 93). Moreover, in relation to the same indicators, a similar tendency was seen in the English-speaking (89.7%, 95; 70.9%, 75; and 69.3%, 73; respectively) and non-English-speaking countries/regions (70.4%, 48; 59.8%, 41; and 55.2%, 38; respectively). The Japan Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act permits international students to work for up to 28 hours a week. On the other hand, the US permits up to 20 hours a week on campus, and up to 20 hours a week on/off-campus is permitted in the United Kingdom and Australia. Thus, the Japanese system enables more working hours, compared to the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, which seems to be one of the reasons for certain respondents choosing Japan. Furthermore, according to Yokota (2013), while there are some available resources such as the “Gateway to Study in Japan,” “Study in Japan Comprehensive Guide,” and “Japan Study Support,” they only provide partial information about studying in Japan. On the other hand, in the United States, for instance, the “Education USA” homepage provides all the information for the students to easily understand university admissions and student life. Compared to the non-English-speaking countries/regions, since English-speaking

countries/regions accept more international students, their websites are more substantial.

Relationship with pull/micro factors at university level based on the survey

In this section, we consider the push-pull/macro-pull/micro model, and verify how the pull/micro factors at the university level influenced study destinations.

First, regarding the pull/micro factors concerning universities' international environment, we asked "Why did you want to study in Japanese universities or overseas universities other than Japan? (Multiple answers)." According to Table 3-1, international students who went to Japanese universities responded as follows to these pertinent factors: "there were a large number of international students" (56.8%, 190), "there were many classes in English" (51.1%, 171), and "the syllabus was in English" (48.3%, 161). On the other hand, despite showing similar tendencies, the positive response rates were higher, at 72.9% (128), 67.8% (119), and 65.9% (115), respectively, among those who chose overseas universities other than in Japan. Among these, Table 3-2 indicates that students in English-speaking countries/regions rate these factors more highly (89.2% (95), 91.2% (97), and 95.2% (101)) than those in non-English-speaking countries/regions (65.2% (45), 66.3% (46), and 60.1% (41)). A *t*-test confirms that there was a significant difference between the responses of international students who went to Japanese universities and overseas universities other than in Japan ($t = 3.063, 2.842, 2.331$; $df = 141, 132, 122$; $p < 0.01$). The results of the *t*-test showed significant differences in all the factors, which were all higher for those who attended overseas universities outside Japan. Moreover, we performed a *t*-test on those who went to non-Japanese overseas universities and found a significant difference in the preferences of those in English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries/regions. All the above factors were rated more highly by those in English-speaking countries/regions ($t = 4.888, 5.997, 5.832$; $df = 175, 159, 141$; $p < 0.01$). Since MEXT founded the TGU in 2014, a total of 26 Japanese universities have offered degrees in English. However, despite promoting internationalization, Japanese universities have an inadequate international environment, compared to other overseas universities. Having said this, it is thought that universities' international environment will vary greatly depending on any individual universities' missions and financial characteristics. Consider international student acceptance policy. Many national universities in Japan do not accept international students at the undergraduate level, because tuition fees are not their primary financial resource. However, in comparison, tuition fees serve as an important financial resource in other contexts, even in US state universities. On the other hand, many private universities in Japan and the United States accept international students at the undergraduate level in part because tuition fees are their primary financial resource. Moreover, classes and syllabi in English are commonplace in English-speaking countries/regions, and even some non-English-speaking countries/regions. For instance, in South Korea, where the "Study Korea Project" began in 2004, 40% of classes and syllabi in universities are in English. Therefore, it is important to have trial classes and request sample syllabi in English during the recruitment interviews of new faculty

members to Japanese universities. For those who have already been employed, it is important to help them improve through faculty development (FD), especially in teaching methods and writing syllabi in English.

Second, regarding the pull/micro factors related to overseas publicity, international students who went to Japanese universities indicated the importance of the following publicity sources: “saw the university homepage” (73.8%, 246), “read university guidelines and pamphlet” (50.1%, 167), and “participated in the university briefing session” (41.2%, 138). However, those who went to non-Japanese overseas universities responded as follows: “participated in the university briefing session” (71.3%, 125), “saw the university homepage” (69.3%, 121), and “read university guidelines and pamphlet” (62.1%, 109) (English-speaking countries/regions 93.2%, 99; 74.2%, 79; and 65.2%, 69 vs. non-English-speaking countries/regions 61.3%, 42; 60.2%, 42; and 53.2%, 37). We performed a *t*-test to examine the significance of the differences between the students in different study destinations, which revealed a significant difference in all the factors ($t = 3.971, 3.242, 2.959$; $df=267, 256, 274$; $p < 0.01$). For those who went to overseas universities outside Japan, their engagement with publicity was greater. A *t*-test performed on all international students who went to overseas universities other than in Japan, showed a significant difference between the English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries/regions. The values were higher among the international students who went to English-speaking countries/regions for all factors ($t = 5.559, 4.113, 3.987$; $p < 0.01$). Currently, international centers carry out university briefing sessions for international students in Japanese universities. Since these are concerned with undergraduate admissions, international and admission centers cooperate to carry out these briefing sessions. However, compared to overseas universities outside Japan, Japanese national universities are not well prepared to recruit international students for undergraduate education, for example, in terms of not being able to offer enough places or a fully English-medium environment. For this reason, many Japanese national universities do not actively hold university briefing sessions for international students at the undergraduate level. On the other hand, UC Berkeley holds briefing sessions globally every year, which resulted in 11,666 applications for undergraduate degrees from international students in 2018, with 1,341 of these being admitted.³ International students who went to Japan used universities’ websites instead of briefing sessions. Many of these websites are multilingual (English, Chinese, and Korean). However, compared to the Japanese version, in many cases the contents of the foreign language versions were simplified.

Relationship with pull/micro factors at university level based on the interview

Following the results of the survey data, in this section we present analysis of the interviews. We first examine the interviews of international students who went to Japanese universities, before

³ UC Berkeley (<https://admissions.berkeley.edu/international-students>)

considering those of interviewees who went to overseas universities outside Japan.

Interviews of international students who went to Japanese universities

- (A) Although, compared to universities in English-speaking countries/regions such as the United States, they are fewer in number and do not provide enough support for international students, I have chosen the present Japanese university because of the TGU, active acceptance of international students at the undergraduate level, and also the substantial support to international students (e.g., tutor system by faculty, student and academic writing support, and international dormitory).
- (B) I wanted to go to a Japanese university when I was a high school student, especially to a national university because tuition fees are expensive in a private university. Since I lived in Jilin in China and was unable to participate in the university briefing session in Beijing, I obtained the university information from the website. I can speak Japanese and English. Compared to universities in the English-speaking countries/regions, a Japanese university may be inferior to the international university environment, but I looked for the university that offers a bachelor's degree course in English and has an international dormitory in Japan.
- (C) I chose the present university because I was interested in the Japanese culture and a bachelor's degree course in English. I actually attended the university and took classes. The English pronunciation of the younger faculty is beautiful, but I could not understand the older faculty when they spoke. Some of older faculty just read the English sentences that were written in PowerPoint or from a book. Generally, everything is okay, but I am so disappointed with the class.

First, Interview A shows that international students recognize the TGU program. Moreover, compared to universities in the English-speaking countries/regions, despite the Japanese university being inferior in some respects, their university was chosen because of its active acceptance of international students and well-organized international student support. Therefore, this student's decision was strongly influenced by their university's international environment.

Second, according to Interview B, although the Japanese university was considered inferior to the universities in the English-speaking countries/regions in relation to classes in English and international students' dormitory, this student also thought that it would be a good idea to have a better international environment. Reflecting on overseas publicity, the participant revealed that, since many Japanese university briefing sessions are only held in big cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, it is difficult for students who live in other cities to participate. Indeed, every year, the JASSO Study Abroad Fair takes

place only in Beijing and Shanghai, and the overseas offices of the universities are also located in these cities. In future, if each university wishes to hold briefing sessions, it may be desirable to know the provinces in which their previous Chinese international students were born. In these provinces, universities could then carry out briefing sessions, supporting further recruitment of international students.

Third, from Interview C, it is clear the while an international environment is important, older faculty members may lack the skills required to organize classes in English. Compared to younger faculty members, more experienced professors did not have to conduct trial classes in English during their job interviews. For this reason, faculty development is necessary for these faculty members, to teach them the skills to organize classes in English, thereby further improving the international environment.

Interviews of international students who went to overseas universities other than in Japan

Compared to the interviews of the students who went to Japanese universities, those who went to overseas universities outside Japan showed a higher recognition of universities' international environment and overseas publicity.

(D) Looking at world university rankings such as the QS World University Rankings, I decided to go with the present university in the United States. Most of world's top universities are in the United States. Compared to the Japanese universities, I felt this one to be better from the perspectives of education, research, and internationalization. My major is International Relations. So, I wanted to attend the present university where there are students from different cultural backgrounds. In other words, I chose this because the international university environment is more satisfactory. There was an impression that Japanese universities lagged behind in this point. I learned about this university by participating in their university briefing session held in China. After that, I asked the admission department questions via Skype, and they kindly responded many times. So, I felt a sense of closeness to the university, and I decided to go there.

(E) The reason I advanced to the present university in the United States is because, compared to the Japanese universities, I could study my specialties in English with international students of various nationalities. I could also get a degree in English and substantial university study support as well. Moreover, if I get a degree on my specialties in English, I will have more opportunities to work. In fact, this university seemed to have a much more substantial international university environment than Japanese universities. I learned about the present university by participating in their university briefing session held in China. The application

guidelines were also written in easy-to-understand English, and I decided to be in the current university because it was polite when I asked questions about the university.

(F) I went to a university in Australia because I was able to study in English and be geographically close to China. I was interested in Japanese universities; however, even in the top universities in Japan (e.g., University of Tokyo), the enrollment of international students was limited. Hence, I was disappointed. In addition, many Japanese universities make it necessary to take exams in Japan, and to take these exams, it was necessary for me to obtain a short-term stay visa. Furthermore, the admission procedure was written in Japanese and was so complicated. I learned about the present university by participating in their study abroad fair in China. University briefing sessions were held many times in China, attracting me to it.

First, the quotation from Interview D shows that this student was influenced by the world university ranking and chose a university that was comprehensively superior to Japanese universities. They also wanted to attend an institution with students from diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds enrolled in the field of International Relations, and felt that the international environment of their chosen university was better than in Japanese universities. Furthermore, this student participated in university briefing sessions and became knowledgeable about the institution. On the contrary, in the case of many Japanese universities, enquiries from international students are generally handled via e-mail, and currently, there is almost no remote correspondence via Skype. For international students, who do not have enough information about Japanese universities compared to the Japanese students, they might feel more secure if such means of interaction were available. Such communication strategies may be one of the more effective modes of overseas publicity.

Third, evident from Interview F, although this student was interested in Japanese universities, the lesser capacity to accommodate international students was discouraging. Further, the necessity to travel to Japan to take the exam deterred this student because of the legal barrier of obtaining a short-term stay visa. Moreover, this student's current university held multiple university briefing sessions, typical of American universities, and actively accepted international students. Thus, the ability to participate in university briefing sessions was one of the reasons behind their choice.

Logistic regression analysis of decision-making of Chinese international students

In this section, based on the analysis results of the survey and interview, we examine the factors that determined the decision-making of Chinese international students. The results of the logistic regression analysis are presented in Tables 4-1 and 4-2.

As indicated by the analysis, participants' gender and their parents' educational background did not have a significant influence on their decision-making. Similar trends were evident in the case of

students studying in English-speaking countries/regions. However, regarding the influence of participants' birthplace in China, those from northeast China were significantly more likely to attend Japanese universities, while belonging to a wealthy family had a significant influence on the decision to study in overseas universities outside Japan. International students from other places of China, including Hong Kong and Macau, and also those from wealthy families, tended to attend universities in English-speaking countries/regions.

Second, excellent Japanese language proficiency test scores significantly influenced the decision to attend a Japanese university, while an excellent GPA and over 60 points on TOEFL iBT scores (≤ 60 points) appeared to make participants more likely to attend non-Japanese overseas universities. International students who had an excellent GPA and over 60 points on TOEFL iBT showed a particular tendency to attend universities in the English-speaking countries/regions.

Third, turning to push factors, students were more likely to go to a Japanese university if they responded positively regarding the applicability of the following factors: "cultural similarity or geographical distance with your country/region," "quality of the university education in your country/region was low," and "difficult to enter the university in your country/region because of hard competition."

On the other hand, those who considered the following factors to be unapplicable were more likely to attend non-Japanese overseas universities: "obtained scholarship in your country/region" and "difficult to obtain good employment even if you graduated from university in your country/region." A similar tendency was noted among those who attended university in English-speaking countries/regions (except "cultural similarity or geographical distance with your country/region"). "Research level of the special field was high in the country/region" was a particularly significant factor in case of the students studying in non-English-speaking countries/regions.

Fourth, regarding pull/macro factors at the national level, the students who considered the following factors to be "applicable" were more likely to attend Japanese universities: "quality of the university education in the country/region was high," "interested in the country/region's culture," and "long part-time work in the country/region." Those who considered the "quality of the university education in the country/region was high," "easy to get university information in the country/region," and "employed after graduation from university in the country/region" to be applicable were more likely to attend non-Japanese overseas universities. A similar tendency was observed in case of the English-speaking countries/regions, except the applicability of "long part-time work in the country/region."

Finally, regarding pull/micro factors (universities' international environment) at the university level, international students who considered the following statements applicable to their decision were more likely to study in non-Japanese overseas universities: "there were many international students," "there were many classes in English," "the syllabus was in English," "the degree course was in English," and "there was support for international students." Regarding pull/micro factors in relation to overseas publicity, at the university level, those who considered the following factors applicable were more likely

to choose non-Japanese overseas universities: “participated in the university briefing session,” “saw the university homepage,” and “read the university guidelines and pamphlet.” A similar tendency was observed in case of the English-speaking countries/regions. Therefore, the results of this research support the hypothesis of Chinese international students who make a career decision to study in English-speaking countries/regions are more affected by the international university environment and the entrance examination publicity abroad.

Table 4-1. Results of logistic regression analysis (Japanese universities)

| | Japanese Universities | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| | (Reference value: Overseas universities other than Japan) | |
| | Regression Coefficient (B) | Odds Ratio (β) |
| Gender (Female) | -0.69 | 0.49 |
| Birthplace in China (Other places of China include Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) | 0.25 | 1.28 ** |
| Parents' educational background (Graduated from high school) | -0.14 | 0.86 |
| Family's economic background | 0.21 | 1.24 ** |
| GPA | -0.04 | 0.95 ** |
| Japanese language proficiency test score | 0.62 | 1.85 ** |
| TOEFL iBT score (60 points or less) | 0.67 | 0.95 ** |
| Cultural similarity or geographical distance with your country/region | 0.39 | 1.48 ** |
| Recommendation of high school teacher and parents in your country/region | 0.02 | 1.02 |
| Difficult to enter the university in your country/region because of fierce competition | 0.14 | 1.15 * |
| Failed to enter university in your country/region | 0.13 | 1.13 |
| The quality of the university education in your country/region was low | 0.21 | 1.24 ** |
| Difficult to obtain good employment even if you graduated from university in your country/region | -0.73 | 0.48 ** |
| Obtained scholarship in your country/region | -0.22 | 0.79 * |
| Pleasant climate in the country/region | 0.02 | 1.02 |
| High safety in the country/region | 0.11 | 1.12 |
| Interested in the country/region's culture | 0.16 | 1.17 * |
| There were parents in the country/region | 0.14 | 1.15 |
| Long part-time work in the country/region | 0.11 | 1.09 ** |
| Developed economy and technology in the country/region | 0.01 | 1.00 |
| Travel expenses to the country/region were low | 0.11 | 1.11 |
| Tuition fees for university in the country were low | 0.07 | 1.07 |
| Living expenses at university in the country/region were low | 0.13 | 1.14 |
| Many international students at university in the country/region | 0.17 | 1.19 |
| Friends and relatives were studying at university in the country/region | 0.17 | 1.19 |
| Research level of the special field was high in the country/region | 0.03 | 1.03 |
| Authority of the degree was high in the country/region | 0.07 | 1.07 |
| The quality of the university education in the country/region was high | 0.54 | 1.72 * |
| Employment opportunity in the country/region after graduation | 0.03 | 1.03 |
| Employment opportunity in China after graduation | 0.21 | 1.24 |
| Easy to get university information in the country/region | 0.16 | 1.17 |
| Get the scholarship in the country/region | 0.02 | 1.02 |
| There were many classes in English | -0.02 | 0.98 * |
| The syllabus was in English | -0.17 | 0.84 ** |
| The courses were in English | -0.03 | 0.96 * |
| There were many faculty members who acquired the degree at overseas universities | -0.27 | 0.76 |
| There were many international students | -0.01 | 0.99 * |
| International student support was substantial | -0.04 | 0.95 ** |
| International student dormitory was substantial | -0.26 | 0.75 |
| Saw the university homepage | -0.74 | 0.49 * |
| Read the university guidelines and pamphlet | -0.26 | 0.75 * |
| Participated in the university briefing session | -0.17 | 0.84 ** |
| | 0.33 | |
| | ** | |
| | 509 | |

Significance Level: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table 4-2. Results of the logistic regression analysis (English-speaking countries/regions)

| | English-speaking countries/regions (Reference value: Non-English-speaking countries/regions) | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| | Regression Coefficient (B) | Odds Ratio (β) |
| Gender (Female) | -0.65 | 0.46 |
| Birthplace in China (Other places of China include Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) | -0.27 | 0.71 ** |
| Parents' educational background (Graduated from high school) | -0.12 | 0.81 |
| Family's economic background | 0.51 | 1.68 ** |
| GPA | 0.11 | 1.12 ** |
| Japanese language proficiency test score | -0.21 | 0.80 |
| TOEFL iBT score(60 points or less) | 0.39 | 1.48 ** |
| Cultural similarity or geographical distance with your country/region | -0.22 | 0.79 |
| Recommendation of high school teacher and parents in your country/region | 0.01 | 1.01 |
| Difficult to enter the university in your country/region because of fierce competition | 0.16 | 1.17 ** |
| Failed to enter university in your country/region | 0.16 | 1.17 |
| The quality of the university education in your country/region was low | 0.54 | 1.72 ** |
| Difficult to obtain good employment even if you graduated from university in your country/region | -0.17 | 0.94 ** |
| Obtained scholarship in your country/region | 0.11 | 1.09 ** |
| Pleasant climate in the country/region | 0.01 | 1.01 |
| High safety in the country/region | 0.13 | 1.14 |
| Interested in the country/region's culture | 0.14 | 1.15 ** |
| There were parents in the country/region | 0.17 | 1.19 |
| Long part-time work in the country/region | -0.02 | 0.98 |
| Developed economy and technology in the country/region | 0.02 | 1.02 |
| Travel expenses to the country/region were low | 0.03 | 1.03 |
| Tuition fees for university in the country were low | 0.62 | 1.85 |
| Living expenses at university in the country/region were low | 0.39 | 1.48 |
| Many international students at university in the country/region | 0.54 | 1.72 |
| Friends and relatives were studying at university in the country/region | 0.21 | 1.24 |
| Research level of the special field was high in the country/region | 0.21 | 1.24 ** |
| Authority of the degree was high in the country/region | 0.09 | 1.09 |
| The quality of the university education in the country/region was high | 0.69 | 1.81 ** |
| Employment opportunity in the country/region after graduation | 0.17 | 1.19 |
| Employment opportunity in China after graduation | 0.07 | 1.07 |
| Easy to get university information in the country/region | 0.21 | 1.24 ** |
| Get the scholarship in the country/region | 0.62 | 1.85 ** |
| There were many classes in English | 0.39 | 1.48 ** |
| The syllabus was in English | 0.36 | 1.45 ** |
| The courses were in English | 0.21 | 1.24 ** |
| There were many faculty members who acquired the degree at overseas universities | 0.17 | 1.19 |
| There were many international students | 0.62 | 1.85 ** |
| International student support was substantial | 0.69 | 1.81 ** |
| International student dormitory was substantial | 0.21 | 1.24 |
| Saw the university homepage | 0.61 | 1.86 ** |
| Read the university guidelines and pamphlet | 0.54 | 1.72 ** |
| Participated in the university briefing session | 0.69 | 1.81 ** |
| | 0.31 | |
| | ** | |
| | 175 | |

Significance Level: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Japan is including in Non-English-speaking countries/regions

Conclusion and study limitations

This research examined the decision-making of Chinese international students going to overseas universities, focusing on the importance of universities' international environment and overseas publicity, based on two surveys and semi-structured interviews.

The results of the analysis supported the hypothesis of this research: "Chinese international students who decide to study in English-speaking countries/regions are more affected by universities' international environment and overseas publicity than those who decide to study in non-English-speaking countries/ regions, such as Japan." Although previous research employed the push-pull model, this research establishes the positive validity of the push-pull/macro-pull/micro model. From these clear results, the following problems were revealed in the Japanese system. Firstly, although Japanese universities are seeking to develop a positive international environment and overseas publicity, it was clear that, in relation to the acceptance of international students in Japanese national universities, these features were insufficient compared to non-Japanese universities, such as those in the US. Secondly, the majority of those who went to Japanese universities were born in northeast China. However, many Japanese universities only hold their briefing sessions in big cities, such as Beijing or Shanghai. In addition, compared to the non-Japanese overseas universities, fewer briefing sessions were held and most universities offered correspondence only via e-mail.

As a countermeasure to the first issue above, Japanese universities need to have trial classes in English as part of the interview process for new faculty, and also have applicants submit class syllabi in English. For those who have already been employed, it is important to help them improve through FD, especially concerning their teaching methods in English. Moreover, many Japanese universities currently accept mainly Japanese students at the undergraduate level. From now on, it is necessary for faculty and staff to understand that greater numbers of international students need to be accepted in response to globalization. Indeed, without the understanding and cooperation of faculty and staff, it is difficult to enhance the international environment. As a countermeasure to the second issue introduced above, Japanese universities must take note of the regions from which their existing international students come, so they can hold briefing sessions in those regions to inform and recruit future international students. Moreover, normally, Japanese universities separate their international office from the office of admissions. However, these must work together to promote the acceptance of international students. Furthermore, it is necessary to correspond with international students who do not have enough information via Skype. Although the amount of correspondence to Japanese universities has increased, it is critical to respond to this demand to achieve results.

Finally, we will with some limitations to this research and consideration of future issues. In this study, we have conducted an analysis based on two surveys and semi-structured interviews, but the sample size was limited. It is difficult to conduct a survey for Chinese high school students who wish to enter overseas universities in English-speaking and non-English speaking countries/regions. In

addition, it is even more difficult to carry out a follow-up survey. Thus, it is important for the future research to conduct analysis based not only on attendees of the “JASSO Study Abroad Fair,” but also on a variety of study abroad fairs to capture larger sample sizes. Moreover, in this research, we focused on the influence of universities’ international environment and overseas publicity. Future research may focus on other important factors, for example, the effect of seniors, friends, and family members, who have been revealed as important others in past research on decision-making.

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