

Emerging-Economy State and International Policy Studies

Kazuko Yokoyama
Sarah Louisa Birchley

Transnational Entrepreneurship in South East Asia

Japanese Self-Initiated Expatriate
Entrepreneurs

Emerging-Economy State and International Policy Studies

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Japanese Self-Initiated Expatriate
Entrepreneurs



Springer Open

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This book is dedicated to Kazuo, Yasuka and all my students who will read this book and use it for their professional development. I hope this book will guide your career.
Kazuko Yokoyama

This book is dedicated to my beautiful mum, Stuart, Grace, Daisy and all the young aspiring entrepreneurs who pass through my classroom: Go, travel, explore, discover, adventure, learn, grow; Live a Great Story.
Sarah Louisa Birchley

Preface

This book is the result of our curiosity; of course, not only as academic researchers, but also as women who have traveled the world and worked overseas ourselves. Over the years, our careers have spanned different continents, providing us with various experiences and opportunities to interact with the world. I (Yokoyama) embarked on an international career when I graduated from university. When I returned to Japan at the age of 35, in 1990, the Japanese-style employment scheme was the mainstream in Japanese society. However, convinced that after having experience in different working styles while in overseas, I felt that Japanese HRM would likely change in the future. And it has. It now incorporates performance-related management practices and a more global outlook. I (Birchley) arrived in Japan in 2001, having just graduated with a degree in geography and having spent a short time working in Spain. In the early 2000s, with no cell phone or social media, living in a small, rural village in Gunma Prefecture, I quickly became embedded in the culture and ways of life in Japan; each day I found myself becoming more and more curious about the interactions I witnessed between my colleagues in the office and how my colleagues were supported in their work, what motivated them and how they worked together. I questioned what made them enjoy their work? Were they interested in leaving Japan, like I had left my home country? What was it like to live and work in another country? The geographer and business-mind in me was curious.

We both became motivated to research this topic as we had a strong idea that an increasing number of young Japanese passing through our classrooms might be suited to or decide to seek an international career and/or had a desire to work for the improvement of society. The first step for me (Yokoyama) was to write a book called *Human Resource Management in the UN: A Japanese Perspective*, edited with Sarah, where I conducted research on Japanese UN staff and found that 40% of Japanese UN staff quit Japanese companies and made a UN career. This meant that they knew and had experience of both systems. In addition, I conducted in-depth interviews with these expatriate employees. After completion of the book, I wanted to develop my research by interviewing Japanese self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs in Southeast (SE) Asia. Similarly, I (Birchley) began to explore

self-initiated expatriate academics working in Japan, arguing that psychological contracts among these expatriates are indicative of communication within the organization and form a useful basis for better understanding of intercultural workplaces. This research leads to an interest in expatriate entrepreneurs in Japan and entrepreneurship, workplace and career education.

Having successfully worked together previously, we joined forces again to undertake this research. Over the past two years, I (Yokoyama) visited seven SE Asian countries and undertook interviews with over 60 Japanese expatriates. Out of these, 52 cases qualified our requirements as entrepreneurs. All interview records were transcribed, and then analyzed and conceptualized by Birchley. As a pair, we worked with and to each others' strengths in order to produce this research, drawing on our interdisciplinary backgrounds.

Initially, we didn't have any networks in SE Asia but through the networks of Japanese Overseas Association, I (Yokoyama) was able to build the networks and find collaborators. Meanwhile, while conducting the research and preparing the manuscript, I (Birchley) was on sabbatical in the United States, South America and Europe, exploring perspectives of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education outside Japan. Therefore, this work exemplifies how two individuals can collaborate in this borderless world. We could not have done this alone, but by combining our skills, knowledge, passion for research and curiosity, we made the most of every opportunity presented to us, at times in spite of our heavy teaching and administration load.

We sincerely hope to inspire others as much as we have been inspired by the cases in this book and endeavor to continue to analyze and share the narratives of these fascinating entrepreneurs.

Tokyo, Japan
June 2019

Kazuko Yokoyama
Sarah Louisa Birchley

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Advice and constructive criticism given by Prof. Chris Brewster, Prof. Jay Mitra and Prof. Mitsuhide Shiraki was of great help in completing this manuscript. Additionally, we thank Ms. Kawakami and all the team at Springer for this opportunity to publish. We would also like to thank the following individuals, companies and associations for their assistance with the collection of data: Ms. Mika Kagawa, Mr. Tadashi Miura, former President of the *Japanese Overseas Entrepreneurs Association*, *WAOJE* and *JETRO* in Shanghai, China.

We wish to thank our dedicated friends, family, students and colleagues for their unwavering encouragement and support.

Finally, our special thanks are extended to all the research participants in South East Asia for generously sharing their time, knowledge and experience with us as we collaboratively interpreted their lived experiences. We also thank those who allowed us to use their offices for the interviews. This book would not have been possible without their collaboration. With the deepest thanks.

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Chapter 1

Perspectives on Transnational Entrepreneurship



1.1 Introduction

What motivates an individual to leave his/her home country to explore business opportunities? What experiences foster a global entrepreneurial mindset in the individual and can this mindset be taught? What are the implications of transnational entrepreneurship for education and future societies? At the time of writing, there is much change in the world, socially, economically and politically; indications of a shift in global politics to the far right, a migrant crisis in Europe, a renewed focus on Asia and emerging economies, border wall disputes in North America, increasing economic inequality in Europe, political unrest in South America, growing disillusionment with larger collaborative bodies such as the European Union and many individuals suffering from a sense of loss over their national identity and values. While these events are happening, some individuals remain steadfast in their home countries. They seek shelter from the global chaos and try to protect the society from changes associated with internationalization. Yet, others see this disruption as an opportunity for growth and development, embracing the chance to connect with their global neighbors. Individuals are now able to develop and self-manage an international career by taking advantage of the multitude of opportunities afforded to them by our increasingly interconnected world (Inkson and Arthur 2001). Whereby previously, international assignments were characterized by expatriate business people sent on low-risk international assignments to work at a subsidiary for a short, fixed period of time, recently, an increasing number of expatriates are seeking a more high-risk endeavor; establishing their own companies outside their home country minus the safety net of a parent company. Who does this? Why do they do it? How do they do it? The implications of this trend are far reaching, in terms of both the economy and society.

Japanese business people are no different in terms of how they interact with the world. Events such as the Olympic Games in 2020 are drivers of a form of internationalization already observed in many sectors of society. As changes take hold,

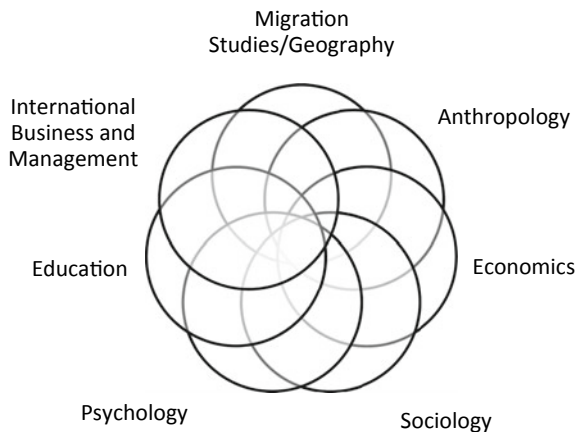
Japanese human resource management practices are already in the crux of change and individuals are starting to explore new career opportunities outside Japan. This book seeks to share the narratives and lived experiences of Japanese business men and women engaged in transnational entrepreneurship (TE) and the ramifications for society, education, culture and the economy.

We begin by providing an overview of the field of entrepreneurship, how we conceptualize entrepreneurs and the individuals who are the crux of this research, self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs (SIEEs). We then share cases of Japanese SIEEs who are working throughout South East Asia, before presenting various theoretical ideas to be explored. The book will provide the reader with rich case examples from which we can build knowledge and theory not only in entrepreneurship but also in migration studies, international business and management, and education. It will not provide definitive answers to the multiple questions surrounding transnational entrepreneurship but will shed light on the lived experiences of people who choose to set up businesses internationally and provide an insight into their motivations. We aim to provide substantive theory in the hope that it can help in building theory of a higher level of generality.

1.2 Positioning the Research

Although grounded in the field of international business and management as a study on transnational entrepreneurship, this book is interdisciplinary in nature. Figure 1.1 shows the academic fields related to the research and as you progress through the book, you will see how we have straddled the disciplines to better understand the entrepreneurs. The inherent complexity of nature and society

Fig. 1.1 Academic disciplines related to entrepreneurship research.
Source Authors



requires us to explore the basic research problems at the interface of different disciplines. According to Klein and Newell (1997), interdisciplinary studies is a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession and draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective (Klein and Newell 1997). It differs from multidisciplinary in that the research integrates insights to better understand the subject at hand.

We take a contextualized view of entrepreneurship in understanding that economic behavior can be better understood within institutional, social, spatial, historical and temporal contexts. Three general trends in approaching entrepreneurship—the economic approach, the socio-environmental approach and the psychological approach—are combined in this book to provide a holistic approach. This has been possible by combining the skills of a pair of researchers who themselves have interdisciplinary backgrounds. The author Yokoyama, Japanese, is a professor of human resource management in Tokyo. She has a background as an assigned expatriate working internationally in the United Nations, before she returned to Japan and became an academic. The author Birchley, Welsh, is a self-initiated expatriate academic, business professor within the same faculty but has an interdisciplinary research background in geography, educational management, entrepreneurship, and experience as an English language teacher, and herself an 18-year expatriate of Japan. Both bilingual, we have combined our knowledge, experience and understanding of Japanese business, education and culture from an insider and outsider perspective with our interdisciplinary backgrounds to present the entrepreneur narratives you will explore in this book. We encourage you, the reader, to engage with these stories, as we have, putting yourselves in the shoes of Japanese transnational entrepreneurs as they journey through their careers, in order to better understand transnational entrepreneurship and the lived experiences of SIEEs in the context of South East Asia.

1.3 What Is It Exactly that We Are Exploring?

First, how do we view entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs? Are the opportunities that entrepreneurs take ‘out there?’ Are they objective? Something to be found? Or are they constructed through a process? Similarly, is entrepreneurship itself a final goal, a final state to one’s career? Or more a step on a path, more ‘transient,’ not a destination? The same can be said for the entrepreneur him/herself. Is an entrepreneur born or made? Is the disposition to become an entrepreneur something in our DNA or the result of our environment and experiences? And if someone decides to be an entrepreneur what makes them successful? Is it a result of experience? Is it luck or good fortune? Let’s first look at entrepreneurship.

1.3.1 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a contested term. It is particularly problematic to define due to its flexibility and subjective-ness. Is it an art or a science? Is it both? Since scholars began articulating entrepreneurship, there are many different schools of thought and theories proposed. Table 1.1 summarizes the main theories based on Kwabena and Simpeh (2011).

Our understanding of entrepreneurship aligns with Cuervo et al.'s (2008), in that entrepreneurship—the function—is conceptualized as the discovery of opportunities and creation of new economic activity.

Many scholars have tried to articulate the field in other ways: Brush (1992) identified four categories; individual characteristics; the environment; the organization; and the entrepreneurial process. Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) suggest five schools of thought: classical economic; management intrapreneurship; leadership; great man; and trait. Hjorth (2004) brings these more concisely to three:

Table 1.1 Summary of theories of entrepreneurship

Theory	Summary
<i>Economic entrepreneurship theory</i>	
Classical	Free trade, specialization, competition, land, capital, labor
Neo-classical	The importance of exchange
Austrian market process	Schumpeter (1934), human action in the context of an economy of knowledge. Awareness of profit-making opportunities
<i>Psychological entrepreneurship theories</i>	
Personality traits theory	Behavioral characteristics
Locus of control theory	Rotter (1966), perception of life events
Need for achievement theory	Perceptions about the rewards and punishments in life (Pervin 1980), entrepreneurs are driven by the need to succeed
Sociological entrepreneurship theory	Focus on the social context; social networks, life stage, ethnic identification, population ecology
Anthropological entrepreneurship theory	Focus on the cultural entrepreneurship model. Culture leads to attitudes toward innovation, behavior
Opportunity-based entrepreneurship theory	Drucker (1985), entrepreneurs do not cause change but they exploit opportunities
<i>Resource-based entrepreneurship theories</i>	
Financial capital theory	Access to resources is most important. If people have access to money, they will be more likely to start a venture (Clausen 2006)
Social capital or social network theory	The idea that if an individual is embedded in a strong network structure, they may have more opportunities to recognize opportunities that might exist
Human capital entrepreneurship theory	Based on education and experience (Becker 1975; Shane and Venkataraman 2000)

Source Authors, based on Simpeh (2011)

corporate, organizational and psychological, while Jack and Anderson (2002) explore more: economic; social; population ecology; trait; psychodynamic; and behavioral. Our study is holistic in nature but it falls within the sociological, social capital and human capital domain.

As there are various definitions and theories of entrepreneurship, so too are there various types of entrepreneurship based upon activities, ecosystems and contexts the businesses engage in and with. Table 1.2 summarizes the main domains of entrepreneurship. Of course, the types can be integrated, such as agricultural social entrepreneurship or transnational academic entrepreneurship. These domains show the sheer vastness of the field.

Within entrepreneurship, as can be seen above, there are a number of types that are concerned with opportunity recognition, trade and people crossing international borders. It is this element that we are concerned with in this book.

1.3.2 *Defining Transnational Entrepreneurship*

To narrow the focus of this book, we are looking specifically at transnational entrepreneurship. The fields of entrepreneurship, human resource management and migration studies have all seen increase in literature on transnational entrepreneurship (TE), yet like entrepreneurship itself, the term is vague and contested. The work of Bailette (2018) provides the most contemporary definition of transnational entrepreneurship to date:

Cross border investment to acquire, combine and recombine specialized individuals and heterogeneous assets to create and capitalize value for the company under conditions of institutional distance and uncertainty (2018:34).

Table 1.3 provides a summary of definitions of transnational entrepreneurship based on Bailette's (2018) review of the literature.

Similarly, Brzozowski et al. (2009), Chen and Tan (2009) and Prashantham et al. (2018) describe the facets behind TE and cross-cultural business and how firms take advantage of cross-cultural opportunities. Figure 1.2 shows the intersection of

Table 1.2 Domains of entrepreneurship

Private/individual entrepreneurship	Agricultural entrepreneurship
Corporate entrepreneurship	Social entrepreneurship
Public sector entrepreneurship	Transnational entrepreneurship
Joint entrepreneurship (public and private sector)	Ethnic entrepreneurship
Academic entrepreneurship	Diaspora entrepreneurship
Intrapreneurship	Migrant entrepreneurship
Political entrepreneurship	International entrepreneurship

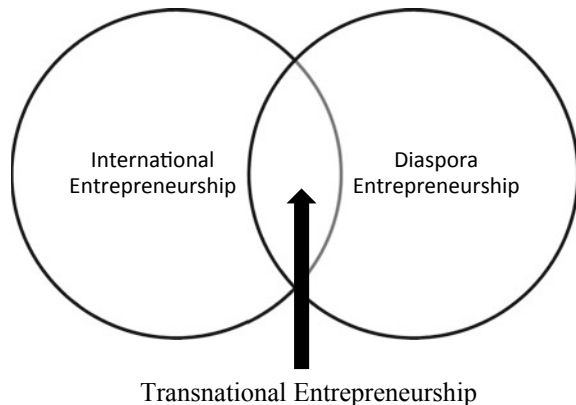
Source Authors

Table 1.3 Definitions of transnational entrepreneurship in the literature

	Definition Transnational entrepreneurship...	Sources
1.	...is a multi-faceted process, in which immigrant entrepreneurs discover and enact business opportunities across national borders	Chen and Tan (2009, p. 1080)
2.	...represents a form of economic transnationalism that immigrants engage in for different purposes	Sequeira et al. (2009, p. 1026)
3.	...is a process of economic adaptation based on mobilization of social networks across borders... ...to leverage resources from two different social fields to create competitive advantage	Patel and Conklin (2009, pp. 1047, 1050)
4.	...involves entrepreneurial activities that are carried out in a cross-national context and initiated by actors who are embedded in at least two different social and economic arenas	Drori et al. (2009, p. 1001)
5.	...[occurs when] immigrants simultaneously engage in two or more socially embedded environments and maximize their resource base by doing so	Lin (2010, p. 127)
6.	...is the ability to mobilize social networks in dual institutional settings	Patel and Terjesen (2011, p. 64)
7.	...implies immigrant business engagement not only in the host country, but also in the country of origin	Brzozowski et al. (2014, p. 551)
8.	...encompasses immigrant and (although on a smaller scale) ethnic entrepreneurs who maintain regular cross-border operations, marking their economic presence (at least) in two countries: the host and home economy	Brzozowski et al. (2017, p. 107)
9.	...[is] the pursuit of entrepreneurial cross-national opportunities by actors embedded in different socio-economic arenas	Prashantham et al. (2018, p. 4)
10.	...[features] individuals who migrate to another country while maintaining business linkages with both the country of origin and the country of destination	Santamaria-Alvarez et al. (2016)

Source Bailette (2018)

Fig. 1.2 Transnational entrepreneurship



research streams in TE, as initially outlined by Droi et al. (2009), which illuminates the context of this book.

The definitions above and Bailette's review of the literature focus on the action and the firm, as opposed to the individual entrepreneur, yet who *is* the entrepreneur we are studying?

1.4 Who Is the Entrepreneur in This Book?

In our research, we seek to hone in on the individual, recognizing that the actors engaging in TE use a sophisticated network of personal contacts combined with various education and life experiences to set up their ventures. To that end, it is important to explore definitions of international and transnational entrepreneurs—the *who* of TE. We have established the *what*, as a form of transnational entrepreneurship, yet how do we define the *who* in this book? When embarking on the study, we were very clear on who we wanted to focus our research on, yet there are various scholarly definitions of who the entrepreneur actually is, which proved complex to navigate. In general terms, we are studying about Japanese who decide to leave Japan and set up their own business overseas in South East Asia. Academically speaking, are these people transnational entrepreneurs? Are they migrant entrepreneurs? Are they diaspora entrepreneurs? We recognize that the entrepreneurs in our study straddle the context of transnational and diaspora entrepreneurship and we ascertain that we are researching in the field of transnational entrepreneurship.

There is a plethora of terms to label entrepreneurs in the transnational context. Table 1.4 highlights some differences in definition based on the literature and our own understanding.

According to research by Inter Nations, an independent research company, in a recent survey of around 14,000 people, they found that the typical expatriate entrepreneur is male, works in business services or consulting, he has a high satisfaction with his work and life balance and more than seven out of ten are in a committed relationship, with a quarter raising children. Their study also found that among business owners and entrepreneurs, 19%—more than six times the global average of 3%—wanted to start their own business in their destination, with 12% citing they are seeking a better quality of life as the reason for their move abroad. Interestingly, Kazakhstan, Malta, Peru and Costa Rica find it easy to attract business owners and Egyptians are more likely to be business owners (18%) than any other nationalities.

Specifically exploring how scholars have defined transnational entrepreneurs, Portes et al. (2002) define them as self-employed immigrants whose business activities require frequent travel abroad and who depend for the success of their firms on their contacts and associates in another country, primarily their country of origin. Drori et al. (2009) class them as an entrepreneur who migrates while maintaining business-related linkages with both their home country of origin and host country, and Rusinovic (2008) defining them as entrepreneurs who use their

Table 1.4 Typology of entrepreneurs working internationally

Term	Definition
Consumers-as-international entrepreneurs	Individual consumers and online communities of consumers who identify, evaluate and exploit opportunities across national borders to create and distribute products for both financial and non-financial reasons (Chandra and Coviello 2010). With the rise of e-commerce sites, such as Amazon, anyone, anywhere, with internet connection can potentially trade internationally
Self-initiated expatriate entrepreneur	Individuals who expatriate themselves from their home country without the support of an employing company and set up their own enterprise
Hi-impact self-initiated expatriate social entrepreneur	Individuals who expatriate themselves from their home country without the support of an employing company and set up their own enterprise, but who also have a profound impact on their host country
Diaspora entrepreneur	Migrants and their descendants who establish entrepreneurial activities that span the national business environments of their countries of origin and countries of residence (Riddle et al. 2010)
Immigrant/migrant entrepreneur	An entrepreneur who has recently arrived in a country other than their country of origin and who start their own companies as a means of economic survival
Trailing spouse entrepreneur	The spouse of a business person who has been seconded overseas. He/she sets up a business in their new country and when their spouse is given a new assignment, the entrepreneur either ceases business or continues it at the next destination
Ethnic entrepreneur	An entrepreneur who has a regular set of connections and interactions with others who share a common national background
Minority entrepreneur	Business owners who do not belong to the majority population
Expat-preneur	Expat-preneurs are businesspeople who have moved abroad on their own initiative and started or joined a new commercial venture in the host country (Vance et al. 2016)

Source Authors

contacts in their home country to conduct business in their new host country. Many of these definitions show an entrepreneur who maintains a strong link between his/her host and home country, however in our study, although the entrepreneurs do this to some extent, they are more independent in that they choose to start a business in the host country without necessarily having a connection to the home country. Thus, based on a review of the literature, for the purpose of this book, the entrepreneurs in our study are defined as self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs (SIEEs).

In this sense, if we define transnational entrepreneurs as individuals who carry out cross-national trade and who are embedded in two different societies, then our

SIEEs are somewhat different as you will see from their stories, the majority of them do not depend on success, both at home and host country.

Table 1.5 highlights a sample of expatriate entrepreneur research that has been conducted over the last 15 years, found through a search of the term expatriate entrepreneur, in order to position our study in the context of a wider field of research (at the top of the table). All the samples we explored had some degree of difficulty in definitively defining expatriate entrepreneur.

By no means is this an exhaustive list, but it does begin to shed light on the types of studies researchers are engaging in that fall under the expatriate entrepreneur umbrella.

Table 1.5 Sample of expatriate entrepreneur research

Country context	Theme	Author(s)
Seven countries in South East Asia	Japanese self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs	Yokoyama and Birchley (2019)
Denmark	Adjustment issues; performance; impact of initiatives to attract entrepreneurs	Basaiawmoit and Normann (2013)
Various	Bamboo network; Chinese expatriate entrepreneurs	Weidenbaum and Hugley (1996)
France/Spain	Self-employed expatriates with lifestyle objectives; lifestyle expats	Stone and Stubbs (2007)
Honduras	Personality; investment activity	Befus et al. (1988)
Norway	Tourism entrepreneurs	Iversen et al. (2016)
Thailand	EU expatriate coping strategies and culture of Thailand	Egan and Tosanguan (2009)
United Kingdom	Korean expatriate business owners; sensemaking and adjustment issues	Lowe et al. (2011)
Vietnam	Westerners in Vietnam; hybrid expatriate entrepreneurship	McHenry and Welch (2018)
Namibia	Chinese expatriate entrepreneurs opening shops	Dobler (2009)
The Gulf	Indian entrepreneurs	Vora (2011)
Qatar	White collar Indian expatriate entrepreneurs; emergence of new sectors	Kanchana (2012)
United Kingdom	Potential of South African expatriate entrepreneurs	du Plessis (2009)
The Gulf	Globalized knowledge society and expatriate entrepreneurs	Kolb (2015)
South Korea	Motivational success factors and foreign entrepreneurs	Walcutt (2015)
Various	Middle eastern expatriate entrepreneurs and the Rokeach value survey	Jaramillo et al. (2012)
Poland	Foreign entrepreneurs in Poland; arrival narratives	Johnson (2006)

Source Authors

1.5 Self-initiated Expatriate Entrepreneurs

To provide a concrete definition of SIEEs, it is helpful to understand self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). SIEs are defined as individuals who expatriate themselves from their home country without the support of an employing company (Inkson and Richardson 2010). Research on self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), in general, has been increasing significantly in the past 10 years (Beitin 2012; Cao et al. 2013; Al Ariss and Crowley-Henry 2013; Doherty et al. 2011). As Vaiman et al. (2015) state, there is no clear definition of SIEs. The definition criteria by Cerdin and Selmer (2014) go some way to defining the SIEs described in our study, in that the SIE engages in *self-initiated international relocation*. Research on Japanese SIEs, in particular, is an under-explored field. Peltokori and Froess (2009) identified differences between organizational expatriates (OEs) (those who are dispatched by their home companies to international posts) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) (those who make their own decision to live and abroad). However, the target group of this study was Japanese expatriates who work overseas.

The key difference is that SIEs in our research choose not to work for an already established company and are not relocated by their company, but to set up their own company in a host country; therefore, they are termed self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs (SIEEs). Research on this aspect of TE in a non-Western context, particularly Japanese, is a new addition to the field and contributes to Al Ariss and Crowley-Henry's (2013) call for research that is context-specific.

In order to qualify for this study, the SIEEs presented in this book fulfill the following criteria, loosely based on Cerdin and Selma (2014):

- (a) the entrepreneur was born in Japan or has Japanese nationality;
- (b) the entrepreneur engaged in self-initiated international relocation;
- (c) the entrepreneur has regular employment (intentions) through his/her own company;
- (d) the entrepreneur has intentions of a temporary stay (initially);
- (e) the entrepreneur has skills/professional qualifications.

Thus, the entrepreneur is ultimately, solely in charge of his/her own international mobility and success. In line with Dyer's (1994) theory on entrepreneurial careers, SIEEs are acutely aware that it is their own choice to veer from a traditional path to engage in an entrepreneurial career. Research on overseas expatriates shows there are many factors that drive an individual to pursue this kind of career, such as their human and social capital (Davidsson and Honig 2003), their family background and personal circumstances (Vance and McNulty 2014), their personality (Baron et al. 2011), their ability to take risks (Hayward et al. 2010), their exposure and connection to the new country (Vance and McNulty 2014), the attitudes and mindsets, global and entrepreneurial, that they exhibit (Yokoyama and Birchley 2017) similarly; these can also be studied in the context of SIEEs.

As suggested at the start of this book, the world is globalizing and becoming even more connected. The migration of people, knowledge and ideas, and the study of the nexus of these elements are increasingly pertinent for our understanding of the world. Particularly in South East Asia, as you will see in Chap. 3, the changing economy and inter-regional migration patterns make a study on transnational entrepreneurship essential for gaining a better understanding of the region and its possible future. From a Japanese perspective, little has been written about Japanese entrepreneurs, let alone Japanese self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs, in English, hence we are pleased to be able to share the stories of these entrepreneurs with a wider audience to aid understanding of the culture, business and economics of the country and wider region, and to encourage debate on how best to research these themes.

1.6 How Are We Approaching Transnational Entrepreneurship?

In this book, we view TEs through a constructivist lens and interpretive paradigm. We are not the first researchers to use social constructivism and we hope there may be more who expand the research agenda on these ideas. We agree with Chandler (1994) that any phenomenon that results from human agency (such as entrepreneurship) does not occur naturally; it is shaped by social, political, cultural and historical contexts. As this research is set in a constructivist paradigm, that means it is conceptualized as having aspects of both the post-positivist and interpretivist paradigms—ontological critical realism with epistemological subjectivism. In this study, meaning is created through an interaction of the interpreter and the interpreted (Crotty 1998). The findings are produced by the interaction between the interpreter and the interpreted, as situated in society, thus knowledge of the observed, in this case the SIEEs, is constructed rather than discovered.

There are two key principles of constructivist logic: (1) knowledge is not passively received, but rather built up through experiences of the individual over time; and (2) the function of cognitions is adaptive, serving to organize the experiential world rather than discover an ontological reality (Von Glasersfeld 1981). We argue that the SIEE begins a sensemaking process (Weick 1995) through life and that this process takes place through interactions with peers (family, friends, colleagues and mentors) and reflections on their education, home experience and first workplace experience. As they make sense of their environment, they are able to recognize potential opportunities and engage deeper in various social structures.

It follows Charmaz's (2006) view of a social constructionist approach to grounded theory which allows the researcher to address why questions, such as 'Why do Japanese become self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs?' while preserving

the complexity of social life. We accept, as does Charmaz (2006), that (1) reality is multiple, processual and constructed—but constructed under particular conditions; (2) the research process emerges from interaction; (3) it takes into account the researcher’s positionality, as well as that of the research participants; (4) the researcher and researched co-construct the data—data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it. Researchers are part of the research situation, and their positions, privileges, perspectives and interactions affect it (Charmaz 2006: 6).

Now we have established our ontological and epistemological perspective, let’s explore the different levels through which we can analyze entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6 Levels of analysis in entrepreneurship studies

Level of analysis	Constructs and variables
<i>Micro level</i>	
Entrepreneur and firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual characteristics • Demography • Family situation • Motivational drivers • Qualifications • Work attitudes • Job organization, location • Job satisfaction, commitment • Career orientation • Career anchors • Career success • Psychological contracts • Career capital • Social capital • Human capital
<i>Meso level</i>	
Entrepreneur and firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Ethnic diversity • Networks • Types of ties • Brokerage • Level of embeddedness • Social capital • Reputation/brand • Expertise • Innovation • Infrastructure
<i>Macro level</i>	
Entrepreneur and firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context • Globalization/internationalization • Politics • Bureaucracy • Legislation • Ethnic communities

Source Authors

Although there is much research on the meso and macro levels of TE, transnational entrepreneurs, diaspora entrepreneurs, and so on, in this book, we focus on the micro level to a greater extent, considering how it is integrated into the meso and macro levels.

Research has explored the push–pull mechanisms of overseas relocation. Many SEIs have a sense of adventure or desire to travel; sometimes they wish to escape from their current circumstances (Doherty et al. 2011). Inkson and Meyers (2003) and Baruch (1995) were also able to confirm various motivations, like push and pull factors influencing SIEs. These include economic, social or legal drivers and/or an inner sense of adventure. They can be classified as explorers—those who wish to see the world, goal seekers—those who have clear goals, and escapers—those seeking to escape personal situations (Barry 1998 in Inkson and Meyers 2003). What all the studies show us is that the field is broad and the space between each level is relatively fluid.

We initially approached the study through the lens of the theory of practice akin to work by Honig et al. (2010). We too recognize transnational entrepreneurs are ‘resourceful actors’, who are operating in different contexts, and that the process of social construction takes place within the dual structures or dual habitus (Drori et al. 2010). This analytical framework, according to Drori et al. (2010), research should include macro-level social constructs with the understanding that actions are understood by observing social practices (Giddens 1986). When discussing the concept of habitus (Bourdieu 1977), Honig et al. (2010) remind us that when entrepreneurs decide to start a transnational entrepreneurial activity they draw on their knowledge and experience from their schema (Mouzelis 1995). Thus practice is the outcome of one’s habitus (Honig et al. 2010: 8).

1.7 The Study

We have thus established that, within the field of entrepreneurship, we are concerned with the sub-field of transnational entrepreneurship and the individual entrepreneurs who cross borders to set up their businesses. Some of the entrepreneurs featured in our study do not necessarily work within both their home and host context but what is important to note is that these entrepreneurs are expatriates, they are self-initiated; they have made the decision to move abroad and show a high degree of self-efficacy.

The narratives shared in this book seek to explore and help us better understand the current situation of Japanese self-initiated expatriate transnational entrepreneurs working in South East Asia. As social-constructivists work within an interpretive paradigm, we took a case method, qualitative approach, to analyze the narratives produced by 51 cases covering China, Hong Kong, The Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand. Interviews were conducted between 2016 and 2019, in the host country, and coding followed grounded theory protocol (as outlined by Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990).

Table 1.7 Location and time of interviews conducted by Yokoyama

Country	Place	Dates	Place of interview conducted
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Feb. 25–27, 2017 June 2–4, 2017	Hotel Azumaya Kirirom Institute of Technology etc.
Myanmar	Yangon	Aug. 23–26, 2017	Super Hotel etc.
Vietnam	Hanoi	Aug. 6–7, 2018	Azumaya Hotel etc.
	Ho Chi Minh City	Aug. 8–9, 2018	Iconic Co. etc.
Indonesia	Jakarta	March 12–14, 2018	Daisei Co. Meeting Room etc.
China	Shanghai	March 11–12, 2019	Hotel Okura Garden Hotel etc.
	Hong Kong	Aug. 20, 2017	City Garden Hotel etc.
Thailand	Bangkok	Feb. 28–March 1, 2015 Aug. 22, 2017	Personnel Consultant Co. etc.
Philippines	Manila	Feb. 4–5, 2019	Plecom Philippines Co. etc.

The narratives shown in Chap. 3 are based on the interviews conducted in Table 1.7 and represent the circumstances of the SIEEs at the time of interview. Please note that prior to publishing, one case withdrew their detailed case description from the book, however the demographic information is still included.

We recognize that narratives can help us to explore how individuals view their environments (Droi et al. 2007). Birchley's (2013) previous experience of working with narratives when she explored sensemaking among academics helped inform the method of analysis. Open coding was the first step of analysis: findings categories or themes from the data. Secondly, axial coding allowed us to relate categories to sub-categories, allowing us to make connections. In the third stage, selective coding, we coded systematically for the categories that help to make a coherent framework (Strauss and Corbin 1998). It was important to contrast literature as it helped to produce new insights (Eisenhardt 1989) and it proved to be valuable that we had explored a range of literature from various disciplines, as we suggest, that have been able to vary the level of conceptual representation and external and internal. We have aimed to focus on the individual within a particular context with the aim being trying to describe a lived experience in a way that communicates the meaning of the experience (Weick 1979). We have included summaries of the life stories and career paths in Chap. 3 as they help us to see the development of the entrepreneurs and how they comprehend the world around them (Gardner and Laskin 1995: 63–4). They give us, researchers and you, the reader, an in-depth access to understanding how the entrepreneur understands his or her own development and the development of their business (Atkinson 1998: 8). Through the data collection, we have developed trust with the entrepreneurs, seeking clarification on various points and engaging in the networks within which they function. The depth of this engagement, we argue, gives a unique insight into Japanese business people who relocate.

As we start to appreciate the lived experiences of the entrepreneurs, we attempt to develop grounded theory to reveal links between transnational entrepreneurs,

opportunity recognition, venture creation, their host countries, Japan and other contextual factors. However, prior to the study we conducted an interdisciplinary literature review in education, career design, entrepreneurship, management, migration studies, sociology and Japanese studies which gave some preliminary conceptual ideas, but as we proceeded with interviews we became aware of additional themes to explore. Akin to work by Honig et al. (2010), we found Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977) a useful framework to help us initially engage with our findings, but Deci and Ryan's work on self-determination theory came to the forefront at the end of our study as it helped us to better understand the individual and environmental contexts within the multiple layers (macro, meso and micro) we analyzed (explained in more detail in Chap. 4).

This book comprises four remaining chapters. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the Japanese context. We feel it is an essential element of the book as it helps to position the entrepreneurs in their natural context, or habitus. On becoming aware of the societal and cultural context, we can have a better appreciation of the norms and expectations the Japanese entrepreneurs had to navigate to expatriate themselves from their home country. We cover the demographic changes, impact of globalization, human resource management, entrepreneurship and education to provide a holistic view of the Japanese context.

Chapter 3 presents a brief overview of each country, followed by the case narratives and career paths from all 51 entrepreneurs.

Chapter 4 presents a basic analysis of the countries and entrepreneur trends followed by a more in-depth qualitative analysis.

Chapter 5 considers the future of self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurship in South East Asia, from a Japanese perspective.

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Chapter 2

Entrepreneurship in the Japanese Context



2.1 Demographic Changes in Japan

Japan is changing. The phenomenon of population aging has taken hold and has become an increasingly important social and economic issue in Japan. According to recent government data, the total population of Japan is 126.71 million as of October 2017, with the number of population aged 65 and over being 35.15 million, 27%. Those between the age of 65–74 make up 13.9% of the total population and those of 75 years old, 13.8%. Analysts predict that the population will fall below 100 million by 2053.

According to UN estimates, the ratio of young people, aged 15–24, across the world accounts for 26% of total population; however in Japan, it accounts for only 12.3%. Currently, according to government statistics, the life expectancy at birth in Japan is 80.98 for males and 87.14 for females. It is predicted to increase to 84.95 years for males and 91.35 years for females by 2065 (Cabinet Office 2018).

Worryingly, the annual number of live births in Japan began to fall from 1975 and has been falling continuously since then. The fertility rate among women is decreasing while their peak age is increasing, with the average age of women giving birth to their first child being 30.7 years old. Reasons cited for the decrease in childbirth include the financial burden of raising and educating children, problems conceiving, wishing to pursue a career and getting married at a later age.

The number of marriages exceeded 1 million annually between 1970 and 1974; however, following that, both the number of marriages and the marriage rate tended to decline. Since 2011, the marriage rate has shifted between 600,000 and 700,000. The number of marriages in 2016 was estimated to be around 620,500 based on the population census. Around 53% of married women, who were working before giving birth to their first child, wish to continue working after childbirth. Similarly, men who have families with small children, 15.0% of men in their 30s and 15.4% of men in their 40s, work more than 60 h/week, with 29% of men working more than 49 h a week; thus men are often reluctant to share housework and childcare

duties with a working wife. Unfortunately, the social support systems such as nurseries and other childcare facilities are often in heavy demand, oversubscribed and cannot cope with the number of mothers wishing to return to work.

In terms of employment, the ratio of people aged 65 and over in the labor force has increased to 12.2%, with a total labor force of 67.20 million. The labor force ratio, which is the percentage of the labor force to the population, in 2017 is 45.3% for 65–69 years old and this has increased year-on-year since 2004. In the period from 2008 to 2010, the unemployment rate at the age of 60–64 rose due to the rapid deterioration of the economic environment, but since then it has declined. In 2017, the unemployment rate for 60–64 years old was 2.8%, which was almost the same as the total age group (2.8%) for the age group of 15 years old and over. The elderly population still has a strong motivation to work post-traditional retirement age, with an estimated 40% of people over 60 stating that they intend to work for as long as they can.

2.2 Globalization and Internationalization in Japan

In globalization, economic activity is highly specialized and is influenced by technological innovation and the development of globally minded human resources. In order to reap the benefits of globalization, it is necessary for countries to respond to the development of new technology while also nurturing global talent. The Japanese government has been making concerted efforts to cope with the new world order and since the 1990s various globalization-related changes have been observed in the economy.

First, exchange rates have fluctuated and continue to fluctuate. Secondly, Japan's trading partners have altered with the shift happening away from the United States and Europe toward strengthening economic ties with South East Asian nations. Thirdly, equity investments from abroad have increased, although slowly and finally, growth and international economic development is slow when compared to the United States and Europe.

Globalization is said to encompass increased cross-border movement of capital and labor and the deepening of economic ties. *Kokusaika*, or internationalization in Japanese, is according to Mannari and Befu (1983: 9), "one of the most potent and significant words in the contemporary vocabulary of Japanese intellectuals, academicians, politicians and journalists." It has permeated business and education discourse for around 20 years and has led to the development of new terms, such as '*guro-barize-shon*' (globalization), '*kokusaijin*' (international person), '*tabunka kyosei*' (multiculturalism) and '*dai-ba-shi-ti*' (diversity). These terms, despite becoming part of mainstream discourse, are poorly understood.

In 1987, the National Council of Educational Reform (*Rinkyoushin*) suggested that in order for *kokusaika* to be achieved in Japan, the country needed to restructure "the Japanese higher education system from an international perspective" (Ehara 1992: 269) in order to rear '*kokusaijin*' (Ishii et al. 1996: 237) or

international person. In attempting to make Japanese people more ‘international,’ it assumes that every Japanese person has the same background, is monocultural, and that one must be taught through a thorough process how to be ‘international.’

In 2013, the Japanese Ministry of Education developed a set of new goals for English education which would develop *global jinzai* or ‘global human resources.’ The policy highlighted three factors and five linguistic skills (METI 2012 and Ashizawa 2012) necessary to become a *global jinzai*:

Factor I: Linguistic and communication skills;

- (1) for travels abroad;
- (2) for interactions in daily life abroad;
- (3) for business conversation and paperwork;
- (4) for bilateral negotiations;
- (5) for multilateral negotiations.

Factor II: Self-direction and positiveness, a spirit for challenge;

Factor III: Understanding of other cultures and a sense of identity as a Japanese.

Research suggests that demand for *global jinzai* by Japanese companies will grow by 240% between 2012 and 2017 to make up 8.7% of the employed population (MEXT 2013).

In addition to *kokusai-ka* efforts in universities, the Ministry of Education in Japan is working to enhance English education substantially throughout elementary to lower/secondary school. This is seen as a major step in advancing language proficiency and global awareness. The new policies are timed to match the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and are integrated into the main education reforms highlighted in 2014.

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) produces a ‘Diplomatic Bluebook’ every year, which details their efforts in internationalization. In terms of how to develop the relationship between non-Japanese and Japan, there are inbound and outbound strategies. In terms of inbound, tourism is seen as a main pillar for growth and regional revitalization. As such, visa restrictions were relaxed and 2017 saw a record 28.69 million foreign tourists enter Japan. Similarly, in the ‘Investments for the Future Strategy 2017’ the government is aiming to increase the number of foreign human resources in Japan (which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

In terms of outbound development, MOFA is working to recruit, train and support Japanese nationals who can play active roles in international organizations, and NGOs, NPOs and local government are working hard to export regional products overseas, through MOFAs Regional Promotion Projects. Through various projects, local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are supported to explore international markets. Thus, there are efforts to not only create an ecosystem where talented Japanese nationals can play an active role on the global stage but also invite non-Japanese to experience Japan through tourism, and their work is also encouraged.

Through such endeavors, an open attitude toward other cultures and values are encouraged along with developing a deeper understanding of global issues through international exchange. As we explore the narratives of the Japanese SIEEs in this book, it is worth bearing in mind the cultural and societal context and discourse of what it is to be an ‘international’ or ‘global’ Japanese in the twenty-first century. What traits of being a *global jinzai* do these SIEEs have? Are they *kokusaijin*?

2.3 Government Strategy

With the socio-economic changes in Japan come the radical political changes in government policy. Since starting his second term as prime minister, Prime Minister Abe has stood on his platform of *Abenomics*—a new kind of economics for a new era of Japan, with a set of policies that can cope with the rapidly aging society and influence globalization.

The Prime Minister’s *Abenomics* package sets out a plan for the future growth of Japan that will enable sustainability. The key concern is how to overcome deflation and set the country back into recovery and prosperity. In 2013, the economic policy package became synonymous with the Prime Minister and his well-known and heavily reported three ‘policy arrows’ that would encourage aggressive monetary policy, flexible fiscal policy and a growth strategy would be the backbone of the Japanese economy for the foreseeable future. In its recent manifestation, there are three key elements; boosting productivity by changing how the country works and embracing diversity, recognizing how to drive innovation and trade through the development of a new strategy called *Strategy 5.0*, leveraging structural reforms, building on international opportunities and circulating growth to regional economies and finally, energizing corporate activities which include encouraging business and investment and driving inward foreign direct investment (FDI) (Government of Japan 2017). Table 2.1 highlights the key policies being implemented (Government of Japan 2017).

These ambitious plans help to highlight the current climate and context of Japan; the environment that the SIEEs have left behind. Thus, it begs the question, why have these entrepreneurs left Japan? Are changes such as these highlighted in the policies likely to encourage them to return? Are these measures sufficient for the development and sustainability of Japan?

2.4 Human Resource Management Practices in Japan

We can see the changes related to internationalization, globalization and government policies in many spheres of society, but in business and management the impact is tangible and in human resource management (HRM), in Japan, it is particularly noticeable. Japanese HRM practices have been the subject of much research. Much

Table 2.1 Highlights of the *Abenomics* reforms

Strategy	Structural and legislative transformations
Boosting productivity	Equal pay for equal work legislation; regulatory limits for overtime work; better cultivation of human resources; promoting flexible work styles; introducing new scholarship programs for children to ease the financial burden of higher education; lessen the burden of working parents and accelerate women’s promotion; facilitate change through helping seniors engage with business; leveraging the talent and promoting and expanding opportunities for expatriates in Japan
Drive innovation and trade	Continue to maintain worldwide leadership in the tech industry; encourage entrepreneurialism nationwide through deregulation and support; expand the healthcare market; increase investment in energy to address global warming; double the integrated market value of the agriculture industry; leverage free trade and other economic agreements; promote quality infrastructure investment; modernize SMEs to meet global standards; reinforce tourism as a central component of revitalization; double labor productivity growth
Energize corporate activities	Stimulate growth through business-friendly reform; strengthen investor confidence through increased transparency; attract foreign companies through promotional activities; resolve issues hindering foreign companies entering Japan

Source Author, based on data from the Japanese government policy documents for *Abenomics*

reversed in the 1980s, the practices were placed under close scrutiny and adapted throughout the world. Traditionally, in Japan, the recruitment of new employees generally occurs in the spring. Companies select graduating students through a series of interviews, document-based screening and aptitude-based testing. They tend not to pay attention to the department the student graduated from or their field of specialization, preferring to hire generalists. They are more concerned in hiring students from top-level Japanese universities, based on their potential, as the objective is to mold the student to the needs of the company (Yokoyama 2014). Promotion panels in Japan usually judge candidates not only on their performance in their job but also on what is termed their ‘*hitogara*’—which loosely translates as the balance of their personality. This is the Japanese concept that believes it is important to be able to work in a harmonious manner while in a company and that the ability to work without causing conflict to others is well respected. As such, promotion often occurs within the company as the senior managers are more aware of the candidate’s every day working style and ability to work with others and it is not commonplace for large companies to recruit mid-career professionals from outside the company. This feature of long-term employment, or the so called life-time employment scheme, was a cornerstone of Japanese HRM. In line with this, employees’ salaries were not based on performance, but on seniority within the company.

Yet, since the 2000s, there have been calls for Japan to change. Dalton and Benson (2002) suggested there was a sense of crisis occurring in Japan, while Matanle (2003), Aoki et al. (2007) and Schaede (2008) observed a move toward an adaptation of Western management concepts. Moriguchi (2014) provides a detailed account of the development of Japanese HRM practices from 1914, arguing that it

may be time to develop a ‘more diverse and flexible’ Japanese style of HRM, encouraging companies to develop more ‘innovative’ HRM practices (Moriguchi 2014: 74). After the explosion of the bubble economy in 1990, many Japanese companies faced competition from outside Japan. In an attempt to reduce costs, the companies tried to reduce costs by introducing performance-based HRM. These changes indicate a change in direction and have resulted in Japanese employees taking initiative of their own career.

However, as you can see from this chart of the employment portfolio (Fig. 2.1), the Japanese HRM system has not changed so dramatically. Sixty percent of the companies are still maintaining a traditional Japanese style of long-term employment where employees are guaranteed work until their mandatory retirement age. Additionally, contract workers who are highly and technically skilled make up only 3.5% of the workforce. Thirdly, the group of temporary employees (*shokutaku* employees, *shuko* employees, contract employees, temporary employees) makes up 40% of the workforce. When this scheme was developed it was thought that employees could move easily among the three groups, but due to the traditional long-term practices this is not a reality. It is difficult to move from part-time to full-time and due to the lack of job security, few employees choose to work as a contract worker.

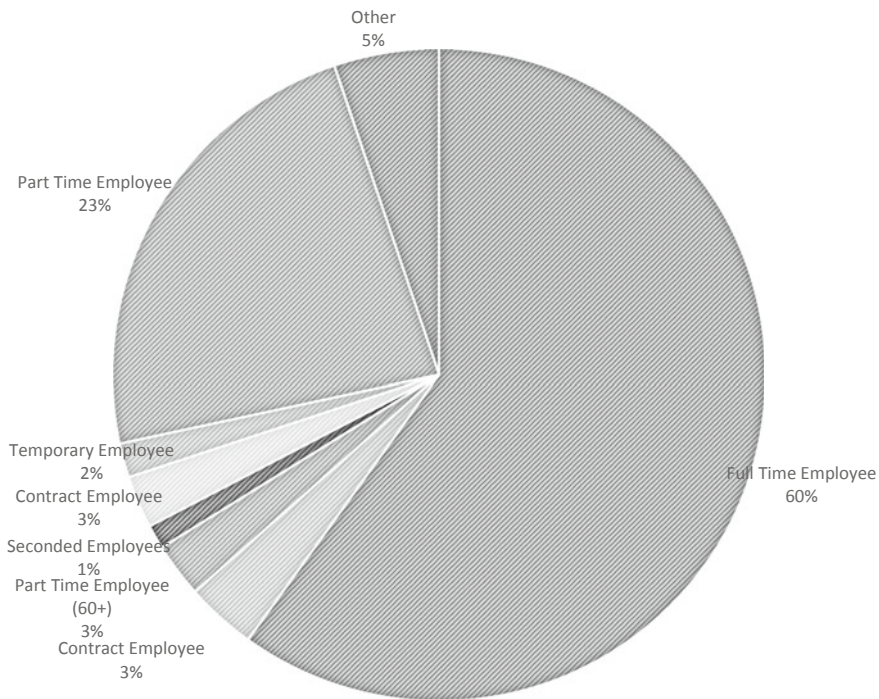


Fig. 2.1 Japanese HRM employment portfolio. *Source* Developed by authors based on the e-Stat (Glo8020101) Statistics Bureau, Ministry of General Affairs

With regard to studies concerned with the management of Japanese companies' overseas operations, the most well-known and classical ones are those of Ishida (1986) and Koike (1991, 1988). At present, the most well-known studies are those of Shiraki (1995, 2006) and Ishida (1985). Ishida (1985) examined the characteristics of Japanese managers deemed successful/not successful in overseas operations. He also examined the transferability of the Japanese-style management practices to overseas operations and pointed out the problems that occur in these contexts. Koike (1991) compared the way of work between Japanese blue-collar employees in Japan and blue-collar employees in the Japanese subsidiaries overseas. He found that the Japanese-style management practices could be transferred outside of Japan. Shiraki (1995) examined human resource management practices in Japanese subsidiaries in South East Asia and China. He found that Japanese-style management did not function well at the managerial level and the Japanese subsidiary companies have difficulty attracting and retaining local white-collars. In addition, he also found that Japanese companies still make greater use of Japanese expatriates, highlighting the issues in attracting and retaining highly talented locals.

Table 2.2 highlights the main shifts between a seniority-based employment system and a performance-based system in Japan.

The advantages of the traditional system include an emphasis on harmony and less animosity in the company, and for employees, demotion or salary decrease is rare meaning that long-term future planning, such as starting a family, buying property, is easier. However, there are issues in implementing such as system in a fast-paced, dynamic corporate environment that is becoming increasingly influenced by internationalization. It is not competitive, not effective and in the end can have a higher long-term cost for the company.

Table 2.2 Japanese HRM systems

Seniority-based HRM in Japan	Performance-based HRM in Japan
Seniority plus merit pay (<i>nenko</i>)	Performance-based pay
Base-up wage increases and <i>teiki-shokyu</i> or fixed-term wage increases	Employee power
Active inclusion of trade unions	Professionals on limited contracts, increase in headhunting
Consensus-based decision making (<i>ringi</i> system)	Dual career track
Employee loyalty	Increased use of limited contracts
Hire generalists over specialists	Less job security, career track offered to women and minorities
Annual hiring from universities	Increase reliance on technology
Internal promotion based on systematic rotation between departments, promotion linked to years of service	Move away from one-size-fits-all management
Security is implicit, dismissal is rare	
Gender discrimination prevalent	
Little correlation between career and academic background	

Source Authors

Thus, understanding of these key HRM trends helps to give insight into how the SIEEs in this study fit (or don't fit) within the traditional Japanese employment systems. As mentioned above, the status of women in Japanese society has also changed dramatically in the last 30 years and the impact that this had on employment practices is profound.

2.5 Women in Japanese Society

Ideas concerning national and international society and the concept of diversity management, particularly the way in which it has been used within companies, have become a pertinent topic in Japanese HRM research. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2014 showed that the number of female managers above chief level in Japan was as low as 11.8%. This highlights the fact that female human resources have not been well utilized in Japan and it will take time to increase the number of women in the workforce, despite the government's protestations that Japan is moving forward in this regard.

The *Equal Employment Opportunity Law* that was passed in 1985, aimed to achieve a society where men and women participate in work on an equal basis. However, at companies with more than 100 employees, the percentage of female staff members at *kakaricho* (section chief level) and above in Japan in 2016 is, as already mentioned, only 13.5%. This is considered to be extremely low when compared with over 40% across all grades in the UN Common System. Furthermore, when female representation at the managerial level is reviewed, the situation is also far from convincing. The number of female staff members at the *bucho* level (directors and above) is only 4.5% in Japan, while it stands at 30% in the UN Common System. A further survey in 2011 by the Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office found that the percentage of females recruited on career track (*sogo shoku*) paths in the private sector was only 22.2% in the companies. Additionally, only 16.7% of women in the public sector are on Japanese civil servant career track positions (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare 2012). The representation of women at managerial levels is still very low in Japan.

In summer 2018, the domination of males in academic and business life was reconfirmed through the scandal involving Tokyo Medical University. It was confirmed that the school boosted men's test scores and made women's appear lower to favor the entrance of males (suppressing female applicants as it was believed that women would quit their posts after childbirth, thus, being a drain on the education system). Japan already ranks at the bottom of OECD countries when it comes to women doctors with around just 20%. The scandal comes at a time when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government developed his "wome-nomics" policy placing women's participation in the workforce as a central strategy for economic growth. The scandal highlights systemic gender discrimination at play in Japanese society where female entrepreneurs may have difficulty fitting in.

Not only are women not represented equally in the workforce but there are also discrepancies in payment structures. Using detailed personnel records from a large Japanese manufacturing firm, Kato et al. (2013) were able to identify the sources of inter-firm gender gaps. They found that after controlling for basic human capital variables, there were 19 and 28% gender pay difference among unmarried employees and married ones, respectively. Additionally, they found that on average unmarried women earn 17% less than unmarried men. Men, when they get married, enjoy a significant marriage bonus, often around 12% more than unmarried men, while women receive a marriage penalty of 6.5%. Kato's research showed that the gender pay gap widens as workers marry, which can result in a gender pay gap of 36% in total earnings.

Having considered the social, economic and political context of contemporary Japan, the workplace and human resource management structure and the role of women in Japan, the next step is to articulate the current entrepreneurial ecosystem of Japan. An understanding of the basic socio-cultural, political context will hopefully allow the reader to better appreciate the current entrepreneurial ecosystem of Japan.

2.6 Entrepreneurship in Japan

The Japanese economy has been continuing on a gradual recovery trend since the end of 2012, with 2016 seeing positive growth for the fourth consecutive quarter and an annual growth rate of around 1.0%, and exceeding 1% for the first time in 3 years in 2013. The OECD predicts that economic growth in Japan will reach 1¼% in 2018–2019 (OECD 2019) with this growth being supported by business investment and private consumption. Additionally, the rate of inflation is expected to rise to 1½% in 2019. However, they warn that government debt relative to GDP is the highest recorded, which is a risk. Thus measures need to be implemented to cope with an aging society and rise in consumption tax. With regard to small- and medium-sized enterprises, according to 2017 Japanese government white paper, although the situation surrounding SMEs as a whole could also be said to be improving, the degree of improvement among enterprises that are small in size is smaller compared to that in medium-sized enterprises and the degree of improvement differs according to region and industry.

The following section presents an overview of the current entrepreneurial ecosystem in Japan. According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, out of 185 countries, Japan ranks 24 in terms of ease of doing business. The cost of business start-up procedures is 7.50% of GNI per capita and on average it takes 23 days to complete registration. In addition, 1.10 businesses are registered in Japan per year per 1000 people, placing Japan 91st in the world for new business density (which is the number of new company registrations per 1000 people aged 15–64) (World Bank, World Development Indicators 2016).

The Global Education Monitor (GEM) describes the situation surrounding entrepreneurial activity in Japan as ‘disappointingly low’ and in the last 14 years, Japan’s early-stage entrepreneurship rate (TEA) has not risen higher than 5.4%. GEM attributes this low rate primarily to cultural aspects; namely conformity and failure avoidance. As part of his three arrows of *Abenomics* (the policy for the economic and structural reform for revitalizing Japan), Prime Minister Abe is aiming to double the business entry rate recorded in the 2012 Ministry of Education, Trade and Industry (METI) Economic Census from around 5 to 10% by 2020 and to double the TEA rate from 4.8% in 2015 to around 7% in 2020 (GEM 2018). In addition, new incubators and accelerators are being set up and funds have been allocated for the development of entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level (Birchley 2018).

Yet, since 1997, there has been a declining trend in the numbers of entrepreneurial hopefuls and people making start-up preparations, with the number of entrepreneurs falling steadily from 383,000 in 2002 to 346,000 in 2007 and down to 306,000 in 2012 (Mitsubishi UFJ 2016). Research by Honjo in 2015 revealed that there were still low levels of entrepreneurship and attitudes toward it in Japan, and that only individuals with well-established entrepreneurial networks are likely to invest in a new business. This research coupled with the findings from Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting Co., Ltd, in their *Survey of Awareness and Experience of Business Establishment and Startup* (December 2016), commissioned by the SME Agency, paints a negative picture of the current Japanese entrepreneurial ecosystem.

To develop entrepreneurship, the Japanese government formulated a scheme to support business start-ups entitled the *Industrial Competitiveness Enhancement Act* in 2014. In this act, municipality governments and private sector businesses are encouraged to work together to provide support for business start-ups with the aim of promoting new businesses in regional Japan. Specifically, municipal governments draw up business plans to assist with business start-ups based on the national government’s guidelines. The plans then move to the government for approval, and the municipal government works with the business start-up support providers in accordance with the approved plans, providing specific business start-up support, such as setting up one-stop helpdesks and holding business start-up seminars. Since this system began, Mitsubishi UFJ found in their study that despite the support available, around 80% of all the respondents to their survey were not interested in starting up a business with a slightly higher proportion of women uninterested compared to men. Unsurprisingly, there is a higher proportion of managers with ten or more years of experience who are interested in starting up a business; with the proportion increasing in both genders between the ages of 50 and 60. Additionally, those with income less than 2 million yen, such as house-husbands/wives, part-time workers, temporary workers or the unemployed, are among the highest proportion of those not interested in a business start-up.

In terms of the changing demographics of Japan, as SME managers are often aging, the number of business exits is at a record high; however, data from the government suggests that the percentage of entrepreneurs aged 60 plus are actually

increasing and as for the distribution of entrepreneurs by age, 60 and over accounted for 6.6% in 1979 and this has increased significantly, to 32.4% in 2012. In addition, in general, start-ups and SMEs in Japan tend to utilize a wider variety of human resources, such as women, seniors and minorities as core employees.

Both at the initial stage of start-ups in Japan and at the stabilization stage, there is a need for investment, advisors and mentors. With regard to investment, at the start-up stage, 83.3% of businesses are funded by the manager's own funds, 39% from family loans or friends and 39% from bank loans. At the initial growth stage this changes, as 72% of funds are acquired from private financial institutions. Government financial support generally comes at the third stage of stabilization or expansion (Japanese Government 2018).

2.7 Career Education in Japan

The Japanese government defines career education and vocational education as follows:

- *Career Education*: Education which encourages career development by cultivating the abilities and attitudes needed to raise the social and vocational independence of individuals;
- *Vocational Education*: Education to develop knowledge, skills, competencies and attitude required to work on a certain or specific job.

Government policy proposes measures regarding the ideal format for career education and vocational education in order to help citizens to build their careers over the course of their lifetime recognizing that the transition from education to employment is a difficult time for young people. Data from the latest Ministry of Education report highlight that the total unemployment level of young people between 15 and 24 years old was 9.4% in 2010 compared with 4.5% in 1991. On comparing these with the average across all ages, 5.1% in 2010 and 2.1% in 1991, we can see the difficulties associated with providing comprehensive and effective career education.

In addition, the chance for new graduates to be hired as regular employees has recently decreased and the number of young people who work as non-regular employees is on the rise. The rate of non-regular employees between 15 and 24 years old increased to 31.7% in 2010 from 9.3% in 1991, and the population between 15 and 34 years old who are not engaged in the labor force, the number of unemployed young people who neither work nor go to school (referred to as NEET—not in education, employment or training) has been around 600,000 since 2002. Related to this is the increasing number of new graduates who quit their employment within 3 years. This figure stands at around about 65% for junior high school graduates, 40% for high school graduates, about 41% in junior college and

equivalent, and about 31% among 4-year university graduates, yet this is on the rise.

Furthermore, we suggest that young people often exhibit the following traits:

- lack of interest or desire toward working;
- immaturity;
- lack of sense of purpose for career design;
- lack of responsibility for their future;
- degradation in basic skills and abilities as a business worker, such as communication, numeracy skills, Japanese business manners and a lack of appropriate workplace Japanese.

Data suggest that employers value communication skills and independence/cooperativeness when hiring new graduates, with around 40% of employers surveyed by the Japanese government expressing their sense that university and school graduates over the last 10 years have gone down in quality. These findings indicate the major issues with career guidance and career and vocational education at high school, vocational schools and universities. There is a need to better equip students with analytical skills to better understand how their life path can be influenced by their mindset and academic credentials along with an increased focus on developing twenty-first century skills and soft-skills as well as hard skills. With Japanese companies changing their HRM practices, students need to be able to fit into the new world order. A lack of readily available mentors, shortened amount of time training and less money available in budgets to bring new employees up to speed, companies are expecting students to graduate with a whole host of new skills and abilities, but are higher education institutions aware and able to catch up with these trends? And how Japanese education policy providers should be viewing and defining a ‘career?’

In the middle of the twentieth century D. H. Super (1957, 1963, 1980, 1981, 1990, 1996), an American, put forward the Theory of Life Stage in which the life was divided into five development stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline, and established a comprehensive theory with the emphasis on the importance of self-concept and how it relates to career development. Following that, Super claimed that the development of one’s career and personal growth mutually affect each other. This career development theory is summarized as shown in Fig. 2.2.

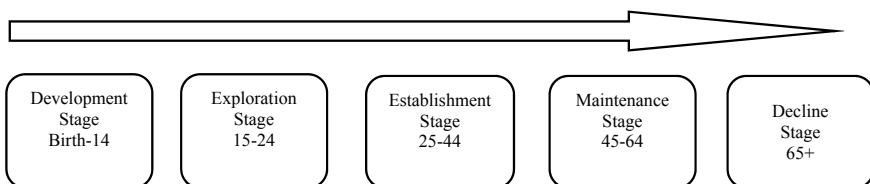


Fig. 2.2 Super’s career development theory

- **Development** stage (Birth to 14) is the first life stage, the period when children develop their capacities, attitudes and interests, socialize their needs and form a general understanding of the world of work.
- **Exploration** stage (Ages 14–24) is the period when individuals attempt to understand themselves and find their place in the world of work. Through classes, work experience and hobbies, they try to identify their interests and capabilities and figure out how they fit with various occupations. They make tentative occupational choices and eventually obtain an occupation.
- **Establishment** stage (25–44 years) is the period when the individual, having gained an appropriate position in the chosen field of work, strives to secure the initial position and pursue chances for further advancement.
- **Maintenance** stage (45–65) is the period of continual adjustment, which includes the career development tasks of holding on, keeping up and innovating. The individuals strive to maintain what they have achieved, and for this reason they update their competencies and find innovative ways of performing their job routines. They also try to find new challenges, but usually little new ground is broken in this period.
- **Decline** stage (over 65) is the final stage, the period of transition out of the workforce. In this stage, individuals encounter the developmental tasks of deceleration, retirement planning and retirement living. With a declined energy and interest in an occupation, people gradually disengage from their occupational activities and concentrate on retirement planning. In due course, they make a transition to retirement living by facing the challenges of organizing new life patterns.

On the contrary, Schein (1985), an American defined the career as the occupation throughout one's life, a way of living through one's life, and the way of expressing one's life. A career anchor is one's self-image of competence, motives and values. During the course of their vocational life, people develop an underlying anchor that will guide their life. He identified five possible career anchor constructs: (1) autonomy/independence, (2) security/stability, (3) technical-functional competence, (4) general managerial competence and (5) entrepreneurial creativity. Follow-up of his studies in the 1980s identified three additional constructs: (6) service or dedication to a cause, (7) pure challenge and (8) lifestyle. Schein also pointed out the role and importance of the mentor.

A well-known Japanese study with regard to career development is that by Ohta (1999) who advocated the concept of *shigoto-jin*. According to his research, a *shigoto-jin* is an employee who acquires skills and abilities that will enable him/her to negotiate and carry out work on an equal basis with his/her employing organization. In Ohta's studies, the focus was primarily on men in the workplace. While in the United States career studies and career education have a history of over 100 years, on the contrary, in Japan, the field of career development studies started only at the end of the twentieth century. As such, more research is necessary to better understand the link between career development, education and in our case entrepreneurship. And as touched upon in Chap. 1, how do we view entrepreneurship? As a destination or a part of the career path?

2.8 Entrepreneurship Education in Japan

Essential to the discussion of entrepreneurship is the degree to which entrepreneurship can be ‘learned.’ It is argued by some researchers, such as Timmons and Spinelli and Kuratko, that mindset attributes, characteristics and skills can be *taught*, yet others disagree with this premise and make a clear distinction between the idea of entrepreneurship being both an ‘art’ and a ‘science’—the art being the creative side and the science being more practical management skills and strategies, stating that the art is inherent and the science is what can be taught by universities. In this paper, the definition of entrepreneurship education is taken from the Japanese Ministry of Trade and Industry policy paper, which states, “Entrepreneurship education refers to education provided to train people to develop ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘entrepreneurial skills’ and to be able to find their own mission, discover themselves what to do with it, and carry it out themselves.”

In 2006, Pittaway and Cope produced a comprehensive and systematic literature review of entrepreneurship education (EE). Their study provided details of papers concerned with EE in various contexts. They found that there were two types of policy-based research: general policy climate research and general enterprise infrastructure research. Yet they stated that the role of policy and policy initiatives did not feature heavily in their literature review, mainly as they focused on education as opposed to policy specifically. The studies Pittaway and Cope refer to are primarily based on an analysis of US and UK policies and their impact, such as Carayannis, Evans and Hanson’s work, which focuses on the environment and cultural context for entrepreneurship education in France (see Pittaway and Cope for a detailed list of policy initiative papers). They call for future research to focus on HE policies in general and how these policies create a climate within which entrepreneurship education must operate and the role of national or supra-national education policy. In addition, there were no comparative studies from Japan, thus indicating an under-developed area of the field.

The majority of surveys on EE in Japan have been conducted by think tanks and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry with few in the academic field and even fewer in English. Research by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2006) and the Daiwa Institute of Research Group found that there were 252 institutions offering some form of EE, yet as a percentage of the student population, only 0.7% of students take these courses.

The most comprehensive review of entrepreneurship education in Japan was conducted by Oheki in 2016. In his paper he outlined the current state and analyzed using quantitative means. He concluded that education needs to be more hands-on, with workshops and classes that facilitate collaboration; advocating a social value creation approach. In this way, it also encourages social entrepreneurship while developing an entrepreneurial and social mindset. Previous studies were conducted by Takahashi, who explored mindset, arguing that EE needs to focus on developing

students with an entrepreneurial attitude—and Kawana who also focused on the need to develop mindset through entrepreneurship contests and argues to provide opportunities for younger students to interact with entrepreneurs in their early formative years.

Lee's research on the impact of EE in the United States and Korea is a useful starting point for thinking about EE in Asian countries. His research found that the impact of EE in Korea is much greater than that in the United States, suggesting that the impact of entrepreneurship education in countries where entrepreneurship-oriented culture is poor will be greater than that in countries with a strong entrepreneurship-oriented culture. His paper highlighted that contextual and societal differences are important and need to be taken into consideration when developing and assessing the impact of EE.

Research on educational policy shows how policies are developed and implemented in national infrastructures, often showing the ideology of a nation-state at a given point in time and the business cultures of a nation. Henry's (2013) paper is asking whether policy makers are expecting too much from EE in higher education in the UK is a useful point of reference as he concludes that maybe expectations have 'spiraled beyond what is realistic and possible' arguing for 'realignment of policy.' This may also be the case for Japan.

In terms of entrepreneurship education in Japan, Birchley (2018) provides an overview of the approach to entrepreneurship in Japanese higher education and also makes an argument for combining entrepreneurship education with content and language-integrated learning to develop more globally minded Japanese entrepreneurs (Birchley and McCasland 2017). Figures from Mitsubishi UFJ also confirm that entrepreneurial hopefuls and people making start-up preparations have encountered various kinds of entrepreneurship education, leading us to surmise that receiving entrepreneurship education is one of the factors that can stimulate interest in starting up a business, yet there is no research on this in a Japanese expatriate transnational entrepreneurship context.

The Japanese government introduced a policy, Exploration and Development of Global Entrepreneurship for NEXT generation (EDGE-NEXT), to specifically ignite entrepreneurship education in Japanese higher education, yet how is the policy currently being operationalized?

In Valerio et al.'s conceptual framework of entrepreneurship education and training, Entrepreneurship Education and Training (EET) outcomes are categorized into four dimensions: entrepreneurial mindsets, entrepreneurial capabilities, entrepreneurial status and entrepreneurial performance. There are also three facets that influence the EET outcomes, and these include: (i) the context, (ii) the characteristics of the participants and (iii) the functional characteristics of the program. Research by Birchley (2018) used the conceptual framework to analyze the EDGE-NEXT programs currently in Japanese higher education finding that in Japan, the context can be a barrier to EET outcomes, that government intervention appears necessary to get initiatives such as these off the ground, their implementation requires significant funding and that it could be considered too little, too late, with a strong argument towards investment in early years enterprise education, especially in terms of developing an entrepreneurial mindset.

According to Valerio's research, entrepreneurial mindsets are the socio-economic skills that are connected to motivation and success—the soft skills

of successful business. Capabilities are concerned with the hard skills, such as skills for running a business and technical knowledge skills necessary for a particular field. Entrepreneurial status is the actual position the entrepreneur holds—a measurement of how life of the individual has changed after EE. Entrepreneurial performance is also another measurement of success or failure. The context of EE is the social, cultural, economic contexts of the delivery and in some cases these enhance and in others stifle activity and development. By analyzing these in relation to educational systems, we can begin to better understand the value of EE.

The Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) and Ministry of Trade and Industry (METI) have identified a lack of entrepreneurship as a problem in Japan and have developed a number of new policies to tackle this issue. The Ministry of Trade and Industry research group, entitled the *Group for the Creation and Development of Start-ups* (2008), definition of EE is education provided to train people to develop ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘entrepreneurial skills’ and to be able to ‘find their own mission, discover themselves what to do with it and carry it out themselves.’ Table 2.3 highlights the skills and characteristics necessary for entrepreneurship as defined by the Japanese government.

In 2009, the Japanese government conducted a significant large-scale research study on entrepreneurship in higher education. The researchers found that 50% of entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions consisted of courses components integrated into general business-related classes, 30% of courses included business planning exercises and less than 20% of courses included business etiquette and soft skills. At that time, the government listed four key points that should be addressed for EE to be more successful in Japan:

- the purpose of entrepreneurship education is often unclear;
- there must be a link between theory and practice;
- universities are not taking full advantage of external human resources, resulting in weak relationships with industry;
- cooperation with external organizations of the region is not sufficiently developed.

Table 2.3 Entrepreneurship characteristics and skills

Characteristics	Skills
A spirit of challenge: a forward-looking attitude to try something new and address the challenges that emerge; Ambition: motivations and causes; Passion: zeal; Courage: willingness to expose themselves to certain risk	Ability to dream: imagination, creativity, problem-finding, positive attitudes, optimism; Ability to explain a dream: communication skills, logical thinking, presentation skills, personality and honesty; Ability to realize a dream: skills to collect information, problem-solving, ability to make plans, vitality, judgment/decisiveness, patience

Source Authors

Following on, in 2014, the EDGE (2014) and then EDGE-NEXT (2017) policy initiatives were implemented. EDGE is an abbreviation for Enhancing Development of Global Entrepreneur Program. Through this program, the government provides financial incentives to universities that meet the criteria for fostering entrepreneurship among its students. The program supports university programs which focus on research, development and innovation between universities and industry and programs that foster human resources that can work with various stakeholders to create and promote innovation. The focus is on university programs that emphasize more practical rather than theoretical content and dynamic universities that show a willingness to change.

The second policy, EDGE-NEXT, is the next-generation entrepreneurship training project—entrepreneurs for the next generation. This policy is aimed at further improving the initial results obtained by universities on the EDGE program. The policy seeks to reward universities that help students acquire knowledge of entrepreneurship, business know-how, problem-solving capabilities and a broad perspective through active learning and problem/project-based learning initiatives. They seek universities that not only support short-term human resource development but also focus on initiatives to build organizational networks and collaborations among internal and external stakeholders domestically and internationally. The ultimate goal is to foster individuals who can form and work within a sustainable innovative ecosystem.

The target organizations in this project are universities in Japan. As a rule, the period of financial assistance for universities accepted into this program is 5 years and the maximum amount of financial support is 50 million yen per year.

The most intriguing point of the Japanese government's EE policy is the use of a consortia model. Established in the United States and developed heavily in the 1960s–1980s, the idea of consortia has both advantages and disadvantages. The Japanese model is bringing together universities, government agencies, research centers and corporations, both domestically and internationally. These inter-organizational networks rely heavily on commitment and collaboration, which fits the culture and norm conditions of Japan. Such collaborations help to expand the scope of the research and can distribute the workload, yet there are many challenges to be expected of this kind of consortium. Initially, from an organizational behavior and culture perspective, each university is at a different stage of its development, the culture and common expectations and values are likely to show the differences between academic institutions and corporations. Additionally, there may be conflict between ideas of autonomy and interdependence that are difficult to navigate when joint funds are also involved. Of most significance is the need for long-term planning and not ad hoc, large-scale, unsustainable approaches. There needs to be sufficient understanding between all stakeholders that organizational change can be slow despite the fast and dynamic nature of entrepreneurship itself. In the global knowledge economy there is a need for world-class R&D, partnerships and consortiums, and the university must be a twenty-first century institution.

The program design varies greatly between the institutions, yet there appears to be a focus on hands-on and project and problem-based learning pedagogies. Despite

the calls by researchers for less lecture-type programs, they still seem to be a heavy feature of all the programs, although lectures are often carried out by entrepreneurs, so are considered more as ‘guest speaker’ style lessons rather than academic lectures. The number of wrap around services appears to be small with internships offered in a few programs. In terms of content, the focus initially is on R&D, specifically, rapid prototype generation, understanding lean start-ups and mindset/attitude development. There is a heavy emphasis on regional development and the ability of the universities to revitalize certain areas of Japan.

Human resource development (HRD) is also a key outcome factor. The development of a global mindset, sustainability mindset and entrepreneurial mindset are key expected outcomes that will serve students well not only in their entrepreneurial endeavors but also in society today.

At present, the EDGE-NEXT policy in HE in Japan is isolated to a select number of universities, yet, in the same way that initiatives toward globalizing HE trickled down, so will policy for EE, leading to many smaller universities, that lack significant funding, developing programs off the back of this new initiative. This effect can already be seen through the number of new programs that have started in non-EDGE-NEXT universities in 2017. Additionally, the consortium model can percolate down to private and public HE institutions across Japan, encouraging more industry engagement on a more localized level.

There is a worry that government support through this explicit policy and implementation of the EDGE-NEXT programs may be too late and more focus should be given to EE at the lower school levels, such as investment in skills-based training and language education in elementary and junior high school. Japan seems to recognize that it needs the power of young people who can cultivate individual thinking in themselves and others and have the ability to take action in society but how is this being addressed? At a younger age, it may be possible to raise awareness of the impact of contextual factors when developing mindset, such as changing the perception of entrepreneurship and ideas and perceptions of risk taking, failure, success and the status of an entrepreneur in society.

Government intervention appears extremely necessary to get initiatives such as EDGE-NEXT off the ground. The EDGE-NEXT policy and programs are extremely ambitious but if they are successful they will develop a productive and employable generation of Japanese workers. This leads us to question, what type entrepreneurship education have the transnational entrepreneurs in our study received (if any)? What evidence can we provide through our findings to support future policies and strategies for entrepreneurship education in Japan?

2.9 Japan, Culture and Entrepreneurship

The final contextual facet of this study, vitally important when we study the habitus of the entrepreneurs, is the impact of culture on entrepreneurship and society. Culture is multifaceted; a multilayered construct that at times we take for granted.

Beginning with the individual level; it is concerned with the behavior, values and assumptions of the individual. At the group level, it focuses on interactions between actors within the group. At the organizational culture level, it is concerned with the top-down and bottom-up approaches to culture, and at the national and global cultural levels, there are complexities that arise, and as researchers, it is necessary to explore how and why culture appears in each context (Earley and Gibson 2002; Oyserman et al. 2002).

If we use Pinillos and Reyes’ (2011) definition of culture as the system of values for a specific group or society, we can ascertain how values, actions and beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation continually shaping and defining the culture of a particular nation (House and Javidan 2004; Russell et al. 2010). The adoption or rejection of these practices is what we seek to better understand and how these practices relate to phenomenon such as entrepreneurship is the key to understanding how business works within cultures.

The *Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness* program, or GLOBE, defines culture as “shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings of events that result from common experiences among members of a community and are transmitted from generation to generation” (House et al. 2002; House and Javidan 2004). The work conducted by GLOBE researchers identified various cultural manifestations at play in business and management. They identified nine cultural dimensions that are useful for analyzing culture in business contexts: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism (collectivism I), in-group collectivism (collectivism II), gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation and humane orientation. In addition, they distinguish between two types of cultural manifestations: cultural practices and cultural values. These cultural dimensions help to explain the practices in society, or what society ‘is’ and what it ‘should be’ (see Table 2.4).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM 2018) uses a number of cultural items to assess the national context of a country and how that impacts entrepreneurship, including attitudes toward failure, societal values, and cultural and social norms. In addition, through a review of the literature on culture and entrepreneurship, the previous dimensions of national culture from Hofstede’s (1980) seminal research are also relevant when exploring whether entrepreneurship

Table 2.4 GLOBE cultural manifestations in business and culture

Types of cultural manifestations	
Cultural practice	Cultural values
Nine cultural dimensions	
Power distance/Uncertainty avoidance/	
Collectivism I/Collectivism II/Gender	
egalitarianism/Assertiveness/Future orientation/	
Performance orientation/	
Humane orientation	

Source Authors (based on House et al. 2002)

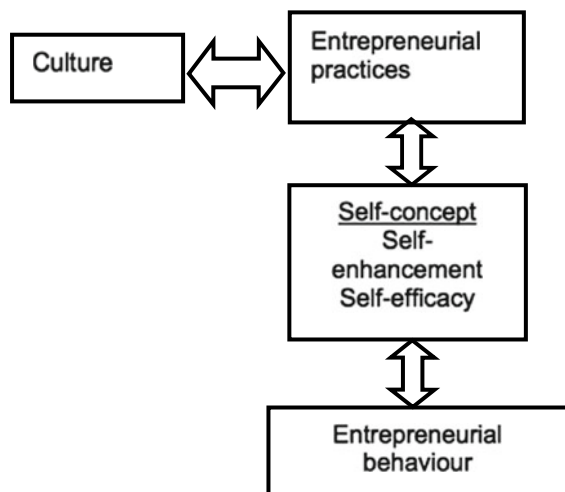
is successfully fostered in a country; power distance, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance.

One interesting aspect is how well entrepreneurship is morally improved within a society, which is termed social legitimation (Etzioni 1987). Thus, if a country approves entrepreneurship, there is a higher level of entrepreneurial engagement as entrepreneurship is fostered through different institutions within society, such as the education system and government financial support systems. Linked to this is the research by Inglehart (1997, 2003) that uses the concept of post-materialism to explore the change in values and cultures within a society. This refers to how much a society favors material goods/goals, whether a society favors non-material life goals or material goals. This is interesting to explore particularly in emerging economies.

As opposed to looking at a society in general, it is also important to consider the individual and their identity. Erez and Early (1993) do this through their cultural self-representation model (Fig. 2.3), which argues that culture develops in an individual's self-identity and is linked to motivation. Tiessen's (1997) research also draws on links between culture and entrepreneurship in advocating research on individualism and collectivism. His own research argues that both orientations contribute to entrepreneurship in different ways and that they play out on different levels; the individual and firm level.

As highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, there are long- and short-term structural changes occurring in the economy and society that affect entrepreneurship in Japan. With regard to employment structures, from 2013 to 2016, the number of job offers increased for all types of employment; however, the number of job seekers declined (Mitsubishi, UFJ). The increased job offers were centered around part-time employment and temporary/seasonal employment (including part-time employment) opportunities. Also, of note is the traditional hiring practice in Japan

Fig. 2.3 The cultural self-representation model of Erez and Early (1993).
Source Erez and Early (1993)



in which graduates are hired in major companies each spring. When looking at the ratio of job offers to new university graduates, among enterprises with 300 workers or more, there are more job applicants than the number of job offers, but among enterprises with 299 workers or less, small- and medium sized businesses, the ratio is generally around 3 or 4, with more job offers than the number of job seekers. Thus, graduates are more likely to find employment in a smaller company.

Similarly, in 2015, the trend was opposite, whereby 500,000 workers switched from large enterprises to SMEs, and 980,000 switched from SMEs to large enterprises. Thus Japanese business people tend to see career progression as moving from a smaller company to a more, larger established company as opposed to leaving a large company to work on their own. In some respects, it is argued that Japanese entrepreneurs are at a low level as larger companies attract employees with their benefits, the possibility of lifetime employment, security and eventual promotion. Thus, if an individual chooses to leave a small or large company, he/she is taking a risk and going against the social and cultural norms. In general, entrepreneurial hopefuls and people making start-up preparations agree that entrepreneurship is associated with taking high risks and having unstable earnings that risks or disrupts one's life.

The concept of disruption or *hakai* in Japanese, can be seen as 'negative' as it implies to destroy something similarly the term '*kokorozashi*' which, directly translates to *kokoro*—heart coupled with *sasu* which is to aim, thus having a sense of ambition that is tied to a sense of civic duty, is a concept in Japan that implies that it is important to stay respected in society, even if seeking out individualistic goals; thus, entrepreneurship could be seen as a negative, selfish endeavor if it doesn't have some sense of civic duty.

In general, most countries researched by the GEM show disparities between men and women when establishing businesses. Factors affecting women's lower proclivity include gender-role expectations, religion, societal norms, low education level, limited mobility and lack of supporting social structure (Raghuvansh et al. 2017). In Japan, the entrance of women in the start-up field could be seen to upset the status quo as they would certainly be considered newcomers to the male-dominated world of entrepreneurship. Although the proportion of women among entrepreneurial hopefuls has increased since 1997 in Japan, female entrepreneurs as a proportion of all entrepreneurs declined over the same period. Thus, although many women may have considered starting a business, they do not follow through with their ideas.

While women may have somewhat of an advantage, as entrepreneurship could offer a means of bypassing rigid corporate hierarchies, women are often not only represented as being uninterested in entrepreneurship but they were also seen to inhibit their husband's desire to set up his business; being labeled a '*wife blocker*' (Washington Post 1996). This derogatory term was coupled with the phrase '*parent block*' (Washington Post 1996), that refers to parents who reject their children's efforts to be entrepreneurial. The findings relating to women echo the findings of Bobrowska and Conrad (2017) who argue that entrepreneurship is male-gendered in Japan, with the media perpetuating the male-dominated ideology in Japanese

business and society and that women in Japan still need to overcome fears about running a business in a male-dominated world.

Japan is often seen to be a conformist culture that puts an emphasis on stability and success with a collectivist mentality that results in a lack of role models and experience in creating followers. The Mitsubishi UFJ (2016) research also found that a higher proportion of entrepreneurial hopefuls had enterprise managers in their immediate environment, such as friends and acquaintances, and parents. Conversely, around 70% of people who declared themselves not interested in business start-ups responded that they had no role model in their immediate environment, thus they have limited ability to develop awareness of what is required to set up a business and no one to look at for support and advice.

In one foreign press publication from 2018 (Phys Org 2018), the term, *mura hachi-bu* was used to describe entrepreneurs in Japan. This term highlights the issues of ostracism and neglect in Japanese society. In a historical context in Japan, this derogatory term was used as a way to punish individuals who broke rules. In modern society, the term more often means discrimination. In the phrase, the word *mura* means village and *hachi-bu* means eight out of ten. It represents the idea that there are ten significant events in one's life: birth, adulthood, marriage, buying a home, illness, death, memorial, travel, flood and fire. As a form of punishment, an individual who had broken the rules was offered no support for all but two of the events; fire and death so that essentially they were neglected and ostracized from society in all other aspects leading to psychological distress. Thus, for entrepreneurs to be described in such terms is quite severe. A modern example of which could be seen in the treatment of entrepreneur *Takafumi Horie*, who did exactly as the discourse suggests; he was a divisive figure that some commentators labeled as a negative role model for entrepreneurship, while others lauded his grit and determination to shake up the establishment. He has since overcome his failure and is still in deep pursuit of changing the status quo.

As can be seen from a review of studies on the links between culture and entrepreneurship, this is a growing sub-field within management research. By expanding our focus on culture, we can better understand how individuals are influenced by their environment (or habitus) and how the intersection of geography, economics and entrepreneurship can show us the influences of individual, group and institutional behavior. Additionally, we can observe how factors such as legal and economic conditions and social networks that are embedded in society directly and indirectly influence entrepreneurial behavior.

Now that we have presented a general context of Japan and the current ecosystem of entrepreneurship the expatriates have experienced in their home country, let's start to explore the narratives of successful Japanese transnational entrepreneurs. What made them leave Japan? How did they start their enterprises and what can we learn from their lived experiences?

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Chapter 3

Japanese Self-initiated Expatriate Entrepreneurs in South East Asia



3.1 The Context of South East Asia

‘Global-is-Asian’ (Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy¹). This bold statement on the school’s flagship digital platform encourages the dissemination of research and advanced discussion by scholars on the new dynamics in this part of the world. We too argue that we are witnessing the ‘Asianization of Asia’ (Funabashi, 1993), where there is raised consciousness and an establishment of identity that has seen Asia emerging as a force to be reckoned with. As many analysts have observed, there is an economic shift from West to East where the ‘global’ financial crisis did not see massive losses in Asia; in fact, many South East Asian nations began to thrive in this new world order. With a potential consumer network of over 620 million, the region has deep cultural diversity, some ethical leadership challenges and a strong community. As cross-cultural academics in Japan, we are able to witness first-hand the globalization of Japan while simultaneously observing massive change and development in the region surrounding us. Fascinated with Japan’s position in this new Asia, our research led us to explore how Japanese SIEEs are themselves taking advantage of the current economic climate in Asia (Fig. 3.1).

In this chapter, we will introduce the context of South East Asia before taking the reader on a journey of entrepreneurship as explored through the narratives of Japanese SIEEs living and working in the region. As we go through each case, it is essential to consider the environment in which these SIEEs live and work, how that compares to the Japanese context we outlined in Chap. 2 and what implications that has for the future development of transnational entrepreneurship in Asia. We will begin with an overview of the context of South East Asia before presenting cases of Japanese SIEEs in Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, illustrating how Japanese SIEEs are developing

¹<https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/>.



Fig. 3.1 South East Asia

their careers and engaging with their neighbors. Table 3.1 shows the GDP per capita of emerging Asian countries (2007, 2017) and their growth rate.

Owing to a population decline since 2000, the service industry in Japan has been decreasing. In addition, as society has matured, Japanese people tend to only purchase items they actually need to buy; therefore, Japanese general consumption has been

Table 3.1 The GDP per capita of Asian countries, 2007–2017

Country	GDP per capita (USD)		Increase 2007–2017
	2007	2017	
Malaysia	7,269	9,952	1.37
China	2,695	8,827	3.28
Thailand	3,972	6,595	1.66
Indonesia	1,855	3,846	2.07
The Philippines	1,673	2,989	1.79
Laos	710	2,457	3.46
Vietnam	900	2,342	2.60
India	1,031	1,979	1.92
Myanmar	410	1,257	3.07
Cambodia	632	1,384	2.19
Japan	35,275	38,430	1.09
Hong Kong	30,594	46,194	1.51

Source The World Bank’s World Development Indicators

decreasing. In Asia, in Singapore and Hong Kong, their GDP per capita has increased significantly, thus their consumption is high but the size of the population is small. These countries don’t have the circumstances to increase consumption. Countries where consumption has expanded are the emerging countries in Asia. As can be seen from Table 3.1, in terms of GDP per capita, Malaysia, China and Thailand are high. In emerging economies such as India, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia the rate of economic growth is quite startling, with many countries close to doubling their growth rate between 2007 and 2017. For comparison, we have included Japan and Hong Kong to illustrate the difference between lifestyles.

In these emerging countries, in accordance with economic growth, the Engel’s coefficient in these countries is decreasing and composition of consumption within the household has been changing. When income increases and the basic consumption demands are fulfilled, people have a tendency to spend their money selectively. For example, when income is low, income is spent on necessities, but when the income is increased the spending on necessities decreases and spending on bikes, cars or mobile phones contracts. We can see from the table that these countries are in a growth spiral. Employment is increasing, income is increasing and, most importantly, disposable income is increasing. In general, if the household income is more than \$100,000 they are considered in the wealthy bracket. If their income is more than \$45,000 and less than \$100,000, they are considered to be in the high-income bracket. If the household income is between \$5,000 and \$45,000 they are considered middle-income countries.

These days, many developed countries are investing in emerging countries, taking advantage of low labor costs, considering them as a production market; however, these countries are changing to consumption markets, where many developed countries can start making a profit. The consumer’s desire to purchase has become higher in the middle-income group, and in these emerging countries, brands with a high price and high quality are becoming more popular (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Asia's emerging market population (2007, 2017) and growth rate

Country	Size (1,000 km ²)	Population (2007)	Population (2017)	Population growth rate
China	9,597	1,317.9	13,864.0	1.05
India	3,287	1,118.0	1,339.2	1.20
Indonesia	1,905	233.0	264.0	1.13
Thailand	513	66.2	69.0	1.04
Malaysia	330	26.6	31.6	1.19
Vietnam	331	85.9	95.5	1.11
The Philippines	300	89.3	104.9	1.17
Malaysia	677	49.2	53.4	1.08
Cambodia	181	13.7	16.0	1.17
Laos	237	5.9	6.9	1.17
Japan	378	128.0	126.8	0.99
Hong Kong	1	6.9	7.4	1.07

Source The World Bank's World Development Indicators

Table 3.3 shows that the trends in household income ratio change in emerging countries but it must be noted that data for Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar were not available and hence not included. Target countries are Malaysia, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and India and data after fiscal year 2013 were not available.

It is also important to consider the ease of doing business rankings (World Bank 2019) for each of the countries we explore. The rankings indicate an economy's position in relation to the best regulatory practice for starting a business. For reference, Table 3.4 shows the ranking of each of the country in this study.

If you visit Hong Kong or Bangkok, you will notice the increased number of convenience stores there. *Seven Eleven* opened their first store in Asia, in Beijing in 2008; 2,892 shops in China; 11,299 in Thailand; 5,443 in Taiwan; 2,311 in Malaysia and 2,593 in Philippines as of March 2019. They also opened a store in Vietnam in 2017 and now have four throughout the country. They are continually

Table 3.3 Trends in household income in emerging economies

Household income	1995 (%)	2000 (%)	2005 (%)	2012 (%)
US\$1,000 and above	64	78	90	97
US\$5,000 and above	4	3	5	58
US\$15,000 and above	0	0	1	13
US\$35,000 and above	0	0	0	3
US\$55,000 and above	0	0	0	2

Source World consumer lifestyles databook 2007, 2013, Euromonitor International

Table 3.4 Ease of doing business ranking

Rank	Country
4	Hong Kong
27	Thailand
39	Japan
46	China
69	Vietnam
73	Indonesia
124	Philippines
138	Cambodia
171	Myanmar

Source World Bank 2019

and significantly expanding their network in these countries. *FamilyMart*, a Japanese convenience store, started operations in Asia in 2010, and as of March 2019, there were 2,554 stores in China, 974 in Thailand and 147 in Vietnam. They also have 135 shops in Indonesia and 71 in the Philippines. As there is little language skill required for a basic convenience store transaction, it is an easy area within which to function. Similarly, Japanese fast food chains such as *Yoshinoya*² are rapidly spreading across Asia. The quality of life for Japanese in emerging economies is not as low as one may expect if he/she lives in the city. They are likely to find many of the same services as they would in their home country. There are many Japanese department stores in Bangkok and Hong Kong and Japanese shopping malls in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. People in the middle-income range have a strong desire to buy high-quality products regardless of the relatively high price.

In the past, Japanese corporations were centered in the manufacturing industry, mainly exporting products to the United States and Europe. However, in accordance with the increase in disposable income in emerging Asian countries, as mentioned previously, there is a shift away from manufacturing toward more service-based industries related to logistics, transportation, retail, education and dining out.

Figure 3.2 shows the BOP pyramid. The BOP is the base of the economic pyramid, which explains GDP per capita, showing less than 3,000 dollars at PPP³ (purchasing power parity) in 2002.

It is estimated that the population in BOP is 4 billion, occupying 70% of the total world population. The market size is considered as 5 trillion dollars. When emerging countries achieve economic growth the next market will be the BOP countries.

²<https://www.yoshinoya.com/en/>.

³For example, this will show how much one product in Cambodia would cost in Japan. Source: World Bank, 2015 data.

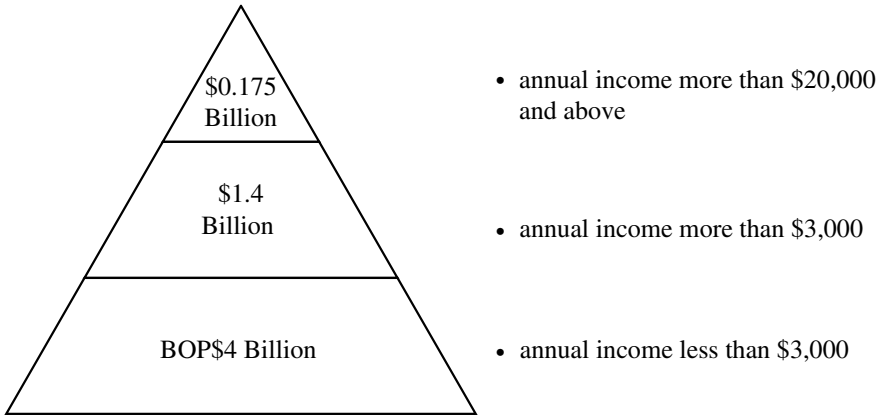


Fig. 3.2 The Bottom of Economic Pyramid. *Source* The next 4 billion (2007 World Resource Institute, International Finance Corporation)

3.2 Cambodia



Cambodia

3.2.1 Country Context

What makes Cambodia an attractive destination for entrepreneurial activity? The rate of growth in Cambodia is a particularly attractive factor. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) data, the growth rate in Cambodia has fluctuated between 6.0% in 2010 and 7.0% in 2016, while the GDP per capita has been increasing, that is, 10 times in the past 10 years and most recently, US\$1,384 in 2017 and US\$1,227 in 2016.

The export industry in 2015 was worth US\$7.87 billion which accounted for an approximate 15.6% increase from the previous year, whereas the import industry was US\$0.11642 billion. Cambodia imports various products from neighboring countries such as China and primarily exports textile products and shoes.

The price of land in Cambodia has been significantly increasing. In the center of Phnom Penh, prices of some districts have increased more than 400 times compared to 15 years ago. In accordance with the increase of middle-income families and the wealthy class, consumer spending has also been growing significantly. The AEON shopping mall (a Japanese General Merchandise Store (GMS)) was opened in 2014 in Phnom Penh, with a second store opened in 2018. One of the interesting characteristics of investment to Cambodia is that there are almost no regulations except for buying land, which is restricted. The Cambodian government welcomes any kind of investments from other countries. Thus, it is possible for anyone to start their own business in Cambodia, as long as they have some base money and willingness for enterprise.

Cambodia became a member of ASEAN in 2016. Initially, many companies made direct investments in the textile industry; however, it is predicted that in the long term there will be competition with other ASEAN countries and these products alone will no longer be as lucrative a business as they once were. Thus, to compete with other ASEAN countries, human resource development through skills training and/or higher education is seen as a particular growth area.

The total population of Cambodia is 15.6 million and 65% of the total population are less than 30 years old. The minimum wage is only applicable to the labor force working in the garment, textile and shoe industries. Yet, their minimum wage, per month, has been increasing steadily, from US\$140 in 2016 to US\$153 in 2017. The low labor cost is attractive to outside investors in Cambodia but the quality of labor is considered low compared with that in neighboring countries. However, compared with the other ASEAN countries, there are a significant number of Cambodians who speak English (and other languages such as Japanese) and these workers are paid over double for their ability (Japan External Trade Organization [JETRO] 2016). Besides, there are not sufficient teaching staff in engineering fields to meet the technical requirements at the global level. There are many factories in the textile industry in Cambodia but there are not many factories that can produce products using machines. Thus, skill development programs have been restricted to everyday fields, such as mechanics, bike repairs and the skills for repairing air conditioning units, and these are often provided with major assistance from outside NGOs.

Despite the country being open to direct foreign investment, there are a number of problems that can hamper entrepreneurial efforts. First, the electricity supply is unstable and power rates are considered extremely expensive. Secondly, as mentioned in the previous section, there is a significant shortage of skilled labor. Owing to the internal war in the 1970s and the killing of highly educated people, there has been shortage of specialists and labor at a high technical level. At present, the literacy rate is 78.4%. Thirdly, public administration in Cambodia is often considered to have a lack of transparency. There is a significant level of corruption, and bribery is a commonplace. Finally, the infrastructure is insufficient in some areas. Major streets have been asphalted but the majority of roads in the country are still in poor condition. These issues can be surmountable by determined entrepreneurs but they should be taken into consideration in this context.

3.2.2 Cases

We will now present seven cases of Japanese SIEEs in Cambodia. Interviews were conducted in Phnom Penh in 2017. We invite the reader to follow the narratives and consider the key turning points in these entrepreneur's lives; how their identity and culture impact on their decision making, while also considering the complexities of becoming an expatriate in this context.

Case CBD-1

CBD-1 was born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1967. After graduating from a women's junior college, she worked at a securities company for 3 years, where she sold stock and gave investment advice. She has always had a strong interest in business, women's independence and supporting developing countries. She puts her interest down to the influence of her aunt, who is French, her own study abroad experience, and her father, who was a business owner. After quitting the securities company, she decided to move to the States to attend language school, community college and advanced to a university in the United States to study international relations, where she earned a bachelor's degree at Boston University. After returning to Japan, she worked at a foreign-affiliated company for 6 months.

While studying in the United States, she became aware that online businesses would be the business of the future and recognized a niche in the market, predicting that the demand for web design services and professionals in this field would increase in Japan over the next 10 years. As a result, she established a web design company at the age of 28. The company hired 15 employees and continued for 12 years. She was able to open the company with a loan of 10 million yen that she won through an entrepreneur contest aimed at women. At 40 years old, she decided to leave the company to shift her life and work and handed it over to one of her colleagues.

Over the next few years she began preparing how she could support women's independence projects in developing countries. The focus of her endeavor was to

allow mothers to fulfill the dreams of their future. While traveling to developing countries, she recognized that in Cambodia, Cambodian women had a strong personality and interest in design, but no place to learn and develop their skills. Therefore, she believed that if she encouraged talented women, developed workshops and learning spaces, and provided creative employment support, then the Cambodian women would not have to leave their country and could immediately contribute to the economic development of Cambodia. Her goal is to develop a women's support network in Cambodia and expand it to neighboring developing countries. Case CBD-1's efforts were recognized and she won third place in a social entrepreneurship contest sponsored by a famous Japanese entrepreneur. At the same time, she also received the Mohammed Yunus⁴ prize for social entrepreneurship. She moved to Cambodia in 2014 to further develop her program.

After moving to Cambodia, she established *Blooming Life International Co., Ltd.*, and opened a souvenir shop called *Wakana Shop*, to sell traditional Cambodian products at the large AEON shopping mall in Phnom Penh. However, at first, the products she sourced did not sell well, so she changed the name of the shop to *AMAZING CAMBODIA*⁵ in 2016. Since then, sales have increased.

At the time of interview she had one store and employed two Japanese staff, eight Cambodian staff front of house and two Cambodians working in product development. Since the interview she has opened a second store at another AEON exchange mall and a third store at the airport. Initially, she had dreamed to fill the shop with Cambodian products developed by her staff, which were based on traditional designs from that region, however, working closely with her product development team she found she did not have the financial capability to do so. She decided to develop high-quality products that would be suited to foreign tourist's tastes and their standards. She had been developing products such as coconut cookies and cashew nut chocolates using packaging designed by Cambodian women.

The initial project cost around 20 million yen to realize. This fund was provided by asking for investment from Japanese investors. She acknowledged she would have to pay a dividend to investors but she still wanted to execute the social business aspect of her company, which many of her investors supported. Currently, instead of paying dividends, the company sends its products to shareholders twice a year. However, she is considering to develop a system to pay dividends to her investors.

Case CBD-1 has highly integrated business and social networks through her contacts with business owners, both Cambodian and Japanese. She is very satisfied with her current life and truly believes in her social endeavor to empower Cambodian women. She is driven by her understanding that in life, one needs to be authentic, in harmony and able to share with each other. For professional development she attended coaching seminars and training while she was in Japan. In the future she hopes to convert the total sales for 1 year into Japanese purchasing

⁴Prize awarded to successful young people who engage in social entrepreneurship. <http://sbc.mgt.ncu.edu.tw/en/yunus-prize/>.

⁵<https://amazing-cambodia.com/>.

Table 3.5 Case CBD-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1967
18	Entered junior college
20	Entered a security company as a sales clerk
23	Studied abroad in the USA, graduated from Boston university followed by community college
27	Returned to Japan and worked for a US-affiliated company
28	Self-employed and started to establish a company
30	Established a web design company in Tokyo and became CEO
42	Visited Cambodia first time
47	Established <i>Blooming Life International Co.Ltd in Cambodia</i> and became CEO Opened <i>Wakana Shop</i> in AEON shopping mall
49	Re-branded store to <i>Amazing Cambodia</i>
50	Preparing for expansion and social programs for local Cambodian women

power equivalent to 3 billion yen. She aims to fill her shop with 100% of products developed by her team while collaborating with NGOs and other local companies. She has a total of 25 employees, including 2 Japanese employees.

Since 2010, she has also sponsored a design contest called *Dream Girls Project*⁶ to help Cambodian women become financially independent through design. She has incorporated independent women's designs into her product packages. In relation to this, she is currently working on building a school where Cambodian women can learn how to start a small business as well as learn the basics of design. Furthermore, she intends to develop financial support systems for Cambodian women starting a business, thus creating a solid base for women who have the qualities to become future business leaders (Table 3.5).

Case CBD-2

Case CBD-2 was born in Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan in 1971. After graduating from high school, she worked as a clerk at a local real estate company until she was 20 years old. Following that, she worked at a major beauty salon, as an esthetician. She got married at the age of 24 and worked as a temporary contract employee, but continued to work in the beauty industry on the side. The reason she worked in this way was because it was more secure than working solely in the beauty industry, although this is where her passion lies. After divorcing at the age of 30, she worked in sales at an insurance company for 12 years, up to the age of 42. During that time, she always worked with a mind to changing her career in the future and so attended various workshops on self-development held in Tokyo. She said that through these experiences she could see she had the opportunity to change her way of thinking and her life.

⁶<https://www.dreamgirlsproject.com>.

As a hobby, she traveled abroad every year from her early 20s. She soon came to the realization that her life could become saturated if she continued to work as she was doing in the insurance industry. Through her job she was able to meet many different people and opened a bank account in Hong Kong. Gradually, through conversations with friends and people she met at the self-development workshops, she realized she could live and work abroad. At the age of 41, she thought about starting a business with three friends, and so visited Vietnam and Cambodia with a view to moving overseas. The three people who guided her at this time worked at a hair salon, a real estate consulting business and in an emergency medical NGO, respectively. At this time, she witnessed the yin and yang parts of Vietnam and Cambodia, and returned home thinking that maybe she had no connection with Asia.

After returning to Japan, she entered a female entrepreneurship group, and after a year, she was introduced to the director of a major cosmetic surgery business which had popularized hair removal equipment in Asia. At that time, she felt she didn't have enough expertise to work with the director, so introduced her acquaintance she met while traveling to Cambodia and Vietnam, who operated a hair salon.

At the age of 42, she accepted a position as an educational trainer at a hair salon in Phnom Penh. However, she decided to leave the salon after 3 months due to differences with the management policy. Immediately following this, she decided to purchase the hair removal equipment and opened her own hair removal salon *Hair Removal Salon MOTOKI*⁷ in Phnom Penh, as a private business. She used 7 million yen for her start-up fund which she saved from her time working in insurance.

When starting a business in Cambodia, she decided without consulting anyone; she decided to take a risk. At the time of interview she was 45 years old, the business was in its third year and employed three members of staff. Both men and women visit the salon and 80% of the customers are Cambodian, with the remaining 20% Japanese and foreign customers.

The senses of Cambodian and Japanese people are very different and she acknowledged that at first, it was very difficult to accept this culture. The charge for processing is \$39 for 20 min (a typical Cambodian salary in Phnom Penh is \$200 to \$300 a month). Although the price is high, even in Japan, total hair removal can cost around 300,000 yen. When she came to Phnom Penh, there were only five or six hair removal salons, but now there are around 14 stores, so she may have to decrease her price with the growing competition.

Although Case CBD-2 has no specific mentors, she received a lot of advice from her seniors while she worked at the real estate company. In particular, she was taught about the importance of savings and how to deal with people while she worked in Japan. Her current mentor is the director of the female entrepreneur group. However, she doesn't tend to become involved in many networks except one female entrepreneur association in Japan and the president of this association.

She is an avid reader, reading books about anything from quantum physics to the law of attraction, as through expanding her knowledge base, she is able to search

⁷<https://www.hair-removal-salon-motoki.com/>.

Table 3.6 Case CBD-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Ibaraki Prefecture in 1971
18	Graduated from a local high school Got a job at a real estate company as a sales agent
21	Changed job to an aesthetic salon
24	Quit the salon and got married Registered with a temp-staff agency Continued to work in beauty on the side
30	Divorced Got a job as sales staff at a security company (while also working as an beauty consultant part-time)
43	Moved to Cambodia Opened a hair removal salon
45	Continues to work in Cambodia

for the next field she may wish to enter. She is highly satisfied with her life and feels that all her experience in Japan was useful in that it helps her to grasp the needs of her customers. She lives her life through a career anchor from Einstein, *there are two choices in life. I will either live by believing that a miracle will not occur or live believing that everything is a miracle.* She spends time on self-reflection and hopes to continue working in Cambodia for the foreseeable future. Although she makes less money now than she did while working in Japan, she hopes to make a profit in the future as to be honest, the more money there is, the better it is, but she can be patient. She is currently concerned about the education of her staff, noting that there are not enough talented human resources to handle the management of her store. In the future she would also like to become an agent for hair removal equipment, possibly enter the hair growth business, and is also interested in diversifying into the childcare business if she makes enough profit in the future (Table 3.6).

CBD-3

CBD-3 was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1979, on account of his father's work. He moved to Saitama Prefecture, Japan at one-and-a-half years old, and lived in Singapore from age 10 to 11. While studying at university in Japan, he moved to England to become a professional football player for a year but gave up his dream and returned home. He returned to college but dropped out in his fourth year when he realized he wanted to be an entrepreneur.

He began working at a consultancy firm as a sales associate responsible for promoting franchise businesses and assisting small and medium-sized enterprises all over the country. The purpose of the consultancy was to produce entrepreneurs, and all employees were required to create a detailed life plan for entrepreneurship every year. While making his life plan, Case CBD-3 decided to start a business at the age of 27, and when he was 25 he transferred to another consultancy firm but left the company 2 years later. At the age of 27, he founded *Prazer* and started to run his own business.

Taking advantage of the knowledge of consulting sales and store management cultivated up to that point, the company ran a total of five to six franchises, including three BBQ stores in Tokyo and one golf school in Shinjuku, Tokyo. In order to start the business, he saved about 2 million yen from his own funds and received additional funding totaling 5–7 million yen from the government and other financial institutions, which he used to buy stores. After around 3 years of managing his company, he decided to leave it in the hands of his subordinates in order to travel the world in search of his next base. At the age of 32, he sold his company and immediately moved to Cambodia. With a profit of approximately 10 million yen at the time of business settlement and with financial assistance from his investor, he established *HUGS International*⁸ with the purpose of supporting the business expansion of Japanese companies in Cambodia, human resource development and real estate development in Cambodia. It is now in its seventh year of establishment. The main focus of his business includes: (1) support and consulting business for Japanese companies wishing to advance into Cambodia, (2) temporary staffing business to provide work for Cambodians to work in Japanese nursing homes in Japan, (3) land trading in Cambodia and (4) the company also operates 14 franchise stores in Phnom Penh. Connected to the staffing business, he started a Japanese language school business in 2016 with a goal to dispatch nursing care workers to Japan in cooperation with the nursing department of a major university in Cambodia. By setting a goal for his nurses to hit the required goal of acquiring N-3 qualifications for Japanese language skills, he created a system that allows them to work for 3–5 years as technical interns⁹ in the field of nursing care in Japan. As a result, 500 people passed N-3 in 2016, and 300 people already acquired level N-3 in 2017. The goal is to reach 1,000 N-3 nurses in 2018. The approval requirement of Visa for technical interns in the field of nursing care in Japan is N-4 or more.

Although he was not initially interested in the real estate field, after understanding that all developing countries are growing their country based on real estate and finance, he decided to buy and sell cheap land in Phnom Penh, for wealthy Asian clients. As the land in Phnom Penh rises in price from half a year to a year, he is able to generate profits which he can reinvest in his businesses. Continuing to diversify, *HUGS* started farming and developed a pig farming business until 2016, but realizing there was little profit to be made he ceased trading. From 2018, he decided to refocus his energy into his four core businesses.

He is currently working to sustain and solidify his business base in Cambodia and considers one business cycle to be 5 years. Currently, he is in the second year of the second stage. He moved to Cambodia without any real planning and had to sell a house he had recently built in Tokyo. After deciding to move to Cambodia, his success came through trial and error. He feels that starting a business overseas is harder than starting in Japan but he felt that even if he had made a careful plan,

⁸<http://hugs-int.com/>.

⁹Overview of the Japan Technical Intern Program: <https://www.jitco.or.jp/en/regulation/index.html>.

nothing would go as planned because Cambodians do not follow the same concept of planning as Japanese business people do. In Cambodia, he feels people only think about living today. Thus, he now lives with that mentality and has abandoned most of his conventional ideas. Also, until he moved to Cambodia, he did not really have a sense of what ‘income’ was but he was aware that the Japanese economy will decline further in the future so that it was an important time to take advantage of new business opportunities in emerging economies. He has strong networks among small and medium-sized enterprises in Japan, teachers and students related to Japanese language schools for Cambodians, Cambodian entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, investors and government officials. He also said that he has no social networks per say as he spends half of the month on business trips to Japan for work and thus he tries to spend as much of his spare time as possible with his children.

As for his overall life satisfaction in Cambodia, he enjoys his life and said that spending time with his children is easier in Cambodia than it was in Japan. His career anchor is $Result = ability \times effort \times direction\ of\ idea$, and he believes that a person’s way of thinking is the most important determinant of success. He continues professional development by visiting other countries to expand his vision and seek new opportunities. As part of that, he often visits Europe, but for the time being, he plans to live in Japan and Asia, with a focus on Cambodia. His current concern is that as he is the second son among his three brothers he does not have to worry about taking care of his elderly parents, but they still do give him some concern. For his future, he aspires to become involved not only in Cambodia but also in the world, stating his work in Cambodia was just the start and he hopes to continue to expand his company through the next cycle (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 CBD-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Bagdad, Iraq in 1979
10	Lived in Singapore
19	Attended university in Japan Attempted to be a professional soccer player but changed career path, dropped out of university
22	Entered a joint-capital consultancy firm
25	Moved to another consultancy firm
27	Became an entrepreneur. Started a business as a CEO and an organizer of franchise restaurants across Japan
30	Delegated management to staff and travelled countries in Asia, Europe and Africa to find his next business base
32	Sold his company, moved to Cambodia, and established a company “ <i>HUGS International</i> ”
38	Expands his business through consultancy for Japanese direct investment to Cambodia, manages a Japanese language school, and buys and sells real estate in Cambodia

CBD-4

CBD-4 was born in Aichi Prefecture, in 1963. After graduating from a university in Japan, he worked as a system engineer. In 1991, he took paid leave and visited a slum in Thailand to observe NGO support activities. At this time, he met a Japanese man who had retired from a major Japanese company. Although the business man was unable to speak English or Thai, he was building a new accounting system while living in Thailand. At that time, NGOs in Thailand received financial support from various donors, but were unable to prepare and manage their own financial statements. After this meeting, he decided to take long-term leave from his company and become a volunteer, taking charge of accounting for the NGO. Between 1992 and 1996, he worked as a volunteer in Cambodia providing vocational training and supporting general affairs in the office (related to accounting).

He returned to Japan temporarily in 1996 due to his family circumstances and returned to his former company, where he was placed in the overseas division. He decided to return to Cambodia in 2002 and work at an international NGO. In 2003 he was appointed the head of accounting and general affairs for his department at the Tokyo headquarters. He went back to Cambodia between 2008 and 2010, where he managed the construction of elementary schools, picture book publishing, vocational training and other support projects. At the beginning of 2010 he decided that he wanted to support various development projects without interference from anyone, and so in 2010 he established a consulting company to take charge of business support projects in Cambodia. He decided to use the profits obtained from those projects for his volunteer activities. He designed his own homepage, businesses cards and set up the business with almost zero start-up funds.

He became the CEO of the *Active People's Microfinance Institution* in 2011, but left due to disagreements with investors in 2012. He went on to immediately establish the NGO group *Rights Smart International* in Phnom Penh and started his own microcredit business for low-income groups. The funding of \$200,000 (approximately 20 million yen) was provided through his own savings and contributions from a Japanese investor.

He acquired a financial license from the National Bank of Cambodia in 2016, and established a company corporation *Rights Smart Finance Plc.*¹⁰ His main projects included: (1) a loan business providing educational loans for students, (2) volunteer work centered on building toilets in school buildings and (3) moral education for locals through *manga* publishing and literacy education. The company currently has approximately 30 employees and has provided a total of \$650,000 (about 65 million yen) in loans, supporting a total of 1,500 individuals. The interest rate is 2–3% a month, and the loan repayment is being made locally so that Cambodians can be advised on their repayment plan according to their individual situation. In lending, no collateral is required for loans under \$300, but two guarantors are required for loans higher than that amount. For loans over \$300, entrepreneurs are required to show identification cards and motorcycle certificates.

¹⁰<http://risma.biz/conceptJP.html>.

Table 3.8 Case CBD-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Aichi Prefecture in 1963
23	Graduated from university
24	Entered a company as a system engineer, took volunteer leave and decided to work for refugees in Thailand
28	Officially retired from the company and started working for an NGO in Cambodia
32	Returned to Japan and his former company
38	Retired again and got a job at an NGO in Cambodia
39	Transferred to the NGO office in Tokyo
44	Appointed Director of the Cambodia office
47	Experienced conflict with board members and quit the NGO. Established a consultancy firm to investigate microfinance
48	Due to further conflict among investors, he resigned from the consultancy firm Established <i>Active People's Microfinance Institution</i> and became CEO
49	He started an NGO called <i>Rights Smart International</i>
53	Obtained a financial license from the National Bank of Cambodia and established <i>Rights Smart Finance Plc.</i> To provide Cambodians with micro credit options. Became CEO of his own company

Local Cambodians are expanding their businesses in areas such as producing dried fish and purchasing motorcycle taxis (*tuk-tuks*) based on the loan.

His mentor is his former boss at his first place of employment. He taught him how to proceed with his work and they see each other as brothers. At present, he is now in a position where he consults with and is consulted by members of the World Association of Overseas Japanese Entrepreneurs (WAOJE). He has various networks through his business, his family and the Ministry of Education in Cambodia. He is very satisfied with his life and recognizes that for him, the income is not so important as the reward is the result of his work. His career anchor is *to always prioritize*. He said it was difficult to acquire new skills but mentioned that he was interacting with various people as part of his personal development and learning from these exchanges. His current concerns are the policy changes being implemented by the Cambodian government and the education and development of his Cambodian middle managers, the development of staff who interact with his Japanese counterparts and other general human resource management issues (Table 3.8).

Case CBD-5

Case CBD-5 was born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1967. He dropped out of graduate school after being inspired to pursue the same life path as Kenichi Omae.¹¹ He subsequently joined a US-based consultancy firm in Tokyo and received an intensive 3-week training program in Chicago, USA. This experience was

¹¹Kenichi Omae is a famous Japanese organizational theorist and management consultant.

life-changing as it introduced him to totally new cultures and experiences. After working for 1 year and 3 months, he was asked to relocate to the Kyushu office in the south of Japan. He declined the request and instead quit the company.

He decided his next step would be to run for public office and so prepared for his candidacy by working for the Liberal Democratic Party. When he was 29 years old, he stood in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election, but was defeated. Following this, he decided to found his own company and began *Digital Forest* in 1998 in his hometown in the southern part of Japan. The company became the leading digital web analytics company in Japan and competed with *Google Analytics*. In 2009, he sold the company to the major Japanese telecommunications company NTT, for 2.4 billion yen and continued to serve as the company's president until 2010.

Before leaving his post as president at the age of 42, he attended the World Congress of the *Entrepreneurs' Organization*¹² (EO), the world's largest entrepreneur group, and felt a sense of crisis for globalization. In 2010, with the goal of becoming a global family, he moved his entire family to Singapore as a base from which to explore South East Asia to decide his next business venture. In 2011, *A2A Town*¹³ (Cambodia) Co., Ltd was established in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and from 2012 to 2014, he worked between Cambodia and Singapore to formulate his business plan. In 2014, he returned his working Visa to the Singaporean government and migrated to Cambodia.

He settled on Cambodia as he felt there was less competition from global companies and the biggest upside of the country being the young population. Also, Cambodia had few foreign capital restrictions and so he decided that Cambodia offered the best business opportunities among ASEAN countries. In the same year, he solidified his business plan to develop a university city combining a university with real estate, IT services and resort businesses. He based his concept on a famous Japanese resort town, *Karuizawa*. He decided on *Kirirom*, a National Park on a mountain, about 3 h from Phnom Penh which initially had zero residents. He decided to rent a piece of land measuring nearly 10,000 ha from the Cambodian government in an effort to try to grow the region through the establishment of resorts, campsites and a university. In 2015, he welcomed 12,000 visitors to *Kirirom*. He plans a much bigger expansion in the future.

Additionally, in 2015, the company established *Kirirom Institute of Technology*¹⁴ (KIT), a 4-year university system with dormitory student accommodation. The school specializes in IT and entrepreneurship. He hires teachers of IT-related subjects from India and English language teachers are recruited from the Philippines. All classes are taught in English. The university has been approved as a university by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Cambodia. Tuition is paid with a compulsory scholarship provided by various

¹²<https://www.eonetwork.org/> a peer-to-peer entrepreneurs' network.

¹³<https://www.wantedly.com/companies/vkirirom>.

¹⁴<https://www.kirirom.info/>.

Japanese and other Asian businesses, and thus students are not burdened with tuition fees or loans. After graduation, students are exempted from repayment of scholarships by working at a KIT-designated company for 4 years, post graduation. Students also have the power to veto the companies they are designated to, in which case they have to work at the university, in the real estate business, resort or IT department instead. There are currently 78 students (22 students per grade), and the first cohort graduated in 2018. The student scholarships are funded partly from resort profits and from university revenue. The university receives around 2 million yen per student from scholarship companies in exchange for four years of commitment to work for the sponsor company.

Although he spent around 1 billion yen to start the company, he earned funds from the sale of *Digital Forest* and also gained support from 25 investors. He said that the project of this size was only possible in Cambodia. Throughout his initial journey as an entrepreneur he never consulted family members or other stakeholders regarding his business as he generally has an idea and runs with it. He says that he is now currently receiving advice from EO members and 25 shareholders. In addition, since he owns 60% of the shares, he has succeeded in developing his business through his own decision-making without being overly influenced by the shareholders.

He interacts within various networks, both face-to-face and online via Facebook. Although he has not received salary for 5–6 years, he is very satisfied with life and work. With regard to job satisfaction, he believes it is important to aim at *maximizing one's experience, focusing on the realization that happiness is not gained through money. He works on the assumption that if other people can achieve things, so can he and in doing so he must make sure others around him are happy.* He is currently considering how he can further expand his business (Table 3.9).

CBD-6

Case CBD-6 was born in Kyoto Prefecture, in 1979. While studying at a department of architecture, in a Japanese university, he took part in a 6-month internship with the famous Japanese advertising company. After graduation he decided to advance to graduate school and during that time he took an intern post at a design office in Beijing, China. He received a master's degree in architecture in 2005.

Post graduation he worked at a consultancy firm, whose main business was consulting for organizational personnel. He worked in this position for 6 years from 2005 to 2011. During the first 3 years, he was in-charge of designing office designs that would motivate employees and in the final 3 years he was in-charge of web and video production.

Based on his experience of creating evidence-based designer workspaces, he decided to launch his company *OS!*¹⁵ in Japan. He had minimal start-up costs, which he took from his personal savings. After the establishment of *OS!*,¹⁶ he was quickly hired to consult for well-known clients. He was responsible for remodeling

¹⁵*Os!* Stands for *o-su* which in Japanese means 'to push.'

¹⁶<http://www.os-fcp.com/>.

Table 3.9 Case CBD-5 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Kagawa Prefecture in 1967
25	Obtained MS from a Japanese university
27	Dropped out of Ph.D. program of a Japanese university
27	Worked for a US-based consulting company in Tokyo and spent 3 weeks in Chicago, USA for training
29	Ran for election as a member of Tokyo Metropolitan Government and lost
31	Established IT-company, <i>Digital Forest Co.</i> in his hometown, which became No. 1 digital web analytics company in Japan
42	Sold the company for 2.4 billion yen to NTT Co., the biggest telecommunications company in Japan
43	Family moved to Singapore as a base to explore his next business venture in Southeast Asia
44	Established a company called <i>A2A Town (Cambodia) Co. Ltd.</i> in Phnom Penh
45	Travelled between Singapore and Cambodia frequently to build up business ideas and develop a business plan
47	Moved to Cambodia and started a university city business venture
48	Established and started four-year <i>Kirirom Institute of Technology</i> which specialize in IT and entrepreneurship and <i>Kirirom Resort</i>
51	First students graduated from the university

a training room, providing the graphic design for the offices of a professional baseball club in Japan and the production of images adopted by another Japanese company. From these experiences, he gained the confidence that even an individual can work equally with a large corporation and still gain high rewards.

However, he did not give up his desire to someday work overseas and so in 2012 he focused his personal work on paper-based and web-based media design operations. He traveled to 60 cities in 33 countries in 1 year and through his travel, he had a very good impression of Cambodia. In 2013, he considered moving overseas and shortlisted Malaysia and Cambodia as potential destinations. He decided on Cambodia as they had a low threshold for start-up. Additionally, he felt that the country had a strong connection to Japan, Japanese families were welcomed there and the Cambodians he met with were very kind. In addition, many Japanese companies in Cambodia had already made a request for his work, which was a major deciding factor.

From the point of view of small and medium-sized enterprises, he could quickly ascertain that there were multiple business opportunities with a 16 million population. Large corporations generally tend to invest in countries with a population of more than 50 million; therefore Cambodia was an attractive country for SMEs.

Table 3.10 Case CBD-6 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Kyoto Prefecture in 1979
26	Graduated from a Japanese university
26	Worked for a consulting company in Japan
32	Resigned and a design company called <i>OS!</i>
33	Stated a worldwide tour with his wife to widen their world views
34	Established <i>OS!</i> in Cambodia
38	Extending his business in Japan, Thailand and Cambodia

He established *OS!* in Phnom Penh in 2013. *OS!* provides design solutions to companies in Cambodia, Japan and other countries. His day-to-day projects include: (1) graphic design production for various companies, (2) web design for homepages, store design, interior design and construction and (3) photograph and video production. He paid around 3 million yen in start-up costs in Phnom Penh, which he took out of his own funds.

He is highly satisfied with his current life. He has various business and social networks, such as networking with clients (companies in Japan, Cambodia, Thailand), his staff (two Cambodians and one Japanese intern), and in his private life he supports his wife's bakery business. His company has a corporate culture that fosters personal growth by sharing the skills and knowledge of various people, thus he is a strong believer in networking and working together. With regard to his income, he carefully divides his money between outgoings and savings. The daily cost of living in Cambodia is about \$10, and he believes that he will need savings for different milestones in his life. His current concern is that although there is a lot of room for expansion in the design business, it is necessary to effectively improve the skills of his staff and to create a sustainable working environment that will allow them to work long term. The recruitment of staff and staff education, training and development were also mentioned as issues of concern. The quality of deliverables is of paramount importance to him and his business, but he believes that *one only lives once so we should live a life where we can feel richness and enjoyment in our everyday activities* (Table 3.10).

CBD-7

Case CBD-7 was born in Tokyo, in 1983. After graduating from university in Japan, she joined a construction company and worked for 3 years in the new CAD development department and for 1 year in the President's office. At 25 years old she reflected on her way of life and began to think about what kind of life she would like to live in the future, what inspired her and how she would like to help others. To her mind, she wants to make people happy through bread and wants to pursue

her dream of becoming a baker. At the age of 26, she left the company and began working full-time at a bakery in Tokyo. At the same time, she met her husband and got married. At the time of working for the bakery, she was only involved in sales operations and not involved in baking bread, but her boss taught her the skills of molding and baking in the intervals between sales. After approximately 10 months, she had learned how to mold a bread base with flour and water, and 1 year later she started to learn how to bake. At that time, she got up at 1 am and after 2 h of mentally preparing herself at home, she would go to work at 3 am to start making bread. She worked in the bakery for 3 years and by the time she left the bakery she was knowledgeable about various methods in the baking trade, such as preparation, packaging, display, and was confident in producing about 50 different kinds of bread.

After leaving the bakery at the age of 29, she left Japan to embark on a world tour with her husband. Her first step was to go to the Philippines alone, for 1 month and a half to undertake language study. Following the program, she reunited with her husband in Hong Kong, but her husband had to temporarily return to Japan for work. In the meantime, she decided to stay in Malaysia for 2 weeks and visit Vietnam after joining her husband again on their travels. She visited a total of 33 countries in 10 months.

Before the tour, she was only concerned with being in love with her husband and being a good wife, but she gradually came to realize that after this experience she would not feel fulfilled, going back to live a life as a general member of society in Japan. Therefore, she began to think about how she could start her own bakery. During her travels, she started a blog that catalogued all the bread she was encountering around the world. She called the blog *From a bakery in the world*. After returning to Japan, she decided that she would open a bakery in Cambodia and moved to Cambodia, at the age of 30, with her husband.

In 2013, she had her own bakery and baked bread that was delivered to grocery stores and delivery services. She also began developing more wholesale products for supermarkets aimed at foreigners. Through this she developed various types of bread such as soft bread, bagels, etc. which were new types of bread for the Cambodian market due to it being a former French colony that had a preference for hard bread and baguettes. She was able to meet the new requests of her customers. In addition, to wholesale, there were many requests for the sale of bread at the bakery itself, and so in October 2015, she opened a bakery called *Bagel and Bakery SANCHI*,¹⁷ in Phnom Penh.

She initially started with just herself and the delivery staff, but now she has eleven assistant bakers and other staff to run the store. The staff start preparing the bread at 5:30 am and the bakery opens at 7 am. It is open everyday until 2:30 pm including Saturday and Sunday. She now leaves the preparation of the bread and store operation to her staff, and goes to the bakery around 7 am to focus on the

¹⁷<https://ja-jp.facebook.com/BagelSancha/>.

Table 3.11 Case CBD-7 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1983
22	Graduated from university and entered a major construction company
26	Left company and got a job at a bakery shop. Married
29	Left bakery shop, took a career break and went around the world with her husband
30	Moved to Phnom Penh with husband and started making bread at a workshop. Opened a bakery
32	Employs eleven Cambodian staff to bake bread, do deliveries, and develop new products

management tasks, such as developing new products and motivating and training her staff. She is always careful to observe her customers to ensure she is meeting their needs, since they are constantly changing.

She is currently highly satisfied with her life and career. As a role model, she cited her previous boss who was bright, warm and unique, but he demanded a high level of work from her. He encouraged her as a mentor but currently, her husband is her main supporter and mentor. She has no particular networks within which she is actively involved however, she has a small but rich network of close friends. She says that her work experience in Japan was very helpful. In particular, she stated that her experience of accounting, recruitment, schedule management and the creation of a company newsletter helped her to develop her management skills in her bakery and also contributed to her understanding of how to create displays and promote her bakery.

Her income has risen since she started the business and she believes it will continue to grow in the future as she diversifies. Her main area of concern is to develop the human resources in her business. Her goal is to sufficiently train her staff to work autonomously. In the future, she hopes she can only focus on management tasks so that the bakery is run solely by Cambodian staff, allowing her time to open a bread cookery classroom to enrich the lives of Cambodians. In trying to develop her staff she approached them with Japanese management practices but after one member of staff resigned, she understood she needed to be more culturally sensitive to her context and now works according to the speed of Cambodians. She believes that she needs to take any chance or opportunity presented, even if it initially seems small. She will continue to make bread for the people of Phnom Penh. As a baker, the most important thing is to learn that *the bread is alive, so I read the voice and expression of the bread. I have a conversation with it*. She said that being able to do this enabled her to deliver the best bread to people (Table 3.11).

3.3 Vietnam



Vietnam

3.3.1 Country Context

Next, let's explore Vietnam, and the experience of Japanese SIEEs in two very different cities; Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh. Vietnam's advantage is its strategic location; close to Southern China, with extensive air and sea links. Vietnam is developing at a phenomenal rate. Over the past 30 years, the country has seen rapid growth under the economic reforms launched by *Doi Moi* (renovation policy) in 1986, which encouraged a socialist-orientated market economy. According to preliminary data from the World Bank (2019), GDP growth accelerated to 7.1% in 2018, with growth expected to moderate to 6.6% in 2019. Similar to Japan however, the population is rapidly aging, despite 70% of the population under 35 years of age. Basic services have improved, gender gaps are narrowing and the pace of social change is fast as the middle class continue to emerge. Reasonable distribution of growth among rural and urban population, with those living below the poverty line falling to 13.5% (AVPN 2019) due to a move from an agrarian economy to a more manufacturing and service-based industry. FDI into Vietnam totaled 24.4 billion USD in 2016, with heavy investment from South Korea.

Most recently, the government has set new socio-economic targets for development in the hope that they can continue economic stability, foster growth and improve trade and investment in Vietnam. The government aims to keep inflation at approximately 4%, increase the export turnover by 7–8%, keep the trade deficit below 3% and set the total growth at 34% (Vietnam Government 2019). This growth has been possible through the country's embracing of trade liberalization and investment in human and social capital. By joining the ASEAN trade area in 1995 and signing trade agreements with the United States in 2000, plus agreements with other Asian nations, the country was able to lower tariffs and encourage investment. These developments saw many Japanese companies set up headquarters in Vietnam and as such, it can provide a fertile ground for SIEEs entrepreneurs.

3.3.2 Cases

We will now share nine cases from Vietnam; five from Hanoi and four from Ho Chi Minh. The interviews were conducted in 2018.

Case V-Hanoi-1

Case V-Hanoi-1 was born in Osaka Prefecture in 1980. He is married to a Vietnamese, has two children. He graduated from a high school attached to a private university. Case V-Hanoi-1 currently runs *Takebo*,¹⁸ a BBQ restaurant in Hanoi, Vietnam.

¹⁸<http://www.hotel84.com/nha-hang/nhat-ban-takebo-112-linh-lang.html>.

Case V-Hanoi-1 was a member of a theater group at high school and although he was not considering attending university, he passed the general examination for a Japanese university and started studies against his wish. However, after persuading his parents that he was unconvinced by the content of the classes, he withdrew himself from the studies after 2 weeks.

His family owned a BBQ restaurant but management of the store became difficult due to a BSE¹⁹ outbreak. He helped his parents as much as he could, but in 2011 he stopped and decided to move to Hanoi in 2012 to start his own restaurant. One of the reasons for starting a business was that his parents didn't listen to his suggestions for improving their own business, so he decided to use his 10 million yen in savings as a source to make his own way in the world. He started his restaurant with a recommendation from a trade manager, who was senior to him, whom he met at a gathering of young entrepreneurs, called the *Junior Chamber*²⁰ in Hanoi. His company now provides food products to sushi stores and staff cafeterias.

Case V-Hanoi-1 met his first mentors in the theater company. He still keeps in touch with his seniors occasionally and seeks them out for advice. Also, during his time working in the BBQ restaurant, he rarely met anyone he could consult with on business. It was his parent's restaurant and he became negative when they wouldn't heed his advice and ideas, yet this negative experience and frustration drove him to start his own business in Hanoi. His current mentors are senior executives of the *Junior Chamber in Osaka*, Japan, presidents of various companies in Hanoi and friends who are around the same age. He likes to gather opinions on management from a variety of sources.

His work networks are deeply integrated with his private life. Customers, employees, Japanese business partners, and so on, are all connected. His company currently employs about 50 people and 10 people at a barbecue restaurant. The sushi shop is not related to the start-up, but there are around 15 employees and there are around 40 employees at the staff cafeteria, which opened in 2016. Currently, his cafeteria offers about 2,600 meals a day at 100 yen per meal. Sanitation standards are still a challenge in Vietnam but he works hard to overcome them and provide quality food.

Although he is busy he tries to spend his free time with friends who are around the same age and likes to spend his holidays with his family as much as possible. His wife is a former employee of the restaurant. They married in 2015. He believes that it is important to balance work and life and that essentially, family is most important. Case V-Hanoi-1 feels that his work experience in Japan was beneficial as he was able to learn the basics of the service industry and that he developed his motto, to always *work with a smile*. He was unperturbed by a decline in income on first moving to Vietnam as he had an opening fund of 10 million yen in savings that

¹⁹Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad cow disease, is a neurodegenerative disease of cattle that had a global impact on world health.

²⁰<http://www.jaycee.or.jp/>.

Table 3.12 Case V-Hanoi-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Osaka in 1980
18	Entered a Japanese university and dropped out
24	Belonged to a theater company Helped out at his family's BBQ business
32	Decided to migrate to Hanoi, Vietnam Established a BBQ restaurant there called <i>Buffalo Takebo</i>
34	Managed a sushi shop in Vietnam
36	Started a staff cafeteria
38	Continues his business and is considering a store relocation

could support him. Despite some management issues he is currently experiencing, business is going well and he is expanding further (Table 3.12).

Case V-Hanoi-2

Case V-Hanoi-2 was born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1980. He graduated from a graduate school of engineering, at a Japanese university and is currently the CEO and Founder of *Scuti Co., Ltd.*²¹

After completing graduate school, Case V-Hanoi-2 spent three-and-a-half years working on developing interchangeable lenses for single-lens reflex cameras at a Japanese camera company in Japan. In 2008, he decided to change career and took a job with the second largest internet advertising company in the industry. In this company he worked in the development division, and was responsible for the development of applications for advertising management and optimization.

In 2012, he helped launch a subsidiary in Vietnam. The overseas company was opened with the intention of securing engineering projects to help foster prosperity in the IT industry in Vietnam. Case V-Hanoi-2 was sent as a representative to Vietnam. When he was asked to return to Japan in 2015 he quit the company.

After considering his future, he decided to open his own company, a Vietnam-based offshore development service specializing in programming language *PHP*. As Case V-Hanoi-2 was a foreigner, he had to start his new business under the name of a Vietnamese business partner. He was responsible for 11 engineers, a business development manager and 14 administration employees.

Although his father worked as a system engineer and a cameraman (for a short period) and his mother was self-employed, Case V-Hanoi-2 didn't feel that he received much encouragement with regard to becoming an entrepreneur at the beginning. He was very independent and had a strong orientation to wanting to work overseas.

The first mentor he encountered was his chief during training as an engineer. He was also mentored by a senior during his first assignment. Nowadays, he doesn't

²¹www.scuti.jp/.

Table 3.13 Case V-Hanoi-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1980
18	Entered a Japanese university
24	Graduated from university Got a job at a Japanese camera company
28	Quit the camera company Entered an internet advertising agency
32	Sent to Hanoi, Vietnam as a representative of the advertising agency
35	Quit the company Established his own company
38	Expanding his business

have any mentor but consults various entrepreneur friends when something happens and he needs advice. He has built networks with local business owners and clients in the IT industry and plays tennis once a week where he engages with his personal network.

As an entrepreneur, he never considered taking time to pursue anything else outside of entrepreneurship and as such, he is highly satisfied with his work. He cites that his work experience at his company in Japan was not so useful as he learned only business manners. He follows a quote from a former president of *Recruit*,²² who said, “*create your own opportunity and change yourself.*”

As for the decrease in income on moving to an emerging market, it decreased by 1/8. He used 1.5 million yen from his own savings as his start-up funds. His current income is \$800/month as it is purposely minimized in order to obtain profits for the company and sustain the business. His biggest concern is the funding of the company as he doesn't believe it is stable (Table 3.13).

Case V-Hanoi-3

Case V-Hanoi-3 was born in Tokyo in 1977 and is married to a Vietnamese national with two daughters. He went to a university in Tokyo, Japan and then proceeded to the graduate school of another Japanese university. He had dual status as a graduate student and 1st year Ph.D. student in collaboration with his supervisor who was working on a joint project with two institutions. The research he was working on with his supervisor was absorbed by a pharmaceutical company and as a result, he lost his place to study. To supplement his living expenses, he worked at a cram school as a teacher during his Ph.D. program, while he decided his next move. His father was an architect with his own office in Tokyo and Case V-Hanoi-3 was the eldest son in the family. He has a younger brother who is a doctor. His father has always encouraged and respects his sons' lives. He didn't want his

²²A famous Japanese recruitment consultancy: <https://www.recruit.co.jp/>.

children to have to look after him and wanted his children to have freedom and successful careers.

At the cram school, Case V-Hanoi-3 began to take more control of the management and was put in charge of parent teacher meetings and other management tasks. Eventually the cram school expanded to six locations and out of those six, Case V-Hanoi-3, opened and managed two branches. At the age of 28 he served as an assistant to the Secretary of the Lower House Member of a political party in Kanagawa Prefecture. At 31 he found that the job was too busy and he was quick to burn out, so he decided he needed to take time out of Japan. He considered Vietnam and Hanoi as they are close to Japan and there are not so many Japanese people there aside from a handful of business people.

Soon after arriving in Vietnam, he met a Vietnamese business person who proposed that he teach at a cram school twice a week. In exchange, he would be provided with a flat for 15,000 yen per month. Case V-Hanoi-3 took the offer and worked 2 days and explored and traveled the rest of the week. As a spontaneous character by nature, he stayed for 3 months and tried to better understand the economic situation in Vietnam through his travels. He decided that to live freely it is good to be a CEO in Vietnam, so with 3 million yen as start-up funds he decided to open a cram school for Japanese called *Aoba Education Center*.²³

In 2008, foreigners were not permitted to open a company alone in Vietnam, so he was planning to find a nominee, but the law changed in 2009 allowing him to open his business singlehandedly. Case V-Hanoi-3 established the first educational company run by a non-Vietnamese in Vietnam. He started the school with himself as manager and one local administration staff, who later became his wife. She was part of the Technical Intern Training Program in Japan for 3 years. To work with Japanese parents, he needed additional staff who could speak Japanese at his school.

At present, he has four full-time Japanese staff working as teachers and three teachers for Vietnamese lessons and four teachers for *soroban*²⁴ class. He is now considering how to diversify his business and attempts to start at least one new business every year. He works hard to delegate his work to the right people and now teaches not only Vietnamese, Japanese and *soroban* but has expanded to exam preparation, science experiments and also provides consultation and education for studying in Japan, working and learning Japanese. He is a representative of the Vietnamese office of the Japanese language school “JSL: Japanese as a Second Language” (JSL) in Tokyo and Okinawa, Japan. Case V-Hanoi-3 made an inquiry at a study abroad consultation in Okinawa Prefecture, Japan. The representative in Okinawa expressed that he wanted to expand their network in Vietnam. Case V-Hanoi-3 was immediately asked to be an agent of the company on the ground, and he accepted.

²³<https://www.aosemihanoi.net/>.

²⁴A traditional Japanese-style abacus.

Similarly, a local company in Vietnam started NAM TRIEU²⁵ (a Japanese language school) in 2005. Case V-Hanoi-3 has a 10% stake in this business and also serves as the managing director. He is the headmaster of the kindergarten for the Japanese section. Of the 700 students, 100 are Japanese and 600 are Vietnamese. Currently, NAM TRIEU is a holding company and has developed a number of supermarkets, barbers, and so on.

In addition, he also runs a steel design office with a Vietnamese friend. There are three investors and nine Vietnamese architects. They first sent one technician to Japan for training, and after returning from Japan, that employee educated two more Vietnamese, then following that they would further educate two more Vietnamese people each year. The training started in the summer of 2014, and is now developing training for CAD for design. Case V-Hanoi-3 has further plans to develop a bakery and a ramen restaurant in the near future as well as planning to open a liberal arts class.

Case V-Hanoi-3 said that he had no mentor per say in his first job but that he spoke to some friends around him for a second opinion when making decisions and that he doesn't have a mentor at the moment at the time of interview. He stated that he doesn't like to talk very much and prefers to make decisions alone. There are people around him who understand his style, so that is important. He is part of a strong network among cram school managers and Japanese language-related businesses, kindergartens and steel businesses. In his free time, he likes to spend time with his family and has an overall satisfaction rating for his life of five out of five. He puts the biggest emphasis on life satisfaction. Although he feels he has been through a lot of mistakes so far, he still has the confidence to succeed in whatever he chooses to do. He has also seen his father's and grandfather's mistakes in their business, so he is careful not to make mistakes.

Case V-Hanoi-3 feels that work experience in Japan is helpful. It taught him how to interact with people, how to assemble things when starting a new business and gave him practical experience. With regard to the decrease in income moving to Vietnam, he learned to live initially on just 100,000 yen to 150,000 yen a month in 2008–2010, but when starting the business, savings from Japan of around 3 million yen were useful (Table 3.14).

Case V-Hanoi-4

Case V-Hanoi-4 was born in Gifu Prefecture in 1976. She is married and her husband works at a Japanese travel agency. She attended a commercial high school in Gifu before entering university in Tokyo. She is currently the CEO and Chief Producer at *More Production Vietnam*.²⁶ After graduating from university in 1999, Case V-Hanoi-4 was offered a job at Nagoya TV TVCM production company and was in charge of TVCM planning. She worked in this position for 2 years until 2001. After leaving the company she entered a photography school in Tokyo and took evening classes while working as a temporary employee during the daytime. She left school after 1 year in 2002.

²⁵<http://www.namtrieu.com.vn/>.

²⁶<http://morevietnam.com/>.

Table 3.14 Case V-Hanoi-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1977
23	Graduated from university, entered graduate school, doctoral program
25	Continued on a doctoral course but dropped out Worked part-time at a cram school
28	Became an Assistant to the Secretary of a Member of the Japanese Diet
31	Needed a break and escaped Japan to travel in Vietnam Worked part-time at a cram school
31	Established his own cram school in Vietnam
37	Established a CAD design office
39	In addition to his cram school business he became the head of a kindergarten for Japanese children in Vietnam
41	Planning to open a Japanese ramen restaurant and bakery

In the same year, she decided to go to Vietnam on a student Visa to study Vietnamese at university. She obtained a certificate of completion of the course. After finishing, Case V-Hanoi-4 decided that she would like to stay in Vietnam and worked as a part-time employee of the travel department at a travel company (head office Ho Chi Minh). She engaged in general office work such as making travel arrangements and focusing on customer service. Eventually she was hired as a regular staff member in 2003. Originally, Case V-Hanoi-4 wanted to create a magazine, but since she was offered the full-time position and an empty seat in the editorial department of the company's free paper, *Sketch*, she decided to work concurrently in the travel department and in publishing.

As the free paper role expanded, she became a manager and a publishing manager going on to set up the company's Hanoi editorial department. Case V-Hanoi-4 began the department alone but eventually expanded it to 15 employees. She remained in that position until 2013 when internal divisions in the company resulted in her having to return to the travel department full time. At that time, the ex-president (current chairman) suggested for Case V-Hanoi-4 to work independently, and a Vietnamese friend (woman) she had met through a homestay and who worked at *Sketch* recommended that they start a business together. Thus, in 2013 with her friend and colleague as her in-country nominee, she founded *More Production Vietnam*.

To raise start-up capital, she received \$10,000 from her previous company, \$10,000 of her own funds, and \$30,000 from her female friends and other colleagues. There are currently 15 employees in *More Production Vietnam* and a smaller side business, a cafe *Annan Parlor* which also has two full-time employees and four part-time workers. *More Production Vietnam* focuses on planning and production, policy and advertising of local business within the magazine, negotiation and coordination with advertising agencies, social corporate responsibility efforts, Vietnam souvenir planning and sales, and Vietnam cafe management. Specifically, Case V-Hanoi-4 deals with everything from making advertisement arrangements to in-house production, advertisement planning and contract agency

Table 3.15 Case V-Hanoi-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Gifu Prefecture in 1976
22	Graduated from a Japanese university Entered a TV production company
24	Quit her job Entered technical college to study photography in the evenings in Tokyo, working as outsource staff in the daytime
25	Went to Vietnam to study a short-course Vietnamese program at a university in Hanoi
26	Worked part-time at a travel agency in Vietnam
27	Became a full-time member of staff at the travel agency in Hanoi, Vietnam, responsible for publishing a free paper Became a member of the start-up team in Hanoi office
37	Established her own publishing company
38	Opened a café
42	Continuing to expand her business

Note In 2019, Case V-Hanoi-4 was recognized for her work in developing and promoting ties between Japan and Vietnam by the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs

business for Vietnamese, the launch and operation management of Facebook in Vietnamese and event planning. It is a wide and varied portfolio.

Case V-Hanoi-4 said that she had no mentor in her first job but as she developed her business she had various mentors alongside her. Particularly her Vietnamese partner and her husband, who she cites as her biggest supporter in her entrepreneurship endeavors. She has strong networks in the business communities in both Vietnam and Japan, including sponsors of Vietnamese in-flight magazines, relations with the *Japan Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam* (as a board member), and a professor in Japan. She also has connections with public organizations related to JICA,²⁷ and a network of working women and prefectural associations, and so on. Her private life is closely integrated into her work and she considers her job satisfaction as most important to her life.

Case V-Hanoi-4 feels that the work she did in Japan before going overseas was beneficial and that *she always keeps smiling as she believes that when there is a little happiness, she can create an environment within which it is easy to work and live*. She is not overly concerned with income, preferring to have a challenging and enjoyable job and colleagues around her. However, she is aware that she needs to focus on keeping the management and the company stable to guarantee the employment of her staff. Case V-Hanoi-4 alone is in charge of sales and work is increasing, but there is no substitute for her or her dedication. Her staff concerns, accounting and salaries, and so on are the responsibility of her partner, so V-Hanoi-4 can focus on her creative and person-to-person work. She believes that the most important facet to her work is building a relationship of human trust between her role in expanding the company and her partner's role in maintaining and managing what they have already built (Table 3.15).

²⁷<https://www.jica.go.jp/>.

Case V-Hanoi-5

Case V-Hanoi-5 was born in Fukushima Prefecture in 1987, and she was 30-years-old at the time of interview. She graduated from a prefectural Junior College English Course. She is currently the CEO of *Asia Education Labo Co., Ltd.*²⁸ and *Asia Education Labo Vietnam Co. Ltd.* Case V-Hanoi-5 believes that the major turning point in her journey was her experience at elementary and junior high school where she worked with teachers in the school to eliminate school violence, with the school ethos being freedom, independence and respect of individual students. At high school she didn't have any encounters with teachers like she had had in her former schools, but still worked hard and decided to pursue higher education. She proceeded to a prefectural junior college in Kanagawa Prefecture because this school offered the lowest tuition in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area. With scholarships and part-time jobs, she was able to pay her fees.

After graduating from junior college, she worked in a sales position at a real estate company and an insurance company for a couple of years. Soon after the *Great East Japan Earthquake* hit in 2011, she decided she wanted to do something for children. When she worked as a part-time assistant at *Kids Base Camp Inc.* she was convinced that educating children was a calling for her.

In 2012, she entered Kenichi Omae's NPO training program where she built her knowledge of entrepreneurship. The schooling period was one year and she attended weekly lectures and participated in start-up study support programs for financially-disadvantaged children. She began thinking it was time to provide others with support, determination, independence and freedom that she had received when she was an elementary and junior high school student.

After working part-time for 2 years at *Kids Base Camp*, she decided to apply for a full-time employee post with the long-term goal that she would settle in that post until her plan for opening her own company was realized. Through self-study, she soon realized that the education she received was similar to the Dutch education system and so went on a field tour of the Netherlands to explore alternative education before becoming a full-time *Kids Base Camp* employee at the age of 24. When she visited Steve Jobs Schools²⁹ in the Netherlands, she was not only able to visualize the future of her home country but she could also come into contact with new ways of thinking. It helped her to recognize the importance of diversity in education. While working as a company employee in Japan, she began to conduct market research in Vietnam as she thought the country might accept her approach to education.

At the age of 24 she took five days paid leave and went to Ben Chi, Ho-Chi—Minh-City, Vietnam on a homestay. In an effort to deepen ties with Vietnam, she became a page manager of the *Vietnam Society in Japan* (12,000 members), a community on Facebook and organized reunion meetings among Vietnamese living in Japan. She managed the page for 4 years and was able to develop human networks both in Japan and Vietnam.

²⁸<http://www.edu-labo.me/>

²⁹A network of public schools in the Netherlands: <https://www.scoolsuite.com/steve-jobs-school/>

Soon she decided to leave *Kids Base Camp* in order to increase her chances of getting to Vietnam. She signed a business consignment contract with another company and conducted educational activities at various kindergartens. When Case V-Hanoi-5 was 28 years old, she decided to take a part-time job for about a year that would allow her to split her time between living in Vietnam and Japan. At the age of 29–30, she decided to hold an event for young children and conduct more market research. At first, she considered setting up a school to provide preschool education in Vietnam, but it was said that it was difficult for foreigners to get an education license, so she reconsidered and thought about providing services for company welfare and event management as a consulting license was easier to obtain.

Currently, the Japanese arm of her company has been established, but the Vietnamese corporation is in preparation, awaiting license when the interview was conducted. The name of the company is *Asia Education Labo Co., Ltd., Anyhapi*, which means *to make oneself happy, anytime, anywhere*.

The project seeks to conduct after-school activities in partnership with public and private kindergartens. *Asia Education Labo Co. Ltd.* is focused on creating opportunities for children to learn about the world. She has one full-time employee who speaks Japanese and five part-time employees.

Case V-Hanoi-5 has had many mentors throughout her career. Her current mentor is the CFO of a Japanese corporation, whom she consults about her work. And she also has a network of Vietnamese entrepreneurs in Japan. She is close to her work colleagues and the after-school staff, other entrepreneurs and people from the Vietnam Society in Japan. At this point in her career she is focused on job satisfaction. She feels her work experience in Japan was beneficial to her career as through various experiences she could learn about how to communicate with others and how to promote oneself. She was not afraid to have a lower salary when comparing her income in Japan and in Vietnam. She has 2–3 angel investors who contributed to her activities. Her company is currently registered as a Japanese corporation for 13 million yen. The registration of a Japanese corporation has been completed and the Vietnamese co-operation is a 100% subsidiary of the Japanese company. Her main priority is the development of her staff (Table 3.16).

Case V-Hanoi-6

Case V-Hanoi-6 was born in Tokyo in 1974. After graduating from university at 22 years old, Case V-Hanoi-6 joined an HR company in Tokyo. He began in the sales division before taking charge of the strategy department and advertising sections. Through this work he learned how to manage human resources and in 2005, he changed his job to work in the HR department of a major foreign company, a division of the Johnson & Johnson Group. In this position he was in charge of recruiting new employees, mid-career hires and leadership education at middle management positions. At the age of 34 in 2008, he worked for a Japanese construction company as an overseas development personnel and was involved in the establishment of the Indian sales office, the Indonesian plant, and was in charge until the age of 37. In Japan, he was based mainly in Chiba, Prefecture, close to Narita International Airport and he traveled extensively overseas for work. In 2012, a human resources management company approached him to consult and help set up a base in

Table 3.16 Case V-Hanoi-5 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Fukushima Prefecture in 1987
21	Graduated from junior college Got a job at a real estate company but quit after 3 months She joined an outsourcing agency and worked at an insurance company
23	Worked part-time at a company supporting children, <i>Kids Base Camp</i> . Joined an NPO and learned leadership and entrepreneurship skills Visited the Netherlands to learn about alternative modes of education Became full-time staff at <i>Kids Base Camp</i>
24	Did a homestay and conducted market research in Vietnam Became the page manager for the <i>Vietnamese in Japan</i> Facebook page
27	Quit <i>Kids Base Camp</i> Made a contract with an education company to give talks at kindergartens
28	Closed the contract and decided to work part-time between Japan and Vietnam
29	Organized various kids events in Vietnam for market research
30	Established her company in Hanoi, <i>Asia Education Lab. Co., Ltd. Anyhapi</i> and registered her company in Japan. Continue expanding her business

Vietnam. This was his gateway to Vietnam and after about 6 months, he decided he could actually use his own expertise to set up his own company. He set up his own company *ASIA GATE VIETNAM Co., Ltd*³⁰ with a Vietnamese business partner with whom he became friends after arriving in Vietnam. His company is 100% owned by him and was started with his savings of 500,000 yen. It was founded with the intention of not spending any capital or using additional human resources aside from himself. Although he officially only employs three Vietnamese staff, he has a consultant contract with an outsourcing company as he believes it is important to be able to obtain information from different people in different positions and as such he hires reliable people in a wide range of fields as and when he needs them. He usually provides them with a contract of \$200 to \$300 per month, and currently contracts about 10 individuals.

His father, who was also self-employed, launched a theater company in Kobe, Japan with his uncle. Similarly, his grandfather, who was also from Kobe, worked selling pickles. Case V-Hanoi-6 believes that the environment he grew up in was related to entrepreneurship to some extent and that the culture surrounding self-employment was positive within his family and in his youth.

Case V-Hanoi-6 first went abroad through his work and was able to develop his knowledge through conversations with other self-employed people. As he developed these relationships and engaged in such conversations he became to recognize the inconvenience of working at a major company and decided to start his own company in Vietnam.

³⁰<https://asiagate-vn.com/>.

Table 3.17 Case V-Hanoi-6 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1974
22	Graduated from a Japanese university Entered an HR company
29	Quit the HR company Got a job at a pharmaceutical company, responsible for HRM
34	Quit the company Changed job to work for an overseas construction company, responsible for setting up factories in South East Asia
38	Moved to Hanoi, Vietnam with the mind to start his own company, six months later, he established his own company
44	Expanding his business

He soon met his wife who was a Japanese language teacher in Vietnam, they got married when he was 42 and he now has a child. Case V-Hanoi-6 believes that if he had gotten married and had children during the early part of his career at *Johnson & Johnson*, he might not have retired from a major foreign company, but he was single at that time and was able to take risks. When he was working at the HR company, he wanted to work for a foreign company and so through his early career he was able to transition smoothly to work outside Japan.

His first mentor was the Deputy President of the HR company who was considered to be a business master. His current mentor is Case TLD-7, who founded a successful recruitment company in Bangkok, Thailand. Through looking at his example, he believes that Case TLD-7 is a good example of the Japanese way of success.

He merges his work and private life. He has extensive networks through his customers and client companies but also has a private life network that he cherishes, which is the neighborhood association he belongs to through his wife. His wife is good at Vietnamese and is sociable, so through her, he was able to take advantage of more opportunities to interact with Vietnamese people, such as through the neighborhood and his children's kindergartens. To date, he tends to mix with local Vietnamese who are not elite in Vietnamese society and it is through these regular relationships that he can appreciate the positive aspects of Vietnamese life. He is fairly satisfied with his life and was initially only focused on job satisfaction until the birth of his child when he changed his priorities.

He believes his work experience in Japan was beneficial to his future success and his career anchor is "*I think and act on my own*" which are the words of *Johnson & Johnson* Japan's president Mr. Yasushi Sekiguchi.

He had no concerns about the decline in income when moving to an emerging economy and was initially focused on increasing his income until he hit around 35 years old, but after that his priority changed to focusing on doing the right things for each of his customers. He believes that in addition to earning a large income from a customer that he doesn't particularly enjoy doing business with, he prefers working with his favorite customers as this increases his expertise. He makes all his decisions alone and has no current or future concerns (Table 3.17).

Case V-HCM-1

Case V-HCM-1 was born in Niigata Prefecture in 1980, and raised in Aichi Prefecture. He attended high school, majoring in science. He took a place at a Japanese university and as a senior, took 1 year off to audit classes at a British university. He graduated at 23 and entered a consultancy company in Tokyo where he was responsible for supporting the start-up of franchises for 3 years. In December 2006 he resigned and in February 2007 he moved to Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam and asked a friend if he could work for a Japanese company as a sales representative to learn how to run a business in preparation to start his own company. In 2008, he started his own recruitment company called *ICONIC Co. Ltd.*³¹ His company provides placements and engages in HR and media consultancy. At the time of interview he was in his 12th year of business in Ho Chi Min city and had one office in Japan. He has a Japanese wife and three children. He was always surrounded by strong entrepreneurial role models. His father became an entrepreneur when he was 41 years old and his paternal grandfather ran a steel factory and his maternal grandfather ran a sushi shop, where he has conducted business since the Edo period. They are an entrepreneurial family, all independent-minded; as well as having these family traits, Case V-HCM-1 was also interested in working outside Japan.

In his third year of university, while his friends were job hunting, he decided that he didn't want to be part of a large corporation and instead aspired to establish a company by himself. He went to a British university and expanded his mind and exposure to overseas. It was here that he chose to venture into his own business. He recognized that Japan has a declining population but not many of his peers were interested in going abroad. However, he saw this as an opportunity and thought that countries in Asia had more opportunities for growth and a larger amount of human capital. He decided to go backpacking in Vietnam as it was a country that interested him. He met his wife, who was also internationally-minded. She worked as a project coordinator for JICA³² in Uganda. Together, they decided Vietnam would be a good place to live and explore.

With a start-up fund of 3 million yen, he now has 130 employees. He cited that he had no mentors in his first job but at present, now that he runs a company, he is thankful to have an advisor/mentor when making decisions. He networks extensively through his work and would say that within his network group, 80% of the members are from within companies he works with. They are often at manager/director level and 20–30% are from outside the corporate world.

In terms of his private and social networks, he has friends in the entrepreneurship field and friends whom he has had since childhood. On a scale of 1–5, in terms of satisfaction, he rates his work as a 2 (as he believes he can do better), life as 5 and overall 2. Case V-HCM-1 believes that work experience in Japan can be beneficial. He believes that it is always important to take risks and *if you win you will be happy and if you lose you will become wiser*, but you must always *stay positive*. Essentially, Case V-HCM-1 wants to be someone who influences society and is

³¹<https://iconicjob.jp/>.

³²<https://www.jica.go.jp/english/index.html>.

Table 3.18 V-HCM-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Niigata Prefecture in 1980
18	Entered university
23	Graduated university and worked for a consulting company in Tokyo
26	Moved to Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam, learned about business through working with a friend
27	Founded <i>Iconic Co. LTD.</i> in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam
27	Expanded his business to Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan
38	Continues with his business

willing to take risks and take action. He believes that having various experiences will expand one's personality and it is important to learn the essence of risk and return through experience. Case V-HCM-1 was not so particular about where he wanted to establish his first business; however, he did want to be able to establish his own identity as a way of expressing himself and so thought being a SIEE would give him the opportunity to do this. His way of thinking is straightforward and as he was determined to start a business, he just focused very hard and didn't initially ask anyone for advice (Table 3.18).

Case V-HCM-2

Case V-HCM-2 was born in Tokyo in 1965. He graduated from a high school electric department and then a vocational school for technical recording. After graduating, he worked as a concert mixer. He also has experience as a lecturer at a technical school, teaching acoustics-related courses. Currently, he is the General Manager of *Flyout Co., Ltd.* and Executive Vice President of *CLS VN Co., Ltd.*³³

Case V-HCM-2 has been involved in recording work since he was at vocational school, and following graduation he became interested in live acoustics and obtained a job at an acoustic company based in Tokyo, at the age of 20.

After working for about two-and-a-half years (1985–1987), he moved to the sound department of a well-known entertainment production company, where he worked for three-and-a-half years until age 26.

At another sound company, he was in charge of acoustics with a colleague. They both decided to leave the company and work independently. They subsequently founded *Flyout Co., Ltd.*, investing 50% each in the company. The business deals with all aspects of live performances, such as sound, lighting, publications, and so on. They still have this business in central Tokyo and a warehouse north of Tokyo. They employ around 18 employees.

Following his first business, at 40 years old, Case V-HCM-2 established *CLS Co. Ltd. (Comfort Life Support)* in Japan in 2005. While he was lecturing at technical school, he became inspired by his Taiwanese student. While teaching

³³<http://www.clsupport.jp/>.
<https://cls.vn/>.

acoustics, he had the opportunity to work on a project alongside his student in Taiwan. From this experience, he soon realized that if he used the skills of an interpreter, he could start a business abroad.

He was interested in the fact that few people were taking opportunity of the business chances available to Japanese in Asia and so initially imported and sold premium Chinese tea. After successfully selling tea, this triggered him to receive some consulting work related to live event management, so he decided he would like to introduce Japanese musicians abroad. In 2007–2008 he founded a company in Taiwan and another one in Hong Kong the following year, both concert production companies, *CLS Entertainment*.

As time went on, Japanese people become more interested in foreign countries through food, culture and tourism, and in turn, foreigners became more interested in Japan. He realized that the only way to appeal to young people is overwhelmingly through pop culture. He spotted a niche in the market in that Asians who love Japan are often young people influenced by pop culture. They want to learn Japanese and buy Japanese products. As a result, Case V-HCM-2 decided to appeal to that demographic and market.

He has been working with this mindset since 2006 however, when the *Senkaku*³⁴ island issue worsened Sino-Japanese relations in 2013, he decided to move the company to Vietnam and founded *CLS VN Co., Ltd.*

The main activity of the company is to hold Japanese culture-related events, such as *anime* festivals as well as consult on event planning. He found that Japanese companies wish to design and direct live performances in which the acoustic, lighting and imaging products are suited to non-Japanese markets; thus based on his experience overseas, he is able to consult on issues of this nature.

Additionally, Case V-HCM-2 also works as a director of an Indonesian motor show, but there are many things that are easy to do in Japan but that cannot be done in many developing countries. By assisting such shows in Asia, his company is able to connect the requirements of the Japanese side with the technology of the local context.

Case V-HCM-2 had no mentor in his first job as he felt his co-workers were also his competitors, thus he was reluctant to seek advice. Currently, he also has no mentor. He does, however, believe that being outside Japan, he doesn't have any time to waste and that his work life and private life are interconnected as he has no need for a separate private life. The industry in which he works relies on building relationships between real people. Therefore, he has strong networks with various industry professionals such as specialists in event planning, the music industry, and so on, and seeks to interact with people who have not only had successes but also failures as there is much he can learn through interacting with others. He is relatively satisfied with his life and believes that wanting to do a good job results in satisfaction in both his personal and professional life.

³⁴The Senkaku Islands dispute, or Diaoyu Islands dispute, concerns a territorial dispute over a group of uninhabited islands known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan, the Diaoyu Islands in the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Tiaoyutai Islands in the Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan).

Table 3.19 Case V-HCM-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1965
20	Graduated from a technical school in music Got a job at a music company
22	Worked for the sound division of a famous Japanese music company
26	Established his own music company in Japan
40	Established a second company in Japan
42	Established an additional company in Taiwan Established a concert production company in Hong Kong (at present this business has closed)
48	Established an event planning company in HCM, Vietnam
53	Continues to expand his business

He cited that his work experience in Japan was extremely useful. He still has many goals in South East Asia. He wants to see and experience everything with his own eyes. He wants to convey his feelings and his understanding through action, *touch and try* being his career anchor. As for his commitment to the company in spite of a loss of earnings in South East Asia compared to life in Japan, he is not particularly concerned as the company is stable. He initially invested 1.5 million yen along with 1.5 million yen from the former wife of his former vice president to establish *Flyout Co., Ltd.* It is now a limited company with capital of 5 million. His main concerns are related to the operation of the company and human resource issues. He understands that there is a way of working unique to Vietnam believing that the culture is not always compatible with Japanese (Table 3.19).

Case V-HCM-3

Case V-HCM-3 was born in Hyogo Prefecture, in 1973 and graduated from a Japanese university.

He married his classmate from kindergarten, who is a nurse and lives in Japan. They have two daughters. He is the CEO of a company based in Vietnam and works as a liaison with Hyogo Prefecture. He works with the prefecture on revitalization plans and runs the support desk for developing business overseas between Japan and Vietnam.

In his second year at university he made Vietnamese friends and became interested in the history of the Vietnam war as he was a history major. His thesis was about the Japanese military invasion in IndoChina, but due to the *Great Hanshin Earthquake*,³⁵ he didn't expect to graduate and so didn't engage in job hunting. In fact, he ended up obtaining special credits that were awarded for students affected by the disaster and surprisingly, he graduated. As he had no job, he decided to study abroad in Vietnam from 1995 to 1996 in Hanoi.

He registered for language classes at Hanoi National University and stayed at a guesthouse run by the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam. He met various Japanese peers at the guesthouse. The guesthouse next door was for

³⁵Or Kobe Earthquake which occurred in January 17, 1995, where around 6,400 people lost their lives.

Cambodian and Laos students, so he was able to develop networks with people from these countries. In 1996, he returned to Japan to work in Kobe as bilingual staff, but after an opportunity presented itself from his uncle, he went to work at the *Lotte Legend Hotel* in Ho Chi Min. However, in 1997 the *Asian Financial Crisis* hit and after 1 year the hotel went into administration. He once more returned to his family in Kobe. His father was a stock salesman and at night he ran a snack bar. His mother was a kindergarten teacher by day and a pianist at the bar by evening.

In 1998, his family decided to open a Japanese restaurant and he started to help his father with the restaurant. In his free time, he started assisting Vietnamese who came to Japan for work. He soon noticed that the brightest Vietnamese were working in IT. He mixed in the same circles as the Vietnamese IT trainees and discussed their needs and the future of Vietnam. Through these discussions he decided to move back to Vietnam in 2000 and worked for a small Vietnamese start-up. By 2002, Case V-HCM-3 had established his own IT-systems company for off-shore IT development and system integration, to assist Japanese companies abroad called *Individual Systems Co. Ltd.*³⁶ He now has over 250 employees.

In his first job, Case V-HCM-3 didn't have a mentor, but as he has developed his career he now has various mentors such as directors and other high-profile Japanese entrepreneurs. In 2018, he started another company back in Japan, in Kyoto prefecture. His work and private life is integrated and he considers himself good at making friends and connections. He made a networking association between Vietnam and Hyogo, which now has 250 members. Similarly, he has 100 members in his tennis association in Ho Chi Min City, 20 in his billiard association and a group of colleagues and friends who were all born in 1992. As an advisor for the municipal government, he has eight years terms of service. Over the years his connections between Japan and Vietnam have become stronger and deeper. He had initial start-up funds of one million yen and enlisted the help and support of two Vietnamese employees at the start of his venture. In 2004, the Vietnamese government changed the laws surrounding starting a company and so he was able to start his company 100% on his own.

He has no specific work experience in Japan that he believes helped his work in Vietnam and also has no distinct career anchor. He believes that income equals success but he recognizes that now he has many staff, he needs to protect them and needs certain income/assets to help them maintain their lifestyle and standards. His values have changed. He is concerned that at present he doesn't have such high motivation for his work. He had planned to expand into Cambodia but couldn't get a sense of direction. At present, his company is successful, claiming a top share in the Ho Chi Min software assistance area. He is seeking a new goal and new motivation. There are currently 30 large Japanese companies in Vietnam and one of his goals is to do business with at least half of them. He has collected information about how to do this and has knowledge of mergers and acquisitions but hasn't found a way to monetize his ideas yet. Case V-HCM-3 realizes that the next step is to further commercialize his knowledge (Table 3.20).

³⁶<https://indivisys.jp/>.

Table 3.20 Case V-HCM-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1973
18	Entered university
22	Graduated university Studied abroad in Hanoi, Vietnam, studied Vietnamese language
24	Employed by a cleaning company as a graduate employee in Vietnamese, became a representative for a Vietnamese factory construction project but due to the Asian currency crisis, the company withdrew from Vietnam in December of the same year and he left the company
25	Worked in his father's Japanese restaurant in Japan
27	Aiming to start a business, so returned alone to Ho Chi Minh City and worked for an internet start-up company
29	Founded <i>Individual Systems Co. Ltd.</i> in Vietnam Continue business
45	Founded <i>Future Spirit</i> a joint venture based in Kyoto

Case V-HCM-4

Case V-HCM-4 was born in Okinawa Prefecture in 1966 and graduated from a Japanese university. His father was a civil servant from Miyakojima Island but retired and moved to Okinawa Main Island to run a hotel business. Case V-HCM-4 is currently a Managing Director of *Vinacompass Co., Ltd.*,³⁷ and General Director of *Shiny Real Estate Business and Investment Co., Ltd.*

After graduating from university, Case V-HCM-4 initially served as a construction and real estate developer for 2 years from 1988 to 1990 and was part of the team franchising fast food businesses.

Following that, he became a manufacturer of special vehicles, such as high-level work vehicles, and worked for 16 years as a supplier. He was employed at a branch in Fukuoka Prefecture and was then assigned to Saga, Nagasaki and Okinawa Prefectures. Simultaneously, Case V-HCM-4 became interested in Vietnam through a chance meeting with a business colleague. Personnel from the overseas division were due to attend a business talk in Ho Chi Minh City, but instead, Case V-HCM-4 was asked to represent the company. During his visit overseas he was inspired by the power of people and the liveliness of the bike culture in Vietnam. As a result, he tried to import various goods such as supplements, clothes, and leather goods, etc. as a sideline, using his paid holidays to make trips between Japan and Vietnam.

From 2006 to 2012, he created a joint venture with a Vietnamese state-owned pharmaceutical company and began work in the hospital wastewater treatment business. His company entered many bidding contests in Ho Chi Minh City and completed 235 public work contracts. During this time, Case V-HCM-4 had a 37.5% stake in the company, with the remainder owned by Vietnamese investors. In 2012, he sold his share and created his own company.

³⁷<http://www.vinacompass.com/>.

Case V-HCM-4 established a joint venture with *Shiny Vietnam*, a pure water treatment company, and *Shiny Real Estate*, an architectural and real estate development firm. Case V-HCM-4 held a 56% stake in the company and the Vietnamese investor holding 44%. He took the role of sales manager and his Vietnamese partner was in charge of the daily administration of the company. The company grew to 40 employees, however in 2016, Case V-HCM-4 became aware of fraud and after reporting his findings, the company is currently under investigation, pending a court decision of dissolution or purchase.

Case V-HCM-4 subsequently founded *Vinacompass Co., Ltd.* in 2018 with 100% sole ownership. The company focuses on the brokerage of real estate and leasing, management of properties and licenses for the interior construction of buildings. They also have consultants for Japanese companies in Vietnam. Currently, there are nine employees and the aim of the company is to try to create results with a small team, focusing on gaining trust and expanding gradually.

Mentors have been important to Case V-HCM-4. In his first workplace, his direct supervisor was extremely influential. Through him he learned about the real estate business and how to negotiate. His current mentor is the president of the same company that operates a housing-related company in Okinawa Prefecture. As well as mentors, Case V-HCM-4 has extensive networks connected through Japanese real estate businesses; however, he cites he has weak networks in his personal life. He views job satisfaction as most important in his life and is ready to begin forward planning hoping to hand over his company in 30–50 years' time.

Case V-HCM-4's motto is *continuation is power*. He believes that when things don't go as expected, it is important to carry on, trying to reduce stress. *If one finds themselves in a difficult situation, the only way to get over it is to believe in oneself and take responsibility for one's actions.* He takes responsibility for all that happens to him and expresses his humble gratitude to all the people who have helped him on his journey through business. When he experienced a decline in income after moving to Vietnam, it didn't worry him. He started his company with a total of \$100,000 and a little less than \$40,000 for the joint venture. In each case he was able to use his own funds from his personal savings and was able to increase capital in 2–3 years. He is now in a position where he would like to find a successor for his business (Table 3.21).

Table 3.21 V-HCM-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Okinawa Prefecture in 1966
22	Graduated from a Japanese university Entered a construction company
24	Quit his job and started to work for a real estate company
40	Established a joint venture connected to drainage in Vietnam
46	Closed the joint-venture company and established a real estate company
51	Closed the real estate company and established another company connected to real-estate and brokerage
52	Closed the previous company and re-opened a new company with 100% ownership, <i>Vinacompass Co., Ltd.</i>

3.4 Myanmar



Myanmar

3.4.1 Country Context

Next, we present the SIEEs in Myanmar. Myanmar is strategically located between India, China and other countries in South East Asia. It has a large agricultural sector which makes up approximately one-third of the gross value added (GVA), although the share has decreased to 27.9% in 2014 from 47% in 2005 (UNCTAD 2016). The country has experienced a tumultuous economic situation over the last 5 years which saw the GDP hitting US\$58 billion in 2013, rising to US\$64 billion in 2015 (UNESCO 2016; World Bank 2016). The government developed a new National Economic Development Plan in 2014, which highlighted agriculture, biotechnology, water preservation, renewable energy and building construction and transport as priority areas (Scimago 2016); all industries that could benefit from inward investment. Yet, in terms of global competitiveness, Myanmar is considered to be underperforming when compared to other ASEAN countries. There is currently no entry for Myanmar on the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor and it ranked 131st out of 140 in terms of the World Economic Forum's 2015–2016 Competitiveness rankings. Similarly, it ranks 138th out of 141 on the Global Innovation Index. Infrastructure developments are seen as key to opening and developing trade between Myanmar and its ASEAN neighbors. According to research by Chakravarty (2017), there has been a 312.64% increase in trade through the India–Myanmar border towns in 2015–2016 with the Indian government identifying Myanmar as a key partner in developing an ASEAN gateway.

3.4.2 Cases

In Myanmar, we conducted a number of interviews in 2017, however, only seven fulfilled the criteria of being a self-initiated expatriate transnational entrepreneur. These six narratives are revealed as follows, please note Case MYM-1 withdrew their career path from publication, however, the demographic information is still included.

Case MYM-2

Case MYM-2 was born in Saitama Prefecture, in 1976. Her father ran a pharmacy but her parents were divorced and she was raised by her grandmother. In her childhood, she traveled to Australia with her parents, and since she started working, she has traveled abroad to places such as Paris, Hawaii, Guam, Hong Kong, and so on. She graduated from high school in Saitama Prefecture. After graduating from high school, she went straight into the workplace and got a job at a cosmetics company in Tokyo for 6 years. At 24 years old, she changed jobs to work for a foreign-owned cosmetic company and specialized in skin care makeup and perfume. As a shop manager, she was responsible for sales in a large store in central Tokyo. At 30 years old, she gave birth to a baby boy and became a full-time housewife between the ages of 29 and 31. However, during that time she used her free time to think about the future and acquire various beauty-related qualifications

such as beauty treatment extensions and head spa techniques. She began thinking of starting a business from this time.

When she was 31, she started making bracelets as a hobby at her home in Tokyo. During this time, she met a woman from Myanmar through her gem stone connections. She decided to take a trip to Myanmar in 2012 to purchase some raw materials for her jewelry. Around this time, she separated from her husband, and in 2013 she divorced just before her child entered elementary school. She moved to Myanmar just with her child's school bag and 2 million yen in her pocket.

From 2013 to 2015, she rented a 3-LDK apartment in Yangon, and to earn an income she provided Japanese women residing in Yangon with esthetics services. She enrolled her child in Japanese school in Yangon and began to build a life there. She started to sell her bracelets on the internet and also traveled to nearby hotels and the marina in Yangon to sell her products to Japanese resident wives living in Yangon.

In August 2015, she opened her first store called *Culumtio*.³⁸ *Culumtio* is a Latin word that expresses healing and bonds, and the store's philosophy is to strengthen the healing and bonds of the heart by wearing jewelry. She studied gemology by herself and returned home to Japan from time to time, to take courses at a jewelry vocational school.

At the end of 2015, her child told that he wanted to return to Japan, and her son now lives with his father in Tokyo. In order to spend more time in Japan, she decided to open a salon in Tokyo in 2017 and has been predominately based in Tokyo since 2017. She splits her time between Tokyo for 3 weeks in a month and Yangon for 1 week.

Throughout her life she has never really had any mentors preferring to figure things out on her own. She interacts with various people in networks connected to her work, such as local gem craftsmen in Myanmar, local employees, customers, Japanese counterparts, representatives of events such as Japanese department stores promotions, and teachers at gemology school. She also has a tight-knit network of friends and family.

As for job satisfaction, she enjoys her work, so job satisfaction is the most important thing in her life. About work experience in Japan, she said that it was useful. For example, through it, she was given the opportunity to think about how she could develop her skills and find the work that she really wanted to do. She started her business with a start-up fund of 1.5 million yen. One million yen was borrowed from the parents, and half a million yen was prepared by herself. The 2 million yen she brought to Yangon covered her moving costs and 1 year's rent which she subsidized by doing esthetic treatments in her apartment. Most of this money came from her savings in Japan. Her main concerns at present are that she worries if her business in Myanmar can survive with her away from the country for 3 weeks a month. She is concerned as to whether her staff can maintain the store alone. Additionally, she is caring for her 92-year-old grandmother and this is one of the reasons for returning to Japan. Finally, she is always concerned about her child who is living with his father (Table 3.22).

³⁸<https://culumtio.co.jp/>.

Table 3.22 Case MYM-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Saitama Prefecture in 1976
Childhood	Travelled with parents to Australia and travelled throughout her working years
18	Graduated from high school and found employment selling cosmetics in department stores
24	Moved companies and specialized in skincare and make-up, became a store manager
29	Got married
30	Had a child
29	Housewife but took various aesthetic qualifications over 3 years with a view to open her own beauty business in the future
31	Made bracelets at home as a hobby. Met a lady from Myanmar related to precious stones
36	Continued making bracelets, went to Myanmar to source stones for her creations. Decided to separate from her husband and got divorced
37	Took her child and moved to Myanmar, took her savings of \$20,000. Lived in Yangon living off her savings and supporting herself by providing beauty services to Japanese clients in Myanmar. Started to sell bracelets online, was successful, opened a gem store in Myanmar
39	Realized her dream of opening a jewelry store in Tokyo
41	Expanding her business

Case MYM-3

Case MYM-3 was born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1979 and attended university in Japan, where he took a gap year during his fourth year to go backpacking to London, through Europe, Morocco, Turkey and China. At the university, he concentrated on part-time jobs rather than attending classes, and saved money to go abroad twice a year. Eventually, he graduated from university at the age of 24, and after graduation, went into an IT company in their human resources department where he worked staffing engineers for 6 years. He spent the first 3 years in charge of career counseling for job seekers and he also worked as a sales manager from the age of 30. He decided to leave the company in 2012 as he thought, what if he became 40 years old and the company collapses? What would he do and what value and skills would he have to take to another position and company? Therefore, he decided to change career. He was troubled in making the decision as he could see he had two options available to him; one, remain in Japan and follow his brother into the family business of running a sports store or two, work abroad. He decided that as he was still young, he should take the opportunity to leave Japan and work overseas. At first, he thought that he could become a sushi craftsman in Europe, but he found that the profession of a sushi craftsman would be unsuitable for his more active nature. At that time, he received a job offer from a friend in Cambodia. He considered it but he also thought there were more countries he wanted to visit and became interested in Myanmar. After moving to Myanmar in 2013, he got a job at a web venture, where he worked for less than 2 years.

While working, he decided to found his own car rental company called, *Growth*,³⁹ in Myanmar, in 2014. With start-up funds of \$50,000 which he borrowed from his parent, he was able to establish and grow his company. In 3 years the company grew to operating more than 80 cars and has 95 full-time employees. Additionally, he also started work as an editor-in-chief of the magazine *Myanmar Business Partner*⁴⁰ and began working on a third company, related to education business. He is currently living in Yangon with his wife who is a full-time housewife and their three children. He has had a number of mentors over the years but they are all bright seniors to him who consider things logically and give him sound advice. They have taught him the importance of understanding people's feelings and how to work effectively. His present mentor is a Japanese company executive, who lives in Singapore. They meet about once every 6 months and he gives him advice. He is engaged in various networks related to his business such as with Japanese company representatives, local managers, local owners, Japanese writers and designers. In his private life he serves as a coach for local baseball teams, so he interacts with other coaches, and parents at his children's baseball games.

He is currently enjoying his work but hasn't achieved all his goals yet. What he enjoys most about his work is that compared to working in an office, he can now decide things 100% by himself. His work experience in Japan was useful as he was able to learn in-depth about the business structure and business manners of Japan. He found that by living abroad, one can also see the places where Japan's positive and negative attributes can become an issue, so he is grateful to understand Japanese culture from this perspective. He lives by the idea that people should enjoy working and that to grow employees you need to take advantage of and understand their strengths. In his cars, he sees them as much more than just a vehicle for transportation, they are a comfortable mobile space, not just a car or a driver, and by seeing it as more this can increase customers and consequently the business. He understood that in order to work in Myanmar he would take a loss in income but he is confident that in time income will grow. The business is still developing and he sees added value as part of his gross profit. If the company is supported by many people and many employees work hard, the profit will increase. He has a goal to increase sales by 100%. In terms of his start-up fund, he is still yet to pay his parents back and has since invested \$50,000 dollars to help protect his business in the future. He plans to return the money to his parents as soon as possible. He cites his wife as someone whom he consults on a daily basis about his company as she is knowledgeable in that area. Current concerns include the risk to his business due to the decline in rental car prices due to the market entry of major, well-established car rental companies, the spread of self-driving cars and AI, his health and driver education. In addition, since his customers are often Japanese company employees, in order to enhance the level of service, he provides extra education to his drivers to add value to the experience (Table 3.23).

³⁹<http://www.growth.bz/>.

⁴⁰<http://www.hire-s.com/>.

Table 3.23 Case MYM-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1979
18	Took a year out of education
19	Entered a university and majored in information technology
22	Took a leave of absence from university and backpacked around Europe, Morocco, Turkey and China. Did various part time jobs during university in order to save money for travel. Didn't concentrate on classes but spent time working and saving for two overseas trips per year
24	Graduated and worked at a temp staff agency dispatching engineers. Spent 3 years working in sales operations and 3 years working in career counseling
30	Became a sales manager
33	Decided to make a change in his career. Had two choices (a) work for his family's sports store or (b) work abroad. Decided to work overseas
34	Moved to Myanmar, worked for a web venture company
35	Recognized a niche in the market and decided to found his own company. Launched <i>Growth. Myanmar, Co. Ltd.</i> , a car rental and driver company
38	He employs 95 people, owns a fleet of 80 cars and has two partner companies that he works with. He is also an editor of the <i>Myanmar Business Partner</i> magazine, free paper and is working on a new education project

Case MYM-4

Case MYM-4 was born in Chiba Prefecture in 1968, as the eldest daughter. Her father ran a PC parts factory and her mother was a civil servant. Until university, she grew up in Chiba Prefecture. She was selected as a member of a high school international exchange program and spent a short stay in Manila, Philippines, where she experienced a homestay. Even now, she continues exchanges with her host family and they meet about once every 2 years. She currently runs *Zaw Ko Services, Zaw Ko Tour, and Hopewill Co., Ltd.*⁴¹

Case MYM-4 went to university in Saitama Prefecture, Japan and studied in a faculty of English literature. She took a year out after the second year of university to study abroad in Perth, Australia, for half a year at a language school, and half a year at a business vocational school. Her parents supported the cost of her tuition during this time. One year later, she returned to university, and changed her major field psychology and had a part-time job.

She graduated from university at 23 years old. When she graduated, it was at the end of the bubble period. She took a job at a real-estate company and was assigned to the hotel division. She worked for about 18 months at this company in Tokyo. At that time, her employer acquired a major hotel chain's first flagship hotel in Asia, in Bali. The hotel was looking for opening staff, so she changed jobs and for the next 3 years she was responsible for guest relations and sales. At the age of 27, she worked as a start-up staff member again, this time opening the Singapore

⁴¹<http://www.zawko-tours.com/>.

Intercontinental Hotel. She was responsible for VIPs and Japanese company relations in Singapore. After that, she changed to the Shangri La Hotel in Singapore and was responsible for sales to Japanese companies. After searching for more challenges, she decided to visit Myanmar and decided to live there. A Singaporean, whom she was friends with and who had been doing business in Myanmar, helped her. They met up and she decided to move and live there.

At the age of 28, she moved to Myanmar and launched a travel agency for Japanese travelers with a female friend. However, it did not go well and so she sold her share of the company to her friend. At 29 years old, she married a Myanmar national who helped her at her company and had her first son at 30 years old. After having her child, she worked for a hotel, for 3 years. She decided to launch the Japanese division of a European inbound travel company, which her husband had run in Myanmar. At the age of 31, she decided to start a Japanese language school teaching Japanese language and manners to Myanmar nations. Following this, she decided to further diversify and signed a license agreement with a cram school based in Singapore when she was 33 years old.

Her husband died suddenly in a maritime accident in 2011 and so she decided to sell the European division of the travel agency, while keeping the Japanese division. The cram school, which she still manages, employs 40–50 teachers and 1,500–1,600 students are learning in her classrooms.

Most recently, she started a recruitment agency in 2016 and is currently working with vocational schools.

Case MYM-4 had two mentors at her first job. The first person was a cabin attendant for a British airline. And when MYM-4 had trouble adjusting to the company culture, this person suggested for her to leave the company and seek work in the Bali hotel. Her current mentors are two Myanmar women who have their own companies. For matters concerning Japan, she consults with the president of her tax office. In addition, her deceased husband's friends support her in other matters.

With regard to work networks, as far as travel companies are concerned, she had one Japanese partner from the time of its inception, and it is through that partner that she always consults on issues ranging from the introduction of people to management issues. Even in the recruitment business, there are several people who are always supporting her. Her cram school is a franchise-type business, so the personnel from the head office changes once every few years, therefore there is no particular tie that is maintained, but various people continue to teach and inspire her.

In her personal life, she does not have a wide circle of friends because she does not have such an outgoing character. She prefers to stay home and values the relationships she has with her family, friends and company staff. In addition, she values her close friends and wants to care for them well. She also knows people from different countries, which expands her perspective.

Currently, her job takes priority so she hires outside services to do housework. When it comes to the question of whether work experience in Japan is useful, experience in the Japanese workforce society, she believes, is useful. She feels that people can be more productive if they do not spend so much energy to guess other people's feelings and keep harmony in the workplace. In addition, she

Table 3.24 Case MYM-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Chiba Prefecture in 1968
High School	Took part in an international exchange project in the Philippines, stayed with a host family. Is still in contact with the host family and they meet up every 2 years
University	Studied English and in the 2nd year, took a year out studying abroad in Perth, Australia. Took 6 months of language classes and 1 year at vocational school studying business. Returned to university and changed her major to psychology. Had a part-time job at a cultural village in Tokyo
23	Graduated and took a job at a major Japanese company, working in their real estate and hotel division but left company
24	Got a job at Bali Intercontinental Hotel and was in charge of guest relations and sales
27	Transferred to Singapore Intercontinental Hotel and was in charge of VIP correspondence and Japanese companies. Moved to the Shangri-la Hotel and was in charge of sales to Japanese companies. Was dissatisfied with the management style in Singapore and visited Myanmar with a friend. Decided to move to Myanmar
28	Moved to Myanmar and set up a travel agency with a friend. However, she experienced problems in working there and sold her portion to go into business alone
29	Married a Myanmar national
30	Had the first child Worked for a hotel for three years Set up a Japanese division of a European-bound travel company
31	Started Japanese language school
33	Started to manage a cram school franchise
42	Husband died suddenly in a maritime accident, so she sold the European division of the travel company
47	Started a job agency and expanding her business

feels there is too much focus on details and a lack of speed in business in Japan. Thus, when she was working in Japan, she was told she was sassy.

She is extremely satisfied with her work and life and has two phrases that anchor her: *it will be ok* and a Japanese expression *calm, charming face, with quiet and warm words*. Her main priority is not income, but if it exceeds 8–10 million yen, then things will be comfortable, and she has prepared money for her children's education. However, being overseas, costs can be higher in the long term, especially if one has to face uncertain circumstances, therefore it is a goal to have an annual income of 15–20 million yen. When starting a business, she said that she did not consult with anyone in advance and made all her decisions by herself (Table 3.24).

Case MYM-5

Case MYM-5 was born in Shizuoka Prefecture, in 1964. She majored in accounting at a Japanese university and on graduating worked until the age of 30 at a local branch office in the personnel department. Here, she was responsible for training employees in Shimizu City.

At 30 years old, she joined a consultancy firm. From 33 to 35 she participated in a start-up in another company in the same field. At the age of 35 she founded *CHEPLUS*⁴² and is still working for that company now. Currently she is serving as representative director.

She conducts overseas training mainly in Myanmar, but also conducts training for companies in Bangkok. In Myanmar, training programs for Japanese companies make up about 20% of her business and the remaining 80% are for Myanmar companies. She has five local staff and her and her advisor are the only Japanese staff. She visits Myanmar every month to give guidance on operation. In the future, she will reduce the number of visits and is considering visiting about once every 3 months. She wants to give Myanmar nationals work experience and confidence. She would like to make inroads into how to adapt Japanese training methods to Myanmar and as much as possible, she also wants to help Myanmar nationals stand on their own two feet, so that they can manage companies themselves.

If she is honest, she feels like she has never really had any mentor, especially since when she was hired as a career-track employee in the second year after the enforcement of the *Equal Employment Opportunity Law in Japan*,⁴³ she was treated differently in the workplace because the bank did not really know how to train women who were pursuing a career. She has established networks on the job and connects with other managers of the personnel departments of small and medium-sized companies and large companies at the business level, sometimes even at the president level.

She has few networks in her private life and prefers to keep a close knit group of people around her such as her family, sisters, mothers, relatives and some close friends. At the age of 40, she needed to take care of her parents and has been doing so for the last 14 years. She is not particular about gaining satisfaction from her work, her priority is her family and if family safety can be secured, she does not have a particular commitment to work. Up to 40 years old, she followed the motto *que sera, sera*, yet after turning 40 she decided that it is not really the right way to approach the world of business. She understands that as a manager she may have to decrease her own salary to increase the income of her staff and thus she would like to use her profits to expand her business. As for start-up funds, she used 1 million yen from her own savings and established a limited company with 3 million yen provided by three investors, before making it a stock company when it became worth more than 10 million yen.

Her current concerns are related to the management style of a Japanese company, specifically, business content and how to proceed with a new business. Recently, she is concerned about hiring a new assistant and is thinking of ways to localize her business that currently operates in Myanmar. Overtime, she hopes to reduce her involvement as much as possible (Table 3.25).

⁴²<http://www.cheplus.com/>.

⁴³In April, 1986 the Japanese Equal Employment Opportunity Law went into effect. The law prohibits gender discrimination with respect to training, benefits, retirement and dismissal, recruitment, job assignment, and promotion.

Table 3.25 Case MYM-5 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Shizuoka Prefecture in 1964
22	Graduated from university
22	Worked for a local bank on a career track; responsible for HR training
30	Joined a consultancy firm
35	Participated in the start-up of a company specializing in training
35	Established a company specializing in training Implemented training programs in Myanmar and Thailand
53	Continuing to expand the business

Case MYM-6

Case MYM-6 was born in 1956 and enrolled in a Japanese university. He dropped out after being involved in a political movement. He was involved in the civil movement until he was 24 years old.

At the age of 24 he worked for 1 year in the sales department of an educational publisher who publish children's books. Following that, he enrolled in a private education course where he took the exam to become an administrative scrivener. After the test he proposed a new course of study based on his personal experience and accepted his suggestion and his idea contributed to the acceptance of many new students.

He ran a cram school from the ages of 27–40 years old. During this time, he got married but divorced after 6 years and transferred the rights of his cram school to a successor. Over the course of 11 years from age 40 to 51, he engaged in sales for a small and medium-sized life insurance company, and from the third year he was designated as the organizational chief and from the fifth year a trade union district representative (non-full-time). When he was 50, he decided to return to his hometown, where his mother lived alone due to his father's death. This was a promise he had held for a lifetime with his father.

After returning to his hometown, he worked as a general manager at two private hospitals until 55 years old and then worked as a vocational training counselor for a Japanese job placement office, *Hello Work*, from 56 to 57 years old. He was also engaged in financial management work for a real estate company at the request of an accounting firm that was affiliated with the hospital.

Through his connections, he was proposed to be appointed as a Japanese side manager in charge of financial management for a car maintenance plant operating as a joint venture with a Myanmar-based company. So with some investment from the presidents of local businesses, he took the challenge to set up the company in Myanmar. In addition, the company established a wholly-owned Japanese subsidiary in Japan separate from the joint venture and he became CEO. He invested his own money into his start-up.

As a result of developing various work improvement systems such as dispatching short-term training staff to maintenance shops of affiliated dealers, it has grown into a leading maintenance plant that has 90 staff in Yangon and receives

Table 3.26 Case MYM-6 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in 1956
24	Involved in the student movement and dropped out of university Worked for an education publishing company
25	Worked for a private education support company
27	Ran a cram school
40	Worked for a life insurance company
51	Returned to his hometown. Became head administrator at two hospitals
55	Worked for a real estate company
58	Established a company in Myanmar. Became CEO
61	Completed his assignment

1,200 units a month. After a 1-year consultation in 2017, they peacefully dissolved the joint venture contract with the Myanmar company and entrusted investors to fully reinvest the equity transfer funds that were now more than double the initial investment. In preparation for the establishment of a new automobile maintenance factory, he is working on finding new land to build the factory and selecting a new partner.

Currently, a friend of university days who is a tax accountant, a classmate from high school and a friend who operates a medium-sized printing company act as his mentors. He has extensive networks that he has developed throughout his career such as local networks, including the *Myanmar Japanese Chamber of Commerce*, *Yangon Japanese Association*, *Cross-industry Exchange*, *Myanmar Japan Society*, *WAOJE (previously known as Wakyokai)*.⁴⁴

His job satisfaction comes from the relationship he has with investors and the relationship of trust he builds with his partners and staff in Myanmar. He noted that the benefits of work experience in Japan are beneficial. Having had various experiences in Japan he sees them as useful for building one's career. He firmly believes that he needs to make a social contribution through his work and can develop human resources. On the question of income, he said that although his income decreased when working in Myanmar, this overseas experience was not wasted. His current concerns are mainly related to his personal life, in whether or not he is able to maintain his health, the purchase of a second-hand fishing boat and his future life in old age. In terms of business issues, he is concerned because it is not always clear if a project development plan is consistent with the project investors as many of his investors have little experience in entering overseas markets (Table 3.26).

Case MYM-7

Case MYM-7 was born in Saitama Prefecture in 1969, is married to a Myanmar national and has a daughter. His father worked as a teacher, later a principal and his

⁴⁴A Japanese business association: <http://tyo-wakyo.com/about/wakyokai/>.

mother worked in the city office. After graduating from high school, he went to a Japanese university and went on a short-term study abroad trip to Pennsylvania, USA for 45 days in the first year summer vacation. This study and homestay experience changed his life and he decided to work in New Zealand with a working holiday Visa, train for half a year to become a professional skier, and after college, traveled again for a month in Australia, a month in New Zealand, and a month in the Fiji Islands. After studying for another year at a language school in Australia, he returned home, and his parents paid for all the expenses related to his overseas experience.

At the age of 24 he became qualified as a domestic travel supervisor and acted as a travel agent for domestic travel companies until the age of 26. When he was 26 years old, he worked as a sales manager for Nikko Hotel, run by Japan Airlines (JAL) in Palau until the age of 33. With the closure of the hotel, he was introduced to work for the same hotel chain in Myanmar, and at the age of 33, worked as a hall manager at Nikko Hotel in Myanmar for 1 year. He then worked as a sales manager at the Shangri-La Hotel in Myanmar from the age of 34 to 36 and at 35 met his wife, who worked at the same hotel and they got married. At the age of 36, he changed fields and began working as a sales manager for a Japanese company selling pencils and cosmetics in Myanmar, but due to the *Lehman Shock*, the head office was absorbed and he was fired. With a growing family, he decided it safer to return to his hometown, but he could not find a place to work, and so decided to return abroad.

At that time, he was hired by an electronic parts trading company in Singapore and in the same year, he was recruited by another Japanese company to become a full-time employee, appointed as a representative of a subsidiary in Egypt, where he was ordered to manage factory work. This company exported vegetables and fruit to Japan, and the factory was located 50 km away from Cairo. His family continued to live in Myanmar during the 3 years he worked in Cairo.

At the age of 43, he decided he wanted to live with his family, so moved back to Myanmar and started his own Japanese restaurant called *Japanese Cuisine, KAMAKURA Marina*.

He has various networks through his new business venture, such as expatriates, regular customers that come to his restaurant, golf, tennis, Chinese chess friends and friends that work in NGOs. In his private life he has a strong network with friends from university and other old friends that he keeps up to date with via Facebook. He also has networks through his children's school.

He really enjoys his work life and has a high level of job satisfaction, but he spends 90% of his life in work and 10% with his family. He designates every Saturday as a family day and will only use it for activities with his family. He believes in the Japanese phrase *ichi-go-ichi-e*⁴⁵ and has a strong desire to never give up. In terms of his income, of course, he believes that the more you have, the better you are. However, at a minimum, it is necessary to have enough to educate children

⁴⁵A Japanese idiom that describes a cultural concept of treasuring the moment. The term is often translated as 'once in a lifetime'.

and feed his family. Once he is able to protect the wellbeing of his family, then he can spend money on other things.

When he started the restaurant he needed 15 million yen in start-up funds, he borrowed 2 million yen from his parents and took the remaining 13 million yen from his own savings. He was able to save 10 million yen through his previous work in Myanmar and Egypt. He also always consulted his wife and parents when setting up his business and believed that his experience traveling in his youth was very important to his future path. He has three current concerns: first that he needs to ensure he has high-quality staff; secondly, he wants the restaurant to be able to function even if he is not present and thirdly, he would like to develop a plan to start another new business within 5 years (Table 3.27).

Table 3.27 Case MYM-7 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Saitama Prefecture in 1969
18	Took a year out after high school
19	Went to university, studied in a faculty of commerce
19	Took part in a short term study abroad in the USA for 45 days in his first year of university
21	Took a leave of absence from the university, took a working holiday in New Zealand. Wanted to pursue his dream of becoming a professional skier so trained during this time
23	Graduated from university, spent 1 month in Australia, 1 month in New Zealand, visited Fiji and decided to spend a year at language school in Australia
24	Took the domestic travel supervisor qualification
26	Became a domestic tour rep and decided to move overseas. Moved to Palau and managed the sales at the Nikko Hotel in Palau
33	Moved to Myanmar after being recommended to by a friend. Worked at Nikko Hotel as Restaurant Manager
34	Transferred to the Shangri-la Hotel, became their sales manager
35	Met his wife while working at the Nikko Hotel, got married
36	Moved industries to become sales manager at a company, which sell cosmetics and stationary goods in Myanmar, due to financial difficulties the head office in Myanmar was absorbed into the main company, made redundant. Returned to Japan and his parent's home but was unable to find fulfilling work in Japan, decided to go back overseas
40	Took a job working for an expatriate fruit and vegetable import company in Egypt; however, with his family still in Myanmar he was looking for a way to move back
43	Decided to return to Myanmar and open a Japanese restaurant
47	Expanding his business

3.5 Indonesia



Indonesia

3.5.1 Country Context

An entrepreneurial ecosystem, as a set of interconnected entrepreneurial actors and connections (Mason and Brown 2014), is developing in Indonesia. Indonesia is often perceived as a country that has relative difficulty in doing business globally, yet its GDP growth rate is between 4.5 and 6.3% and it was not significantly affected by the global crisis in 2009 (World Bank 2016). Indonesian GDP grew from \$285.9 billion in 2006 to \$861.9 billion in 2015 (GEM 2016). In addition, based on the report on Human Capital in ASEAN (WEF 2016), Indonesia ranks in 69 among 124 countries with a score of 67 out of 100. The report highlighted some concerns at how the country will develop without more skilled employees, yet the country has a young population with around half of the total population below the age of 30, and thus, the labor force is expected to grow considerably larger in the foreseeable future.

In terms of entrepreneurship, there appears to be no major differentiation between males and females, with the majority deciding to start a business after finishing secondary education (50.8% of males and 54.7% of females) and often before age 44 (GEM 2016). Conversely, Indonesia ranks second in terms of entrepreneurial intention, with a 17.67% early-stage entrepreneurial activity rate. There is little data available on expatriate entrepreneurship in the country.

According to Price Waterhouse Cooper, with a target economic growth of more than 6%, there is growing pressure on the Indonesian government to attract foreign investment and talent. Over the past decade, there have been various measures

introduced to help facilitate entry, yet it still remains difficult. The most common way to establish a company in Indonesia, as a foreign investor, is to form an Indonesian limited liability company (known as a PMA) and one-stop-shop style organizations are helping newcomers to navigate the complex systems, with an average set-up time being 45 days. Although English is a business language in Indonesia, knowledge of Indonesian certainly helps facilitate business outside the main cities. Culturally, in Indonesia, business relationships are based on trust and familiarity, thus making connections and networks within the community are important to the success of a start-up.

Indonesia shows great potential as a site for expatriate entrepreneurs, especially when considering the potential quality of human capital. We present the cases in this study as an attempt to highlight the context of the current system and the actors within it.

3.5.2 Cases

We present seven cases from Indonesia. All the Japanese SIEEs live and work in Jakarta and interviews were conducted in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2018.

Case IND-1

IND-1 was born in Osaka Prefecture in 1964. When Case IND-1 was a child, she watched how her parent's business folded, so quickly became aware that she needed to be independent. She decided to make a radical choice to study Indonesian at a national university in Japan as it would give her more opportunities. After graduation, she joined a Japanese company in which she had a very liberal boss. When she was 28 years old she was transferred to the Jakarta office of her company and spent four years there. When the company asked her to return to Japan, she decided to remain in Indonesia.

After her resignation, she started her business as an independent consultant under the umbrella of a local manufacturing company. She provided high-quality administrative consultancy services and was successful. However, she closed the partnership with her business partner after the financial crisis in 1998 because her business partner failed in investments and lost money. Unfortunately, she had introduced him to one of her friends for investment and they could not find any justifiable solutions between them, so, she took responsibility for the debt.

After this incident, she set up a new company with new partners. However, she encountered further difficulties. For example, one of the partners tried to sell their company without prior approval from other partners, including Case IND-1. Additionally, one employee misused her company's operational funds personally and ran away. IND-1 tackled these problems consulting relevant laws and visiting government offices. Finally, she sorted out these problems.

As increasing numbers of Japanese companies began to recognize the potential of Indonesia as a place for investment, she obtained more consulting work. By

Table 3.28 Case IND-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Osaka Prefecture in 1964
23	Graduated from Osaka University of Foreign Studies, majoring in Indonesian language studies Joined a Japanese company in Osaka as a sales assistant (general employee)
28	Was transferred to its subsidiary company in Indonesia and stationed in Jakarta for 4 years
32	Was asked to return to Japan. Decided to branch out on her own and to work as an independent consultant
34	Established a consultancy company
53	Continues to work in the same business

utilizing her own networks and self-branding efforts, she gradually expanded her clients. She has no plans for expansion and likes to keep strong control over her business. Case IND-1's biggest concern is that her nominee (the representative Indonesian co-owner) is becoming old, so she fears for the future governance of the company. This is because the relationship with the nominee is only a gentleman's agreement and the concept of a nominee is not protected by law (Table 3.28).

Case IND-2

IND-2 was born in Yamaguchi Prefecture in 1983. During high school, Case IND-2 spent 3 weeks at language school in New Zealand and at age 13, went to Chicago and Toronto alone for homestay. These were major life experiences that gave him confidence. After 4 years working for a Japanese internet advertising company, Case IND-2 felt that he needed independence, so through a man he met while working at the internet company, he decided to move to Vietnam and set up a free paper company called *Weekly Lifenesia*⁴⁶ part of his *PT.KuiPlat Media Company*. A Free Paper is a regular publication that gives advice and guidance for expatriates in a particular area. It acts as a cultural, social and business broker by providing information and connections to expatriates. With start-up funds of 10 million yen the company was established with a colleague at his previous company, plus two Japanese and three Vietnamese. The Japanese co-founder lives in Hawaii and initially paid 100% but Case IND-2 has since paid him back. When he began the Free Paper company, it was the only one available in Ho Chi Minh City and is currently sold every week. He stayed in Vietnam working on the Free Paper for 2 years before noticing a gap in the market in Indonesia. Many Japanese expatriates were in living in Jakarta but there was no Free Paper available to assist them in their new life. Like his co-founder, he wanted to be successful around the world, and thought Jakarta would be the next opportunity for him. So borrowing start-up funds, he moved to Indonesia and started his business. Using knowledge gained in Vietnam, he set up the business in a similar way and now he has 15 employees.

⁴⁶<http://lifenesia.com/>.

Table 3.29 Case IND-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Yamaguchi Prefecture, in 1983
19	Entered a Japanese university
23	Began working for a Japanese company
27	Sought independence and decided to move to Vietnam and set up a Free Paper company in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
29	Moved to Indonesia and set up a similar free paper <i>Lifenesia</i>
34	Expanding the business in Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore

He feels grateful for his situation and cites having three mentors as helping him to succeed: his business partner in Hawaii, a Japanese whom he met in Hanoi and another Japanese in Indonesia. His business partner was someone he considered to be not a regular Japanese, in that he didn't follow a traditional Japanese career trajectory. His mentor graduated from high school and university in the United States, so Case IND-2 was able to learn a lot about life outside Japan from him. Through his Japanese mentor in Hanoi, he was able to learn much about how to associate with local people, how to recruit local staff and how to integrate himself into the local community. Case IND-2's third mentor in Indonesia provides him with constructive criticism about how to run his business. He is fairly satisfied with his life but feels there are still many things he wants to do. He quite strongly feels that his work experience in Japan was not so important, as by staying in Japan he would meet only people like Japanese, and although learning the Japanese ways and manners is important, they can be learned outside, but what is important is exposure to different types of people.

Case IND-2 believes that accumulation of small amounts of trust over the long term will lead to greater success. To be successful in business, he believes, *is to be appreciated for one's work and the amount one contributes to society is also the equivalent to a salary*. Personally, eventually he wants to gain Indonesian citizenship and possibly open another business in Vietnam (Table 3.29).

Case IND-3

Case IND-3 was born in Tokyo, in 1966. He graduated from a Japanese university. During his fourth-year university, he took a 1 year leave of absence to attend an English school for 6 months at Georgetown University in the United States. Although he hoped to remain in the United States as it was, his father, who was in the real estate business, passed away, and so he decided to move back to help his mother (who took over as president of the company) deal with debt repayment and business restructuring.

After graduating from the university at the age of 22, he worked in a real estate company (which was headquartered in Kyoto, then Tokyo), but at 24, the company went bankrupt due to the end of the bubble economy and so he took a job with another real estate company and worked there until the age of 27. Following that he worked for multiple real estate companies spending around 2 years at each,

becoming appointed representative director at 30. At 32 years, he became independent in Japan and started his own real estate brokerage company. At first, he set up the company with three old classmates from junior high school. They started the business in a small apartment in Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture.

He moved to Tokyo in 2000, and changed the name and organizational structure. At that time there were four employees. The company's annual sales was 2.4 billion yen. Eight years later, at the age of 40, because he owned a small but partially non-lawful property the bank considered his company to be at risk. Therefore, his company was expected to go bankrupt around 2007, so to counteract this, he decided to move the company to Bali, Indonesia in June of the same year.

The reason why he decided Bali was initially that he had liked Indonesia while he spent time there on a trip to Asia; secondly, he was invited by acquaintances, and in addition, he felt a great sense of warmth from the people and he enjoyed the lifestyle and food there. From a business perspective, there are many young people in Indonesia, so a large potential workforce and the economy is growing, so he may be able to fulfill his dream of migrating and retiring at the age of 45.

In September of the same year, he visited potential homes, schools and business properties with his wife and children. As he went on honeymoon to Bali, he decided to move there with his family, in December of the same year. He lived in Bali for two-and-a-half years until 2010, before moving to Jakarta. In consideration of children's education and the environment, his wife returned home to Japan, but then the *Great East Japan Earthquake*⁴⁷ occurred, and in order to avoid the potential influence of radiation in Tokyo, in 2011 his eldest daughter returned to Jakarta. The eldest son stayed living with his wife in Tokyo until he graduated from junior high school and his wife traveled back and forth between Tokyo and Jakarta.

In Bali, he worked in a real estate business that mediates between Japanese expatriates and Indonesians. In Jakarta he also became an agent and business consultant for a mail-order company but it did not work well. Two years later, in 2014 he became president of a company that exports wood-based fuels into Japan called *PT.Asia Pacific Energindo*.⁴⁸ He received a request from a Japanese company and decided to take over their biomass business. He currently employs 10 Indonesians.

He is considering naturalization, but at the moment he has not met all the legal conditions. For naturalization, he needs to have at least 5 years as a KITAS⁴⁹ Work-Visa holder and be able to emphasize his degree of contribution to Indonesia (including tax payment, employment, etc.). He feels his number of years in Indonesia is sufficient but his contribution is not yet enough.

He has strong networks with Indonesian business people and Japanese investors and as for his private networks, he tends to keep within his family and very close

⁴⁷The 2011 earthquake off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku which was of magnitude 9.0 and resulted in a devastating tsunami. The disaster killed around 15,800 people.

⁴⁸<http://energindo.link/>.

⁴⁹KITAS stands for *Kartu Izin Tinggal Sementara* and is a Temporary Stay Permit Card for Indonesia, valid for 6–12 months.

Table 3.30 Case IND-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1966
18	Entered a Japanese university
21	Took a leave of absence from the university in the fourth year and went to English school in Georgetown University for half a year
22	Graduated from a Japanese university Continued running his family real estate business
24	Business went bankrupt Worked for another real estate company owned by a Japanese businessman he knew
27	Worked for a subsidiary of the real estate company
30	Inaugurated as a Representative Director for a Japanese company
32	Started a real estate business in Kanagawa Prefecture
33	Moved to Tokyo, changed the name of his company
40	Decided to transfer the base of the company to Bali, Indonesia Moved his family to Bali in 2007 Lived in Bali for two and a half years until 2010
43	Moved to Jakarta
47	Took over as president of a company that exports wooden fuel to Japan
51	Continues to lead the project

friends. He had an active social life when he was young but sees this time of his life as a time to focus on work. He is moderately satisfied with his life and he knows job satisfaction is most important, however, he currently he thinks the most important thing in life is his family.

With regard to his views on income, he feels that the minimum is he needs to provide for the future of his children to give them choices in life. He wants to have enough to provide time, space and experiences for his children to gain knowledge. When he started his company he used start-up funds of \$2 million (more than 200 million yen in Japanese yen) and this was collected from investors. As this company was a trading company, it didn't require a nominee and was established with 100% foreign funds. There are four Japanese shareholders and 60 investors, mainly from Japan. His current area of concern is the future direction of laws and regulations in Indonesia. Indonesia's current policy is focused on developing the poorest in society and it is becoming increasingly difficult for foreigners to do business there (Table 3.30).

Case IND-4

Born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1975. Case IND-4 was not a serious student at university. He studied economics at a private university. Both his parents ran a beauty salon. During university he worked at a bar and had interactions with American customers who encouraged him to master English and travel abroad. Therefore, he decided to go to Los Angeles to study English. This was his first exposure to overseas. After a few months in the United States, he decided to go to

Table 3.31 Case IND-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Fukuoka Prefecture in 1975
20	Dropped out of university Went to Los Angeles to attend an ESL course
22	Attended a vocational beauty college in the USA
24	Worked for a beauty salon in Beverly Hills, USA
33	Moved to Indonesia
35	Opened a hair salon in Jakarta, Indonesia
43	Has four branches and continues to expand his business

beauty school to learn how to become a hair stylist in the United States. He paid his own tuition and his parents paid his living expenses. Eventually, he worked at a beauty salon in Beverly Hills. Through his work he met a wealthy and influential Indonesian businessman, and after talking with friends and clients at the beauty salon, he was able to foresee the financial crisis in 2009. The Indonesian businessman urged him to move to Indonesia, so after, he spent time looking at properties in Indonesia. With his personal savings he decided to open a salon in 2010 called *Nobu*,⁵⁰ with his wife, who is also a beautician. He currently runs five salons in Indonesia and is pleased that his dream to have his own salon came true.

He speaks English, Japanese and Indonesian, so these languages come in very useful when doing business and over time he has become more culturally aware. Throughout his life he has had one Japanese mentor who is successful in business in Jakarta; the mentor advised him of the difficulties to expect in the country and how to navigate the cultural norms and expectations, such as respect for family and religious expectations. He is fairly satisfied with his job but thinks that he can do more but has low satisfaction with his overall life as he has little work–life balance and with his wife in the same business there is little social time. Case IND-4 thinks that although money can solve many problems in life, he wants his wife to have more time for herself and her family, so he needs to increase his overall work–life balance. Now that he is successful he would like to delegate business to his employees, concentrating on management, to allow him and his wife an opportunity to take a break (Table 3.31).

Case IND-5

Case IND-5 was born in Jakarta in 1973 to an Indonesian mother and Japanese father. She was educated in schools in Japan, in Japanese school in Singapore and at an international school in Jakarta. Case IND-5's father worked for a major Japanese machinery corporation and was transferred overseas, which is how he met his wife. Due to her father's job she traveled to various countries as a child, so had a wide variety of educational experiences. She decided to enter university in the United

⁵⁰<https://ameblo.jp/nobu-hair/>.

States but quit to study Indonesian at an Indonesian university as an international student. During her early years, she received no Indonesian education, so she decided to study it as an adult. After she finished her studies, she worked for a Japanese company in Jakarta and worked as a secretary, in general affairs and in accounting for 1 year. However, she found her character didn't fit well with factory work, so she decided to get a more customer-facing job at a restaurant. At the restaurant she did advertising and event planning, while also working front of house.

Recognizing a niche in the market, she decided to start a real estate company for Japanese business people looking for a residence in Indonesia called *Maison Map*.⁵¹ She had two employees and now she has 35 employees.

Again, based on her knowledge of Japanese hospitality and the hospitality industry, she opened a Japanese-style girl's bar in Block M, Jakarta, Indonesia; it was the first such bar in that district in Indonesia. However, another Japanese man also opened one at around the same time. She went into direct competition with Case IND-6 and when they eventually met as business owners, they gradually fell in love. Her husband is Case IND-6 in this study. Over time they started to consult with each other about business, tax, accounting, and realized that the bar business was also not a good fit to her character, so she sold the bar to her husband and began to study management and real estate business. She was career focused and didn't want to have family responsibility, but her parents offered to support her if she decided to have children. As a result, the grandparents take care of their children, so both Case IND-5 and Case IND-6 can work and they all live together in a big house.

While she was pregnant, she started attending school in the evening to study film making and digital arts. After completing various classes, she was involved in a Japanese festival held in Jakarta, where she was introduced to the world of *cosplay* and decided to make a documentary film. During the making of the documentary, she found out about the *World Cosplay Summit*⁵² in Nagoya, Japan. She found there was no such contest in Indonesia, so she decided to establish the first contest in Indonesia. Eventually, Indonesia was represented at the *World Cosplay Summit* and received the 3rd prize at the first time of entering. Indonesia secured the 1st prize a few years later. Using the connections in the industry, Case IND-5 decided to set up a cosmetics make up company.

In terms of her personal motivation and approach to life, she works with her husband but still maintains her independence. At the beginning of her entrepreneurial journey, she had no mentor but now she relies on her husband and her network through her work. Her work and personal life is somewhat mixed, so she has a network in the pop culture business as well as with business people and investors. She is the CEO of her real estate company but has enough staff to delegate the work, so she doesn't touch day-to-day business. She is constantly seeking new ways to inspire people and spends a lot of time socializing and networking (Table 3.32).

⁵¹<http://maisonmap.com/>.

⁵²<https://www.worldcosplaysummit.jp/opcosplayking>.

Table 3.32 Case IND-5 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Indonesia in 1973
21	Went to university in Los Angeles, USA but left in the middle of the program
23	Went to university in Indonesia as an International student to study Indonesian language
25	Worked for a Japanese company in Jakarta Moved to a different Japanese company in Jakarta
27	Changed to work in a restaurant in Jakarta; working on advertising and promotion during the day and at the restaurant bar at night
27	Decided to start own company and established a real estate agency which acts as an intermediary for Japanese residents seeking apartments
28	Taking advantage of the experience gained in the restaurant and bar, with a group of 10 others she started a bar. As a result, she decided to start studying business and self-taught herself the basics of business and management
33	Continued working in the real estate industry, while also participating in evening school. Saw a niche in the market to set up a cosplay tournament in Indonesia with the aim of participating in the cosplay world competition. By 2016, her competition was ranked the world number one
44	She plans to set up a new cosmetics company that makes use of the networks she has developed in the community

Case IND-6

Case IND-6 was born in Indonesia in 1975, to Japanese parents. He initially received a Japanese education in Jakarta, Indonesia but at the age of 10 he was sent to his grandmother's house in Yokohama and was educated under the Japanese education system. After finishing high school, he decided to become a Japanese chef, focusing on serving traditional Japanese cuisine. Following time in the kitchen, he moved into the management side of the hospitality and food business. After a few years, he decided to take some time out and go backpacking. He visited Indonesia and spent time at his mother's restaurant. After meeting his mother, he abandoned the idea to continue backpacking and decided to stay in Jakarta to help improve his mother's restaurant. At the time he wanted to start a business, foreigners could not borrow money. Although he could borrow start-up funds from an Indonesian, he wanted to be independent and start a company without a guarantor, so using his own funds and the support of two investors, he started a ramen shop. His philosophy was not to take money from the shop but to continually reinvest. After opening over 40 stores throughout Indonesia, he experienced some difficulties with regard to his business and competition, so he decided to diversify and moved into the restaurant logistics and import/export business. He now has a group of businesses under the umbrella of the *Daisei Group*.⁵³

⁵³<https://www.daiseigroup.info/>.

Table 3.33 Case IND-6 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Indonesia in 1975
18	Graduated from a commercial high school Worked in a traditional Japanese restaurant
20	Worked in a different restaurant in Tokyo
21	Worked in another restaurant in Tokyo
23	Worked at a different restaurant in Tokyo, becoming the manager
26	Visited mother's restaurant in Jakarta, Indonesia
27	Started a Japanese restaurant in Jakarta, Indonesia
28	Started a ramen restaurant chain, had 48 stores but now has 17, moved into the food logistics field
34	Started <i>DAISEI</i> Group and became CEO
43	Expanding his business

After reorganizing into an overseas investment company in 2009, he applied the philosophy *Maju Bersama!*—meaning *Go Forward Together*—as the base of his retail operations with vendors, real estate agents, logistics professionals and system developers, participating actively. He currently has over 450 employees in Indonesia. He intends to launch into e-commerce in the future but his nationality limits his options for expansion, so he is in the process of changing his nationality to Indonesian. By doing so, he can expand his business and will be in a better position to protect his employees. Naturalization is the only way, yet he will still maintain his Japanese identity.

Case IND-6 stated his previous experience in Japan was extremely useful for developing his business; he also sees himself as independent and respects himself in order to work hard. His close relationship to his boss in his first job after high school was his first experience of a mentor, but now, his wife is his closest mentor and confidant. His wife's mother is Indonesian and father is Japanese and she was also educated in a Japanese system, so they have a shared cultural background. He strongly believes that human relationships are more important than money (Table 3.33).

Case IND-7

Case IND-7, was born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1985. Both parents of Case IND-7 are Japanese, however, his father worked for a plant company and was sent to Indonesia twice while he was young, so Case IND-7 was educated from 2 to 12 years old in a Japanese school in Indonesia. During elementary school, his parents divorced and he lived in Indonesia until his elementary school graduation. From junior high to the end of high school he returned to Japan and lived with his mother. When he graduated from high school, he considered being a policeman but

his mother encouraged him to use his Indonesian language skills, so he entered an international faculty of a Japanese university where he took a degree in the Indonesian language. After graduation, he obtained a job at a fishery company in Japan. The company imports shrimps and develops new seafood-based products. He chose this company as he wanted to work outside Japan in the future, so this company gave him connections and also helped to pay back his university fees. Two months after starting work in the company he was assigned to Malaysia. For 6 months of his placement he was ordered to run the business by himself and ended up staying in Malaysia for three-and-a-half years, after which he was assigned to Vietnam.

Eventually, the head office was closed in Vietnam and as a result, he was transferred to Indonesia to start new businesses and explore new ventures for the same company. He was put in charge of importing seafood to Japan. He was asked to return to Japan in 2014, but he was already starting to think about starting his own company. As a result, he resigned and started a ramen business which failed, so at the age of 28 in 2014, with a friend, he started selling frozen fish products to restaurants and began importing and exporting fish with a company he called P.T. AJI TAMA. At the time, there were no fishmongers in Surabaya, so he saw a niche in the market and took advantage of it. He now has a fishmonger in Jakarta at the request of *Daisei* group and has built his network around the region. Specifically, he sells fish for use in Japanese cuisine, so knows the standards expected of the industry. In 2018, he will reach the 5-year anniversary of his business. Case IND-7 currently, distributes to 25 restaurants, has 2 regular Indonesian staff, recruiting additional local part-time employees depending on the season. He is able to speak Indonesian which helps in communication with staff. His mentors are his friends whom he considers to be akin to family. He also has networks with fishermen and factory employees, his business partners in Surabaya and shop owners. At present he is unsatisfied with his work, although he is highly satisfied with his personal life. He is single; he doesn't need much money, so he saves a little every month to pay back his university fees, but worries that as he has had little work experience in Japan. His guiding philosophy is the idea that *he himself knows he is content at the moment and he shouldn't expect too much*. An additional concern is that in order to do the business successfully, he sometimes accepts too much work without fully considering his capacity; therefore he needs to better manage his workload and expectations. He doesn't know what he will be doing in the future (Table 3.34).

Table 3.34 Case IND-7 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1985
18	Entered a Japanese university to study Indonesian language
22	Was employed at a Japanese trading company, with a head office in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan Moved to Malaysia 2 months after joining the company and worked there for three and a half years
25	Transferred to Nha Trang, Vietnam for 3–4 months Transferred to Tinh Ben Tre and spent around a year and a half in Vietnam
26	Transferred to work in Surabaya, Indonesia
28	When asked to return to Japan, he decided to decline and retired from the Japanese company Decided to seek entrepreneurship opportunities in Indonesia Opened a store, Shimada Market, in Jakarta
32	Expanding his business

3.6 China



China

3.6.1 Country Context

China has slowly been becoming a more market-based economy. According to the World Bank, GDP growth is averaging nearly 10% and this in turn means that more than 850 million people have been lifted out of poverty. The country has survived

and thrived since the banking crisis in 2008, yet it is still suffering from the pace of reform and the need to ensure sustainability in all areas of growth. The government developed a five-year plan 2016–2020 to address the issues associated with rapid growth; plans which include tackling environmental issues and access to education and healthcare. The target growth rate is 6.5%. Yet, despite the growth, there is uneven development across rural and urban areas. In 2009, the World Bank estimated that the ratio of nominal mean urban income to rural income was approximately 3.3 in 2007, with the absolute gap widening tremendously.

Despite having an unfavorable governance ranking in the World Bank's Worldwide governance ranking, and a low ease of doing business ranking (78/190), due to the business environment generally lacking predictability, in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI), China was ranked as the world's second most attractive economy for multinationals, behind the United States (AVPN 2019). It had an inflow of 1.23 trillion USD in 2014 and trades primarily with the United States, the European Union and Hong Kong. Consequently, consumer spending is also up, driven by population growth and an increasing disposable income. The social economy in China is also developing with 3,200 NGOs registered (AVPN 2019) and increasing support for social enterprise.

3.6.2 Cases

We present five cases of Japanese SIEEs in China. The interviews were conducted in Shanghai in 2019. Again, we conducted multiple interviews with Japanese business employees; however, only five met the criteria for being a self-initiated expatriate transnational entrepreneur.

Case C-1

Case C-1 was born in Ibaraki Prefecture in 1979. His father owned a construction company and after graduating high school he joined his father's company as a carpenter. After 2 years, he was sent to another company as an apprentice, where he stayed for 5 years. When he was 25, through an introduction he moved to Okayama Prefecture and continued to work for another construction company as an apprentice. There, he worked alongside a group of carpenters from China and it was through this experience that he opened his eyes to the international community. Following the apprenticeship, he didn't know what to do next in his life, but thought of the Chinese carpenters and decided to go to Shanghai to meet them with a view to doing business there. He planned to work as a carpenter in China, but the wage and status of a carpenter was too low and it was difficult to get a Visa for such work.

He was offered work at a smart phone application company connected to LINE where he took a job working in customer service and HR. During that time, from 2011 he was asked by Americans in Shanghai to establish a human resource

management training and translation company.⁵⁴ He was an entrepreneur at night and on the weekends, while still working in the consultancy during the day. He currently has five full-time employees and ten part-time workers. He stayed at the app company for three-and-a-half years and at 33 years old, he got another job at a Japanese-affiliated consultancy firm where he was responsible for staff relations; he was initially part-time as he thought it was a good place to gain new skills, but he soon became the Director of HRM within the company at 37 years old. The company was called *Cochi Consulting*.⁵⁵

From his first job he had a mentor who still mentors him today and has picked up new mentors throughout his career. His network consists mainly of his clients, such as Japanese companies. In his social networks, he engages with the local senior citizen community where he lived in a share-house, he has maintained his friendships with them. He also engages socially with business associates he meets through his training and translation company.

While he was a carpenter and building houses, he realized the importance of preparation and planning and this lesson has stood himself in good stead for the future as these are transferable skills. His career anchor is *to do to others as you would like to be done to you*. He reads books and meets new people to develop his skills. He doesn't have an attachment to his income; it is not the most important thing in life. He used 6 million yen to start his company, with 3 million yen coming from his own savings and two American investors contributed the remaining 3 million yen. He made a clear rate of return contract with his investors, so he doesn't worry about his relationship with them and business is running smoothly. He got valuable advice from other Japanese expatriate entrepreneurs in China, who are more experienced in business and culture there than him.

He is highly satisfied with his life and work and his only concern is whether or not to get married (Table 3.35).

Case C-2

Case C-2 was born in Hokkaido in 1980. His parents were local dairy farmers. When he was a junior high school student he read a Japanese translation of a book written by Bill Gates, which inspired him to become an entrepreneur. During high school he played basketball and wanted to become a PE teacher. He took an exam to enter a private university because he wanted to join the basketball team there and there they had no English language proficiency requirement.⁵⁶ During university, he rented a flat, played Chinese chess and played basketball. He felt that it wasn't the right life for him and so he decided to study IT networks by himself, planning to quit university at the end of the first year. However, his parents begged him to remain, so he decided to stay but quit at the end of the second year. At that time, he was 20 years old. He decided to go to Manchester, UK, for 1 month of language

⁵⁴www.compass-corporate.com

⁵⁵<http://www.cochicon.com/>.

⁵⁶It is commonplace for Japanese students to sit an English language proficiency exam in order to enter university.

Table 3.35 Case C-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Ibaraki Prefecture in 1979
18	Graduated from high school Worked as a carpenter at parent's company
20	Worked as a carpenter for a different construction company in Japan and received training
25	Worked for another company in Western Japan
28	Took a 6-month leave of absence to move to Shanghai, China Decided to quit the construction company
28	Got a job at a system development company for LINE in China
31	Started a consultancy company in training and translation
32	Quit the app company
33	Entered a Japanese consultancy company, as a part-time
37	Became the full-time Director of HRM of the consultancy company
39	Expanding his business

study. Following the training he worked at a local hotel as a waiter, housekeeper and general assistant for various events. He stayed in Manchester for approximately 1 year and there he met a group of Chinese who expressed their excitement about the Beijing Olympics and their vision for the future of China. Through these exchanges he felt that he wanted to try living in China.

Following his stay in the UK, he returned to Japan and moved to Tokyo, where he worked for a typically Japanese IT company (a subsidiary of the Japanese telecommunications giant, NTT). Two years later, he found a job in China and worked in IT maintenance at Dell for a year. He couldn't feel the excitement he had expected while working there and so he asked Dell for 3-month sabbatical leave and he moved to Shanghai. He found that he was better suited to living in Shanghai so quit his position at Dell. For 3 months, he worked part-time at the arts village in Shanghai and worked with traditional handicrafts. Six months later, the workshop he was working with relocated outside Shanghai and as he didn't want to commute or relocate, he decided to set up his own art and design company when he was 26 years old, called *Office 339*.⁵⁷ At that time, there was an interest in contemporary Chinese art and many Japanese art galleries approached him to coordinate exhibitions. For 12 years he has continued this work and currently has nine employees. He works in two main areas; one is planning and producing exhibitions and the management of art at various hotels and the second is IT and web-related managing YouTubers and digital content management.

Although he is the first son, he was under no duty to inherit his parent's farm and so his younger brother took it over. His parents encouraged him to pursue his dreams and his future. Case C-2 didn't have a mentor at his first workplace, but at

⁵⁷<http://www.office339.com/>.

Table 3.36 Case C-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Hokkaido in 1980
18	Entered university with the aim to become a physical education teacher
20	Dropped out of university Entered an English language training school in Manchester, UK
20	Worked at a hotel in Manchester, UK
21	Worked for an IT company in Tokyo
23	Quit the IT company Moved to China to work for an American IT company
24	Took a leave of absence but eventually quit Worked for the Arts Village in Shanghai
26	Established an art event planning office in Shanghai
38	Continuing to develop his business

present he has a mentor whom he consults on all business matters. At work, he engages in various networks, one is the collection of Japanese companies who want to work with Chinese companies that are related to entertainment, IT and art. The second network is among digital content providers and managers.

In his private life, he is engaged in various networks connected to his children and people he meets through his wife's musical activities. He also has many friends among other entrepreneurs in China. Through his work in Japan he was able to observe how average Japanese work and he could acquire those business manners/skills later when working with Japanese clients. As for his career anchor, he *believes that all things are transitory*. He started his company with 1.5 million yen from his own savings. His main concerns are the political situation in China and whether or not he can maintain his company financially (Table 3.36).

Case C-3

Case C-3 was born in Osaka Prefecture, in 1975. At university he studied Chinese Modern History and through his studies, he spent 3 months studying Chinese in China. On graduation, he got a job as a translator between Japanese and Chinese. Even though he only worked for a short time, he was able to develop Japanese business manners and learn how to interact with Chinese. However, he soon became bored with his job and decided to quit and move to China for a year. He stayed in Shanghai for 1 year studying language at university and in the afternoons worked as a Japanese language teacher and translator to pay his expenses. After 1 year, he got a job in China preparing documents for a trading company. He worked at this company for 2 years and during that time he met his wife who was a flight attendant and had had overseas experience. His wife pushed him to start his own company.⁵⁸ She felt that he was abused by his company and that he could easily work on his own, so she donated 1.6 million yen to his start-up funds. He

⁵⁸<https://8card.net/p/26683961105/>.

Table 3.37 Case C-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Osaka Prefecture in 1975
23	Graduated from university Entered a translation company, quit the company Studied abroad in Shanghai for Chinese language training
24	Got a job in Shanghai, China
26	Established a company with his wife
35	Changed the name of the company
43	Continues to work for his company

founded a business as a negotiator, translator and business consultant. After 3 years he found his business target in SNS analysis in China. Using his analysis skills, he writes corporate reports and sells them to companies. He employs 35 staff, of whom, 30 are females and 5 males.

He networks regularly with fellow entrepreneurs, PR agencies in China, his internal staff and Japanese PR agents. In his social life, he connects with his wife's friends and relatives. As for his work and life satisfaction, he considers them equally important. His career anchor is to *always think critically, analyze situations and don't be opinionated*. He realizes that if one lives overseas, it is better to have a higher income than average as it is important to have enough money to provide education for children to be educated in two cultures. In the past he was cheated a few times but this didn't dampen his enthusiasm for life and business in China. He didn't really see the importance of money as he was focused on just preserving himself, but as soon as he had children his priorities changed and he soon realized the value of money. He is highly satisfied with his work and life in China and feels happy. His biggest concern is the political situation between Japan and China (Table 3.37).

Case C-4

C-4 was born in Tokyo in 1977. When he was a child, he was educated in a Japanese school in New Jersey, United States, until the third grade of middle school. He returned to Japan and attended a Japanese high school before becoming enrolled in a university in Tokyo, majoring in economics. C-4 is the Group Representative, President and CEO of IP FORWARD. He is also a Japanese Lawyer and Patent Attorney, the President and CEO of JC FORWARD and President and CEO of Animation Forward.

After graduating from university, he joined Dentsu Co., Ltd⁵⁹, a leading advertising company, as part of their new graduate intake of 2000. Here, he worked for less than 3 years. He was initially interested in pursuing a game-related career but after talking with people in the field, he decided that he could specialize in contents production. Having studied law at university, this, combined with his knowledge of

⁵⁹www.dentsu.com

game development and his English language ability, meant that he was selected to work in the advertising company's entertainment division, which is not normally assigned to new employees. He appreciates the training he received at the company.

Originally, he liked games and had experience of winning tournaments, so he considered becoming a game producer. Through his relationships with gamers, he learned that Japan had no business producers in the game content business at the point where it interacts with the Hollywood movie industry. In addition, he thought, if he passed the bar exam, could understand the law, speak English and was familiar with games and the game industry, he could become a producer and legal advisor to support the overseas expansion of Japanese content. After receiving useful advice, he decided to join the company as it was trying to create a new department that comprehensively handled content-related business.

After gaining content business experience in Dentsu and becoming registered as a lawyer in 2003, he became a member of the First Bar Association and joined a famous Tokyo-based law firm in 2003. He worked as a lawyer specializing in corporate law and intellectual property, finance and real estate securitization until 2006.

At the request of the director of his law office, he was dispatched to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry from 2006 to 2009. He became the first anti-counterfeit expert lawyer. It was the first time that one of the top four law offices had dispatched a lawyer to that Ministry. As part of his work he was in charge of dealing with issues surrounding counterfeit goods through which he was able to hear the opinions from Japanese-affiliated companies in China, and he could examine China's IP laws, and was actually able to negotiate with companies overseas such as those in China, South East Asia and the Middle East.

He returned to the law office in 2009 and exercised the right to work abroad in China for 2 years until 2011. At that time, many qualified lawyers expressed their wish to be trained in the United States, but C-4 chose China.

In the first year, he lived in Shanghai and went to a language school for half a year. For the remaining six months, he was registered with six investigation companies where he learned how to be an investigator. In 2010 he joined a law firm in Beijing and continued his training on how to manage and control detectives and various other works for the company. Despite still being in training, he received a number of requests from Japanese companies seeking counsel on counterfeit countermeasures and was controlling many Chinese detectives that worked to promote counterfeit countermeasures for Japanese companies.

During the 2 years he was with the company, he took the opportunity to think about national interests and his next career step. He decided to leave the law office and pursue work related to his experience as a detective. At 34 years old, C-4 set-up a private investigative consulting company in Shanghai called *IP Forward*.⁶⁰ Initially, he started the company with a dozen Chinese detectives and steadily expanded the business. At present, he deals not only anti-counterfeiting, which he

⁶⁰<http://www.ip-fw.com/english>

started at the time of its establishment, but also works with lawyers from Japan and China, deals with patent and trademark intellectual property issues with patent attorneys (including patent translation work using AI) and provides consulting services for businesses seeking to expand into China. In addition, he started an import company (which brings Japanese content, such as movies and animation to China) and an animation production company, which was established as a joint venture with a famous Japanese animation company. He has around 70–80 employees, including non-regular employees. Of these, ten are Japanese.

His philosophy is that *the meaning of work is not for the money but to contribute to society*. He is the oldest son of three and has no self-employed relatives. Although he lives overseas, he has many opportunities to meet his parents. He goes back and forth between Japan and China for business as he now has an office in Japan.

C-4's work and personal life are deeply intertwined. He has strong networks with other consulting companies, intellectual property clients, contacts through his other businesses, and movie/content operator, animators, patent attorneys, AI engineers and government officials. He is moderately satisfied with his current work and life and believes that the experience he had in Japan was useful for his future.

His mottos are, difficulty is given only to those who can overcome it and a manager is a person who somehow manages everything and the responsibility for everything falls at his feet. Although money is not the most important thing in life and he does not consider himself greedy, as a manager he understands that he needs to make money to hire highly talented people.

C-4 started his company with 13 million yen. Initially this was a joint investment with the boss of a Chinese detective firm, but they separated their financial relations approximately 5 years ago. The boss is now in charge of a different company. As for entrepreneurship, he consulted with Japanese investors whom he describes as his mentors. He continues to seek self-enlightenment and spends his free time reading books on topics outside his work and new fields in order to expand his knowledge base. He has no current concerns (Table 3.38).

Case C-5

Case C-5 was born in 1974. After his graduation, he worked at the Government office for 4 years. After MBA in the United States, he joined a global consulting company in 2001, where he had worked for 10 years until 2011.

After 10 years he decided to leave his position to do something more meaningful with his life utilizing his experience. At the company, he also worked on projects in retailing and trading companies in Europe and South East Asia, and during the last 2 years with the company he worked as one of the Asia-Pacific retail practice leaders. Through this he could appreciate the contribution that other Japanese business people had made to the region in the past. In his 10 years at the company, he saved money and gained various experiences, so he decided to start his entrepreneurship endeavors immediately after quitting. He started a company. He wanted to keep learning and growing and to create a positive working environment for others. He was financed by his business partners and quickly developed an

Table 3.38 Case C-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1977
18	Entered university
19	Passed the bar exam
22	Graduated from a Japanese university Entered a leading advertising company in Japan
25	Registered as a lawyer Got a job at a famous law firm in Japan
28	Seconded to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, as a lawyer specializing in copyright, to deal with negotiations between Japan and South East Asia and the Middle East
31	He returned to the initial law office and moved to the Shanghai office He developed legal skills in detecting copied products
34	Quit the law firm Established a consultancy firm, specializing in copyright law in Shanghai
42	Currently running 7–8 businesses including a counterfeiting consulting firm, works with lawyers from Japan and China, deals with patent and trademark intellectual property issues with patent attorneys (including patent translation work using AI) and provides consulting services for businesses seeking to expand into China. In addition, he started an import company (which brings Japanese content, such as movies and animation to China) and an animation production company, which was established as a joint venture with a famous Japanese animation company.

online marketing and e-commerce platform to spread Japanese creative content to China. He now provides app technology and big data service to various Japanese companies based in China.

Case C-5 comes from a family of craftsman, including engineers, but no one has been self-employed. He had no mentor for his first job, but he did have colleagues whom he respected. His personal life and work life are deeply integrated, but he does have some separate networks. In his working life he has networks with his Japanese clients, Chinese counterparts, Chinese who are private investors in his competition and Chinese entrepreneurs. As for his private networks, he often engages in leading non-profit activities as he wants to create greater interdependence between people in the world. He currently has a high level of satisfaction in both his personal life and work. Case C-5 employs about 130 full-time staff and an additional 20 who are non-regular employees. He believes his work experience in Japan was extremely useful for his future and he works by a career anchor that stresses his desire to improve the world one step at a time.

Money is important to Case C-5 as he understands that it is necessary in order to grow the company. He began with 100 million yen and the venture is jointly owned by seven people. Case C-5 is engaged in professional development and sets personal goals of running a marathon once or twice a year. He has no major concerns but professionally he believes that he has a greater corporate social responsibility compared to the past, seeing this as an important turning point in management. He currently also has an office in Japan (Table 3.39).

Table 3.39 Case C-5 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1974
22	Graduated from a Japanese university
22	Got job at the Japanese Government
25	Entered a business school in the United States
26	Quit the job and entered a consulting company
36	Quit the company and started own business
45	Expanding his business

3.7 Hong Kong



Hong Kong

3.7.1 Country Context

The one country-two systems approach to governance, post-1997 handover Hong Kong from the British to China, has allowed China to be self-governing to a reasonable degree but it is not independent from Chinese politics. Hong Kong is flourishing, and was named the freest economy in the world in 2017. The market-driven economy has resulted in expected GDP growth and a high level of consumer spending in the last quarter. The region has a high degree of FDI, and access to finance by the general population is extremely high at 96%.

Similar to Japan, Hong Kong has a rapidly aging population, with a median age of around 44 years, which means the national workforce is slowly decreasing by around 0.3% per year, yet, despite the drop in labor, it is an attractive destination for business due to its strong infrastructure, business support services and use of English.

3.7.2 Cases

Interviews were conducted in 2014 in Hong Kong, with follow-up interviews conducted in 2018.

Case HKG-1

Case HKG-1 was born in Hokkaido in 1960 and after graduating from junior college he worked at a cooperative for 6 years. After questioning his life, he quit his job and was unemployed for a year. He registered at a job placement office, *Hello Work* and was offered a job with a company based in Hong Kong. As part of his training, he initially worked at the office in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan but due to the end of the bubble economy, that office closed and he was soon transferred to the Hong Kong office, where he worked for 11 years. As Hong Kong became part of China at that time, the future of Hong Kong was uncertain.

In 2004, he decided to start his own consultancy firm with his wife called *Access Point International*. The company assists Japanese expatriates moving to, living and working in Hong Kong. As for his personal development, he plans and presents a series of five lecture series per year through which he can build his networks; both personal and professional. Currently, he is moderately satisfied with his work and life and in Hong Kong he has a mentor to whom he goes to seek advice on growing his business. He has strong professional networks with Japanese companies based in Japan, particularly those who are interested in setting up their business in Hong Kong.

Through his daughters, Case HKG-1 has a social network and is planning to establish a *Papa's Association* among expatriates in Hong Kong. There is a Japanese school that runs up until junior high school, so before reaching the end of that level of schooling, he and his wife will decide their next move, based on the future of their daughter's education.⁶¹

⁶¹Since the interview, they returned to Japan in 2019. Since then he has been working for a consultancy company in Tokyo as an advisor.

Table 3.40 Case HKG-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Hokkaido in 1960
22	Worked for Japanese co-operatives
27	Unemployed, looking for work
28	Joined a company, briefly trained in Sapporo, Japan, but immediately the company closed in Japan and he was relocated to the main office in Hong Kong
33	Established his own consultancy firm in Hong Kong
53	Currently expanding his business

HKG-1 is most concerned with the satisfaction of life over business. He wants to create the best life for his family. The cooperative he initially worked for in Japan opened his life to what is possible. Although it followed strict traditional values, he could learn much from the experience. He believes that now, to continue living, one needs somewhere to live, somewhere to eat and something more from life. *He often thinks about whether what he is doing is right or not or beneficial or not.* These kinds of thoughts help him to pursue his goals (Table 3.40).

Case HKG-2

Case HKG-2 was born in Fukushima Prefecture, in 1948 and was 65 years old at the time of interview. After high school, she attended vocational school, where she studied English. She was recruited as a flight attendant for a major Japanese airline. She worked for the company for 3 years before she married. While she was raising her children, her husband was asked to work in Hong Kong, so as a family, they relocated. When she went back to work she got a job as a manager at a Japanese restaurant for a couple of months. After that, she was selected as a General Manager for the *Hong Kong Japanese Club*, a very prestigious society, where she worked from 1994 to 2004. In 2004, at the age of 55, the mandatory retirement age, she retired. In the meantime, her husband passed away. Through her network with the Japanese club, she decided to set up a food delivery company called *Fine Japanese Food Co. Ltd.*,⁶² supplying Japanese food to Japanese restaurants in Hong Kong. She began with four employees and has now expanded to ten employees. She teaches her staff Japanese service and hospitality standards, *omotenashi*.⁶³ She stated that she had a higher level of satisfaction while working at the Japanese club as she has a very heavy sense of responsibilities and now is under pressure to continually make a profit. She felt that her work experience at the Japanese airline was extremely useful in preparing her for the future.

At work, she is trying to delegate all the work to her staff. In the near future, she hopes she can step back and try something new. Her concern at present is that Hong Kong is becoming more Chinese-controlled and influenced, making it difficult to predict the future. Although her daughter is married and living in Tokyo, and her

⁶²<http://www.finejpfood.com.hk/>.

⁶³*Omotenashi* is a Japanese term used in the hospitality industry. It captures the way in which Japanese hosts pay attention to detail and anticipate their guests' needs.

Table 3.41 Case HKG-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Fukushima Prefecture in 1948
High school	Ordinary student
18	Studied English at vocational school
19	Flight attendant
22	Housewife
44	Expatriate wife in Hong Kong
45	General manager in a Japanese Club
55	Mandatory retirement Age
57	Established a Japanese Food Wholesale company, CEO. Opened the company website, which was the first website in the Japanese food wholesale market in Hong Kong
60	Opened the first on-line shop specializing in Japanese food in Hong Kong
65	Expanding her business

son is living in Germany, she remains in Hong Kong. She respects her heart and goes with her gut when making decisions. As a career anchor, she said that when she can't find the solution by thinking, she has to move her body, take exercise, eat well and enjoy life in her own way (Table 3.41).

Case HK-3

Case HK-3 was born in Kumamoto Prefecture in 1955. After graduating from university in Japan with a degree in interior design in 1979, he joined an electric company and was in charge of designing custom lighting fixtures. When he was 29 years old, he was assigned to Hong Kong and spent 4 years in design and overseas production research at the Hong Kong office. But at the age of 34, the company decided to withdraw from the Hong Kong market. Although the Hong Kong market had recorded profits, he was forced to leave. In the same year, along with his co-workers, he decided to follow up with his previous clients and established *Lighting Workshop Company*⁶⁴ in Hong Kong, to act as a distributor. Currently, the company employs two staff and they design and propose lighting arrangements, purchasing lighting equipment from Japan. He is mainly engaged in work as a sales agent.

He said most of his work comes from Japanese companies, and that through this experience he has learned a lot about quality assurance and safety, on-site procedures and how to deal with problems. In Japan, if one suffers a loss of 2–10 million yen due to the failure of a custom-made product during work, it is common for the company to take on the responsibility, not the person in charge. On the other hand, in the case of Hong Kong, the responsible person has a different way of viewing responsibility from hiding the problem or running away. He said that while working in Hong Kong, he sometimes encountered cultural differences. Although he is not good at Chinese, he says that this does not have a major impact on his own work because he works with drawings.

⁶⁴<http://lwc.com.hk/company.php/>.

Table 3.42 Case HKG-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Kumamoto Prefecture in 1955
22	Studied interior design and graduated from university Got a job as a lighting specialist at an electric company
29	Transferred to the Hong Kong office
34	Company decided to withdraw from business in Hong Kong Quit the company and established his own lighting company with a friend Became the CEO of his own lighting design company
59	Continuing to expand his business

Currently, a third of his business network is connected to a Japanese design office, and the other two-thirds are connected to a Hong Kong-based office. In addition, at the request of mainland China and Singapore, he is doing custom work for lighting equipment in places such as hotels and shopping malls.

In his personal life, he has established social networks through his hobby of diving, has made acquaintances from work, close friends among the fathers of children who attend the same school as his children. He said that he is happy with his work–life balance in Hong Kong, as his wife is working as an illustration designer. He can enjoy diving on the weekend and returns home to visit his family in Japan once a year. With regard to income, he feels that a minimum amount of compensation is necessary, as long as he can keep working and supporting his family. He cites his career anchor as: *it is important to be honest with the customer*. If something goes wrong, he will try to tell the customer early in the matter so as to be able to interact smoothly and successfully to reach a conclusion. He intends to continue working until the age of 80, when his second child graduates from university and doesn't intend to leave Hong Kong (Table 3.42).

Case HK-4

HK-4 was born in Mie Prefecture, in 1960. After graduating from university, he went to work as a technician at the central laboratory of a Japanese medical school hospital at the age of 24. He was satisfied with the blood sample and inspection work he conducted there, but he felt dissatisfied with the seniority-based salary system. In addition, while the amount of work increased, the personnel did not, and although the headquarters requested the lab to maintain the quality of service, the lab couldn't guarantee that with limited human resources, so he decided to leave the company.

After quitting, he applied for the *Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers* (JOCV). Although, it was pointed out that he had a lack of experience, he was selected and sent to the Department of Malaria of the South Pacific Solomon Islands, Health Department at the age of 26 years. While working in the Solomon Islands, he felt he enjoyed living abroad. At the end of his contract he decided to look for another overseas position in a developing country.

When he was 28 years old and back in Japan, he ended up employed by a health checkup company in Chiba Prefecture. When he started at the company, he heard that they planned to establish an inspection facility in Hong Kong and at the age of 30, he was stationed in Hong Kong as a manager. However, since he did not have local authority, he became frustrated and he decided to quit at the age of 39.

Table 3.43 Case HKG-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Mie Prefecture in 1960
24	After graduating from university, got a job as a technician at a university hospital blood test department
26	Selected as a Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteer, assigned to the local government in the South Solomon Islands
28	Returned to Japan. Employed by a health check-up company
30	Transferred to Hong Kong and set up the Hong Kong branch
39	Quit the company and established his own health service check-up company in Hong Kong
53	Expanding his business

Soon after he quit he decided to found his own company, *Mediport International Ltd.*⁶⁵ For the first 3 months, initially his work involved working as an insurance broker with one nurse on staff, but after 4 years SARS⁶⁶ occurred in 2003 and customers increased rapidly. In 2004, he had to hire two full-time employees and one nurse. At this time his business centered on adult general medical checkups and child health checkups.

He said that his initial work experience in Japan was not useful but he is grateful for the support he received when he decided to become independent. Satisfaction at work in Japan was 2–3 on a five-point scale, but it is 4 at present. As a measure of the success of his entrepreneurship efforts, he mentioned that his income has now returned to the level and living standard he had had in Japan. With regard to income, of course he believes that it is better to have a higher income, but life and satisfaction should not be decided based on the level of income. He said it is important for companies to provide a good working environment in which employees can work satisfactorily.

He has mentors within his field and as part of his professional development he engages with his mentors and also expands his qualifications. He recently took qualifications in mental healthcare via a correspondence course and is attending classes once a month in Japan.

His network consists of people he has met through personal clients at the consultation desk for medical companies and the clinic outsourcing centers. Outside the office, he often meets with a friend who is detached from his professional life and together they like to walk in the mountains and engage in photography, specializing in capturing shots of flowers. His current concern is whether he has the provision of funds to deal with sudden problems on the job, and in his private life he is concerned about his role as a parent. His career anchor is *don't forget the benefits received* and he has stated that eventually he would like to be self-sufficient and able to work and live remotely either in Japan, in Hong Kong, or somewhere in the Solomon Islands, by the age of 60 (Table 3.43).

⁶⁵<http://www.mediport.com.hk/>.

⁶⁶Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was first discovered in Asia in February 2003. The outbreak lasted approximately 6 months as the disease spread to more than two dozen countries around the world.

3.8 Thailand



Thailand

3.8.1 Country Context

Thailand borders the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, located next to the emerging economies of Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia. The country is blessed with beautiful beach and mountain landscapes that are highly suitable for agriculture, fishery and tourism alike. The country has a constitutional monarchy and is a member of APEC and ASEAN. In less than 30 years, Thailand has risen from low income to upper-middle income status. After a brief spell of political and civil instability following the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, FDI is increasing, with foreign companies viewing Thailand and its strategic position next to China as an attractive base in Asia. The country enjoys low inflation, low unemployment and recognizing and harnessing the power of the tourism industry. The government has developed various policies to support it and increased government spending in infrastructure and tourism-related initiatives (World Factbook 2019).

Thailand is highly reliant on international trade and cross-border business initiatives, as output accounts for around two-thirds of GDP (World Factbook). The exports include electronics, automobile parts and processed foods. Although the agricultural industry is comprised mostly of small farms, and contributes just 10% of GDP, it still the primary employer for around one-third of the population (including migrant workers from other South East Asian countries).

In terms of religion and society, the norms and expectations of the country are centered around Buddhist principles. The population enjoys a relatively secure macroeconomic environment and decent health and primary education. However, the World Bank suggests that improvements are necessary in terms of innovation, business sophistication, financial market development and, most importantly, labor market efficiency.

3.8.2 Cases

Interviews were conducted in 2016 in Bangkok and follow-up interviews were carried out in 2017.

Case TLD-1

Case TLD-1 was born in Tokyo in 1968. She graduated from a Japanese junior college. Upon graduation, she took a clerical job at a travel agency to make money while she was deciding what to do for her future. She quit her job at the age of 23 and was fired from various jobs over the next 10 years due to her alcoholism. At the age of 33, she took a new job and was asked to go to Bangkok to sell Japanese pillows in a Thai department store. This was a turning point in her life and career. She successfully sold all the pillows she took with her. From time to time, she was asked to sell Japanese goods to the Thai market, so made a number of visits to Bangkok. TLD-1 decided to spend some time alone in Thailand, to read books, refresh and contemplate her future. While she was there she attended a seminar run

Table 3.44 Case TLD-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1968
18	Entered a junior college in Japan
20	Got a job at a travel agency
23	Changed jobs repeatedly
33	Was asked to go to Bangkok and sell Japanese pillows at department store
35	Decided that she could do the same job herself and be her own boss, so quit her company and started her own business
45	CEO of a company called <i>KENKO PLUS</i> , selling health-care goods, air-purifiers and other related goods in Thailand

by WAOJE. It was there that she met a Japanese expatriate and took part in early morning study group sessions to learn about business. It was at this point that she decided she could run her own business called *KENKO PLUS*⁶⁷ (Health Plus). At the age of 35 she built up her company, initially selling healthy bedding and linen but now sells any products associated with health and wellbeing. She now employs eight Thai workers. As a result of the *Great East Japan Earthquake*, she invited her parents and sister to live in Bangkok. Her parents sold the family house in Japan and moved permanently to Thailand with her father's pension.

Through her communication with her colleagues she became convinced that she could take advantage of connections with different Japanese companies. She was able to introduce herself as a consultant to Japan-based companies. She stated that when she makes any major business decisions she runs them past Case TLD-7 and she believes that she would not have been able to achieve all that she has without the support of her mentor. After she changed her daily habits, she found her life changed dramatically. She now wakes at 3:00 am or 4:00 am in the morning to tackle the most important work. She then reads books and goes to the sports gym before going to bed at 8:00 pm and *believes that this good habit changes one's life*. She appreciates the troubling years she had at the beginning of her career; they helped to shape her future.

For Case TLD-1, money is a major driving force behind her business; the more cash she has, the better she can do. She believes that money can be used toward her next challenge. She hates competition and just wants to do what she believes in. She is highly satisfied with her life and career at this point (Table 3.44).

Case TLD-2

Case TLD-2 was born in Tokyo in 1964 and graduated from a Japanese university. Through his studies he came to think strongly about how to solve the problems in the world, especially how to address poverty and disparities abroad. Therefore, he decided to go backpacking in Thailand and Nepal several times to find the meaning of happiness.

⁶⁷<https://www.kenkoshop.co.th/>.

After graduating, he got a job at a travel company specializing in South East Asia with a dream of becoming a journalist whose subject matter was South East Asia. He moved to Bangkok and worked as a tour coordinator for about 2 years. After being transferred to Bangkok, he worked hard and in 3 months was able to speak basic Thai; however, his company ordered him to move to Singapore, so he resigned. Six months after he quit, he was hired as a local employee at another travel company and worked at that company for 10 years, but he resigned from the company as he thought it would be difficult for him to realize himself if he stayed with one company permanently.

It was at this point, at the age of 36, that he established the *Wellness Life Project Co., Ltd.*,⁶⁸ with the aim of revitalizing the mind and body while staying for a long time overseas. He used start-up funds of 2 million yen and chose to base his business in Thailand. He decided on Thailand because there are three attractive features to doing business there. First, the nature; second, the culture (he liked the way there is respect for elders and people with disabilities) and third the Buddha's teachings. Initially, he developed travel tours for people with disabilities, but he received many cancellations after the *9-11 Terrorist Attacks* in the United States in 2001.

At the age of 44 in 2008, he diversified to establish a company specializing in rehabilitation in Thailand. However, almost half a year later, following disagreements with the co-founders, he decided to give up the business. He gave his share of the company to his co-founder free of charge.

At the age of 45 in 2009, the travel business deteriorated further due to the unrest in Thailand and the occupation of Thai airfields, so he jointly operated a restaurant to make a living.

At the age of 47, 2011, he started a charcoal business, selling charcoal to restaurants throughout Thailand. The business began to take off from around 2015. Currently, he hopes to realize his aim of creating a universal society where disabled people can travel freely, and he is continuing his activities.

He engages in reading, yoga, breathing exercises and meditation as part of his self-development. He is satisfied with his present life, and needs only enough money to live. He feels that work-life balance is more important than anything else. There were no mentors at the time he was assigned to Bangkok, Thailand, but now he has several mentors including connections through WAOJE and his charcoal-burning clients. His career anchor is *borrow wisdom and train the body that you cannot borrow*. As for the future, he intends to continue living in Thailand until he dies as he has married a Thai woman and has children (Table 3.45).

Case TLD-3

Case TLD-3 was born in Kochi Prefecture in 1973 and she graduated from a Japanese university. At junior high school, she had ten pen-pals which ignited her interest in foreign countries, people and languages. At university there were many returnee students, so the environment in which she studied was very international.

⁶⁸<https://www.baantao.com/>.

Table 3.45 Case TDL-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Tokyo in 1964
18	Entered university, during university went backpacking in Thailand and Vietnam
23	Entered a travel agency specializing in South East Asia Transferred to Bangkok
25	Quit the travel agency Worked for a different travel agency
36	Established a health and wellness company in Thailand
42	Established a company specializing in rehabilitation in Thailand but gave his share to his partner free of charge, due to a disagreement with him
47	Started a charcoal-burning business in Thailand
51	Continuing to expand his business

While she was at university, she took 1 year off and attended language programs in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

After graduation, TLD-3 took a job at a venture capital company where she was recruited into a career track. She worked in the accounting section for 3 years. However, she found that at that company she would not be able to use her language skills, so she changed the company and started working for an American-based pharmaceutical company in Japan. At that time, as her boss was American the language used at the workplace was English. Although she used English she was unable to develop her accounting skills, so she felt unfulfilled. Two years later she moved to a company which sells telephone systems for call centers. In this position she was able to work as an accountant. She was sent on assignment to Singapore for one and a half years and worked in the company for 3 years in total. She took leave from the company and moved to the United States with her husband. While she was in the States, she gained a CPA license, but on return her and her husband parted ways. When she returned she found it difficult for her to work in Japan. She started looking for a job in South East Asia and was offered a job in Bangkok by a Japanese-run accounting consulting firm. There were three Japanese working at the company and 50 Thai employees. The company gave consultation to over 200 Japanese-affiliated companies. She was in charge of audit work, using her CPA and English skills as she checked the Financial Statements of over 50 companies.

TLD-3 became overwhelmed by the workload at the company and she decided to set up her own company, in order to provide the same service to clients which her boss had offered. Following this offer, she set up a company with start-up capital of 2 million Thai baht, equivalent to 6 million Japanese yen. The company is called *ProMission Co., Ltd.*⁶⁹ She now employs four Thai employees and has contracts with 30 companies overall. TLD-3 works on the regular monthly accounts of 25 companies which provide stability for her business.

⁶⁹<https://promission.asia/>.

Table 3.46 Career path case TLD-3

Age	Career path
	Born in Kochi Prefecture in 1973
Junior high school	Pen-pal relationship with student overseas
18	Entered university, majoring in foreign languages, took part in a language program in Ireland and the U.K
23	Worked at a Japanese venture capital company in Japan
26	Worked at American-affiliated companies in Tokyo Sent on a 1.5 years assignment in Singapore
32	Lived in the USA, obtained a CPA
34	Returned to the previous American-affiliated company in Japan
36	Worked for a Japanese-affiliated company in Bangkok
38	Established her own consulting and accounting firm, employing four Thai in Bangkok
41	Expanding her business

For professional development, she has a US CPA license, certificates in accounting and skills in Thai language. She is very fairly satisfied with her current work, yet she seeks to find a better work–life balance. When she was in Japan she did not have any mentors but now, in Bangkok, she has a few mentors through her work. Her networks consist of her clients and WAOJE in Bangkok. In her social circle, she has networks through her belly-dancing class. TLD-3 plans to continue to live overseas and at present although her base is in Bangkok, she may move her base to another ASEAN country in the future. To her, job satisfaction is most important in her life. She stated that her experience in Japanese companies was not so useful for her current career. In contrast, her work experience with American-affiliated companies in Japan was extremely useful to her career as it helped prepare her for the relationships and work she has now with her clients. She believes it is important to be happy and in order to be happy one needs a certain level of income, the quality of work and work–life balance, which are important. Her career anchor is to *develop a win–win relationship* with the people she is working with and if this is achieved, other things will come. Her dream is to expand her company through staff education (Table 3.46).

Case TLD-4

TLD-4 was born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1972. He studied at a Japanese high school but studied in Denmark for 1 year during high school. Following this, he first entered university in Japan and went to a language school in Australia for 1 year. At 20 years old he was accepted to study at Griffith University in Australia and majored in international relations. After graduating from the university at the age of 23, he returned to Japan and spent one year working as a part-time employee at a convenience store.

At the age of 25, he got a job at an investment consulting company focusing on Vietnam and was assigned to Ho Chi Minh a week after joining the company. He worked there for one and a half years. After returning to Japan, he decided to work in the sales field in Japan and worked at a TV company for 3 months. Unhappy, he left the company and decided to work in South East Asia and wanted to start his own business. Consequently, he visited Singapore and Malaysia, and got a job through his acquaintances while staying in Thailand. At the time, the company needed 2 million baht in start-up funds, equivalent to 6 million Japanese yen, so to help supplement his income he carried out translation. At the time he was 27 years old; he was able to establish *Lighthouse Info Service*⁷⁰ company which provides studying abroad program in Thailand for Japanese people. At 28 years old, he established *JEducation Co., Ltd.* for Thai people to study abroad in Japan.

Initially, he mainly focused on providing study abroad for Japanese people in Thailand, but now the mainstream work is support for Thai people who study abroad. When he was 32, he established a Japanese language school in Bangkok. At the age of 39, he established another company *J Career Recruitment Service*, where he started recruitment business. It helps Thais who have finished studying in Japan find employment in Thailand or Japan.

As part of his self-development, he learns Thai language and participates in a cross-industrial association for the purpose of making personal connections. In addition, he has built a network with the yacht companions. He has not had any mentors. Although Case TLD-4 has a high level of current life satisfaction, he thinks that he cannot contribute enough to society, and his level of satisfaction with work is low. He also stated that although work satisfaction used to be most important, this changed after the birth of his child. His career anchor is to *cherish the will which stems from his idea of wanting to improve the world*. In the future, he intends to continue the company based in Bangkok. He is also considering being based in Japan in the future (Table 3.47).

Case TLD-5

Case TLD-5 was born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1979. He first had his eyes opened to working overseas through his uncle. His uncle traveled overseas and often brought back gifts for his nephew. His older sister was an office worker who did clerical duties at the company where she worked, and enjoyed visiting overseas 2–3 times per year for vacation. In addition, she studied for a year in Italy, to learn Italian. He attended the same university as Case TLD-6, but he said he was not a serious student. When he was a freshman, he went backpacking for 1 month in Thailand. He took the opportunity to travel in every school vacation and made a decision not to be a salaried worker but to start his own company. By his final year of university, he made a clear plan to be in the restaurant business. He went through the traditional recruitment procedure and specifically decided to seek a position with a particular Japanese *izakaya*⁷¹ chain. He chose this company because if an employee

⁷⁰<http://www.lighthouse-info.com/>; <https://jeduction.co.jp/>

⁷¹A traditional Japanese-style pub.

Table 3.47 Career path case TLD-4

Age	Career path
	Born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1972
High school	Studied at a Japanese branch high-school in Denmark
20	Entered Griffith University in Australia, majoring in International Relations
23	Graduated from the university
24	Worked as a part-time employee in Japan
25	Got a job at a consultancy firm and was transferred to Ho-Chi-Minh City, Vietnam
26	Quit his job and got a job in Japan as a sales agent at TV company but quit after 3 months
32	Established a Japanese language school in Thailand
39	Established a recruitment placement company in Thailand
43	Continuing to expand his business

worked for more than 5 years at the company, they would provide them with a loan of up to 50 million yen to start their own restaurants. He was offered a job with the company and worked his way up through positions in the front of house, back of house, store manager and eventually area manager.

At the age of 28, he quit the company. He planned to open a restaurant in Tokyo. At that time, a Thai businessman, who was a friend of his father, happened to visit Tokyo. His father explained his son's plan of opening a restaurant to his friend. Then, the Thai friend advised him to abandon his plans in the Japanese market due to the declining population and to try to establish the business in Thailand instead. He decided that if he was to set up his business in Thailand, it was highly likely to be successful, so he decided to move to Bangkok and start preparing for his future. On arrival in Bangkok he attended Thai language school for 6 months. At school, he met many people and learned how to set up a business in Thailand. He also met with a Japanese expatriate who gave him much advice. In the latter half of his 6 months, he started to prepare to set up his restaurant.

After a year, he was able to open to his first restaurant called *My Porch*.⁷² He needed 18 million yen to open the business. He was able to put up 5 million yen of his own savings and the remaining 13 million yen was raised through investors (father, father's friends, Thai friends and other friends) without the need to take out a loan. During his time working at the *izakaya* in Japan, he had head-hunted staff from Japan to work in Bangkok. One chef accepted an offer to work with him in Thailand, yet he was specialist in Western food and not Japanese food. As such, he decided to be flexible with the style of his restaurant and changed the focus from entirely Japanese to a Japanese–Western hybrid style restaurant. He chose a location where Japanese expatriates lived. His restaurant proved popular with Japanese

⁷²<https://www.myporchbangkok.com/>.

housewives who would take a Japanese-style lunch during the week after daily grocery shopping and housework. It became a hub for the Japanese housewife community. The first 3 months were not successful but from the fourth month he began to make a profit.

In the second year, he decided to expand his business. A traditional Thai massage parlor in the same area was declared bankrupt. As a result, the landlord offered him the opportunity to rent and reopen the traditional Thai massage parlor. He immediately took this opportunity and decided to open a high quality parlor, focused on cleanliness and high-level of service as well as techniques provided in both Japanese and Thai. He called the business *At Ease*.⁷³ The price was 10–20% higher than the average Thai massage parlor shops but tourists and Japanese expatriates were prepared to pay the increased price.

In the third year, he decided to expand further to open a *karaoke* box for Japanese tourists. It was a successful endeavor. He added a second store in year five, in addition to a sweet shop. However, the sweet shop was unsuccessful and he decided to close it. In the sixth year, he decided to travel around Thailand and neighboring countries to look for more opportunities. In year seven, he opened the first branch of his restaurant in Hanoi, Vietnam. In the future he wants to do business in Japan and become a bridge between Japan and other ASEAN countries. He does not like to borrow money for his business, although he had to do so in the past. He follows the business model of just leasing properties, so he can easily close the business if it is not successful. He makes comparisons between his businesses to see which are successful and if they are seen to be failing, he withdraws them from the market. He believes that when he starts new businesses he performs better. So he looks for opportunities to challenge himself.

His mentors are Japanese expatriates in Thailand. His career anchor is the Japanese idiom ‘*nasebanaru*’ that can be translated as: where there is a will there is a way (Table 3.48).

Case TLD-6

Case TLD-6 was born in Oita Prefecture, in 1978. He was a graduate of a Japanese university. During university, he audited an international liberal arts course, where he met students from various South East Asian countries. He tried to get a job through the traditional Japanese recruitment route. Although he failed to get a position in his first choice of company, he did receive a job from his second choice. As a graduation trip (which is traditional for Japanese university students before they embark on their career) he traveled through South East Asia to meet his friends. When he was in Thailand, he heard that a major Japanese automobile company in Thailand was looking for Japanese local staff. He abandoned his plans to go back to Japan to enter the traditional Japanese company and took the position

⁷³<http://atease-massage.com/thai-massage/>.

Table 3.48 Case TLD-5 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1979
18	Ordinary university student Backpacked around Asia, traveling from Chiangmai, Thailand to Singapore Decided to be an entrepreneur
23	Worked for 5 years at a Japanese restaurant
28	Opened a Western-style restaurant called <i>My Porch</i> , in a Japanese expatriate residential area
30	Opened a traditional Thai massage parlor called <i>At Ease</i>
31	Opened a <i>karoke</i> box
32	Opened <i>At Ease</i> second shop
33	Opened a sweets shop. Failed and closed
34	No expansion. Started traveling ASEAN countries
35	Opened <i>My Porch</i> in Hanoi, Vietnam
36	Owns five restaurants and related shops

at a prestigious Japanese automobile company in Bangkok. While he worked at that company he said he gained many professional skills. His clients were executives of leading Japanese companies in Bangkok. Through these connections he learned much about international business. In particular, he stated he could better understand the relationships with *zaibatsu*⁷⁴, such as overseas Chinese, Indian and American companies. He understood the relationship between all these channels. Although he was young, a fresh graduate, he learned how to behave within the organization and how to manage local Thai staff. At the age of 26 he decided to step away from his job and to open his own company. At that time, he needed 1.5 million yen, that is approximately \$12,000 as start-up capital.

He started a consultancy firm, called *ASEAN Japan Consulting Co., Ltd.*⁷⁵ with four Thai researchers. For example, his company researched about the safety of elevators in major tourist hotels and fed this information back to Japanese-based tourist companies. Other projects he started were concerned with pets and elderly care. He was contracted to do market research for 11 Japan-based companies. He used his in-country experience and networks to build a portfolio of clients. Through doing these marketing research projects, he was able to identify a new, niche market. He decided to embark on a joint venture with a leading dry-cleaning company in Japan. The Japanese company provided the technical assistance and he provided the in-country knowledge employing 40 Thai workers (15 at the factory, 15 at the shop and 10 at the office). At the time of interview, he had 13 shops and intended to expand to 20 stores throughout Bangkok. He reported to his Tokyo

⁷⁴Is a Japanese term referring to industrial and financial business conglomerates, whose influence and size allowed great control over significant parts of the Japanese economy.

⁷⁵<https://www.asean-j.net/company/>.

Table 3.49 Case TLD-6 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Oita Prefecture in 1978
18	University student, majoring in commerce
22	Failed to get an offer from his first choice company during traditional job hunting
23	Traveled around SE Asian Countries and got a job offer from a major Japanese automobile company in Thailand
26	Established a market research company, employing four researchers
36	Started a joint venture business of dry-cleaning company in Japan
37	Continuing to expand his business

partner periodically (however, this contract was closed and the Japanese cleaning company decided to start a dry-cleaning business in Bangkok by themselves).

He did not have any mentors when he first started work. He developed his skills through reading books; however, now, other Japanese expatriates in Thailand act as his mentors. He states that in order to do work successfully, *trust and sincerity are most important*. His long-term plan is to expand his market research consultancy into neighboring countries and continue to have a base in Thailand. He has a Japanese wife and she lives with him in Bangkok. She attends a Thai language school. He continues to study the Thai language and is able to communicate with locals in their language. He feels he has an ability to foresee various business opportunities. He is focused on maintaining a high salary and achieving growth in his company. He is highly satisfied with his personal and professional circumstance (Table 3.49).

Case TLD-7

Case TLD-7 was born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1970. He is renowned among Japanese expatriates in Bangkok as the most successful Japanese businessperson in Bangkok. As a child, he was a boy scout. While he was in high school he took part in a 2-week scouting camp in the United States that really opened his eyes to study in the United States. He went to a university in Oregon, USA and majored in Business Administration. During his time studying overseas, he decided that he wanted to become a businessman, but not like a traditional Japanese salaryman. He had an image of a traditional Japanese salaryman through reading Japanese *manga* as a child. This image remained with him and he did not want to follow that route. He decided that he wanted to work in a country other than the United States or Japan.

After university he went to Malaysia to find a job but was unsuccessful. From Kuala Lumpur he moved to Bangkok and for 2 weeks, he looked for a job. He eventually found a job at a real estate agency. He worked but quickly decided that he could do the job successfully by himself. Six months later, with a friend, he opened his own real estate agency in Bangkok. He received start-up funds from a

Table 3.50 Career path case TLD-7

Age	Career path
	Born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1970
Elementary school	Boy scout
High school	2 weeks camp in the USA
18	Went to university in the USA and studied Business Administration
22	Looked for work in Malaysia, but failed
23	Arrived in Bangkok and found a job at a real-estate agency
24	Established a company with a friend, with the assistance of a Japanese investor. Started a recruitment company with two Japanese and two Thais
45	His company is the biggest recruitment company in Thailand and is expanding business to Myanmar

Japanese investor. Initially, he provided a one-stop-service for real estate needs and wanted to change to a recruitment business as he could see that many Japanese companies were beginning to invest in Thailand, resulting in a huge need for this type of business. However, his investor did not approve of this change, so he changed the investor and started his company from scratch, with four employees, two Japanese and two Thai, with a start-up fund equivalent to 7–8 million yen. He is now the CEO of his own recruitment company with 60 Thai employees and 13 Japanese employees. The company has now become the biggest in its industry in Thailand and has expanded into Myanmar. It is called *Personnel Consultant Manpower*.⁷⁶

As for professional development, after he moved to Bangkok, he started to study the Thai language, assisted in the set-up of WAOJE in Thailand and became a member of the *Rotary International Club*.

He is highly satisfied with his personal and private circumstances. He sends his children to boarding school in Japan as he wants them to be brought up with the values of being Japanese. He feels like his success has depended on his ability to listen carefully to others. He is concerned *with making others around him happy and believes if he can do this, he will also be able to live a happy and successful life*. He feels that as an employer, he has to continue to create value for his employees; if not, the employees will not be satisfied and will be less productive. He lives by the words, *don't extinguish the fire, keep having passion*. He says these words to motivate and inspire him to keep going (Table 3.50).

⁷⁶<https://www.personnelconsultant.co.th/>.

3.9 The Philippines



The Philippines

3.9.1 Country Context

With over 7,000 islands, the Philippines has an unenviable task in ensuring parity between rural and urban areas, yet as a nation overall the poverty rate has declined from 10.5% in 2012 to 6.6% in 2015. Approximately 40% of the employed work in informal positions and the majority of the poor live in rural areas. Since 2014, the country has begun to welcome FDI and with 31% of the population under 15, it is a young country in Asia, with a growing labor force. In general, according to our analysis of data from the World Bank, the Philippines was reasonably resilient to the global economic crisis. This was due to the large remittances home from Filipino workers and migrants overseas and a lower dependency on exports. Similarly, the government has made efforts to improve the tax system and improve the competitiveness of the country.

The election of President Duterte in 2016 resulted in harsher measures for illegal activity, particularly crime, illegal drug use and corruption, which he sees as barriers to development and economic growth. He has introduced a new ten-point socio-economic agenda (Box 3.1).

Box 1. President Duterte's Ten-point Plan for Socio-Economic Growth

-
1. Continue and maintain current macroeconomic policies, including fiscal, monetary and trade policies.
 2. Institute progressive tax reform and more effective tax collection, indexing taxes to inflation. A tax reform package will be submitted to Congress by September 2016
 3. Increase competitiveness and the ease of doing business. This effort will draw upon successful models used to attract business to local cities (e.g., Davao) and pursue the relaxation of the Constitutional restrictions on foreign ownership, except as regards land ownership, in order to attract foreign direct investment
 4. Accelerate annual infrastructure spending to account for 5% of GDP, with public-private partnerships playing a key role
 5. Promote rural and value chain development toward increasing agricultural and rural enterprise productivity and rural tourism
 6. Ensure security of land tenure to encourage investments, and address bottlenecks in land management and titling agencies
 7. Invest in human capital development, including health and education systems, and match skills and training to meet the demand of businesses and the private sector
 8. Promote science, technology and the creative arts to enhance innovation and creative capacity toward self-sustaining, inclusive development
 9. Improve social protection programs, including the government's Conditional Cash Transfer program, to protect the poor against instability and economic shocks
 10. Strengthen implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law to enable especially poor couples to make informed choices on financial and family planning
-

Source Republic of the Philippines, Department of Health.

The results of these reforms are yet to be seen but initial indications show that they are making significant progress. But in terms of inward investment, many outside the country who are considering investing or relocating may feel that increasing security and reducing corruption as lower barriers to entry.

3.9.2 Cases

Interviews were conducted in 2019 in Manila.

Case PPN-1

Case PPN-1 was born in Saitama Prefecture in 1977. His father was a Japanese salaryman but his mother comes from a background of entrepreneurs. He studied at a private university in Japan, majoring in accounting. During university, he spent most of his time working at his part-time jobs. Using the funds that he saved from his job he enjoyed traveling. As a freshman he spent 1 week in Phuket, Thailand; this was his first exposure to overseas. After travelling to the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand he got a job at a famous Japanese advertising company. He worked in the sales division and in 2008 he became a manager for media design, sales strategy and distribution. In his mid-30s, he started to think that he could leave and become independent. His company had a culture which encouraged employees to become entrepreneurs. He resigned from the company in 2014 at the age of 37 and established a company at the age of 38 in 2016.

At his company, one of his seniors was engaged in the free paper business and suggested him to enter this field. After conducting some initial market research, he found that the Philippines was the only country in South East Asia that didn't yet have a free paper, so he suddenly decided to visit the Philippines and consequently decided to enter that market. His company is called *Plecomm*.⁷⁷

He asked one of his colleagues to join him in his business. She quit her position and worked with him on all the administration tasks, related to setting up and running a new business while he worked on the sales and design element. He used his personal funds along with investment from various colleagues and business associates to start the business. For the first 3 years his company was in the red, but following that he began to make a profit. It took time but it is now sustainable. He is concerned with making a profit for his company. Until the time of interview, the company was in the red, but now it is making a profit. Once he earns as much as he did in Japan, he will feel he has achieved success. He now hires eight employees; two Japanese and six local staff.

From his early 30s, as he was considering leaving the original company he started to engage in professional development workshops and read books on skills development, management, and so on. Through the years he has built professional networks with client companies, his staff, and other business associates. As for his social network, almost all his friends are connected to his work as the two worlds are interconnected.

He is highly satisfied in his work and life. Although he didn't have a mentor in the early part of his career, at present, he has two mentors; one is his counterpart who is running the company with him, they are joint decision makers. His other mentor is a Japanese expatriate entrepreneur who started a business in the

⁷⁷<http://plecomm.com/>.

Table 3.51 Case PPN-1 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Saitama Prefecture in 1977
22	Graduated from a Japanese university and entered an advertising company
23	Worked in a sales position at the advertising company
37	Quit the company
38	Established a free-paper company in Manila, the Philippines
41	Continuing to diversify and expand business

Philippines from whom he can learn about the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. In the future, he hopes to continue working in the Philippines and values the time he spent working in Japan, as it gave him a secure base for his future. His career anchor is that he would like to *develop a solid infrastructure for Japanese to live successfully in the Philippines* and believes that *in business, you get out what you put in*. He has no current concerns and his two elder sisters live close to his parents, so he doesn't feel he has a duty to return to Japan (Table 3.51).

Case PPN-2

Case PPN-2 was born in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture in 1995 and comes from an entrepreneurial family. Her brother has a business in Mexico and her elder sister lives in Okinawa Prefecture as a nurse. While PPN-2 was at university, she traveled around the world as a backpacker, funded by her part-time job at a sports gym.

On graduating from a women's university, she got a job at a cyber security agency. Through that position, she gained skills in sales, advertising and product development. Before joining the company, during her third year at university, she started an NPO *Dear Me*⁷⁸ that provides support and assistance for poorer children to develop their dreams. She continued to work on this project while at the security company and eventually quit after less than 2 years to pursue her business full-time.

PPN-2 thought about conducting activities for these children that would be different to what they would usually encounter, so she developed a fashion show recruiting them as models to encourage them. She visited the Philippines and was welcomed by the bright and warm character of the people she met. She used a crowdfunding website and made connections with apparel companies, asking them to donate their clothes to the fashion show and she conducted six such fashion shows in 1 month to support the children.

At present, she is working on more fashion shows to raise money and exposure, but she is also establishing an education system to enable young people to enter the modeling world, become hair and make-up artists, and designers. She will open workshops and other education and training-related events. Once her business model is successful, she will expand the fashion shows and training to other developing countries.

⁷⁸<http://dearme.a-i-t.net/>.

Table 3.52 Case PPN-2 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1995
18	University student, went backpacking around the world and established an NGO in her third year of university
22	Entered a cyber security company and worked in sales, advertising, and merchandise development
23	Quit the company Established an NGO to support young people in poverty

As for funding, she used crowdfunding to start her business. It cost 300,000 yen to host six fashion shows and after each show she writes a report to her investors. In the future, she plans to open an apparel company in Tokyo. Her business networks include talent agencies in the Philippines and Embassies. In terms of her social networks, in addition to her professional networks, she interacts with men and women of the same generation in the Philippines. As for her professional development, she believes that traveling abroad and talking with people who have a high level of motivation and are goal-orientated help her to develop her knowledge and skills.

While she was working in Japan at the cyber security agency, she had a busy but fulfilled life and was highly satisfied. In comparison, currently her level of satisfaction with her work is low but her overall satisfaction is extremely high. This is because she has only just started her company and there are challenges. She had a mentor at her first workplace who was her senior. This person taught her the importance of having a mind to help others and essential business skills. At present, she has two groups of mentors; Japanese expatriate entrepreneurs in the Philippines and a group of people who work in the Philippines whom she interacts with regularly.

In the future, she hopes to continue this project in the long term. She believes that satisfaction at work is most important and that her experience in Japan was very important for her and even though her income is negligible at the moment, she was prepared for this fact and knows that this will change in the future. She lives by the idea of paying it forward and approaches life with a smile and appreciation (Table 3.52).

Case PPN-3

Case PPN-3 was 39 years old at the time of interview and was born in Aichi Prefecture in 1979. Due to his father's work he was educated in Aichi Prefecture and Toyama Prefecture. Following high school graduation, he went to an accounting vocational school, and soon after entering, he got a part-time job at a western clothes store. Upon graduation of the vocational school he became full-time at the shop. The store went bankrupt and so he decided to take it over from the owner. He eventually returned the debt of approximately 600 million yen. He opened his own store with start-up funds of 3.5 million yen. In order to do this, he saved 1 million yen by selling over 3000 used clothes at local flea markets. He received those clothes free of charge from his friends. He also borrowed 2.5 million yen from his parents.

He decided to take a break from the business and went to the Philippines. He liked the warmth of the Philippines and was surprised to find that labor costs would be cheap there, so he started to think about opening his own store in the Philippines. When he was around 27 years old, he sold his shop in Japan to the manager. He learned how to sell his left over stock to China, so started to develop and expand his business. By doing trade between countries in South East Asia, he quickly learned how to gain profit through exchange. As a result, he established a web marketing company.

In 2010, he began to work in the e-commerce sector. In 2014, with a start-up fund of 50 million yen that he took from his savings, he diversified into the real estate business in the Philippines and employs 60 local staff. The company is called *HalloHallo Home Inc.*⁷⁹

He has never had a mentor, but he has an equal relationship with his co-president with whom he discusses his ideas and shares information from time to time. He has a strong network with his investors, not only individual investors but also companies, staff and agents. In his personal life, he believes that his work and his hobbies are interlinked and that through work, if he finds someone interesting, he talks or travels with them. He has two bases; one in the Philippines and one in Japan as that is where his family lives. While he is in Japan, he spends his time with family and meets with friends and people in business. While in the Philippines, he concentrates on his business. For the future of Japan, he wants to develop a scheme of trust and reliable networks. He believes his experience in Japan was useful for his future as it was through this that he developed his sense of intuition. His career anchor is based in the Japanese idiom *mafu-sakushin*, which translates as even if there is a small hole, with determination, you can pick away at the hole to make it bigger. Even if it is difficult, if you can continue you will eventually make it. As for professional development Case PPN-3 reads books and surfs the internet to get new news and data for analysis. *Income is not the most important thing in his life, what is important is when one is in trouble, it is important to think how many people you have around you who can help you.* It is vital to develop a supportive and appreciative environment around yourself and others. Value comes from the number of collaborators, not money. In general, he has a high level of satisfaction in his work and personal life. In terms of his concerns, he feels there are few people who actually put a level of challenge into their lives and that regular Japanese people are immature and unable to take a challenge (Table 3.53).

Case PPN-4

Case PPN-4 was born in Ishikawa Prefecture in 1982. When he was one-year-old, his family moved to the Philippines. His father ran a car-body-parts factory. He studied commercial law at a university in the Philippines. After graduating, he worked for his father's company. At the age of 28, he moved to a Japanese-affiliated company to improve his training. He became the sales manager

⁷⁹<http://www.hallohallohome.com/>.

Table 3.53 Case PPN-3 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Aichi Prefecture in 1979
18	Graduated from high school
18	Studied accounting at vocational school Took a part-time job as a sales assistant at a clothes shop
19	Became full-time staff at the clothes shop
20	Established his own clothes select shop Manufactured and sold on an OEM basis
23	Visited the Philippines for a break
26	Established a clothing company and web marketing company in the Philippines
31	Established a real estate company in the Philippines, diversified his business to include an e-commerce business, restaurants
39	Expanding his business

and worked there for 5 years. It was there that he learned Japanese management practices.

In 2015, his father passed away at the age of 65 and he attempted to succeed his father's business. As he felt the automobile industry was in decline and he encountered many difficulties, he decided to close his father's business. Following this, he started a new business in tea production and sales. Using 5 million yen from his savings, he has now built a company of 11 employees. The company is called *Sainlak Inc.*⁸⁰ As for professional development, he has developed a long-term planning strategy for his goals. As he develops an action plan based on these goals, he knows what to do next. He hopes to maintain his current income, but he knows that one never knows what the future holds. He currently has a high level of satisfaction with his personal life, but in his working life he isn't satisfied as he thinks he can do better than he currently is doing. His father was his mentor until his passing but at present, his wife was his mentor. His wife was a company director and has managerial knowledge. He has networks with colleagues and business associates, banks, lawyers and accountants. He also speaks regularly with other Japanese expatriate entrepreneurs to exchange information. In his personal network, he considers the *WAOJE (World Association of Overseas Japanese Entrepreneurs)* as his social network and engages with his classmates from the Philippines and the friends he has through his wife. He intends to continue working in the Philippines, but he is open to his family living elsewhere outside the Philippines. He works with the belief that *one shouldn't make enemies* and *what will be will be*, despite planning for the future, there are some aspects of life that one can't control. Currently, he is concerned about the influence of China on South East Asia, the Philippines, and his business (Table 3.54).

⁸⁰<http://sainlak.com/>

Table 3.54 Case PPN-4 career path

Age	Career path
	Born in Ishikawa Prefecture in 1982
18	Entered university in the Philippines and studied law
22	Worked for father's company
28	Worked for a Japanese-affiliated company to further develop his training
33	Father passed away and so he closed the company
34	Established a herb tea company which produces and distributes tea in the Philippines
37	Expanding his business. Since the interview he has moved to Japan

Chapter 4 will provide an analysis of the cases and a discussion of relevant themes.

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Chapter 4

Country Comparisons



As highlighted through the cases and as we learn more about the individual SIEEs, we can also see how each country context differs socially, culturally, politically and economically. The following chapter will share the findings from the analysis of the cases within their country context, providing an overall contemporary picture of the Japanese self-initiated transnational entrepreneurs in Asia.

4.1 General Findings

Initially, 68 interviews were conducted throughout South East (SE) Asia, but of those, 51 were deemed to fit the definition of a self-initiated expatriate transnational entrepreneur. Of the 51 transnational entrepreneurs interviewed, 37 were males and 14 were females. This mirrors the general trend in Japanese entrepreneurship in that males tend to dominate the field, yet there is positive growth among women. In addition, 37 were married and 14 were single.

Sixty percent of male SIEEs were aged between 26 and 35 when they became a SIEE, while for women, the majority became an entrepreneur between the ages of 26 and 40, highlighting that men tend to start slightly earlier in life than women (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Demographic Information

	Gender (F = Female, M = Male)	Marital Status (S = Single, M = Married)	Prefecture	Year of Birth	Age at time of publication
Cambodia					
CBD-1	F	S	Tokyo	1967	50
CBD-2	F	S	Ibaraki	1971	45
CBD-3	M	M	Iraq	1979	38
CBD-4	M	M	Aichi	1963	53
CBD-5	M	M	Kagawa	1967	51
CBD-6	M	M	Kyoto	1979	38
CBD-7	F	M	Tokyo	1983	34
Vietnam (Hanoi)					
V-Hanoi-1	F	S	Osaka	1980	38
V-Hanoi-2	M	M	Fukuoka	1980	38
V-Hanoi-3	M	M	Tokyo	1977	41
V-Hanoi-4	F	M	Gifu	1976	42
V-Hanoi-5	F	S	Fukushima	1987	30
V-Hanoi-6	M	M	Tokyo	1974	44
Vietnam (HCM)					
V-HCM-1	M	M	Niigata	1980	38
V-HCM-2	M	S	Tokyo	1965	53
V-HCM-3	M	M	Hyogo	1973	45
V-HCM-4	M	M	Okinawa	1966	52
Myanmar					
MYM-1	M	M	Kanagawa	1960	57
MYM-2	F	S	Saitama	1976	41
MYM-3	M	M	Kanagawa	1979	38
MYM-4	F	S	Chiba	1968	47
MYM-5	F	S	Shizuoka	1964	53
MYM-6	M	S	Oita	1956	61
MYM-7	M	M	Saitama	1969	47
Indonesia					
IND-1	F	S	Osaka	1964	53
IND-2	M	S	Yamaguchi	1983	34
IND-3	M	M	Tokyo	1966	51
IND-4	M	M	Fukuoka	1975	43
IND-5	F	M	Indonesia	1973	44
IND-6	M	M	Indonesia	1975	43
IND-7	M	S	Kanagawa	1985	32

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

	Gender (F = Female, M = Male)	Marital Status (S = Single, M = Married)	Prefecture	Year of Birth	Age at time of publication
China					
C-1	M	S	Ibaraki	1979	39
C-2	M	M	Hokkaido	1980	38
C-3	M	M	Osaka	1975	43
C-4	M	S	Tokyo	1977	42
C-5	M	S	Kanagawa	1974	45
Hong Kong					
HK-1	M	M	Hokkaido	1960	53
HK-2	F	S	Fukushima	1948	65
HK-3	M	M	Kumamoto	1955	59
HK-4	M	M	Mie	1960	53
Thailand					
TLD-1	F	S	Tokyo	1968	45
TLD-2	M	M	Tokyo	1964	51
TLD-3	F	S	Kochi	1973	41
TLD-4	M	M	Kanagawa	1972	43
TLD-5	M	M	Hyogo	1979	36
TLD-6	M	M	Oita	1978	37
TLD-7	M	M	Fukuoka	1970	45
Philippines					
PPN-1	M	M	Saitama	1977	41
PPN-2	F	S	Hyogo	1995	23
PPN-3	M	M	Aichi	1979	39
PPN-4	M	M	Ishikawa	1982	37

In terms of their place of birth, Table 4.1 shows from which prefecture in Japan the SIEEs originated, highlighting that although a significant percentage are from Tokyo and the greater metropolitan area, there is an interesting spread of entrepreneurs from more rural prefectures of Japan.



With regard to family background, over half of the entrepreneurs had an entrepreneur in their immediate family, whether that may be a parent, sibling or grandparent, and thus they grew up among a culture of entrepreneurship. Over half of the SIEEs were educated at undergraduate degree level, while 37% did not go to university and instead, graduated from senior high school or a technical or vocational college and 5.8% earned a graduate degree.

Almost 70% of the SIEEs had experience overseas during the learning stage of their life, which, as we will explain later, was instrumental in a SIEE's decision to become an expatriate. Linked to this is the entrepreneurs' motivation to expatriate (Table 4.2). The majority of SIEEs had either a general interest in overseas, study abroad experience at university or had traveled overseas for work or pleasure. Unlike migrants who seek safety and security in a foreign country, none of the TEs were motivated by a safer life outside Japan, although almost 10% cited a need to

Table 4.2 Motivation for relocation

Altruistic endeavors	9.8%
Escape life in Japan	7.8%
For safety and security	0%
Opportunity recognition	11%
Foreign friends	3.9%
Traveled abroad during university (backpacking)	7.8%
Educated/lived abroad during childhood (elementary/JHS/HS)	11.7%
Traveled abroad for work/worked with foreign companies/clients	27%
Traveled abroad for pleasure (as an adult or child)	3.9%
Inspired by mentor/friend/colleague/family	13%
No significant tie to Japan	0
General interest in overseas	19%
Studied abroad during university (study)	13.7%
Born overseas	5.8
Inspired by famous person	1.9%
Trailing spouse	1.9%

Source: Authors

escape life in Japan (but this was for cultural and social reasons as opposed to safety). This confirms that the classification of these individuals as SIEEs is correct, over using the terms ‘diaspora’ or ‘migrant’, which conjure up a particular image of the individual’s motivation to leave their home.

With regard to the entrepreneurs’ field of business in their first employment, their first entrepreneurship endeavor in Japan and their current field of transnational entrepreneurship, Table 4.3 highlights the shift in fields. Eighty-eight percent of SIEEs felt their prior work experience in Japan was beneficial for their future; however, 51% cited they had no mentor in their first workplace, as opposed to 76% who now have one as an entrepreneur. Interestingly, 72.5% of entrepreneurs did not have experience setting up a company in Japan prior to moving overseas. In addition, the primary field of business for the entrepreneurs’ first employment and subsequent overseas company was general management, highlighting the generalist aspect of Japanese traditional employment practices. The Japanese education system, as mentioned in Chap. 2, generally educates for generalists as opposed to specialists. Interestingly, fewer SIEEs chose to remain in the computer IT and software field, despite it being a main field of employment in their first job and in their first start-ups in Japan as shown in Table 4.3. Similarly, there was a decrease in those working in retail and sales and banking, but unsurprisingly, there was an increase in those working in trade and transportation, which would be a niche field for SIEEs due to their bicultural nature.

Table 4.3 SIEEs field of work

	First field (%)	ENT Japan (%)	TE field (%)
Computers, software and IT	17.60	3.9	7.8
Healthcare	1.9	0	3.9
Education, training and social services	5.8	3.9	13.7
Art, design, music, communication, PR	19.6	3.9	13.7
Trade and transportation	3.9	0	11.7
General management, business consulting, accounting, finance, trading	31	1.9	29.4
Architecture, civil engineering, building	7.8	0	0
Science	1.9	0	0
Hospitality, tourism, service industry	3.9	3.9	5.8
Law, legal enforcement	0	0	1.9
HRM	5.8	0	7.8
Beauty and aesthetics	7.8	0	5.8
Real estate	13.7	1.9	11.7
Microcredit	0	0	1.9
Retail/sales	23.5	1.9	13.7
Publishing/journalism	1.9	0	7.8
Banking	1.9	0	0
Government	1.9	0	0
Cooperative	1.9	0	0
NA	0	72.5	0

Table 4.4 Source of funding

Self-funded	52%
Business partner/parent company funding	1.9%
Angel investor	1.9%
Family-funded	11.7%
Friend-funded	1.9%
Self + general investor	25%
General investor (in the traditional sense)	13.7%
Crowdfunding	1.9%
N/A	3.9%

Source Authors

Once SIEEs decide to start their own business overseas, where do they get their funding from and how much would an SIEE need to start a business in South East Asia? Table 4.4 shows a summary of the source of funding for the Japanese SIEEs.

Over half of the SIEEs were self-funded by savings and a quarter of those interviewed used a combination of self-funding and a general investor. Interestingly, only 1.9% of SIEEs used crowdfunding support or angel investors.

Table 4.5 Start-up funds

Less than 1 million yen	13.7%
More than 1 million to less than 3 million yen	25%
More than 3 million to less than 5 million yen	17.6%
More than 5 million yen to less than 7 million yen	9.8%
More than 7 million yen to less than 9 million yen	0
More than 9 million yen to less than 11 million yen	11.7%
More than 11 million yen to less than 13 million yen	5.8%
More than 13 million yen	15.6%
N/A	5.8%

Source Author

Similar to regular Japanese domestic small and medium business owners, a significant proportion of funding also comes from the immediate family.

Of most interest in regard to funding is the low barrier to entry. More than half the entrepreneurs used less than 5 million yen to start their business, with a quarter using less than 3 million yen and 30% spending more than 9 million yen (Table 4.5).

With regard to professional development, the majority of Japanese TEs read books on business and other subjects outside of business to widen their knowledge base. This was followed by engaging in formal education, that at times involved coming back to Japan, and engaging with the people in their networks (Table 4.6).

Although the data above presents a brief overview of the findings, a deeper analysis of the TEs narratives can help us better conceptualize Japanese TEs in SE Asia. The following section will highlight the theory emerging from the in-depth analysis of the narratives.

Table 4.6 SIEEs professional development

Formal education (attending classes/seminars)	29.4%
Mentoring	5.8%
Publishing	7.8%
Shadowing	0
Presenting	3.9%
Engaging with professional organization (work/expat/rotary)	11.7%
Engaging with various networks	21%
Volunteer work	1.9%
Distance/virtual learning	7.8%
Reading	33.3%
Travel abroad	7.8%
Self-reflection	23%
Language study	11.7%
Watch news/current affairs programs	7.8%

Source Authors

4.2 Conceptualizing Japanese Transnational Entrepreneurs in Asia

Through analysis, using data-led and research-led codes we present a conceptual framework for understanding the lived experiences of Japanese transnational entrepreneurs working in South East Asia. Figure 4.1 is an integrated model of

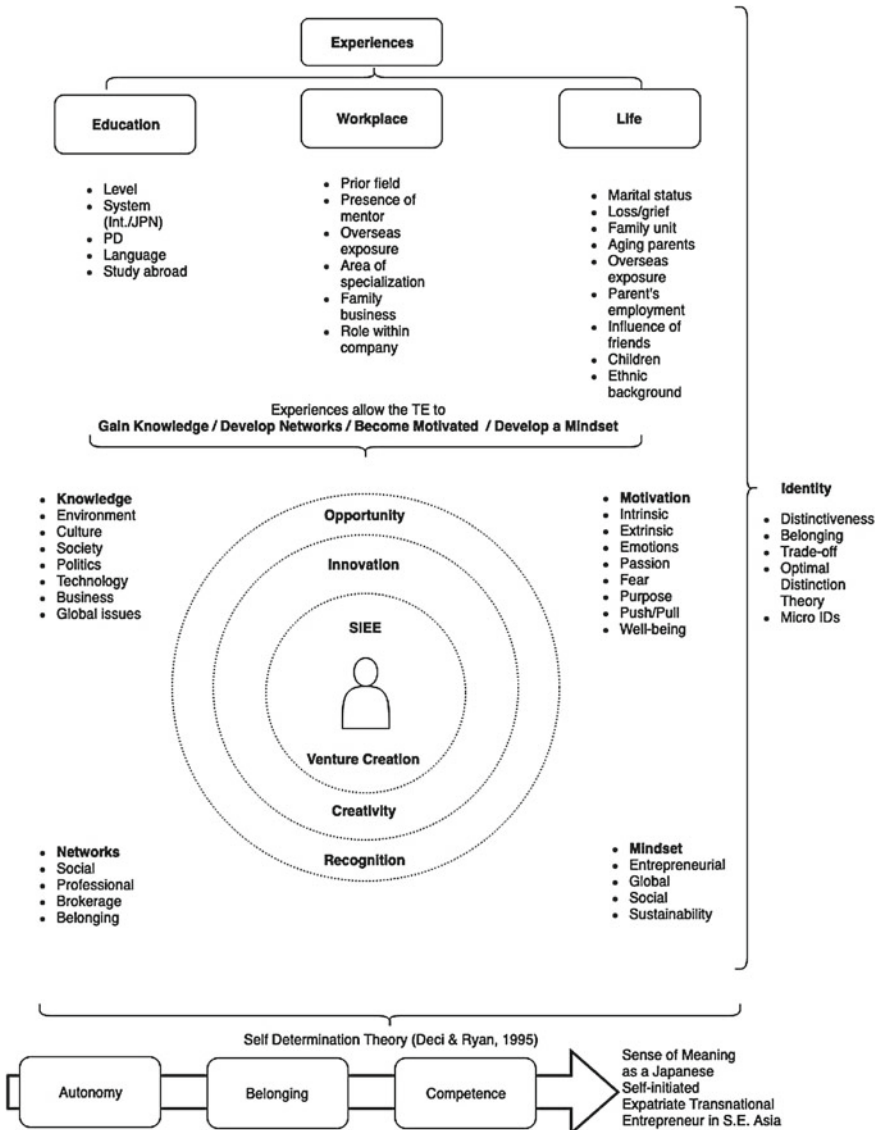


Fig. 4.1 An integrated model of Japanese self-initiated SIEEs

Japanese SIEEs, highlighting the concepts at play and relevant theories that emerged. At the center of the framework are the Japanese SIEEs and their participation in transnational entrepreneurship. Surrounding the entrepreneur and his/her business(es) are the concepts and factors that impact upon innovation, creativity, opportunity recognition and their journey toward entrepreneurship. Follow our exploration of their narratives as we weave it together with current and emerging theory. All the TEs in this study show a heightened sense of entrepreneurial awareness, in that they are sensitive to culture, information and aspects of their contextual environment. The Japanese SIEEs work through De Koning's (1999) process of information gathering, thinking through talking with mentors and their networks and finally assessing resources. Our findings also remind us of Ronstadt's (1998) and Shane and Venkataraman's (2000) work on the 'corridor principle' in which the experiences and knowledge gained in the past are considered to be 'corridors' that trigger the ability to recognize opportunity. Let's walk the corridors these entrepreneurs have traversed.

Through this study we are trying to understand how people think so that we can better understand their actions in the context; we are concerned with entrepreneurial cognition. Entrepreneurs bring into existence future goods and services and we are interested in what is exploited by whom, how and with what consequences (Venkatavaman 1997: 120). Why do some Japanese individuals recognize these new business opportunities overseas and how does their knowledge trigger action and opportunity recognition as the ability to identify opportunity is the most important skill (Ardichvili et al. 2003). We argue, as do others, that prior knowledge and experience is key as it is through these experiences that individuals have more chance to take advantage of what they discover and have more intuition (Davidsson and Honig 2003; Venk 1997). The individuals have knowledge of their environment, culture, society, the world and this knowledge is external to the organization they create. Through engagement in their environment and through their experiences, they build alliances and partnerships; developing networks both professional and social, as well as meeting (and becoming) brokers and develop a mindset(s) (global, entrepreneurial, social, sustainable). This fluidity between factors gives rise to the ability to recognize opportunities, innovate, create and venture create. Throughout the process the entrepreneurs are always negotiating their identity and traversing a trade-off between feeling a sense of distinctiveness and of belonging. The complex interplay of these factors, we argue, is related to self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 1995) and that a sense of meaning and success for the self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs stems from the satisfaction of the three core needs; autonomy, belonging and competence.

4.2.1 Experience

In Japan, formal education is seen as fundamental to the development of society, with nearly 76% of high school student graduates going on to attend university. As

we found through the narratives of SIEEs, they have varied backgrounds in their formal schooling.

4.2.1.1 Education

The majority of TEs attended university and just 5% earned a post-graduate degree. Of those who had a post-graduate degree, they used their specialized knowledge to set up their business, drawing on their new skills and knowledge often based on their first job field in Japan. Interestingly, none of the SIEEs interviewed studied for a qualification in entrepreneurship, business or an MBA, which could signal both the lack of such courses available in Japan and/or the unnecessary nature of further study in that domain to become a successful entrepreneur.

The entrepreneurs were primarily educated in a Japanese system. This is of vital importance as it highlights how their parents and society, in general, trust the Japanese education system. With the need to study Japanese language, especially *Kanji*, rigorously and methodically throughout one's schooling, in cases where the SIEEs were raised overseas, they were educated in a Japanese international school system where they could develop Japanese language and culture skills. Of note is that the SIEEs themselves also follow the same pattern when educating their children. They choose to either educate their children in international schools in the host country or send their children back to Japan to be educated, often with their spouse, to ensure they receive a 'Japanese' education or sending them to live with Japanese grandparents. This highlights the high value placed on the Japanese education system in terms of trust and educational attainment.

However, when entering university, almost all the SIEEs took some time out of Japan to be educated overseas whether that may be as part of a short-term study abroad language program or a long-term international exchange or a working holiday or internship. These opportunities helped the SIEEs to develop their English language skills and increased their exposure to overseas, yet the SIEEs did not always specialize in English language, merely developing survival tools to function at a basic level overseas, instead, focusing on gaining more through the cultural exchange and exposure to new ways of thinking. Those interested in languages tended to study them later in life and often in the host country, as a form of self-development after relocation. We found that SIEEs in Thailand, Indonesia, China and Vietnam tended to continue foreign language study as a means of developing their business prospects; recognizing the importance of local cultural and linguistic knowledge in business success.

As they become SIEEs, they choose to engage in autonomous learning, usually through reading, which traditionally is an important aspect of Japanese visual culture. They also attend occasional professional development seminars, as opposed to returning to higher education to gain a formal, post-graduate education. The courses the SIEEs take are usually in Tokyo, thus they return to Japan for their professional development, trusting the quality of the program and finding content that fits their needs. The entrepreneurs have a strong will to develop themselves

through their own self-directed learning. Their development is also somewhat social in nature, such as engaging with current networks or traveling overseas to broaden their horizons and gain new ideas. Through all these formal and informal educational experiences, the SIEEs are exposed to new ways of thinking, new ways of doing things and new ways of engaging with the wider world. These educational experiences at the beginning stages of their lives provide a base from which the entrepreneur can begin to develop his/her ideas, their human, social and cultural capital. The importance the Japanese place on their traditional schooling system should not be underestimated.

4.2.1.2 Workplace

The prior workplace experiences of entrepreneurs in general, especially their international business experiences, have been identified as an important influence on their future venture creation (Oviatt and McDougall 1994) primarily as it helps to shape opportunity recognition. As the importance of Japanese schooling cannot be underestimated, neither can the importance of the SIEEs first job in Japan. The respondents cite that more often than not, although their first workplace experience may not translate into a solid base for the field they enter as an entrepreneur, it still provides them with a solid foundation in Japanese business etiquette and manners. It was from the first workplace experience that many SIEEs learned how to function in Japanese society and simultaneously, what aspects of Japanese society they felt were at odds with their personality (which at times became a trigger to leave the workplace or Japan).

Similarly, the SIEEs who were seconded overseas as part of their early employment used that experience as leverage when starting their venture. Additionally, some SIEEs took advantage of a company sabbatical or gap year opportunity, such as CBD-4, whose sabbatical lead him to quit his position. An SIEE's experience overseas for work increased their social, economic and cultural capital, allowing them to begin building networks that they would use in the future when setting up their businesses. These overseas postings were key 'ah-ha' moments in the development of their entrepreneurial efforts. Both in Japan and in postings overseas, the entrepreneurs initially held junior roles within the company before being promoted, often with their first major promotions occurring before 30 years old, and this exposure to different areas of the company with different levels of responsibility helped to expand the SIEE's knowledge base.

Mentors figure heavily in the SIEEs stories. Despite some SIEEs not having a mentor in the early part of their career, when they become an entrepreneur it is then that they seek out guidance and in the majority of cases it is a fellow Japanese, highlighting the deep trust between members of the same culture and the necessity to be guided by someone familiar to their background and culture. Although not classified as a mentor in the traditional sense, many of the SIEEs spoke of the influence of a Japanese business guru as a kind of role-model and although they may not have a personal mentor-type relationship with the guru, reading their work

had a strong impact on their motivation. In Western contexts, business leaders such as Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg and Richard Branson are seen as influential role models for entrepreneurs. Yet, in Japan, inspiration often comes from fellow Japanese business people (with exception of one of the SIEEs who was inspired by reading Steve Jobs' autobiography), thus highlighting the need to share the narratives in this book with young people and/or aspiring entrepreneurs for them to have tangible Japanese entrepreneurial role models, who are often lacking in their everyday world. Other mentors or role models came from close friends or family, such as CBD-1's French aunt.

The importance of mentors also reflects the Japanese societal model of *sempai-kohai*, junior and senior-based seniority system. Of note, is that female Japanese SIEEs tend to seek out guidance from other women, such as Case CBD-2, while men seek out other men. There were few examples of entrepreneurs seeking guidance or mentoring from the opposite sex such as TLD-1 who had the support of TLD-7. In cases where the spouse was a confidant, it was also the case that the spouse was an entrepreneur such as Case IND-6 and Case IND-7. A small percentage of the SIEEs cited no mentor, preferring a 'lone ranger' type decision-making process, where he/she goes with their gut, not even consulting with their spouse or family members, such as Case CBD-5 and Case V-Hanoi-3.

The influence of growing up in an entrepreneurial environment also cannot be underestimated. The SIEEs discussed being exposed to risk-taking and hard work through their parent's small businesses. Oftentimes, conflict arose when the SIEEs was deciding whether to succeed the family business, more often than not, choosing to seek their own path and business overseas, such as Case MYM-3. Even when some of the entrepreneurs developed knowledge and skills through working for their family business, they chose to eventually leave the business to pursue their own projects.

4.2.1.3 Life

In terms of life experience, SIEEs in this study have differing experiences of marriage and divorce, yet for all, the influence of their friends and family in generating life experience cannot be underestimated. The common element of life experience between the SIEEs is the influence of aging parents. One common concern for all expatriates whether they are entrepreneurs or otherwise is the health and wellbeing of their parents. In an aging society like Japan, with a somewhat limited social security system in terms of availability of sheltered accommodation, hospice care and nursing homes, often the responsibility for care falls with the children, specifically the oldest son. Thus, if that child is overseas and unable to care for the parent, this can put stressful demands on the entire family. From the SIEEs perspective, they experience feelings of guilt, fear for the future and an underlying concern that maybe they should be at home. Even if the parent encourages independence, such as Case V-Hanoi-3, the child still has a moral sense of responsibility to be a care giver. This life experience can both spur the SIEEs on,

as they want to create a stable financial environment for their family or may cause them to have doubts about their future as SIEEs.

Life experience through romantic relationships is also a fundamental component to the development of the entrepreneur. We can see that the overwhelming majority of males in this study are married with children, fulfilling Japanese societal expectations. Oftentimes their wives take a peripheral role to their endeavors, being housewives, trailing spouses or in a number of cases, living apart from their husbands, often back in Japan. As can be seen through the cases, some female spouses return to Japan to educate their children in a Japanese education system, such as Case IND-3. This shows the dominance of males in society and the prominence put on their career. Of those SIEEs that are currently single, many cited the desire or decision to find a partner as one of their concerns. There is a common line of thinking that the men are seeking some kind of stability in their home lives that may give them more legitimacy as entrepreneurs. Having a partner also expands one's social and professional networks, with many of the SIEEs taking advantage of their wife's extensive networks. Especially when a Japanese SIEE marries a host-country national, they are then able to tap into a deeper level of culture within the country, gain respect from the host national clients and colleagues, show their level commitment to the country and build trust within new networks, such as Case V-Hanoi-3. Intercultural marriages of this nature are powerful antecedents to the expansion of business opportunities in the new country.

On the other hand, the majority of females in this research are single, including divorced and widowed. Of those females who are single, they have made their career development a priority over their romantic relationships. This follows a general trend of women becoming secure in their career before seeking a mate, but runs contrary to the traditional Japanese approach of a woman finding a husband soon after starting their first job and then quitting to become a housewife. The SIEEs in this study are also putting off childbirth as their career takes priority, such as Case V-Hanoi-4. They network within close groups of female friends and family and focus their attention and energy on themselves and their businesses, such as Case MYM-4.

As for those SIEEs who are married, two of the cases in this study are married to Japanese whom are also SIEEs. In the case of CBD-6 and CBD-7, they met in Japan and traveled together after quitting their jobs in Japan. Through this experience, they felt comfortable knowing that as a team, they could live and work in a foreign country with the support of each other. Case CBD-7 felt a strong sense that she would feel unfulfilled in a life back in Japan. Looking at her husband for inspiration, decided that she too could set up her own bakery, so with his support and backing she made this a reality. The couple in IND-5 and IND-6 met in the host country and became business rivals before becoming romantically involved. Their relationship further developed, they got married and now they work on separate and joint business projects.

The experience of tragedy in relationships also inspired some of the SIEEs to pursue their businesses. In the case of MYM-4, she lost her Myanmar national husband in an accident at sea and this further inspired her to develop her business,

choosing to stay in Myanmar not return to Japan, and since this decision, the focus of her energy has helped her business go from strength to strength. Similarly, Case TLD-1 in Thailand is a success story in turning life around. After reverting to alcoholism, Case TLD-1 was able to draw on something inside herself to change her life through entrepreneurship. Through her exposure to overseas, she felt that she would 'fit in' better in an overseas environment as opposed to Japan. She was also able to see that she was a survivor and capable of many things, recognizing that she had skills and talent in communication, sales and knowledge of her customers. In choosing to develop a health and wellness business, she was able to tap into her negative experience to start an authentically-driven company. In both cases, the women were able to experience tragedy but harness the negativity and turn it into a positive driver for success. Thus, it is important to note that although marital status is no indicator for success, one's romantic relationships provide important experience that an entrepreneur can draw on in the future; both negative and positive. It is part of the arch of life, experiences from which one can grow.

In a similar manner, the SIEEs who have had children cite that the experience of having them fundamentally changed their outlook on life, particularly when it comes to financial security. Being SIEEs can be risky in terms of finance and while single or childless, the entrepreneur can take risks with money, however, all the Japanese SIEEs with children cited the heavy sense of responsibility to provide for their spouse and children, to enable them to have the same opportunities offered to them when they were growing up, such as Case C-3. Living in a different country allows a child to grow up bilingual and bicultural, although as the entrepreneurs expressed, this can be costly as private education is often necessary in order for a child to maintain their Japanese culture and identity. Hence, they decide to send the children back to Japan for the children's education, such as Case TLD-7. This again highlights the importance and trust that Japanese put on in their education system. The need to provide children with opportunities could be said to make their parents slightly more risk averse as the responsibility weighs heavily on their future business planning and need for sustainability.

In the same way that relationships have an impact on the entrepreneur, so does their exposure to overseas at an early stage of their life. Whether that may be in a child's early years, as they travel with their parents either for leisure or as part of their job, they study abroad in high school or university or go backpacking independently, these experiences help mold the SIEEs worldview and is a significant factor in their decision to later pursue a career overseas such as Cases CBD-2, MYM-2, IND-2, PNN-1, etc. These experiences remove barriers and open minds. From an educational perspective, travel overseas, in whatever format and whether recognized at the time or not, is an experiential learning experience. People learn by traveling and gain knowledge through 'meaningful discovery' (Boydell 1979: 19). Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning combines experience, perception, cognition and behavior to create learning. Through the SIEE's narratives, we can see how the entrepreneurs learned through their overseas experiences and fed that knowledge back into their business development. A key aspect of experiential learning overseas is reflection and again, as we can see through the narratives, on

Table 4.7 Learning outcomes from exposure to overseas

Learning outcomes from exposure to overseas
Self-confidence, adaptability, confidence, interpersonal skills, communication skills, increased self-esteem, cross-cultural understanding, autonomy, independence, a broader worldview, increased intercultural competence, problem-solving skills, flexibility

return to Japan, the SIEEs reflected on their experience, drawing out the benefits to support their overseas venture creation. Table 4.7 highlights the knowledge and skills gained from travel and exposure to overseas.

Based on an understanding of Kolb’s model, the SIEEs were able to have concrete experience overseas in the early part of their lives, they were able to reflect and observe the experience, conceptualize their learning and then engage in what Kolb terms, active experimentation, planning, trying out what they learned through their overseas venture creation.

Similar to the concept of experiential learning is the idea of transformative learning (Morgan 2010). In transformative learning the traveler ‘changes’ and becomes a ‘transformed home comer’ (2010: 252). With some SIEEs stating they were not sure if they could ‘fit in’ to Japan again after their exposure to overseas, this highlights the transformative nature of their experiences, such as Case HKG-1. Particularly in terms of transnational entrepreneurs, this exposure to overseas at an early stage in one’s life, we argue, is a key driver for entrepreneurship.

4.2.2 Motivation

How does motivation figure into the lives and actions of SIEEs? What triggers an entrepreneurs’ pursuit of opportunity and risk taking? We found that despite the overwhelming amount of literature that contends that financial reward is the primary motivation behind an individual’s decision to engage in entrepreneurship, the majority of our SIEEs do not cite financial gain as their initial motivation, however, once they have passed the threshold stage, the economic theories of entrepreneurship pervade and if the anticipated current profit received from the entrepreneurship is greater than the individual received as a previously salaried employee in Japan, then the entrepreneur views this as success and motivation to continue, such as Case TLD-6.

According to research on motivation by Deci and Ryan (1985), extrinsic motivation is considered to be when one acts in a certain way based on an external source and external rewards, such as Case V-HCM-2. Whereas intrinsic motivation is the opposite, when the drive to behave in a particular way comes from an internal source; our interests, sense of morality, our mindset.

Additionally, we can examine the push and pull factors driving SIEEs. For example, the possibility of financial reward from a particular outside source could

‘pull’ the entrepreneur toward a particular context (Katz 1994), whereas a ‘push’ would be a negative situation that the entrepreneur encounters and thus wants to move away from, such as Case PNN-2 and Case V-Hanoi-5. A number of SIEEs stated the need to ‘take a break’ from Japan or to ‘escape’ everyday life. In these scenarios, a mundane life is seen as a push toward life in another country as maybe one feels they are not being adequately rewarded financially in their work, or intrinsically they feel no emotional satisfaction with their life.

Of great interest to us as researchers was the finding that the SIEEs had high levels of passion and positivity toward the pursuit of their entrepreneurial goals. We will address the connection between passion and self-determination theory (SDT) later in this chapter, but for now, let’s focus on positivity. Entrepreneurship has been described as an emotional roller coaster whereby the entrepreneur experiences various ups and downs, positive and negative experiences and varied emotions (Boyd and Gumpert 1984; Baron 2008). Fredrickson’s Broaden and Build Theory (1998) came to mind when analyzing the SIEEs career anchors as he assumes that positive emotions influence cognition by broadening an individual’s thoughts and actions. We found that when the entrepreneurs felt like their work was of value they were passionate and positive about their experiences. Their work became an integral part of their identity and they often became akin to the personification of their company. Moreover, the more positive experience the entrepreneur encounters, the more positive and passionate the state they become. In exploring the entrepreneur’s career anchors we considered using Schein’s categorization of: (1) autonomy/independence, (2) security/stability, (3) technical-functional competence, (4) general managerial competence, and (5) entrepreneurial creativity, (6) service or dedication to a cause, (7) pure challenge and (8) lifestyle; however, after engaging with the data we found three primary categories and sub-categories as a different way to conceptualize the SIEEs career anchors (see Fig. 4.2).

Of most interest was that the majority of career anchors of the 51 entrepreneurs spoke in general terms of self-belief, social responsibility and optimistic outlook, with the three concepts emerging strongly; maintaining a positive attitude, determination and collaboration. The career anchors also go some way to ascertaining the psychological well-being of the entrepreneurs. The overwhelming feeling of positivity from the entrepreneurs was infectious. In a modest culture like Japan, these individuals certainly stand out with what could be categorized as a more westernized view of positivity and optimism. Connected to this is what appears to be a deep level of self-reflection, self-awareness and self-efficacy, which was a common trait among all the SIEEs interviewed. This understanding of self and need for autonomy will be discussed further on in the chapter; however, it must be noted that this focus on oneself and understanding oneself while also having an interest in others helped us to better understand the mentality and mindset of the individuals.

In addition to personal career anchors, a number of SIEEs drew on popular phrases by famous business gurus and famous people, both Japanese and non-Japanese and traditional Japanese idioms, such as *ichi-go-ichi-e*, by Case MYM-7, which highlight their philosophical nature and connection to their Japanese culture and heritage.

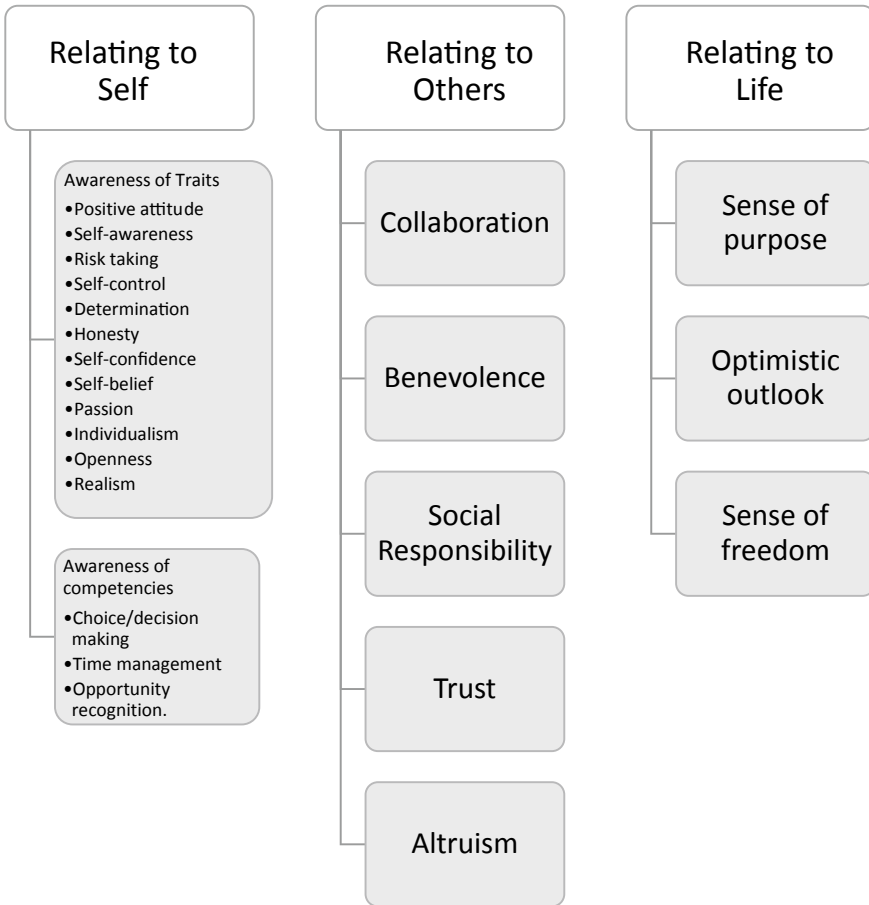


Fig. 4.2 Conceptualization of Japanese SIEE career anchors. Source Authors

4.2.3 Networks and Brokers

Japanese businesses are well known for their networks and the management of knowledge within and between each other. There is frequent sharing of ‘tacit and explicit knowledge’ among firms (Glisby and Holden 2003: 30), which depends on the strong intercorporate networks at play in Japan. As Whitley (1992) ascertained, quoted in Glisby and Holden (2003: 31), “one of the most striking features of Japanese business is the pervasiveness of mutual obligation networks and the high level of interdependence.” In a business context, Nonaka (1991) found that employees have a sense of commitment and identity to their company and once part of the ‘family’ per say, they exhibit ‘communitarianism’ (Trompenaars 2000)—commitment and loyalty. As Glisby and Holden (2003) confirm, “Japanese are

inclined to build strong interpersonal relationships with others with whom there is a strong sense of shared fate: people...in the same company” and in this sense, when expatriates are hiring new staff or engaging with new clients, they may want to ensure that the new hire or partner will ‘fit’ into the organization and their culture. As such, relying on expatriates already working in the host country to help build connections may help to maintain the balance of ‘harmony in human relationships’ (Glisby and Holden 2003: 30), such as Case TLD-5.

Bhappu (2000: 410) illustrates that the “Japanese family is an institutional logic for Japanese corporate networks and Japanese management practices” and that this is connected to the word ‘*i.e.*’ which is the Chinese character of people under one roof (Kumagai 1992: 181). ‘*i.e.*’ or *family* in business and organizational settings can be “characterized by a network of hierarchical ties among people” (Bhappu 2000: 412). Historically, in organizations, recruitment into the corporation would have commonly been by birth, showing the deep familial ties and commitment to the organization. Therefore, with members of the organization so similar to each other, there is undoubtedly a relationship that creates somewhat of an ‘institutional logic’ and awareness of management practices (Scott 1995). This is known as ‘*ko’on*’ (孝恩) and is characterized by ‘reciprocity and obligation’ (Bhappu 2000: 412), where ‘achievement is secondary to trust,’ such as TLD-6. As such, it is interesting to explore the networks at play among Japanese SIEEs and how they develop a sense of reciprocity and obligation among their expatriate business networks.

Social network theory has been an important part of research in entrepreneurship since Busenitz et al. (2003), Liao and Welsch (2005) and Williams and Lee (2009). The relations that entrepreneurs have with others have an impact on everything from opportunity perception and recognition to access to resources. Research on strong and weak ties between individuals also has an impact on the entrepreneurial opportunity recognition process (Ozgen 2003; Ozgen and Baron 2007). What are considered to be contextual factors also influence individual motivation, thus the environment and actors within the environment are key elements to understand (Krueger 1998).

Through an analysis of the networks, both social and professional, and the clear emergence of brokers among the Japanese SIEEs, we can appreciate the applicability of social embeddedness theory (Granovetter 1985). This theory suggests that entrepreneurs take part in specific economic networks that are tied to their cultural, ethnic identity to aid business development (Rath 2006). Again, this supports the constructivist view that these entrepreneurs act within various social networks, they are embedded in different discourses and social structures which are connected to trust and understanding cultural norms and expectations (Portes 1995).

According to Burt (1992), network ties are information and resources that individuals can access in competitive situations such as venture creation. These ties can help shape one’s identity, build social capital and increase success. Typical typologies of networks from the social sciences are highlighted by Borgatti (2009) as seen in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Typology of networks

Similarities			Social relations				Interaction	Flows
Location	Membership	Attributes	Kinship	Roles	Affective	Cognition	Talk Advice Help	Information Beliefs Personal

Source Borgatti (2009)

There are networks that are based on similarities such as when we share the same space, both temporal and spatial, we may be members of the same clubs or groups and/or we may share the same attributes in terms of gender or attitude. Networks concerned with social relations include family networks, the role of our bosses, friends of bosses, colleagues, and so on; sharing the things we like and dislike and what we know (cognitive). Interaction networks are the kinds of communication we engage in; who we talk to, give advice to, help, and so on. Flows refer to the flow of information which may be personal or job related. When we explore networks among people we can draw on these typologies to ascertain what kind of networks and communication are occurring in the workplace and during venture creation.

When considering professional networks, such as WAOJE, the majority of SIEEs associate with their clients, Japanese business associates, expatriate business people and other entrepreneurs, highlighting the strong reliance of the expatriate network. Similarly, in terms of their social networks, the SIEEs tended to network within their expatriate community, friends through work, clients and other entrepreneurs. The social and professional networks were highly intertwined. Figure 4.3 shows the integrated networks the SIEEs immersed themselves in as they started their business.

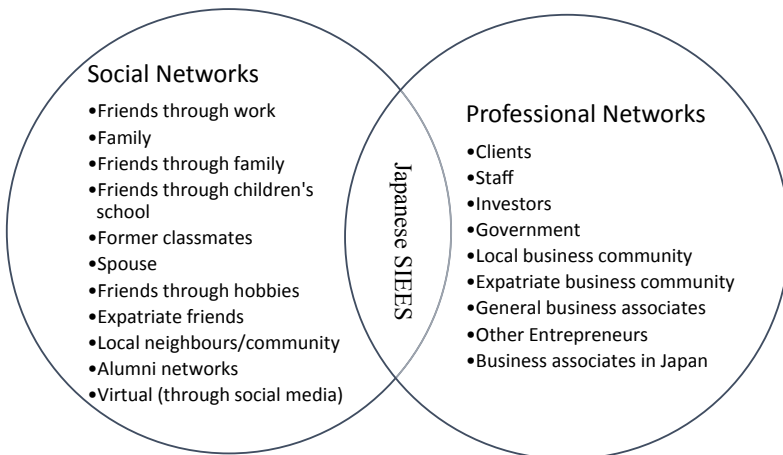


Fig. 4.3 Integrated networks of Japanese SIEEs in South East Asia. Source Authors

Social and Professional Networks

The importance of social networks to the entrepreneur has been established by numerous researchers (Aldrich and Zimmer 1985). As can be seen in the narratives, the SIEEs social networks encapsulate both formal (business contacts, investors, NGOs, etc.) and informal (family, friends) sources. The level of interconnection within the network and the intensity varies. Sequeira and Rasheed (2004, p. 89) suggest that strong ties are necessary for start-ups but can be unhelpful at ‘break-out stages’ which could be why we see many of the entrepreneurs express that they didn’t have a mentor at the initial stages and networked either heavily with their spouse or business partner at the initial stage. What is common among the Japanese SIEEs is the importance they place on Japanese family and Japanese community entrepreneurs, whether that may be Japanese expatriates in the same country or Japanese business colleagues. As social network ties often depend on the trust of its members for its sustainability over time, trust is a significant resource for venture creation as it could help to give competitive advantage (Smith et al. 2001; Aldrich and Zimmer 1986; Honig 1998). As a rebuttal to this there is a worry that an individual’s personal freedom could be curtailed as dependence solely on Japanese-related networks could result in other groups and individuals feeling ostracized and could also stifle creativity and innovation. Yet as the majority of entrepreneurs have set up businesses catering to the needs of expatriates and Japanese businesses, this high level of conformity to Japanese way and perception of networks could be seen as beneficial.

Brokerage

Boissevain’s (1974: 148) concept of a ‘social broker’ is perhaps particularly appropriate to SIEE networks outside Japan, as a social broker ‘places people in touch with each other either directly or indirectly’ and these brokers are believed to build strong networks. Additionally, the term ‘cultural broker’ is also pertinent as it describes people who are able to bridge cultures and act as agents of change. We could see this most clearly in Thailand, where a linchpin Japanese cultural broker helped to facilitate new Japanese SIEEs enter the Thai market, in Myanmar where Japanese SIEEs businesses are highly connected to Japanese multinationals and large-scale businesses operating in the country and in Indonesia where Japanese investors need to rely heavily on a host-national to be able to successfully navigate the paperwork and regulations for business development. As such, the presence of a broker is essential. At times this broker is another Japanese SIEEs while at others it is a host-national.

In an interesting turn, recognizing the need for network and brokerage development, the SIEEs themselves made a business out of sharing knowledge through networks; setting up free papers, such as Cases V-Hanoi-4, MYM-3, IND-2 and PNN-1. The concept of a ‘free paper’ is relatively unique to Japan. Japan has a tradition of free magazines and newspapers to share content relevant to local people. They often include advertisements for local businesses and act as a promotion tool and source of knowledge and network creation. Despite the trend of moving

digitally, Japan still has an appetite for paper-based initiatives such as free papers and in emerging economies, where the internet and digital content may not yet be as advanced. A free paper is a useful publication for expatriates to get the information necessary to run their businesses and live in the host country.

4.2.4 Knowledge

In order to identify opportunity, entrepreneurs must have knowledge and as Gaglio and Katz (2001) argue, if we understand how an entrepreneur identifies their opportunities we will understand the base of entrepreneurship. Therefore, how and when do entrepreneurs gain knowledge? As we have argued above, their knowledge is shaped through their education, work and life experiences, throughout which they build valuable networks where they further construct knowledge with others, recognize opportunities and take action akin to findings by Hayek (1945), Gimeno et al. (1997) and Vankataraman (1997).

Similarly, prior knowledge is also important in creativity (Amabile 1997) as individuals can make links between things they may not have had awareness of before, thus this leads them to pursue new opportunities. Some research suggests that feeling overwhelmed by knowledge may push some into a mental rut, where the individual retreats from seeing out new opportunities purely because they feel overwhelmed, yet as we can see in our cases, the generalist-type entrepreneurs tend to stay with what they know, their safe-space, if you like. Their ventures rely on their tried and tested knowledge; therefore they are able to take risks in implementing them overseas as there is a degree of security.

In terms of knowledge of their environments overseas, as they relate to the culture, groups and places they choose to start a business, the Japanese SIEEs have mostly all had some prior exposure to the country through work, travel or study abroad, and thus when they relocate it is not the first encounter with the country. As such, when we think of the term 'place' the location of their business is selected by recognizing favorable economic conditions, and availability of networks within which they integrate. In terms of services such as education, healthcare, housing and connectivity, the SIEEs in this study seek out ways to replicate their Japanese environment, choosing to return to Japan to take advantage of Japanese health services and education systems due to the high level of trust they place in them and the perceived quality of service they receive. Similarly, in general, the SIEEs do not place a high degree of importance on the political leadership, diversity, access to resources or engagement within the host country as to all extents and circumstances they remain quite enclosed in a Japanese bubble. Yet those SIEEs that do engage more with the host country political networks in order to sustain their business, they are certainly aware of tensions in the region with China and how changes in neighboring political regimes would impact on their business. This prior knowledge of societal issues can help individuals to identify opportunities and spot risks before they arise.

The physical attributes of the location, such as feeling authenticity, buzz and aesthetics, also do not play a major role in decision making, aside from some of the SIEEs in China who feel the need to be in Shanghai in order to advance their business, and those in Hanoi, who see significant differences between opportunities available in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh.

Culture and International Knowledge

As Margalit and Halbertal (2004) ascertain, culture is a fundamental part of our being and the ability to conserve our own culture, enables the members of a community to develop and secure their personal identity. As such, we can see very strong links and networks between expatriate TEs as they seek to maintain their Japanese cultural identity and that of theirs and children. As we discussed previously, international knowledge and exposure to overseas are essential for the development of TEs as this allows them to learn how to effectively enter a new foreign market to build strategic alliances within the country.

4.2.5 Mindset

A mindset is “a predisposition to see the world in a particular way [and] to perceive and reason in certain ways” (Waite 2014, p. 32). We argue that all our SIEEs exhibit two or more of these types of mindset; entrepreneurial, global, social and sustainable. *The American Heritage Dictionary* (2016) defines a mindset as, “a fixed mental attitude or disposition that predetermines a person’s responses to and interpretations of situations or an inclination or a habit.” In her seminal work, Dweck (2006) describes two types of mindset: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. In the fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities are fixed traits, while in the growth mindset individuals believe their abilities can be developed through dedication. Common sense suggests that an entrepreneur would likely have a growth mindset and a resilience that is necessary for success. Additionally, a successful transnational entrepreneur must surely have a global mindset.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

Numerous scholars have defined an entrepreneurial mindset (EM) (Krueger 2000; McGrath and McMillan 2000; McMullen and Shepherd 2006). McGrath and MacMillan (2000) provide five characteristics of the EM: (a) the passionate seeking of new opportunities; (b) the enormously disciplined pursuit of opportunities; (c) the pursuit of only the best opportunities instead of chasing after every option; (d) the focus on adaptive execution; and (e) the engagement of energies of everyone in one’s domain. In Ireland, Hitt and Sirmon (2009) state that EM is the ability to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities, have a sense of alertness, logic to deal with uncertainties and an entrepreneurial framework within one’s mind.

Table 4.9 Entrepreneurial characteristics

Characteristics	Examples
Entrepreneur's personality traits	High need for achievements, autonomy and dominance; low need for conformity; tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty; high propensity for risk-taking, adaptability and flexibility; sense of self-esteem, self-confidence, self-assurance; alertness
Entrepreneurial learned and acquired attributes	Communication capabilities (including foreign languages in case of international entrepreneurship), interpersonal relations (including cross-cultural sensitivities)
Entrepreneurial behaviors	Commitment; pro-activity and planning; sense of observation
Entrepreneurial orientation	International orientation and global mindset (a construct based on experience, education, exposure)
Entrepreneurial processes	Create a vision and a direction; financing the enterprise; planning for expansion and growth; planning for competing in the market; providing for the necessary resources; building networks and networking—social networks—ethnic networks—international network
Entrepreneurial outcomes	Regional growth and development; wealth creation; employment; economic dynamism

Source Etemad (2004, p. 18)

Etemad (2004) summarized highlights of selected entrepreneurial characteristics (Table 4.9). These help to provide a contextual view of the entrepreneur and how he/she is embedded in his/her environment in addition to the impact of his/her upbringing.

What is common among all definitions is that the entrepreneur is able to open to explore, recognize and take opportunities. In terms of international entrepreneurship, SIEEs explore, recognize and take opportunities in an international context. In this case, we can say they should not only have an entrepreneurial mindset but must also have a global mindset.

Global Mindset

Gupta and Govindarajan (2002) in their seminal work on cultivating a global mindset define a global mindset as one that combines an openness to and awareness of diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity. If we explore work on global mindset with international management, Levy et al. in Hitt et al. (2007) define global mindset as a “highly complex cognitive structure distinguished by an openness to and expression of multiple cultural and strategic realities on both global and local levels and the cognitive capacity to moderate and assimilate across this diversity” (p. 217). Javidan's *Global Mindset Inventory* measures attributes in three areas: intellectual capital, psychological capital and social capital. Global intellectual capital relates to cognitive complexity, cosmopolitan outlook and the ability to be global business savvy. Psychological capital relates to a passion for diversity, a sense and quest for adventure and self-assurance, while a global social capital is the propensity to have

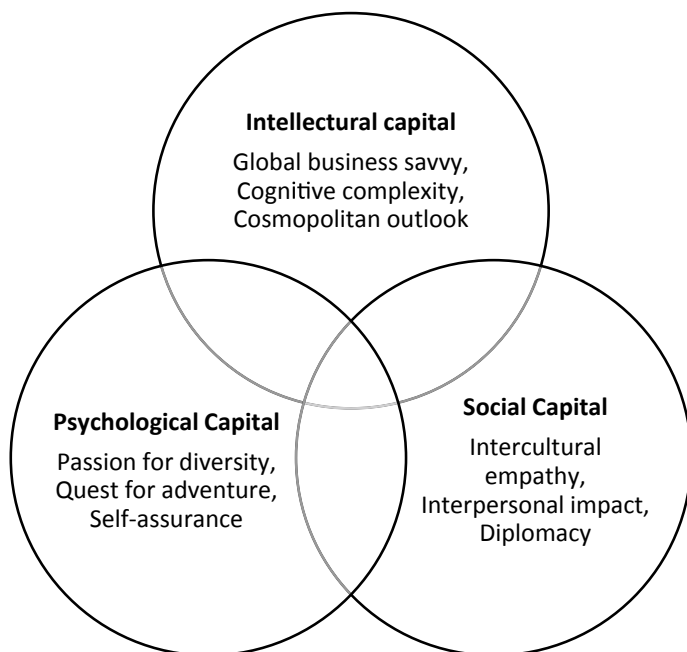


Fig. 4.4 Aspects of global mindset. *Source* Based on Hitt et al. (2007)

intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact and diplomacy. It would be expected that transnational entrepreneurs would exhibit strong self-efficacy and confidence when operating in a global cross-cultural context and the ability to deal with failure in a cross-border context (Fig. 4.4).

Even though research on individual antecedents of individual attributes has been largely inconclusive, there remains an interest in attempting to uncover such constructs (Stewart and Roth 2001).

Social Mindset

Bornstein (2007) conducted extensive research on the social mindset of social entrepreneurs in different contexts. He concluded with six characteristics that are exhibited by extremely successful social entrepreneurs: (a) willingness to self-correct; (b) willingness to share credit; (c) willingness to break free of established structures; (d) willingness to cross-disciplinary boundaries; (e) willingness to work quietly; and (f) strong ethical impetus.

His research found that “one of the primary functions of the social entrepreneur is to serve as a kind of social alchemist: to create new social compounds; to gather people’s ideas, experiences, skills, and resources in configurations that society is not naturally aligned to produce” (p. 236) and that most have a strong desire to restore the equilibrium of justice in society and to solve societal problems.

Sustainability Mindset

The essence of sustainability is to achieve and improve the quality of life for all. It is concerned with social equity, sufficiency and opportunity, engagement and democracy, communication and the cooperation between individuals and organizations. Sustainability and having business leaders with a sustainability mindset will help the development of not only the population and resources on this planet but also technology (Mezher 2011). Having a sustainability mindset helps others to change their behavior (Mezher 2011). Therefore, it is vitally important in the twenty-first century for CEOs to have a sustainability mindset that they can use to influence the direction of their organization.

We found that the TEs exhibit various attributes related to four types of mindset. The entrepreneurs in Cambodia were slightly different to TEs in other countries in that more of them were related to social entrepreneurship endeavors. We can see through this study that when a global mindset (an awareness of internationalization), a social mindset and a sustainability mindset are combined, individuals can become hi-impact SIEEs (Fig. 4.5). The mindset attributes of these individuals are a combination of those outlined by Javidad (2007) and Etemad (2004), in conjunction with Bornstein’s attributes of social mindset, and research on sustainability. These entrepreneurs exhibit traits such as a belief in their own self-efficacy and an entrepreneurial personality (Hartigan 2006). We can see that the individuals have high-impact social networks and are rich in social capital; they are action-orientated and have different measures of connectivity; formal ties, informal ties and intermediary ties which they use to best effect.

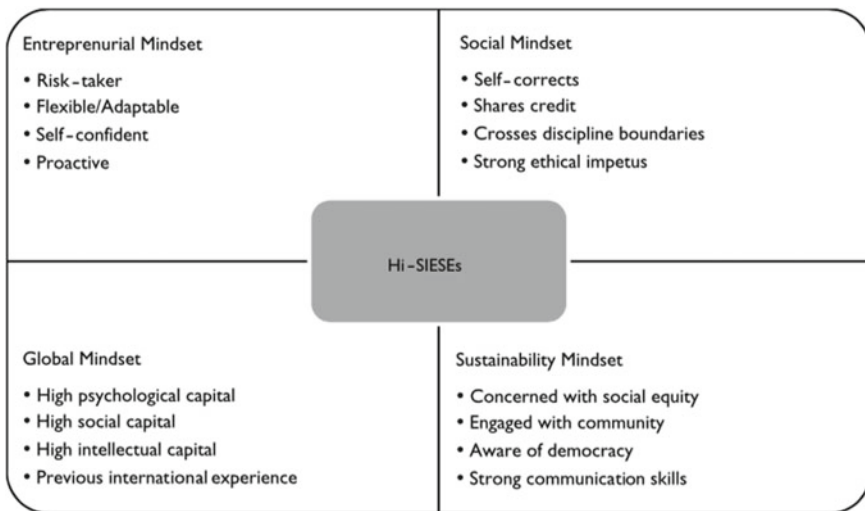


Fig. 4.5 Mindsets of SIEEs. *Source* Authors

4.2.6 Opportunity Recognition

According to Baron (2006: 104), opportunity recognition requires the ability to “connect the dots between changes in technology, demographics, markets, government policies and other factors” and it is this that SIEEs in this study do very well. As we discussed in Chap. 2, there is debate as to whether opportunity is objective and waiting to be ‘discovered’ or more subjective and constructed through individual’s interpretations. In our research we argue that they are co-constructed and emerge when the SIEEs connect the dots of his/her experience (life, work, education) , networks, identity, motivation, etc.

4.2.7 Innovation and Creativity

Entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation drive socio-economic development (Carayannis et al. 2003; Kuratko 2012). In this study, we take creativity to be the generation of new ideas, for example, in one of our cases an entrepreneur decides to write, publish and distribute a free paper in the Philippines as there is not one yet available in this context. This is a new idea for the context but it is still an imitation of an idea in another context. It is possible as the entrepreneur is able to interact with others in the same organizational field (Powell and DiMaggio 1991) to make it a reality. Sawyer (2006) ascertains that creativity relies on the socio-cultural processes that are at play in our convergent and divergent brains when they work together.

Innovation, we consider, is the exploitation of new ideas, again a social process that relies on collaboration and the leveraging of various resources (Sayer and Walker 1992). Innovation is related to problem-solving, organizational models and the generation of values in a diversity of contexts (Krueger 2005). Amabile (2012) sets out a definition based on three factors: knowledge, creative thinking and motivation. In both innovation and creativity there are many actors, social networking and communication at play (Freeman 1991). Through this study we can see the individual factors at play when an entrepreneur decides to start their business and understand the environment in which he/she works. Research suggests that entrepreneurs from highly developed countries are more likely to engage in innovative rather than imitative activities, however, as can be seen through our study, many of the actual business ideas are imitative, but the context in which they are delivered (as an expatriate in a new host country) is innovative. On reflection, more research could have been done in the fields of innovation and creativity in this study.

4.2.8 *Venture Creation and Financing*

When entrepreneurs start their businesses, access to capital is pivotal for a successful launch. However, it is also the area of most concern for entrepreneurs (Chaganti et al. 1995). Through the narratives we were able to observe that the entrepreneurs did not have an adequate understanding about sources of capital, highlighting a knowledge finance gap. The SIEEs followed a traditional model of self-funding their ventures in the beginning stages with less than 2% using angel investors or crowdfunding. Bootstrap financing, which is often one major source of finance for entrepreneurs, was not always available to SIEEs but many took advantage of informal arrangements such as sharing work space and loans from friends or relatives (Neeley 2003; Landstrom and Winborg 1997). They did not have access to many capital markets as their initiatives were international and cross border in nature. A Japanese bank would be unwilling to finance an overseas venture and likewise the host country would also reject any funding application on account of the SIEEs being new to the country, without a credit rating. In his research, Thorne (1989) identified that the method the entrepreneurs use when raising capital is indicative of their character as a business owner and as we see from our study, the majority of these SIEEs were prepared to put their livelihood and savings on the line in pursuit of their business; essentially, we can assume that the entrepreneurs are risk-takers.

4.2.9 *Identity*

We are now arriving at one of our key arguments; that identity is a key contextual factor in venture creation among Japanese SIEEs in South East Asia. Identity is the meaning that we attach to ourselves (Gecas 1982) when we ask ourselves, ‘*who am I?*’ We consider identity not only as entrepreneurial identity but an individual’s identity as a ‘Japanese;’ identity as it relates to one’s education background; identity as it relates to one’s peers; identity as related to language; and identity as related to family background. All of these ‘identities’ are the result of an individual’s socialization and environment and that ‘identity’ is powerful agent driving entrepreneurial action. We recognize the complexity of identity as a fluid and dynamic construct that is a frame of reference for entrepreneurial decisions, but considering it in such research allows us to better interpret social situations and understand what makes an entrepreneur function in the way they do.

Self-efficacy is influenced by personal, cognitive and contextual factors (Bandura 1997) and we argue that the Japanese SIEEs in this context may have a heightened perceived self-efficacy due to their mixed parentage, various educational experiences and work experiences inside and outside Japan. It appears that the SIEEs have strong knowledge of self as they have had to constantly negotiate their identity, they appear highly connected to their culture, identity and Indonesia, as

compared with Japanese SIEEs in Cambodia, for example. Therefore, we argue, they have less structural holes (Burt 1992) when conducting business. They are highly creative individuals who have been afforded the opportunity to question their identity, purpose and experiences.

Bandura’s (1997) work on self-efficacy highlights four sources of efficacy beliefs; mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological states. We argue that in the Japanese SIEEs we have observed in South East Asia, the source of self-efficacy is through their various experiences; workplace, education, life, their interactions with their environment and the networks around them. Through their varied educational experiences, travel abroad and workplace interactions, they are able to recognize role models that can help them to see their capabilities. In addition, mastery in a particular field gave all the SIEEs the confidence to start their own businesses. Once they were on the path to success, mentors provided verbal persuasion and support during times of emotional and adjustment difficulties.

Thus, if self-efficacy is also defined as an individual’s belief in particular targets and tasks (Krueger 1998), these attitudes go some way toward recognizing opportunities. As shown in research by Hostager et al. (1998) and Pech and Cameron (2006), if an individual has successful experience and they have a great ability to seek out opportunities, in addition, elevated self-efficacy leads to an ability to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities (Ozgen 2003; Shane 2000; Ucbasaran et al. 2009). We argue the Japanese SIEEs have a heightened sense of self-efficacy. In some cases, there is a sense among the SIEEs that he/she doesn’t ‘fit’ into Japanese society and that this feeling of inadequacy is also connected to a heightened and perceived sense of self. Figure 4.6 shows the system of self-efficacy that we have observed among the cases.

However, returning to the focus of identity, our identity often instills in us a sense of belonging or even uniqueness. By having a particular identity, we are able to fit in a particular group. Therefore, in having a unique identity one may not ‘fit in’ and there may be an unmet need for belonging. Ashforth et al. (2000) discuss an entrepreneur’s micro-identities, explaining that an entrepreneur will need to balance their unique identities that make them trailblazers and pioneers with their sense of belonging and ability to fit within a particular identity group (Table 4.10).

In the narratives we explored there was an observable tension between the unique or distinctive identity of the entrepreneur and their belonging identity. As an example, many respondents stated that they felt they would no longer ‘fit’ in Japanese society having been an expatriate for so long; yet, they still were seeking a

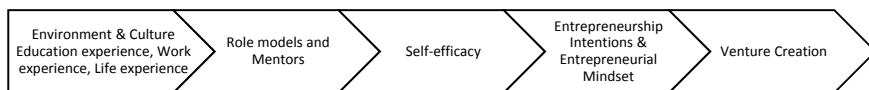


Fig. 4.6 The system of self-efficacy among cases of Japanese SIEEs. *Source* Authors

Table 4.10 Managing multiple identities as an SIEE

Transnational entrepreneur’s multiple identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Ethnicity • Race • Socio-economic status • Language • Marital/relationship status • Parent/Childless • Family composition • Aging parents • Education • Career • Entrepreneur
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sense of belonging to both their country and expatriate groups within their new host country. They felt a sense of distinctiveness that they needed to trade-off with feelings of the need to belong. This is not uncommon. Brewer and Pickett (1999) found that to be distinctive is a universal human motive and it is separate from self-esteem. As can be seen in these cases, this distinctiveness from the Japanese ‘norm’ helps the entrepreneur to develop a meaningful entrepreneurial identity that maybe others cannot develop. The SIEEs self-identify with their Japanese expatriate groups in their host countries, and akin to social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986), they view these groups extremely favorable as it also adds to their sense of self-worth. Thus, it fits into theory that people have a strong need to belong, and as a result tend to be more positive (as can be seen through the career anchors).

Further examining Fig. 4.7 we argue that Japanese SIEEs need to address the following imbalance to achieve optimal distinctiveness for their identity and balance their multiple micro-identities. In terms of distinctiveness, the SIEEs have an identity as an entrepreneur; this sets them apart from their previous identity as an employee in Japan. They are also a foreigner in their host country. They achieved freedom from the traditional working structures of a Japanese corporation and they are developing a new vocational identity and identity as a manager. In terms of belonging, the SIEEs will always visualize themselves as Japanese. Their desire to return to the safety net of Japan for medical care and education highlights the sense of belonging they feel to their home country and nationality. They belong to their family; as a parent, spouse, child, which makes them feel a sense of security but can also cause tension. The TEs feel a sense of belonging to a globalized world; as an expatriate they are also a global citizen. We also found a number of entrepreneurs who felt a sense of belonging engaging in their sports clubs or with people associated with their hobbies. The SIEEs must manage all their identities through their engagement of entrepreneurship and compartmentalize some and integrate others when necessary (Shepherd and Haynie 2009) to avoid conflict.

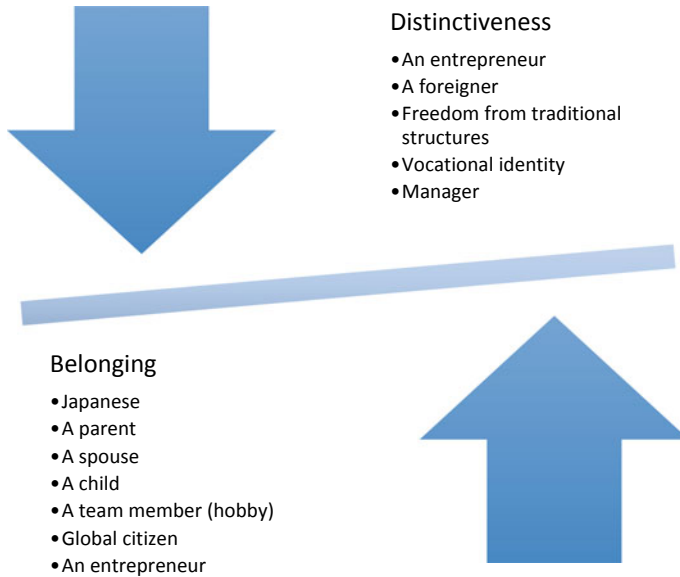


Fig. 4.7 Competing identity issues among Japanese SIEEs. *Source* Authors

4.3 Self-determination Theory (SDT)

As we coded each case, we gained a deeper insight into the people; the men and women who made a decision to leave Japan to set up a business venture overseas. How they think? What drives them? How they make decisions? To share their stories, it became evident that self-determination theory (SDT) was the lens through which we could comprehend and convey their activities; SDT could help us to explain our findings. We became more concerned with motivation; how did these entrepreneurs move themselves? How do they influence others around them to act? What makes these entrepreneurs different from other? As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, people are often motivated extrinsically, by reward, but what was apparent in these entrepreneurs is that they are primarily motivated from within by their interest, their curiosity of abroad and their experiences and it is through these motivations that the entrepreneurs appear to sustain their passion and determination to succeed as transnational business people. This way, we would discover fits within the framework of self-determination theory (SDT).

SDT is a framework through which people study human motivation and personality. It combines motivation studies with people's experiences of the social and cultural facets of their life. Most importantly, in relation to our study, it helps to understand the individuals' experience of three key psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness (which we term belonging in this study), how they

relate to performance as entrepreneurs. We argue that if these three needs are supported, as we can see by the entrepreneurs in our study, they are successful, if not, then, we argue, they may not succeed as a transnational entrepreneur. We take the assumption that the SIEEs in our study are active individuals interacting with the social and cultural world around them as they gain new experiences and develop their sense of self.

At the core of SDT is the belief that human nature displays positive features and that they make effort and can be self-determined in their lives. Ryan and Deci (2000) refer to this as ‘inherent growth strategies.’ It is assumed that the needs we have are cross-cultural (Ryan and Deci 2000). Autonomy is the need to feel and experience life and behavior as integrated within and endorsed by the *self* (Deci and Ryan 1985). Competence is the need to be effective in one’s interactions with their surrounding environment (Deci 1975). Belonging is the need to establish close and secure attachments with others (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Deci and Ryan 1991).

SDT suggests that if we satisfy autonomy, competence and belonging needs, we will be functioning at an optimum capacity and that importantly, these are cross-cultural and cross-developmental. However, criticism has been leveled at the theory, where opponents argue that the fundamental crux of SDT cannot be applied to Eastern contexts and cultures as essentially their cultures do not view autonomy in the same way that Western, more individual cultures do (Chao and Tseng 2002). Eastern cultures, due to their collectivist nature (as touched upon in Chap. 2) value conformity, harmony within the group and family interdependence over independence, individuality and autonomy. Yet as Ryan (1993) argues, autonomy is an endorsement that comes from within; it is the acceptance and recognition of one’s behavior that doesn’t need one to separate from others, but to recognize their inner needs. Thus, it is acceptable for an individual to be autonomous and interdependent within a group and to embrace collective values of the East (Ryan and Lynch 1989).

After extensive engagement with SDT and our narratives, we applied the SDT framework to our SIEEs (Fig. 4.8). We argue that our SIEEs need and have autonomy when they develop their business, their self-efficacy, that they have developed through their work, life and education experiences motivate them to become self-initiated expatriates. Similarly, they need a sense of belonging and thus, during each stage of their business development, they seek out groups and networks within which they can thrive. Additionally, they are aware of their competencies, what they can contribute to their business and society and are highly motivated to continue developing their competencies. The SIEEs are maintaining distinctiveness (autonomy). They are achieving optimal distinction yet engaging with multiple communities in their contexts (belonging) and are aware of their ability (competence). Combining these three needs gives the SIEEs a sense of meaning in their life and work, essentially we argue that Autonomy + Belonging + Competence = meaning as a self-initiated expatriate transnational entrepreneur.

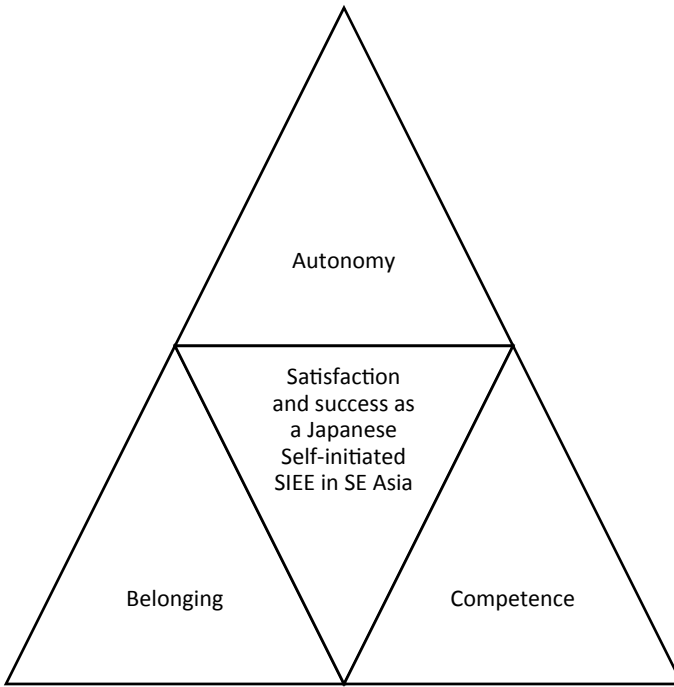


Fig. 4.8 Self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 1995). *Source* Author

4.4 Summary of This Chapter

In this chapter we have provided the reader with our interpretation of the findings and suggest that Self-Determination Theory is a key component and useful framework through which we can observe the success of the Japanese SIEEs in South East Asia. The final chapter will provide some recommendations and suggestions for the development of these kinds of entrepreneurs.

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Chapter 5

The Future of Japanese Transnational Entrepreneurs in South East Asia



5.1 Fostering the Next Generation of Japanese SIEEs

As we close out this book, we would like to leave the reader with some thoughts and observations on the future of transnational entrepreneurship in South East Asia from a Japanese perspective. We will begin by highlighting some new directions for Japanese HRM, education, both entrepreneurship and career education, some recommendations for becoming a SIEE and advice on setting up a business in South East Asia.

5.1.1 *New Directions for Japanese HRM*

Recognize the Diversity Provided Through Gap Years

- Offer gap years to new employees before they take up position
- Do not discriminate against students who have had gap years in evaluation system.

Our study found that engaging in a gap year, whether that be between studies or as part of a career-break, this valuable time allowed the individual to engage in personal growth and skills development. Not only do individuals gain knowledge but they also gain emotional intelligence and maturity, which helps them to make informed decision. A gap year fosters curiosity which is an important component when considering opportunity recognition. Therefore, it can be helpful for those transitioning in their career and considering working for themselves.

During this time a potential SIEE or company employee can engage in self-development as they ‘find’ themselves (Nieman 2010). The benefits of a gap year are well documented in literature outside Asia; therefore it would be an

interesting area for future research within the region (Martin 2010; Heath 2007; Jones 2004; Birch and Miller 2007). We argue that one major benefit of a gap year is that they help an individual acquire soft skills. Exposure to soft skills helps to enhance career maturity and self-efficacy (Miles 2015). Naturally, a gap year also has its disadvantages. There is the emotional stress of being separated from friends and family, the feeling of loneliness, the financial burden and if not prepared properly, the lack of routine and a lack in a sense of purpose.

However, we argue that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages as Super (1990) and Super and Hall (1978) argue that that career maturity is associated with developing competencies in six areas, namely, knowledge of careers, knowledge of work environments, knowledge of preferred occupational group, planfulness, decision-making and accessing resources available for exploration and all these are fostered during the gap year process. Indecision is often seen as negative as it is thought to inhibit progression and development yet, we argue that this time of exploration is actually a time when an individual can negotiate their identity and gain new knowledge. As such, we would recommend that companies offer gap years to their new recruits before they take up their positions. In addition, we would hope that companies refrain from discriminating against potential employees who have had a gap year or 'time out' from their studies and embrace them on their soft skills, potential and maturity as well as their hard skills.

Work–Life Balance

The term work–life balance (WLB) in Japan has been a buzz word for the past 5 years and shows no sign of being given any less attention. It is at the forefront of the agenda for workplace reform, particularly in light of negative stories connected to overwork, worker depression and suicide and issues in family structure. Having a WLB does not just mean having time outside of work to relax, but it also implies the need to use time not in the workplace to build life experiences. It is through various experiences such as travel, time with family and friends, visits to new places and experiencing new things that help an individual to grow. Therefore, the promotion of the professional development benefits of WLB should not be ignored. Employees who achieve work–life balance have the potential to be more creative, happier and healthier and less burnt out. Time with family can often be extremely motivating and can ignite an individual to push themselves further. All of the SIEEs we interviewed stated they felt a different sense of duty and priority when they had children, thus if employees are able to spend more time with their children, they may grow professionally, too. For many SIEEs, experiences they have outside work during this WLB time are instrumental in their decision to become entrepreneurs. Similarly, we would like to suggest that companies offer sabbatical leave for travel for the same reason; it is through exposure to overseas that many SIEEs make the decision to leave Japan and set up their own businesses.

Development of Specialists and Expand Mid-Career Track Job Market

As we mentioned in Chap. 2 and will again later in this chapter, there is a need to differentiate between the development of specialists and generalists in Japan. We ascertain that although generalists are very successful as SIEEs, there are more

opportunities that are often sought through being a specialist. Japan is quite rigid between specialist and generalist tracks and once an employee is in a particular track they are usually fixed there. We advocate for a more flexible mid-career track job market that would allow generalists to move to specialist track and vice versa without discrimination. If there was an interchangeable system, employees would have more flexibility and mobility. Thus, with this increased experience, an individual may spot an opportunity they could exploit for entrepreneurship. Increased exposure to various experiences is the key.

Early Selection of Global Personnel

Again, as touched upon in Chap. 2, what is a *kokusai-jin* or *global ginzai*? How to we ascertain if a Japanese person is global or has the potential to be global personnel? More often than not, employees must wait until their mid-career to be given the opportunity for global assignments or relocation. In this way, students graduating from university with experience overseas, language ability and/or an international posture are often left frustrated as when they enter a company, they spend a lot of time as a generalist, getting to know the ins and outs of the company as opposed to getting stuck into engaging with foreign clients, and so on. We advocate that it is necessary to start developing global personnel at an earlier stage in their career. Send these motivated individuals overseas for the experience or to subsidiaries within Japan, to widen their experience. These experiences will surely trigger an entrepreneurial way of thinking in these individuals. These experiences will help potential SIEEs to be competitive and develop leadership experience. If a company can find talent early enough they can mentor these outstanding individuals and give them opportunities by spotting their potential. Of course, the negative aspect for the companies in this scenario is that after the exposure the employee would want to leave to further develop his/her career, but this is a chance to take for improving HRM in Japan. Competition can be good in this situation.

Promotion of Women in the Workplace

From our previous research on Japanese women working in the United Nations, we appreciate that it takes much time to strive for equal job opportunities for women which is why we need to be patient. However, companies need to be encouraging women who want to break boundaries, be entrepreneurial.

There are three main ways that women can be better supported: (1) The development of an in-company and/or outside company mentoring system to give women access to role models. (2) opportunities to engage in networking events to increase their exposure and confidence; (3) more flexibility.

As we have seen in our study, many women seek out other entrepreneurs for support and advice but this should be supported and happening in companies, too. If a company provides better mentoring systems from when women join the company, they are likely to gain more experience, confidence and have more potential to take the step to become an SIEE. Similarly, women need more time to engage in networking but with family commitments this is often disregarded as attending post-work networking parties can be seen as frivolous or difficult to manage with childrearing duties. Additionally, organizers of such networking

events should also vary the time that they take place to make them easier for more women to attend. Finally, companies need to be more flexible toward women in the workplace; allowing them the same opportunities for promotion and advancement, regardless of whether or not they have children or have taken maternity leave. They should be afforded equal opportunity for promotion, overseas assignments and such, all experiences that will lead to changes in their motivation, mindset, knowledge and development of networks; the antecedents of entrepreneurship opportunity recognition. For example, women should also be encouraged to see the benefits of life overseas with children, particularly small children, as many countries have childcare systems that are more advanced than Japan, which make it surprisingly easy to balance work and life. There are laws in Japan, such as parental leave, to encourage women in the workplace and to help them balance work life and childrearing; however, they are not always enforced.

Supporting Employees to be Entrepreneurial

A number of SIEEs in this study were encouraged to be entrepreneurial through their first workplace. Employers should provide opportunities for employees to develop new skills through entrepreneurial projects. Ways that employees can do this include asking them to come up with new ideas for products, services and ways of doing something in the company as this will encourage entrepreneurial, innovative and creative thinking. For those not in managerial positions, let them lead a team or put them in charge of a project. Ask them to set goals for the company. Encourage and motivate the employees by connecting their ideas and the development of their projects to financial or benefit rewards. In doing so, their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will increase.

Additionally, managers in companies need to be more approachable when it comes to talking about outside work. A number of regular employees' surely harbor dreams of setting up their own company or run companies on the side but are reluctant to discuss this with their superiors for fear of being ridiculed or discriminated against; being accused that they are not committing to the company 100%. But if employers opened up more and discussed these kinds of topics with their employees, they are not only supporting potential entrepreneurs but they are opening up lines of creativity in their employees. By engaging in these kinds of conversations managers have the added benefit of better understanding their employees to know what makes them tick and how they can be motivated which could lead to better levels of retention. Conversely, when employees experience the feeling of success and recognition of what it is to think entrepreneurially, this may inspire them to become an entrepreneur.

5.1.2 *New Directions for Entrepreneurship Education*

Constructivist Pedagogy and Approach

Having reviewed the educational and life experiences of the Japanese SIEEs, we have formulated some recommendations for entrepreneurship education in Japan, yet we hope these suggestions may also be applicable in other contexts. We advocate for an integrated enterprise education framework that is grounded in social constructivist pedagogy. Using a constructivist model we can approach discrepancies and contradictions in the way a learner processes knowledge and how they filter and build knowledge and skills through their experiences. Essentially, we want learners to be able to connect the dots in their life, as we can see in the way the SIEEs have moved abroad and set up their businesses; encouraging them to be autonomous. Coupled with this, is the need to explore idea of the possible self as outlined in research by Birchley and McCasland (2016), which will help learners harness their understanding of identity and the role that it places in entrepreneurial mindset development. This role identity which is co-constructed will help students to visualize themselves as entrepreneurs and equip them with skills to navigate a globalized world.

Constructivism in education is an “approach to learning in which learners are provided with opportunities to construct their own sense of what is being learned by building internal connections or relationships among the ideas and facts being taught” (Borich and Tombari 1997). The learner builds on personal experience and is active and social in the learning experience. Scaffolding, collaborative group work and self-guided autonomous learning is the key, along with the additional element of peer review and evaluation.

Box 1: Elements of Constructivist Pedagogy

Knowledge construction
 Learner-centered education
 Collaborative learning
 Project-based learning (PBL)
 Critical and reflective thinking
 Encouragement and development of creativity

A teacher working within a constructivist framework needs to be trained as the role differs from a more traditional style classroom. The teacher acts more like a facilitator and supporter of the student learning. Similarly, the student is not a passive receiver of knowledge but an active co-constructor of meaning and knowledge.

By educating Japanese students to be more entrepreneurial in general, this has greater benefits to a wider society, not just in the creation of new entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial thinkers can contribute to job creation, economic success and societal challenges facing the country as they have the correct mindset to deal

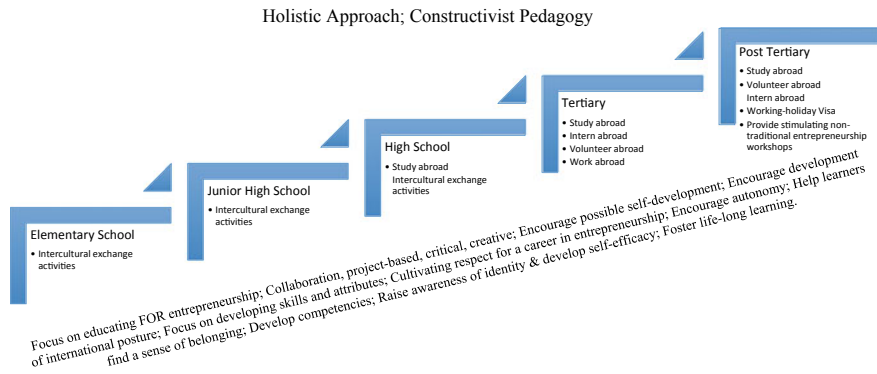


Fig. 5.1 A constructivist approach to entrepreneurship education in Japan

flexibly with the changing world. There needs to be a focus on classroom activities and assignments that encourage the learners to dig into their experiences and engage in activities that will develop entrepreneurial competencies. For example, the assignment could be to create something, and this requires an action such as working in a team or interacting outside the classroom environment, which in turn could develop a sense of self-efficacy. This pattern needs to be at the forefront of educator's minds. Figure 5.1 shows a diagram representation of potential Japanese entrepreneurship education.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

We also advocate more project-based learning (PBL), which is recently gaining traction in Japanese universities but which could be more widely adopted earlier in the schooling system. Of course, learning by doing is already a powerful tool in business and enterprise education, however in PBL, the emphasis is not only on accomplishing an intellectual challenge but through collaboration, the students engage in authentic tasks, are able to reflect and develop roles in project management; all aspects are necessary for entrepreneurship. The student-centered nature of the delivery process of a PBL course helps students develop entrepreneurial behaviors and skills.

Possible Selves

Birchley and McCasland (2016) advocated bringing the notion of possible selves into the entrepreneurship classroom as it can help students consider what they might become, creating a link between cognition and motivation. Understanding one's possible self means to have "cognitive manifestations of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats" (Markus and Nurius 1986: 954). Awareness raising of the possible self has the potential to act as an incentive for future behavior as it can help us to see what the students aspire to and/or their not yet realized identities. Hoang and Gimeno (2015: 4) state that thinking about possible identities can "guide and motivate goal-oriented behavior, often to the extent that a possible role becomes an actual one." As such, we suggest it is necessary to consider what

factors move individuals to become entrepreneurs and we should share them with our students. Through various inside and outside class activities, students can activate their schema about themselves to assist them in building cognitive maps that help them understand and process information.

International Posture

Another major concern for educators in Japan, but also in other countries we suspect, is the need to develop students with an international posture (IP). With regard to IP, in Japan, Yashima (2009) has conducted research on student's international orientation and willingness to communicate (WTC) and defines the construct of international posture as "to what extent learners are interested in or have more favorable attitudes towards foreign affairs...willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and...openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures, among others." Studies conclude that students who are aware of what it is to be international or global, tend to be highly motivated when studying language or seeking employment. This coupled with the positive selves concept outlined above are potentially very positive drivers of an entrepreneurial mindset, particularly in relation to SIEEs. Durand et al. (2018) argue that the extent to which students are able to visualize their possible selves in relation to being global can be an incentive for future behavior. By integrating ideas from the concepts of IP and possible selves, we can help learners examine their involvement with the international community, what it feels like to be an international person and/or business owner, helping them to develop mindsets and attributes that we see among the SIEEs in this study.

Fostering an Entrepreneurial Mindset from Primary Age

Through this study, we have become more convinced of the need to foster an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age. The reason for this is that when self-efficacy, the perception that an individual has of his/her ability (Bandura 1997), is high, the more likely it is that the individual will take action, therefore instilling this action-taking trigger in children will surely lead to more action taking in later life, and possibly less fear of to risk taking. Incorporating the development of self-efficacy in primary education will also help students to become lifelong learners as the child will see a world that is surrounding them, they can develop new perspectives and see and interact with the world differently, consequently being able to recognize opportunities presented to them, something that is at the core of entrepreneurship.

Undoubtedly, there are some critics of introducing such education to children at the primary level and these include financial and the perception of mindset training. Some educators and administrators feel that entrepreneurship education is too costly, financially and in terms of the time it takes to train teachers to deliver a thorough curriculum. Thus it is not seen as an integral part of the school or the student's journey through education, but as an appendage to the learning process. However, we argue that it should be integrated into the curriculum through a holistic, interdisciplinary approach. In Europe, in primary education, around

Table 5.1 The ACRO model of entrepreneurship

Attitudes	Self-knowledge, belief, confidence, motivation, aspiration, determination, competitiveness
Creativity	Problem-solving, lateral thinking, idea generation, spotting and creating opportunities, innovation
Relationships	Working with others, managing difficult situations, negotiation, persuasion, influence, presentation, communication
Organization	Planning, managing resources, decision making, researching and understanding the environment, managing risk

Source Welsh Government

two-thirds of countries recognize entrepreneurship education and are horizontal or cross-curricular, forming a key component of the school's mission.

A model that could be adapted for use in the Japanese context is that of the Welsh Government, who identified the characteristics commonly displayed by Welsh entrepreneurs. Recognizing that entrepreneurship is a way of thinking that can be nurtured, the ACRO model was introduced to focus on the attitudes, skills and behaviors needed to enable young people to meet the needs of business in the twenty-first century. ACRO stands for attitudes, creativity, relationships, organization, and considers the everyday business tasks and underlying skills and attitudes of the entrepreneur (Table 5.1).

Introducing children to these behaviors from elementary school level helps to foster an entrepreneurial mindset in the individual from a critical period. Each subject in each section of the curriculum integrates the ACRO skills in some way through their lessons so that the students have multiple opportunities to engage with and practice using these entrepreneurial skills, while they are also developing self-efficacy.

Creating a Culture of Entrepreneurship within the Institution

As outlined briefly in Chap. 2, entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level is adopting approaches similar to the United States by utilizing consortia and business incubators; however, this is somewhat limited to more prestigious universities, with mid-rank and lower-rank universities not having the available funding to implement such programs; therefore, there needs to be a better system of industry–university collaboration in entrepreneurship and more access to incubators. Universities need to be more outward focused and responsive to the needs of industry when designing entrepreneurship programs.

However, we also advocate the need for entrepreneurship to be a more integral part of the university as a whole in order to create an entrepreneurial mindset and culture of the institution. One model that we feel Japanese universities could adopt is that of the University of Texas at Austin and their *Blackstone LaunchPad*.¹ At the university, they take a holistic approach believing that entrepreneurship is for everyone. The *LaunchPad* is a cross-curricular, centralized hub on campus which

¹<https://ugs.utexas.edu/blackstone-launchpad>.

offers faculty, students and staff all the resources and support they need for idea generation and venture development. This includes workshops and networking events, free and confidential mentoring services, competitions for pitching and the SEAL Program; student entrepreneur acceleration and Launch program, which is a 9-week summer program to help students conceptualize and develop their new ventures. As an interdisciplinary and cross-campus service it highlights the way the university is fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and culture in the institution. Potential entrepreneurs work at their own pace, in the inclusive environment, which truly nurtures the individual. Regardless of how successful the entrepreneurs are through the hub, they have still developed an entrepreneurial mindset and skill set where they can take risks, be resourceful and can deal with failure.

University Entrance Exam System

As explained in Chap. 2 and by multiple scholars, Japanese university entrance systems are considered extremely ridged in that they funnel students into university through an examination that places value on rote memorization and not the twenty-first century skills we believe are necessary for successful integration into a global workforce. The Japanese government announced that the examinations will be reformed from 2020 in collaboration with private-sector organizations. In the previous job markets, rote memorization was highly valued among companies, as individuals were able to show retention skills but also malleability to fit into the company. However, in today's environment, where students are working with AI and other new technologies, and alongside a more internationalized workforce, the role and function of the worker is changing.

The new *Center Test* has been called the *Daigaku Nyuugaku Kyotsu* in an attempt to differentiate it from the traditional style test. The new test will examine critical thinking and students' ability to express themselves in the hope that they will be able to better adapt to the workplace and contribute to the economy and future of Japan. As well as open-ended questions, the test has reformed the English component; stating that students must show evidence of speaking ability by taking an external test provided by a private organization. Additionally, some universities are already adding multiple test components to cater for the changing nature of students, for example, presentation entry-route, where students give elevator pitch-type presentations as part of their entrance exam help to identify students who show the potential to be entrepreneurial, if they aren't already.

International Exchange and Study Abroad Programs

The Japanese government has been making great strides to increase the number of Japanese students studying abroad, and the number of non-Japanese students studying at Japanese institutions is also increasing. These are all part of the internationalization efforts outlined in Chap. 2. However, we feel that to help encourage entrepreneurship and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset among the next generation, although the traditional language-related study abroad programs are useful, the development and promotion of more innovate experiential learning programs abroad would be more impactful.

There are three different approaches we would like to suggest: (1) Partner-university research and development projects; (2) experiential learning (EL) programs in emerging economies; and (3) overseas start-up internships.

By partner–university R&D projects, we mean that institutions can take advantage of the partnerships they already have to create joint research and development projects of a short- or long-term nature that has multicultural teams working together through a problem or project-based learning type pedagogy. For example, a group of students from one university could travel to the other and be put in teams with the partner institution to work on a project. This format could even be beneficial in a hackathon format, which could also be conducted online. These types of innovative exchange would add a new dimension to traditional study abroad offerings.

Experiential learning programs in emerging economies are a way for students to learn about their neighbors and better understand the needs and context of emerging economies. In addition, through this kind of activity, students can develop collaboration and negotiation techniques. These programs would be immersive and field-based. They combine classroom-based instruction with observations, research and data collection, and interaction with locals. The programs can be designed to fit with the student's major and thus they are not only learning more about their specialism, but they can also develop a critical understanding of the world.

Overseas start-up internships are becoming popular in Europe and North America. In these types of programs, students go overseas and intern within a start-up to experience the pace and culture of that kind of business. Of course, a barrier to Japanese young people may be language but as our book has illustrated there are many Japanese SIEEs working in South East Asia that also have Japanese as their working language; therefore students and universities should take the opportunity to seek out these kinds of companies and approach them for opportunities.

Lifelong Learning and Exploration Stage Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is an important objective of lifelong learning as many of the SIEEs start their businesses after they have left formal education; therefore learning possibilities and courses should be available post-formal education. As such mentoring or tailor-made programs would be a natural fit for this demographic of learner where they could learn formal management practices but more importantly, can develop skills necessary for survival.

Examining the typical lifelong learning entrepreneurship programs offered in various communities in Tokyo, both through the government initiatives, private organizations and universities, it is clear to see they follow quite a traditional route and mid-career professionals are being offered opportunities to take foreign-MBA programs to help them advance to entrepreneurship. Yet, we believe that while these could be useful, there is a need to find an educational pedagogy and approach that is more impactful. Additionally, more attention should be paid to what are often termed non-traditional students; socio-economically disadvantaged, and/or those with a low educational level or non-traditional educational background. The idea

that entrepreneurship can be an avenue for these individuals is positive, if we look at immigrant entrepreneurs, they are a prime example of how entrepreneurship can be life-changing regardless of background or socially economic situation. Similarly, graduates of vocational school also should be provided with more entrepreneurship education and training. It is in this area that local authorities can step in to support new initiatives. We wish to draw the reader's attention to the increased popularity and impact of the *PopUp Business School* that originated in the UK. Their approach is opposite to traditional approaches to business creation. They don't believe in business plans or loans and show participants of their workshops how to start a business without spending any money. Data from the *PopUp Business School*² show that 30% of the people that come into their course start their business before the end of the workshop and 27% make their first sale within the first week. We advocate that although it goes somewhat against the culture of Japan and entrepreneurship education currently focused on the target group of mid-career potential entrepreneurs, if this radical approach was adopted it has the potential to open the field extensively and be highly impactful.

In general, in education, we argue that it is important to emphasize hybrid skills and soft skills development. Through developing knowledge of a particular subject, students also need to develop their transferable twenty-first century skills, and this may be possible through modular learning and pedagogies that support a social constructivist approach. The omnichannel nature of the world means that education should follow suit with a more flexible, fluid approach to providing education, both online and offline and through work placements, internships and other out of classroom experiences. This, combined with a focus on the development of soft skills will not only help to set students apart in a traditional recruitment market but will also help them be able to visualize themselves as potential entrepreneurs and give them varied experience and knowledge from which to draw on in the future; learners are building their social and human capital through these experiences.

5.1.3 New Directions for Career Education

We envisage a career education that would include a focus on developing competencies for the workplace that view career development as a journey as opposed to making a decision on one career destination. Within this context the student is surrounded by multiple stakeholders, not just a career advisor, but by classroom teachers, professional advisors, industry leaders and facilitators; a sophisticated integration of professionals. These people will help students to find multiple individual pathways and customize their develop plans in collaboration. The delivery of education will also be omnichannel to engage students and will take a heavily

²<https://www.popupbusinessschool.co.uk/>.

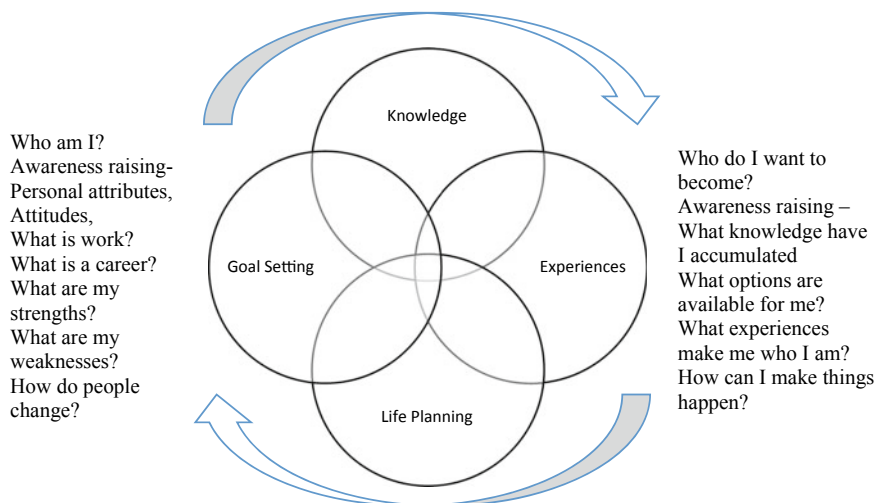


Fig. 5.2 A holistic approach to career education. *Source* Authors

holistic approach with students (and adults) co-constructing knowledge with facilitators and advisors to raise awareness of who they are and what they could become (Fig. 5.2).

5.1.4 Reflections on Doing Business South East Asia

As we have seen through this book, the barrier to entry in South East Asia for Japanese SIEEs is actually quite low compared to what we first envisaged. However, there are still some concerns about doing business in the region. Corruption, poor governance and the perceived instability of relations between China and the region and China and the United States has raised concerns. Additionally, although the tariffs imposed on goods imported within the region are zero, there are a number of non-tariff barriers that are still in place that require negotiation. Therefore as has been the case with the European Union, countries in ASEAN will have to find a consensus on issues that affect joint trade and industry, which in turn affects SIEEs. Three more areas of concern are language, adapting to new cultures, and finding and managing local talent. The first two issues are usually addressed by the SIEEs through joining language classes and becoming more embedded in their communities post-arrival. The third issue remains a major concern for the SIEEs. The key we feel would be harnessing the power of the millennial with value-driven propositions.

Conversely, the labor force is one of the biggest benefits to doing business in South East Asia. The middle-class growth rate is high and birth rate is generally

Table 5.2 Summary of observations

• Country	• Observations
• Cambodia	• Low barrier to entry, strong signs of growth, whole country is open for business, strong support from the government, friendly relations with Japan. The main business language is English which makes it more accessible and the US dollar is used as the primary currency for business
• Myanmar	• Low barrier to entry but somewhat unstable politically, growing income per capita, most new smaller companies can piggyback off larger companies, opportunities available, friendly relations with Japan
• Vietnam (Hanoi)	• Driven by HCM City, still behind economically and lacks trained labor force, conditional entrepreneurship in that it is driven by other areas not the area itself, highly influenced by the political economy
• Vietnam (HCM)	• Capitalist in comparison to Hanoi, many Japanese companies already established, more driven and currently expanding more than Hanoi, strong labor force, hungry and determined
• Philippines	• After the Duterte regime seeking stability, life is improving, statistics are up and there is a similar mentality to what is found in Latin countries, there is a north-south divide and some areas where religion makes it very difficult to engage with the country as a whole; however, in Manila, the political leadership is now strong, there is an ease of entry for Japanese companies, the language is English, so relatively accessible and the culture is open
• Indonesia	• Religious instability, vast country with huge potential and possibility but barrier to entry is the highest among the countries visited. Entrepreneurs need in-country support and collaboration to be successful, however, once considered to be an 'insider' it is easy to live, many of the entrepreneurs feel comfortable to live there and have a sense of acceptance but understanding the religion and culture is necessary
• China (Shanghai)	• Capitalist-driven, many Japanese companies already established, therefore relatively low barrier to entry, however, concern about the government's relation to Japan and the USA causes a high degree of political uncertainty
• Hong Kong	• Capitalist-driven, similar to Shanghai but some Japanese companies are already withdrawing due to the political instability between Hong Kong and Mainland China. Japanese entrepreneurs with small firms feel they can't expand at the moment as many of them rely on business from larger Japanese companies
• Thailand	• Many Japanese companies already in Thailand. Smaller firms rely on business from larger firms, many companies are expanding, increase in the ease of doing business in Thailand so lower barrier to entry, the Japanese domestic market is small so Japanese entrepreneurs in Thailand do not only focus on exporting or providing services to Japan, but do so domestically in Thailand or to neighboring countries

Source Welsh Government

higher, too. It is likely that when children watch their parents move up the economic ladder and start businesses they are influenced by them and motivated to be successful in the same vein. There is a hunger and ambitious feeling among the millennial generation. In addition, technology and innovation is embraced in Asia and moves at a steady, if not relatively fast speed. Harnessing this rapid expansion will surely give SIEEs the edge (Table 5.2).

Advice and Recommendations for Starting a Business in South East Asia

With regard to doing business in South East Asia, we have some general recommendations. First, it is useful to have some initial experience in South East Asia before becoming an entrepreneur. Potential SIEEs should advantage of the travel and welfare system opportunities within the region and backpack, go on trade missions, join an entrepreneurship association trip to the region, but get an initial understanding of the target country. Secondly, they should consider the type of field they wish to enter. Many successful SIEEs run companies that either serve as a clear B2B market, or they use their networking skills and connections to develop a company that connects people and/or resources, either in the host country and/or with Japan. These companies include recruitment companies, real-estate companies, education-related enterprises or consulting and strategy development firms. Thirdly, understand that one of the biggest challenges in working in the region (which is also one its biggest advantages) is how to train and retain local labor through value-driven propositions. However, building a strong intercultural team that can help navigate cultural boundaries will be useful. It is important to understand the country, religion, culture, financing rules, and so on, as much as possible before entering the market as one can expect to spend at least 1 year building relationships and trust in the host country. However, as the SIEEs in this study illustrate, the move to become an SIEE can be lucrative and beneficial for not only the entrepreneur, his/her family but also the region as a whole.

5.2 On Becoming a Self-initiated Expatriate Entrepreneur

From our exploration of the entrepreneurs in this study, we would like to conclude with some advice and recommendations for those individuals who aspire to be transnational entrepreneurs. However, many of the following recommendations are also applicable to those wishing to become entrepreneurs in their home countries.

5.2.1 *Exploration Stage*

For those wishing to become a self-initiated expatriate entrepreneur, we suggest that the key to success is taking advantage of a wide range of opportunities presented during the exploration stage of one's life. At this time in one's life, between the ages of 18–25 people usually experience college life, their first job, exposure to overseas, they may experience loss or grief or start a relationship. All these opportunities provide experience; the experience helps to shape their motivation, increases their knowledge, crafts their mindset and is the first opportunity to start building robust networks. Both men and women tend to start their businesses before 40, which means the exploration stage and into the establishment stage is the key time for planning as they can learn about what types of work are available and what

different careers are open to them. They are able to take into account their skills, interests and expectations for life. They may not yet be clear about the future but they are in a position to take risks and evaluate their options. Many students do not take such risks at this time of life and thus limit their option of seeing what is potentially available. Consequently, they limit their ability to perceive opportunity. This time of life is called ‘exploration’ and many choose to settle, maybe too soon and risk limiting their options in the future.

- Recommendation: Actually spend time exploring in the exploration stage of life. Take advantage of opportunities offered.

5.2.2 *Exposure to Overseas*

One key experience during the exploration stage is being exposed to what is outside one’s home country. Whether that comes from taking part in a study abroad program, backpacking or travel for work or with family, the key timing of this exposure should not be underestimated. The opportunity to go overseas provides the individual with the strongest opportunity to reassess his/her identity and develop new mindsets. One of the main benefits of going abroad at this time gives the chance to leave one’s comfort zone. Some of the basics of life, such as the ability to make friends, work part-time, have been established and can make one feel comfortable but it is when we are uncomfortable in unfamiliar situations that we learn the most. Through travel we can meet others who may hold different values and thus, this gives us an opportunity to reassess our own values. By navigating a new environment, we have the ability to face new challenges, grow stronger and understand our identity better.

Similarly, overcoming an obstacle during travel, such as a miscommunication, can help build confidence; it is a teachable moment that cannot always be provided in a classroom setting. The need to make a split second decision in a foreign country helps develop resilience and cultural sensitivity. And, as more and more jobs in the future require employees to be globalized, these skills, the ability to travel and process the world outside one’s home country, can give individuals a competitive edge in the workplace. The need to make decisions on a daily basis when traveling and deal with the demands of a different life in unfamiliar surroundings can trigger a person’s creativity, innovative-thinking and personal development.

- Recommendation: Travel during the exploration stage of life.

5.2.3 *Family and Lifestyle Choices*

Whether or not to get married is often a major decision in the exploration or establishment phase of life. From our study, the trends appear to be that males get married in Japan and rely on the support of a trailing spouse as they set up their businesses. At times, the couples are often required to live apart from their children when schooling them, therefore this needs to be given consideration when embarking on an international career as a spouse or parent. On the other hand, women tend to remain single when they start their businesses. This trend of an independent single woman is in line with general trends around the world. Work is given priority over finding a partner and having children. For those couples who were both expatriate entrepreneurs, one couple met and married in Japan and they took a joint decision to move to Cambodia. This requires commitment on both people to navigate the new lifestyle and culture and the couple in this study prove to be a strong support for each other. The expatriate couple who met when they were both overseas has a similar support network and mentor relationship with each other. Even though they pursue different businesses they are able to share ideas with each other and can turn to each other when they may experience difficulty.

- **Recommendation:** Consider the complexities of a marriage in an international context.

Similarly, when couples who work overseas or who are considering working overseas have children, there are more factors to consider. The majority entrepreneurs with children in this study stated that when they had children, their priorities changed entirely, from the focus on the business to focusing on providing for their families. They became slightly more risk averse and became more concerned with how to educate their children.

It is common for expatriates who work overseas to educate their children through an international school system, whereby the child most likely studies for an international baccalaureate (IB). Unlike in many countries where the IB is highly regarded, the traditional Japanese schooling system and university entrance system in particular, does not yet know how to adequately process such qualifications, and thus it could be the case that Japanese students are discriminated against for having not graduated from a Japanese high school. With this knowledge, many self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs choose to educate their high-school age children in Japan, which often means they are separated from their child for a number of years. This almost obsessive need to graduate from a Japanese high school graduation in order to enter a top Japanese university is unlikely to change unless the entire education system in Japan changes, or universities slowly become more globalized. In all the South East Asian countries we visited they all had some form of Japanese language education and many had a traditional school system that would run through elementary school or junior high school and this was deemed sufficient initially; however, to provide children with a strong Japanese background and to give them the option of entering university in Japan and working in Japan in

the future returning to Japan at this key stage is vitally important. If a child is educated in an international school until high school, then the parents must decide whether to educate their child in a foreign university or return to Japan with the status of a ‘returnee’ (a label given to a child who did not go to high school in Japan). If a child went to an international junior high school, then the decision of whether to go to a Japanese high school or continue in an international school becomes extremely important. Finally, the cost of a child’s education was also mentioned among the entrepreneurs as a possible area of concern. To educate in an international setting can be expensive (often for assigned expatriates, the company who sponsors their assignment provides an education subsidy for their children, but of course, as self-employed, entrepreneurs do not have this luxury) and the entrepreneur must carefully consider how to educate their children, in what setting? Home setting, international setting, local setting? At what stages? And how much the education choice will cost?

- Recommendation: Give due consideration to children’s education in an overseas context.

The term expatriate guilt is common in the academic literature and in the mainstream discourse. The notion of guilt (often tied to responsibility) is a key part of life abroad. And even though working overseas may be seen as glamorous, risk-taking, adventurous by others, the expatriate him or herself can feel an enormous sense of guilt for the family and friends they have left at home. This sacrifice can put a huge psychological burden on the individual (and the family and friends who remain in the home country). One of the main sources of guilt for the self-initiated expatriates in our study was not being available to care for elderly relatives and with many populations experiencing an aging population trend. This situation will likely be similar for expatriate entrepreneurs from a variety of countries. There are ways to overcome such guilt. In our studies, some entrepreneurs were able to leave the care to other members of the family; some were told by their parents to pursue their dream and gave permission to travel and explore life overseas. Some have made a conscious decision about returning back to Japan when the time is necessary. In order to cope, developing strong support networks overseas is vital and by creating a ‘family’ overseas, in whatever form that might take, or by seeking out an experienced mentor, will not only be helpful for overcoming guilt but will also help to motivate and add to one’s knowledge base.

- Recommendation: Give due consideration to expat guilt and the care of elderly relatives

There is a strong focus on the need to maintain a work–life balance in modern society. The narratives of the expatriates highlight how despite working for themselves, many of them still maintain their hobbies as a way to not only relax but also to build professional and social networks. For example, joining a tennis club or dancing group overseas can help forge links with the host community, build friendships and gain inside knowledge of the new culture. If the club is an

expatriate organization, then this provides the entrepreneur with a valuable link to his/her home country. It is through these networks that expatriates can learn about industry trends and increase their business connections. It can give an individual a strong sense of belonging, helping to maintain their identity (and navigate multiple identities), gives a sense of purpose and common goal.

The focus on well-being and self-care is especially important for an entrepreneur. When an entrepreneur has found happiness in career, it is often at the expense of having their own personal, quality, time and narrowly avoiding burnout. As we saw in our study, a vast number of entrepreneurs blend their social and professional networks; thus they are enjoying both the social side of their life while engaging in business to some extent. If this can be balanced, then this could be thought of as the optimal work–life balance. The key appears to be able to schedule life appropriately, whether that may be scheduling a game of tennis, scheduling a father’s meet-up group or scheduling a dance recital. Each entrepreneur finds his/her own balance point and engages with their hobbies, interests and friends to varying degrees based on what is necessary for them.

- Recommendation: Engage with your hobby/interests and find a personal work–life balance

After deciding to relocate overseas, it is essential to engage with the new host community to be able to make the most of the experience. Many of the Japanese SIEEs in this study engage with their host communities, however, some remain more closely aligned with or within what is sometimes termed the expat bubble. Community engagement is relational and occurs at a very local level of society. The process of engagement means developing mutual trust and respect and developing common goals. Through engaging with the community, the SIEE can take part in tasks such as designing or planning something new for the community or helping them overcome a particular problem. Particularly in the context of working within a developing economy, the SIEEs can help to develop resources for the community and contribute toward community development and sustainability while simultaneously developing cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and cultural skills; all components of intercultural competency.

Intercultural competence is often emphasized in relation to expatriate training because cross-cultural training is based on the assumption that intercultural competence can be learned and taught. Yet, as we can see through these entrepreneurs, they may not have been explicitly ‘taught’ how to engage with the host community yet through interactions, they can acquire new skills and information about their host culture to help them survive and thrive. Some entrepreneurs in this study have engaged so deeply with the community that one of them built roads and developed infrastructure for their local area, while others have helped improve the skill level of the labor force of the country. An SIEE can contribute in many ways, not just economically, but also with their time, attitude and behavior.

- Recommendation: Engage with the local culture and community as much as possible.

5.2.4 *Workplace and Career Choices*

Our study found that the majority of entrepreneurs worked within a more generalist field as opposed to specialist, which is expected due to the Japanese education system. Thus, it is important for a potential entrepreneur to understand the difference between a specialist and generalist and be able to understand where their skills and experience lie, particularly what skills they can leverage in their future business. It is sometimes considered to be the ultimate career choice and one decision from which all future decisions will be related. Generalists tend to have a loosely defined role within a business, whereas a specialist has a more defined role. It is interesting to observe that the entrepreneurs in this study use their wide range of knowledge and experience to create organizations that are broad in nature. A generalist can typically see how to join the dots of a problem or process as they have a ‘bigger picture’ mentality. They value interconnectedness and can think outside-the-box. It is unsurprising then that, overall, generalists have many transferable skills, use effective communication strategies and tend to be considered good leaders and managers. This was evident through our interviews. We also observed that what we would that the term generalists show a high degree of flexibility, not just in their work pattern but also in their career. They are less restricted and more open to risk taking as they can better understand and assess the various elements at play in decision making.

That is not to say that a specialist would not make a successful SIEE, specialists are often better compensated for their work due to their specialized, niche knowledge. Especially in emerging economies, a specialist would likely be able to add value to their community as they could easily become the thought leader in their new context and as people tend to seek help from experts when experiencing a problem, an expert SIEE could have many advantages over generalists in the field. Being aware of one’s skill set and understanding what you could potentially bring to the table as an SIEE, whether that be as a generalist or specialist is vitally important and part of identity formation.

- Recommendation: Understand the difference between a specialist and generalist and see where your skills and experience lie.

Another finding from analyzing the lived experiences of the SIEEs is that none of them seemed to visualize becoming an entrepreneur as a final destination of their career. It was something that emerged organically over time as they traveled through their career and it may not end up being the final leg of their career journey. For some people, a career is a destination and when reached, the goal and satisfaction is achieved. However, with the SIEEs, success and becoming an entrepreneur appear to be journeys and that, if we think of it in terms of Maslow’s theory of motivation, self-actualization is the pinnacle of life and something that we continue traveling toward. The motivation to reach it is part of the challenge of life and this thought is always helping us to ‘become’ rather than be ‘complete.’

The journey from want to be entrepreneur to entrepreneur means to forge one's own path and realize that you are on a journey of discovery; a journey through which your mindset will alter, your knowledge will increase, your motivation will fluctuate, your identity will become contested but you will have a sense of autonomy, belonging, and be aware of your competencies. At the same time, as there is a general, what could be termed, visible career, that is the tangible path (formal steps, observed by outsiders), entrepreneurs also have an invisible (to outsiders) career, more akin to an internal career, a general understanding of where they want to go in life (and the subjective reading of that journey).

The SIEEs showed a strong ability to deal with uncertainty, a high degree of flexibility and a sense of openness. Most of them are continuing to expand their businesses organically based on the opportunities they recognize in their various contexts. The ability to think on their feet and be responsive to change is a key part of their journey as they encounter various twists and turns.

- Recommendation: Consider a Career to be a Journey, Not a Final Destination.

Despite not all SIEEs having a mentor in their first workplace, those that did often still had the same mentor later in life. A mentor in the first workplace can be a huge influence on someone's career; they can make or break a positive workplace experience. A mentor helps to nurture talent and can help retain new employees. They can have a positive effect on job satisfaction and performance. The SIEEs found that having someone initially believe in them gave them a degree of confidence to believe in themselves. Mentors also help to create and connect their mentees with an expansive network, which in some cases proved very useful when the SIEE was setting up his/her business overseas. Creating a multigenerational company culture was also helpful for the SIEEs as the ability to draw on others' knowledge and experience was useful when learning how to set up businesses. Psychologically, a mentor helps to reduce stress and anxiety. Some of the SIEEs used mentors in their first workplace to do this, but as they gained experience and moved their careers in a different direction, the emotional support was provided by their spouse.

When engaging with a mentor, the SIEEs need to be committed to expanding their knowledge and competencies and willing to ask for help. A small number of SIEEs in this study preferred to be more 'lone ranger' types and make decisions alone, based on their gut. However, those who sought the help of a mentor were open and receptive to new ideas and ways of doing things. Through their mentor relationships they were able to also improve their interpersonal communication skills.

- Recommendation: Seek out a mentor in the first workplace.

The importance of engaging in a form of professional development and having a positive attitude toward lifelong learning cannot be underestimated. All the SIEEs in the study are engaged in professional development of some kind. The most common form was to read books not only on business-related topics but also on

topics outside their field of knowledge or comfort zone. In reading about different fields, they could expand their knowledge base, become motivated by different things and thus increase their ability to recognize opportunities.

The SIEEs also see value in continuing to travel abroad during the establishment phase of their career. Travel, as it did in the exploration stage, gives the entrepreneur new perspectives and new opportunities. It was cited as an important form of self-development.

Another interesting fact is that some SIEEs returned to Japan for more formalized, classroom-based or lecture-based seminars. With the world being even more interconnected online, professional development becomes easier. This will likely result in a decrease in the number of Japanese people returning to Japan to study as qualifications may be more widely available online. In addition, training mobility will likely increase across South East Asia with training becoming available in places such as Thailand, Shanghai, etc. These changes open up a new niche training market.

- Recommendation: Engage in continual professional development.

5.2.5 *Developing Self-efficacy*

Schein's work on the concept of a career anchor explains that a career anchor is an individual's self-concept of what they are good at, their motives and values and how they govern their work and career choices. After a few years of working, the SIEEs are able to reflect on their experiences and their anchors evolve. When an individual is better able to understand his/her own needs, they can understand the world, what kind of employee or leader they can be and how they can contribute to society. When engaging in entrepreneurship it is useful for the individual to think about what motivates him/her and to try to formalize that in a career anchor. A mentor may help to guide the development of an anchor but ultimately it is up to the individual to decide on his or her own. From these SIEEs, we could see that many of their career anchors were related to their understanding of 'self' and their ability to recognize their management competencies. Recently, there are many online tests one can do to determine their career anchor; however, it is possible to feel just an alignment to one or more of Schein's categories and traits; technical competence, managerial competence, autonomy/independence, security/stability, entrepreneurial creativity, service, challenge and lifestyle. For those potential entrepreneurs in their mid-to-late 20s, it is a good time to reevaluate one's career and reflect on workplace experience to date.

- Recommendation: Develop a career anchor.

Similar to having a career anchor that recognizes one's competencies, having an innate ability to believe in oneself and have passion are also the key to becoming a successful SIEE. All the SIEEs in this study exhibited a high degree of self-efficacy.

If passion is defined as an intense positive feeling, a type of energy that helps give one a sense of meaning, then the SIEEs in this study exhibited a strong sense of passion for their work and careers. They have been able to find and harness their passion to gain success. The level of positivity among the SIEEs was extremely high and the majority exhibited no signs of fear or perceived lack of challenge, indicating that they had few emotional roadblocks at the time of interview. Undoubtedly, the SIEEs faced entering a new country with some trepidation yet, the challenge of succeeding in a brand new environment was motivation enough to overcome any fear.

- Recommendation: Have passion and positivity.

A great amount of effort, time and money has been poured into developing English language skills among Japanese young people as the skill will enable them to work efficiently on the world stage. While this, of course, is a valid assumption, we found that the majority of SIEEs we interviewed were not exceptional in terms of their level of English language proficiency. They had a rudimentary amount of English to function; however, they did not possess a sophisticated level of business English. What they did have was a high level of general communicative ability and well-developed soft skills. Therefore, we would urge potential SIEEs to work on developing their soft skills over language proficiency at the beginning stage. Once established, many of the SIEEs engage in host-country language classes, enrolling in Thai or Vietnamese, for example, or even studying these at university level and prioritizing them over English.

A basic to intermediate level of English proficiency, around the Common European Framework of Reference B1 level, which is considered to be a threshold level, appeared to be sufficient for our entrepreneurs to flourish. At this level they can understand points regarding family, work, school and leisure-related topics, can deal with most travel situations and describe their experiences, events, ambitions as well as options or plans in brief terms.

Soft skills, particularly professional soft skills such as critical and analytical thinking, teamwork and interpersonal skills, are vital. What is most important in the modern world of business is the ability to be fluent in work behavior; this focus on 'behavior' and being a 'cultural fit' means that it is no longer possible to be linguistically competent; intercultural communicative competence and highly developed soft skills are critical. Breaking down soft skills into two categories; process skills (communication, teamwork, etc.) and awareness skills (knowledge of contemporary issues, etc.), we can see that the SIEEs in this study possess ample amounts of both types. We also found that at the core of a successful businessperson is initiative. The SIEEs had the power or ability to begin and follow through with their plans; they showed a high degree of determination and ability to assess situations. We argue that the development of these skills is more pertinent than becoming proficient in English. Thus, we recommend that an individual focus on having as many life experiences, through which he/she can develop soft skills.

- Recommendation: Develop soft skills over foreign language skills from the outset.

Through the research we could easily see how SIEEs were forced to negotiate their identity at different points in their career. Identity and the nexus and trade-off between distinctiveness and belonging as individuals seek to find optimal distinction is something that many people are not aware of. A lack of awareness that at times, we need to negotiate our identity in certain situations may lead to stress, confusion and negative feelings. As such, potential entrepreneurs need to be aware of how their identity may be contested and learn to deal with frustration that may arise from that situation.

It is important to realize that an individual is not only negotiating the way they see themselves but also how others perceive them; therefore, the conceptions of one's self-identity may limit them in business situations, particularly in relation to negotiation. Therefore, to raise awareness, it is important to engage in developing emotional awareness and mindfulness. A number of SIEEs stated that they are engaged in some form of mindfulness activity or engagement with their emotions or thoughts. It is useful to find ways to manage moods and emotions in oneself; for some SIEEs that meant engaging in their hobby or travel, for others it was getting out into nature to feel grounded. Practicing mindfulness helps one to become aware of the emotions and identities within ourselves. Engaging in mindfulness not only helps the mind to settle but also the body.

- Recommendation: Be aware that identity is negotiated and use tools such as mindfulness to help recognize identities and beliefs.

5.2.6 Key Business Decisions

For any budding entrepreneur, how to finance a project is often considered the biggest hurdle to overcome. For our study, we found that actually, for many of the SIEEs, they found that finance was actually a relatively low barrier to entry when entering an emerging economy market in South East Asia. This makes the region very accessible and the nature of an emerging economy means that the opportunities for growth are immense. Therefore, when deciding to set up a business, restricting oneself to their home market is slightly short sighted when financial gain could be achieved in a newer market at a lower entry cost.

In connection with funding, the majority of the SIEEs used their own funding or that of traditional investment procedures. Only one SIEE used crowdfunding. Crowdfunding and angel investment has become an important part of an entrepreneur's journey in other countries around the world, but is slow to take traction in Japan. This may be culturally-related, but the potential power of crowdfunding should not be ignored by potential SIEEs. Crowdfunding can provide the SIEE with access to capital at an early stage. It helps to hedge risk and is a useful initial

marketing tool. By engaging with investors online in a relatively barrier-free environment, the entrepreneur is able to quickly build new partnerships, gain customers and build confidence in themselves as a business owner and their brand. Of course, this path is not always appropriate for everyone, as there is a risk of failure and letting your funders down. The SIEE may not meet the threshold required by the crowdfunding site and/or your concept is laid bare to competitors on a wide platform. However, we recommend that SIEEs explore how crowdfunding may appeal to them; particularly younger entrepreneurs may find the tool suitable for their needs and abilities. They are more technologically engaged generation who used to manipulate social media; thus crowdfunding and online engagement may seem like a natural path to funding.

Similarly, using social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, LINE and LinkedIn can also raise the profile of an entrepreneur. Creating an online brand and identity is important. The high-impact social entrepreneurs are savvy users of online tools to increase their connections not only in Japan but also in their host country and wider afield. For example, becoming a moderator of an online expatriate group can enable one to build connections and recognition quickly. Similarly, giving advice to other entrepreneurs or expatriates on online forums or career advice boards, and so on, helps to raise the visibility (and thus the potential client base) of the SIEEs.

- *Recommendation: Realize that finance is a relatively low barrier to entry for setting up a business in South East Asia.*
- *Recommendation: Explore how crowdfunding as a source of funding could be beneficial.*
- *Recommendation: Be savvy on how to use social media to build networks.*

5.3 Reflections on This Study

5.3.1 *Methods and Conceptual Frameworks*

We stand-by our decision to use qualitative research methods and particular narratives as they allowed us to provide a thick description from which we could better understand the SIEE's lived experiences. Using qualitative methods we were able to answer questions about experience, how the SIEEs developed meaning and understand their standpoint. As researchers, we became the instrument and the 'subjects' became our 'participants' (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). We have endeavored to provide a description of our procedures and a transparent explanation of our analysis and data management. We have also engaged in reflexivity, triangulation and worked closely with the participants themselves to ensure an accurate representation of their experience.

In future studies we will use self-determination theory as more central tenant from the outset; further developing theory from that stand point. In this study, we

neglected to ask questions about the SIEE's retirement plans. This is an important aspect of better understanding how the SIEEs view their career and how connected they remain to Japan. How many SIEEs intend to return to Japan for retirement? How many utilize private pensions or do they rely on the Japanese state pension and what are the ramifications of that for the economy. In a similar vein, we should have addressed healthcare and the economic impact of any remittance of earnings to Japan. In future studies we will be sure to ask such questions.

5.3.2 Future Research Directions

We intend to continue researching in this field and will expand the study to explore Japanese SIEEs in South America and Africa. We are particularly interested in SIEEs in BRICS countries and we are also keen to move toward diaspora TE research among Japanese in Peru, where there are approximately 160,000 people of Japanese descent and Brazil, which has the largest Japanese population outside Japan.

Similarly, we have become more interested in non-Japanese SIEEs and other aspects of transnational entrepreneurship in Japan. Preliminary research by Birchley (2018) found that there is a strong case for Japan attracting foreign talent to maintain and develop society, counteract the declining birthrate and to provide an economic stimulus. There are many reasons to invest in Japan, particularly in light of new government initiatives such as the Invest Tokyo Project, the Tokyo One Stop Shop Business Establishment Center (TOSBEC) and business development centers around Japan. However, as of 2018, Birchley (2018) found that only a small number of expatriate entrepreneurs had taken advantage of the business support provided by the Tokyo government and that SIEEs attempting to enter Japanese markets need an awareness of traditional Japanese mental habits "which value intuition and experience...and the concept of socialization" which is a "quintessentially Japanese form of exchange behavior" (Glisby and Holden 2003). Knowledge of essential networks and brokers are of paramount importance to successfully establish a business in Japan. We hope that this book and especially, Chap. 2 can provide some cultural context for entrepreneurs considering entering Japan.

Finally, the increased number of foreign students and technical interns in Japan warrants an investigation into TE among that demographic of the population in Japan. Similarly, the increasing diaspora of Nepalese, Vietnamese and Indian business owners in Japan would also likely provide an interesting new research context. We feel that the field of TE and the study of entrepreneurs and the connection to Japan is a stimulating avenue of research.

5.4 Closing Remarks

Japanese self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs are exceptional individuals in that they not only exhibit a strong entrepreneurial mindset but also a global mindset that sets them apart from regular Japanese. They recognize opportunities around them, thanks to the experiences they have had since they were young. They were able to connect the dots and consolidate the experiences into a new and challenging stage of their career. The most profound finding was that they exhibit a high degree of self-efficacy, which we argue arises from their experiences. The Japanese SIEEs appear to be free thinkers who are secure in decision making (often based on their gut feeling). They make efforts to embed themselves in their new communities as they negotiate their multiple identities. In addition, they have a set of competencies that they continue to develop. The SIEEs are likely to encounter more uncontrollable risks while living and working abroad compared with ones who live and work in their home countries.

We encourage researchers to be interdisciplinary and to further explore the mindset and motivation of successful and unsuccessful SIEEs in a variety of contexts. We endeavor to further contribute to the field by extending this study to non-Japanese SIEEs in Japan and Japanese SIEEs in other emerging economies. To aspiring self-initiated expatriate entrepreneurs, we advocate for them to go abroad as soon as possible in their education or career and seek out a mentor or some form of guidance that will help him/her to connect the dots of their experience; consolidating it to develop a new mindset, greater knowledge, more extensive networks and increased motivation, while at the same time continually negotiating his/her identity.

In conclusion, the SIEE's primary needs of autonomy, belonging and competence are met. They have an intrinsic motivation and are able to self-regulate. They show a high degree of enjoyment and an inherent satisfaction in what they do as entrepreneurs. They engage in projects which are usefulness-driven in that they are related to their previous experience, their set of competencies and the needs of their new community. In addition, they have a value-driven attitude to their work; they, as often expressed through their career anchors, highlight that they are doing work which fits with their own deeply-held values and which excites and interests them. They fit Deci and Ryan's (1995) definition of an autonomous, motivated, individual who has intrinsic aspirations. They choose to be SIEEs with a strong sense of volition, energy and persistence. Who will be among the next generation of SIEE?

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