An Exploratory Study of "Fairness" in Educational Settings

—American and Japanese University Students—

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Abstract

This paper deals with differences and similarities in the perception of "fairness" in educational settings between American and Japanese university students. First, data was collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews as to the words and actions of Native English-Speaking (NES) teachers that Japanese students regarded as unfair, and those of Japanese students that American teachers found to be unfair. Based on the responses, a second questionnaire was prepared and distributed to 155 American students and 157 Japanese students. This paper specifically discusses the diverse viewpoints voiced by American and Japanese students, and suggests ways to reduce their respective discontentment in educational settings.

Keywords: fairness, students' perceptions, cultural differences, individual differences, diverse viewpoints

Introduction

The concept of "fairness" is said to differ vastly between Americans and Japanese. Yoshida (1996) notes, for instance, that while "fairness" is a primary virtue for Americans, Japanese give priority to maintaining harmony within the group. American individualism encourages independence and aims at free competition where individuals can display their ability to the maximum. In business, manufacturers compete with one another by trying to establish that their products are of a higher quality than those of their competitors. But all parties are expected to "play by the rules." "Rules should be applied with knowledge of the relative strength of the opponents, so that the stronger opponent does not use the rules to beat a weaker one" (Stewart & Bennett 1991:107). By contrast, Japanese culture is frequently described as a "collectivist"[1] culture. However, it would be more aptly labeled as having an affinity for interactional relativism which involves situational variability and complexity and consideration of the overall balance among relevant factors (Lebra 1986; Nishiyama 1989). The method of decision-making aims at ensuring that "all parties are happy with the outcome" rather than "who is in the right and deserving in a specific situation" (Lanham 1986:294). "Harmony and feelings of cordiality of all members of a group is considered more important than 'fairness'" (ibid). This does not mean that fairness is unimportant but rather that greater emphasis is placed on maintenance of harmonious relationships. In business, providers form networks and the members within the networks conduct their transactions so as to avoid competition and conflict.

According to Sue (2004), many Americans, "trapped in a Euro-American worldview that only allows them to see the world from one perspective" (p.762), suffer from "ethnocentric monoculturalism" (p.765) where the group in power strives to impose its reality and beliefs upon others. Tropenaars (1993), in analyzing relational orientations that explain how people in a given culture deal with one another, states that Americans adopt a universalistic approach wherein "what is good and right can be defined and always applies" (p.10). In contrast, Japan is described as a particularistic culture. "The particularistic

reasoning is that friendship has special obligations and hence may come first, instead of assuming that the one good way must always be followed" (ibid). The Japanese, while exhibiting the same tendency towards ethnocentrism as Americans (Neuliep, Chaudoir & McCroskey 2001), do not attempt to force their reality and beliefs upon others but are more apt to judge anyone outside the group as inferior or not warranting the same consideration as members of the group.

Research Questions

Given that in business, differing perceptions of fairness have caused problems between Americans and Japanese, we can expect that similar conflicts have arisen in educational settings. The purpose of this study is to identify diverse viewpoints of American and Japanese university students with regards to how they perceive "fairness" and explore ways to reduce their respective discontentment in educational settings.

1. In what ways do American and Japanese university students' perceptions of "fairness" differ? Are there any similarities? Are the similarities/differences in any way related to the students' respective backgrounds?

2. Are differences related to gender, age, and experience staying in Japan (for American university students) or experience staying in an English-speaking community (for Japanese university students)?

Method

First, data was collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews as to the words and actions of Native English-Speaking[2] (NES) teachers that Japanese university students regarded as unfair, and those of Japanese university students that American teachers found to be unfair. From the responses, the researchers selected 14 representative examples in which conflicting cultural values might trigger communication problems in English education and a second questionnaire was prepared with seven questions representing the students' perspective and seven representing the teachers' (See Appendix). Some questions focused on the cultural differences related to taking personal initiative as opposed to maintaining group harmony, and the horizontal and hierarchical structure of interpersonal relationships. Other questions focused on non-cultural variables related to classroom policies. The questionnaire was translated into English and back-translated into Japanese. Respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the evaluation of fairness in a particular situation, and to briefly explain their response. (Ex. Native English-speaking teachers seem to prefer active, outgoing students. They only remember those students' names and they tend to call upon those students more frequently and give them higher grades. I don't think this is fair.) In addition, they were asked to share any experiences they had had in class that they considered to be unfair.

Respondents

The questionnaire was distributed to 155 American university students at a midwestern community college. Of these students 87 were male and 67 were female (1 no answer). The average age of the respondents was 22. All of the students were enrolled in general education courses in preparation for transfer to a four-year university. The questionnaire was also given to 157 Japanese university students enrolled at a four-year Japanese university of comparable size and academic standing. Of these students, 69 were male and 88 were female. The average age was 19.

Hypothesis

This study is based on a theoretical model of culture wherein attitudes emerge from social organization structures and forms of interaction. According to Levinson, Foley and Holland's study (as cited in Godfrey 2007), culture is a continual process of creating meaning. Central to the concept of culture is "the notion of sharing—sharing of experiences and values which guide actions and reactions" (Godfrey 2007). We hypothesize, therefore, that differences in the perception of fairness will be related to cultural values that direct people's actions and reactions such as individualism vs. interactional relativism and

horizontal vs. hierarchical societies whereas similarities will be related to factors other than cultural variables.

Results

One-Way ANOVA using SPSS version 11.0 was performed to compare the mean scores between the American students and Japanese students. Scores on nine questions reached a significance level ($p \leq .05$) [Table 1]. In the case of five questions, American and Japanese students gave similar responses. For Question 1, section 1 large numbers of both American (n = 65) and Japanese (n = 97) students agreed that it is unfair for teachers to show a preference for students who are active and outgoing. In contrast, for question 4, section 1 many American (n = 66) as well as many Japanese (n = 91) students indicated that they felt it was fair for teachers to reward students who participate more actively in making presentations as part of a group project. Similarly, for question 6, section 2 the majority of American students (n = 95) as well as a significant number of Japanese (n = 67) students agreed that it was unfair that all students who participate in a group project receive the same grade when some students do more work. For question 5, section 1 many American (n = 90) and Japanese (n = 127) students agreed that it was unfair for teachers to reject a particular question after first informing students that he/she would welcome any question. For question 1, section 2 the majority of American students (n = 113) as well as many Japanese students (n = 60) agreed that students should be placed in language classes according to their ability.

Four questions revealed differences in the students' perceptions of fairness. For question 2, section 1 many American students (n = 71) agreed that it was unfair for a student's grade to be affected by a personality characteristic (shyness) whereas many Japanese students (n = 78) disagreed. Although question 6, section 1 attained a significance of .051 the responses did not indicate a clear difference, merely a direction since many Japanese responses were clustered in the middle (n = 98). American students (n = 72), in contrast, responded that it was fair for a teacher to request that students be more expressive. For question 3, section 2 most American students (n = 117) indicated it was fair for students to seek information from the teacher about an upcoming test by asking questions after class. A large number of Japanese students (n = 65), on the other hand, responded that they felt it was unfair. Finally, for question 7, section 2 a significant number of American students (n = 79) indicated that they considered it fair for a student to ignore advice given by a teacher without having expressed disagreement at the time the suggestions were made. In contrast, while some Japanese students (n = 53), responded that they thought it was unfair for the student not to have followed the teacher's advice, a large number of Japanese students' responses (n = 89) were clustered in the middle indicating some ambivalence. Even though responses to a number of questions did not reveal a significant difference between the two groups, the corresponding written answers did indicate some cultural differences in the way fairness is perceived.

Table 1: Results of One-Way ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Question 1 Section 1	Between Groups	9.349	1	9.349	8.036	.005
	Within Groups	360.648	310	1.163		
	Total	369.997	311			
Question 2 Section 1	Between Groups	32.834	1	32.834	24.665	.000
	Within Groups	412.676	310	1.331		
	Total	445.510	311			
Question 3 Section 1	Between Groups	1.361	1	1.361	.822	.365

	Within Groups	513.712	310	1.657		
	Total	515.074	311			
Question 4 Section1	Between Groups	11.338	1	11.338	6.823	.009
	Within Groups	515.111	310	1.662		
	Total	526.449	311			
Question 5 Section 1	Between Groups	27.866	1	27.866	21.085	.000
	Within Groups	407.053	308	1.322		
	Total	434.919	309			
Question 6 Section 1	Between Groups	4.132	1	4.132	3.846	.051
	Within Groups	330.865	308	1.074		
	Total	334.997	309			
Question 7 Section 1	Between Groups	.004	1	.004	.002	.964
	Within Groups	601.176	310	1.939		
	Total	601.179	311			
Question 1 Section 2	Between Groups	52.377	1	52.377	44.586	.000
	Within Groups	361.820	308	1.175		
	Total	414.197	309			
Question 2 Section 2	Between Groups	1.158	1	1.158	1.279	.259
	Within Groups	277.988	307	.905		
	Total	279.146	308			
Question 3 Section 2	Between Groups	139.711	1	139.711	99.037	.000
	Within Groups	435.903	309	1.411		
	Total	575.614	310			
Question 4 Section 2	Between Groups	.048	1	.048	.041	.839
	Within Groups	359.861	307	1.172		
	Total	359.909	308			

Question 5 Section 2	Between Groups	2.500	1	2.500	2.116	.147
	Within Groups	362.729	307	1.182		
	Total	365.230	308			
Question 6 Section 2	Between Groups	44.776	1	44.776	27.472	.000
	Within Groups	501.998	308	1.630		
	Total	546.774	309			
Question 7 Section 2	Between Groups	73.749	1	73.749	72.251	.000
	Within Groups	313.364	307	1.021		
	Total	387.113	308			

Discussion

Research Question 1: Cultural or Individual Differences and Similarities between American and Japanese University Students

(1) Differences between American and Japanese Students

Situations in which differences were revealed were classified into three cultural variables related to the social organization structure and forms of interaction: (a) personal initiative and group harmony, (b) paternal and maternal natures of society, and (c) horizontal and hierarchical interpersonal relationships.

(a) Personal Initiative and Group Harmony

One cultural contrast that emerged reflects the difference between American culture where personal initiative ("Pull yourself up by your own boot straps") is encouraged (Samovar & Porter 2001; Stewart & Bennett 1991), and Japanese culture where people are expected to give priority to group harmony and, as a member of the group, avoid causing conflicts (Kishida & Kotaki 2005; Yoshida 1996). In response to the statement, "NES teachers seem to prefer active, outgoing students. They only remember those students' names and they tend to call upon those students more frequently and give them high grades. I don't think this is fair," even though American and Japanese students agreed that this was unfair, critical remarks were conspicuous among American students. Representative examples of responses include: "If you want to be noticed, do something, go above and beyond;" "This teaches kids to be outgoing if they need that in the U.S. to succeed;" and "If you contribute more to the class, then you should get a better grade." Positive statements by Japanese students were notable. Typical examples were: "Equal opportunities to speak should be given to all students with the respect of various personalities;" "Many Japanese are introverted, and every student should be encouraged to be more extroverted;" and "Some students, even if they hope to, simply can't speak actively. So it is unfair if teachers evaluate those students based on the teachers' personal preferences.

Quantitative analysis of American responses indicated that a large number of students chose 3 (n = 55). This suggests that while personal initiative is encouraged in American education, many Americans feel certain concern about its excessive implementation.

A small number of American students made comments similar to those of Japanese students. Examples include: "It's unfair, just because someone is quiet and reserved doesn't mean they are not learning or deserve a lower grade;" and "It's my nature to be quiet/shy, shouldn't have to change my personality to please a teacher and get a better grade." Likewise, a small number of Japanese students (n = 19) stated

opinions similar to American students: "Active attitudes are necessary for improving foreign languages;" and "Outgoing and active people will be in an advantageous position also when starting to work after graduation." This implies that one's personality may also affect one's perception of "fairness."

Similarly, cultural differences were identified based on the issue: "Many students come to me [the teacher] after class and ask questions about an upcoming test. This may mean that they receive more information about the test than other students in the class. I don't think this is fair." Most American students (n = 117) indicated that it was fair for students to seek information from the teacher with reasons such as: "I think the students asked questions because they are highly motivated;" and "They are making extra effort. They deserve it." On the other hand, a large number of Japanese students (n = 65) felt that it was unfair. The reasons given were: "The information should be made public later. Nothing is wrong with answering the student's question after class, though;" and "If the teacher gives additional information to a particular student, the same information should be known to other students in the next class." The difference illustrates how it is acceptable in American culture for those who take initiative and assert themselves to receive an advantage in contrast to Japanese culture where most students feel they should have equal access to the same information.

The results of the above two issues also indicate that while many American students do not feel it is fair for a teacher to show a preference for active and outgoing students, they do feel that teachers should reward students who take personal initiative.

(b) Paternal and Maternal Natures of Society

Another difference reflected in the responses was between the paternal nature of American society and the maternal nature of Japanese society (Kawai 1984:235-236). In other words, fairness for Americans means to treat people according to their ability whereas the Japanese interpretation of fairness is to treat everyone equally irrespective of their ability. The issue was: "A NES teacher had students read aloud in class. Those students who read in a monotonous tone were only allowed to read a few lines whereas students who read with good pronunciation and intonation were allowed to read longer passages. I don't think this was fair." Although this question did not attain a level of significance, comments revealed a difference in the attitudes of American and Japanese students. Those American students who disagreed, shared reactions based on their own experiences: "I have had such experiences and it is so annoying to listen to a monotonous reader;" and "Intonation and animation hold people's attention. If you aren't doing that when you read—people are likely to fall asleep." Contrarily, a considerable number of Japanese students agreed that such an action was unfair and commented: "Teachers should have the pronunciation and intonation of students with monotonous reading tones corrected by giving the opportunities;" and "Equal opportunities should be given to everybody."

A portion of each group of students viewed the situation from a broader perspective: "I have mixed feelings on this, one side gave a good example of how to speak, the other, though, does need more practice;" and "Good pronunciation and intonation can be a model. However, I can also understand some people feel it's unfair if only people with good pronunciation and intonation are allowed to read more."

(c) Horizontal and Hierarchical Interpersonal Relationships

The way in which students responded to suggestions from a teacher reflects American horizontal and Japanese hierarchical interpersonal relationships: American culture where a personal confrontation between two persons of different hierarchical levels is acceptable (Stewart & Bennett 1991:90), and Japanese culture where, because of the influence of Confucianism, criticizing a person with higher status is regarded as arrogant behavior (Yamamoto 1981:139). Different points of view were apparent in the written comments of students to the question: "I spent a lot of time working with one of my students on her graduation thesis. I made some suggestions about how she should develop her research. Although she seemed to agree, I found later that she hadn't followed my recommendations at all. She hadn't expressed any difference of opinion during our discussion, and I don't think this was fair." American students insisted: "Opinions are to help, not to be expected to be taken;" and "It's her paper. It's OK to seek advice, but if in the end she doesn't use the advice, it's OK." However, Japanese students stated: "Japanese people are likely to act that way. Most Japanese consider it rude to decline on the spot suggestions that the teachers offered for them;" and "If I were put in this situation, I wouldn't be able to show disagreement."

Those American and Japanese students who expressed agreement with the above issue made comments such as: "The student wasted your time which is valuable;" and "The student should have used some suggestions."

Another issue which indicated different attitudes about interpersonal relationships was: "One of my classmate's English ability was really good; however she was shy and couldn't answer questions asked by a native English-speaking teacher. She received a low evaluation in this class even though she scored high on written exams in other classes. I don't think this was fair." This teacher's evaluation was regarded as unfair by many American students, but fair by a considerable number of Japanese students. The American students made statements such as: "One can be shy, but if she had this problem, she should have contacted the teacher before evaluation and explained the situation;" and "Her shyness doesn't reflect her ability, her work should." On the other hand, comments by Japanese students included: "In conversation classes, class participation is usually valued. We have no other choice;" and "If the teacher clarified how to grade his/her students in the first class, the student would be compelled to accept the grade."

(2) Similarities between American and Japanese Students

In contrast with the aforementioned issues, American and Japanese students generally agreed on two themes: situations in which teachers' consistent policies were expected, and those in which group projects were graded.

(a) Teachers' Consistent Policies

The following were situations where students expected consistent policies from their teachers. One issue was: "A NES teacher said, 'You can ask me any question.' When I asked him, 'What sports do you like?' he responded, 'Your question is too common. I've answered this question many times already, so you should come up with a new question.' He did, however, answer other common questions from other students such as 'Do you like Japan?' I don't think this was fair." The majority of students in both groups objected to this teacher's attitude, and supported the student's opinion. Representative explanations were: "If he said he would answer any question, he should not break one off;" "That teacher contradicted himself;" and "This shows favoritism." These responses indicated that teachers should maintain clear policies so as not to confuse their students. One way of avoiding confusion is to define the parameters more clearly from the outset, such as by stating something like, "Any question not pertaining to sports," as some students pointed out.

The other issue was: "Students who have seldom attended class and have received low scores often come to me [the teacher] at the end of the semester and beg me to give them credit for the course because they have gotten employment and want to graduate. I don't think it's fair to give them credit for the course." A large number of both American and Japanese students sympathized with the teacher's dilemma. Typical explanations were: "No work, no reward;" "If they don't succeed at school, they can't succeed in life;" and "It's unfair to diligent students." This suggests that making exceptions for a particular group of students is generally viewed as unacceptable.

(b) Grading of Group Projects

Results that greatly differed from what had been expected concerned the grading of group projects. Certain similarities were identified between American and Japanese students. The majority of American students and a good number of Japanese students agreed with a complaint voiced by American teachers, "When I assign group projects, sometimes only one or two people in the group do most of the work. Because it's group project, all students receive the same grade. I don't think this is fair." Typical responses from American students were: "Students should get the grade they deserve;" and "Work should be graded on the person's ability and understanding." This signified one aspect of American culture where accomplishments should be made measurable and visible (Stewart & Bennett 1991:78). Representative comments made by the above Japanese students were: "If it the teacher gives slightly different grades to each student, it may motivate those students who don't work hard enough;" and "If the teacher could pay attention to individual achievements also, it would be better." Among Japanese students, responses were diversified. Some students strongly supported traditional Japanese values where priority is given to group harmony and individuals are encouraged to make mutual concessions without

asserting themselves too much (Kishida & Kotaki 2005:206) by insisting: "Teamwork should be cherished;" and "Group projects should be graded based on the sense of joint responsibility." Those students who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement made comments such as "Even if the teacher interprets the situation to mean that only one or two people in the group do most of the work, I'm not sure if it's true;" and "It will be difficult for the teacher to grasp accurately who actually works hard in the project." The results suggest that the attitudes of young Japanese have moved closer to those of American culture in some respects possibly as a result of the recent trend in Japanese companies to replace the traditional seniority system with a merit system.

The responses of a small number of American students reflected views similar to traditional Japanese values: "If it was a group project, then everyone should have received the same grade because maybe the quieter students did more of the research;" and "The product is what counts, not who did what."

Research Question 2: Differences in Gender, Age and Overseas Experience

(1) Differences in Gender and Age

As for gender, a marked difference was seen in emotional expressions. For the issue "A NES teacher said, 'Put your true feelings into words.' Other students and I found that the teacher was too expressive and we thought that she should control her feelings. Her request that we express our true feelings was unfair," a clear difference emerged between men and women among American students. Responses such as, "That's how women in the states do it;" and "Have you met my wife?!" indicate the expectation that emotional expressions by women tend to be more intense than those of men. No great differences were seen between the answers of men and women among Japanese students. Regarding age, no differences were identified in any of the situations.

(2) Differences based on Overseas Experience

Depending on whether the student had had an opportunity to live overseas, a significant difference was revealed in empathic responses. American students with experience staying in Japan mentioned: "The teacher seems insensitive to Japanese culture;" and "The Japanese reserved nature should have been taken into consideration. The instructor was completely out of line." Likewise, Japanese students with experience staying in English-speaking communities reflected some understanding of other cultures: "I have realized that it is very important to express my emotions since I actually lived in English-speaking countries;" and "I have recognized that native English speakers can't understand my emotional expressions until I show my feelings too much seen from a Japanese viewpoint."

Also, regarding the evaluation of students adopting a more assertive attitude in class, American students with experience staying in Japan indicated an understanding of Japanese culture: "Japanese students are not generally expected to be outgoing;" and "We as Americans are outgoing, very opinionated, competitive. Quiet is seen as weak. But I also living in Japan, see your point of view." Similarly, Japanese students with experience staying in English-speaking communities again demonstrated that they recognized the value that many English-speaking cultures place on assertiveness: "By conducting such education, the teachers can motivate their students;" and "Active attitudes are valued in English-speaking countries, so such evaluation [placing a high value on active students] is valid."

Moreover, in expressing disagreement with teachers, a crucial difference was identified. American students with experience staying in Japan mentioned: "Learn some Japanese culture—I've never met any who are overly opinionated;" and "She should have told you she disagreed, but a Japanese student probably learned not to disagree with her teacher." By contrast, Japanese students with experience staying in English-speaking communities stated: "If the teacher is non-Japanese, the student should express her opinion on the spot;" and "The student should have expressed what she had in mind spontaneously."

(3) Differences based on Other Experiences

Another issue where past experiences other than overseas experience were strongly identified was: "At the Japanese university where I teach, students are not placed in language classes according to their ability. I don't think this is fair." Although cultural differences were expected, influences from past

experiences turned out to be stronger than cultural differences. Japanese students unexpectedly responded: "I can tell from my experiences that it isn't good that one class consists of students who can't keep up with the class and students who get bored;" and "If one student can't understand the class, the student can't improve his/her language ability."

(4) Additional Responses

In the third part of the questionnaire students were asked to identify any experiences they had had in class that they considered to be unfair. Several cultural differences became apparent. Some American students raised the issue of religious tolerance: "Once penalized for differing religious views;" and "When teachers insist they are right or take advantage of their position to bash my religion." This issue wasn't mentioned by Japanese students who tend to have polytheistic views and generally have a high tolerance for differing religious beliefs (cf. Kishida 2002). On the other hand, one issue was brought up only by Japanese students: "When asked a question, a student who is first called upon is put in a disadvantageous position because the student has less time to organize his/her ideas and can't do a good job compared with students who are called upon later." This issue wasn't raised by American students, who may be more accustomed to giving spontaneous responses.

There were several other interesting responses. Some American students commented: "Life is unfair. Get used to it," indicating a gap between an ideal (fairness) and reality (unfairness). Also, one American student stated: "I have sometimes been ostracized by fellow students because I occasionally try to impress the instructor with my knowledge of the subject. I feel that they treat me unfairly." This statement would not be surprising if it had been made about Japanese society where there is a well-known proverb: "The nail that sticks up will be hammered down." Even though Americans admire assertiveness, they may display a low tolerance for someone who is overly boastful or appears to be "showing off." Finally, one Japanese student stated: "When one student hesitated to answer a question, some teachers spent a lot of time for the student. It is unfair to other students because it is a waste of time."

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that some differences as well as similarities exist in the way American and Japanese university students view the issue of fairness, and that differences are related to cultural variables as hypothesized. It is true that a large number of students manifested their own cultural values in various situations, but the results reveal that in any situation, some students have views similar to those of people from other cultures. Also, the results indicate that people who have lived in another culture experience perceptive changes about that culture. Moreover, a person's personality and past experiences sometimes exert a greater influence on the evaluation of fairness than cultural factors.

In order for teachers not to make students feel that they are being treated unfairly, they must first recognize diverse viewpoints by avoiding ethnocentric monoculturalism. As can be seen from this study, a variety of viewpoints can be identified in most situations. Acknowledging differences in learning styles and personality characteristics as well as cultural traits is essential.

Also, it is important for teachers to maintain consistent policies. To be truly "fair," teachers must maintain a standard that all students understand so that students who do make efforts reap the proper rewards.

Finally, regarding group projects, some suggestions made by both American and Japanese students are worth considering: "Sometimes those who don't talk as much did more behind the scenes. Other times they are slackers; a peer review is needed;" and "Group projects should grade both the individual and the group."

As some American students point out, "Life is unfair," and we can't expect "absolute fairness." However, it is certain that both teachers and students can reduce their respective discontentment in educational settings by recognizing and trying to understand diverse points of view.

Acknowledgments

NOTES

[1] Gudykunst and Nishida (1994) point out that the terms "individualistic" and "collectivist" in reference to culture are heavily value laden in Japanese with the former having the connotation of 'selfishness' and the latter used with reference to dictatorial political systems.

[2] Most teachers were Americans, but some Japanese could not identify the nationality of their teachers. Therefore, the term "Native English-speaking" is employed here.

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Appendix

We are conducting a survey on similarities and differences between Americans and Japanese regarding their perception of 'fairness.' Your answers will be treated confidentially, so we would appreciate your

answering each question frankly. Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Gender: M F Age: _____

Experience staying in Japan: Yes (Length of stay: _____) No

Part I: What do you think of the following opinions expressed by Japanese university students about the words and actions of native English-speaking teachers? Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree. (1 = strongly agree 5 = strongly disagree) Then briefly explain your response.

1. Native English-speaking teachers seem to prefer active, outgoing students. They only remember those students' names and they tend to call upon those students more frequently and give them higher grades. I don't think this is fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

2. One of my classmate's English ability was really good; however she was shy and couldn't answer questions asked by a native English-speaking teacher. She received a low evaluation in this class even though she scored high on written exams in other classes. I don't think this was fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

3. A native English-speaking teacher had students read aloud in class. Those students who read in a monotonous tone were only allowed to read a few lines whereas students who read with good pronunciation and intonation were allowed to read longer passages. I don't think this was fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

4. When we gave a presentation as part of a group project, some students talked a lot while others said only a few words. Students who spoke more received better grades than others. I don't think this was fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

5. A native English-speaking teacher once said, "You can ask me any question." When I asked him, "What sports do you like?" he responded, "Your question is too common. I've answered this question many times already so you should come up with a new question." He did, however, answer other common questions from other students such as, "Do you like Japan?" I don't think this was fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

6. A native English-speaking teacher said, "Put your true feelings into words." Other students and I found that the teacher was too expressive and we though that she should control her feelings. Her request that we express our true feelings was unfair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

7. A native English-speaking teacher set a deadline for a report. The theme was difficult and some students did not observe the due date. The teacher then extended the deadline by a week for those

students without a penalty. I don't think this was fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

Part II:

What do you think of the following opinions expressed by American teachers about the words and actions of Japanese students? Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree. (1 = strongly agree 5 = strongly disagree) Then briefly explain your response.

1. At the Japanese university where I teach, students are not placed in language classes according to their ability. I don't think this is fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

2. Students who have seldom attended class and have received low scores often come to me at the end of the semester and beg me to give them credit for the course because they have gotten employment and want to graduate. I don't think it's fair to give them credit for the course.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

3. Many students come to me after class and ask questions about an upcoming test. This may mean that they receive more information about the test than other students in the class. I don't think this is fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

4. When I ask questions to students, rather than answering me directly, they often turn to consult their friends. They don't think about the questions by themselves. I don't think this is fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

5. Students are sometimes absent from my class for club activities. Without having made any effort to find out if any homework was assigned, such as by consulting their friends, they ask me to extend the deadline of the assignment because they were absent. I don't think this is fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

6. When I assign group projects, sometimes only one or two people in the group do most of the work. Because it's a group project, all students receive the same grade. I don't think this is fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

7. I spent a lot of time working with one of my students on her graduation thesis. I made some suggestions about how she should develop her research. Although she seemed to agree, I found later that she hadn't followed my recommendations at all. She hadn't expressed any difference of opinion during our discussion, and I don't think this was fair.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

"Explain your response _____"

Part III: If you have had any experiences in class that you consider to be "unfair," please share them.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation.

About the authors:

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