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Social and Support Network of

Muslim Students in Japan:

A Case Study on ALEPS Members

Ng Sor Tho

Sia Bik Kai

Okai Hirofumi

Tanada Hirofumi

IMEMGS

Institute for Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies
WASEDA UNIVERSITY, Tokyo, Japan

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早稲田大学人間科学学術院

アジア社会論研究室

〒359-1192 所沢市三ヶ島 2-579-15

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Ng Sor Tho

Faculty of Economics & Administration, University of Malaya

Sia Bik Kai

Faculty of Accountancy and Management, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

Okai Hirofumi

Graduate Student, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

Tanada Hirofumi

Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

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Ng Sor Tho

Faculty of Economics & Administration, University of Malaya

Sia Bik Kai

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Okai Hirofumi

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Tanada Hirofumi

Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

1. Introduction

Under the Look East Policy (LEP) program of Malaysia, more than 10,000 Malaysians had been sent to further study at the universities and technical colleges in Japan. The Alumni Look East Policy Society (ALEPS) is an alumni for the LEP graduates after their return to Malaysia. ALEPS was established in 1988 under the initiative of the Public Service Department of Malaysia after the return of the first batch of graduates from Japan. The society comprises former graduates of Japanese universities and technical colleges and is under the patron of Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz. The objectives of ALEPS are to support the Look East Policy implementation by the government and to pursue the objectives of the policy, to realize technology transfer from Japan, to assist government agencies in enhancing mutual

relationships with Japan and to organize training and leadership programmes for members in enhancing their career development (ALEPS, 2006).

This study was conducted as one of the academic activities of the Faculty of Human Sciences of Waseda University with the aim of understanding further the lives of Muslims students in Japan and after returning to Malaysia.

2. Methodology

The population of the study is all returning students from Japan who join the ALEPS. This study was conducted with the cooperation from both the University of Malaya (UM) and ALEPS office in early 2007. It was decided to utilize the mail questionnaires for the study, as the members are all over the Malaysia. The ALEPS office is responsible in providing the addresses of its members to the researcher of UM, who in turn mailed out the questionnaires to respective addresses, received completed return questionnaires and uncompleted return questionnaires, and followed by data entry. The initial target of the respondents was 300 cases, and it was decided to send the questionnaires to 2000 members. However, the number of members with full addresses was only 1,000. Thus, a total of 1,000 questionnaires were mailed to the ALEPS members and 136 questionnaires were completed and returned. Out of which, eight questionnaires were not filled up with all the required information. A total of 314 undelivered questionnaires were returned to UM office because of changing in work place, and the rest, 550 were of no sign at all.

3. Results and Discussion

This section is divided into three parts. It begins with the profile of respondents and followed by the life of respondents in Japan, it includes the communication between respondents and friend and family members when they were in Japan. Lastly, it gauges

the communication with friends after returning to Malaysia. The opinions on the benefit and satisfaction from their experiences in Japan are also presented.

3.1 Profile of Respondents

There were 136 respondents for the study, 94 males (69 per cent), 39 females (29 per cent) and 3 respondents (2 per cent) did not reveal their gender. As this survey is targeted at the Muslim, nearly all the respondents are Malays, except only one Chinese.

The age of the respondents ranged from 25 to 58 years old, with a mean of 36 years. The distribution of respondents by age group shows that about 38 per cent of them were less than 35 years, another 29 per cent were 35 to 39 years while the rest aged 40 and above (Table 1). There is no significant gender difference in the age distribution of respondents.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Age Group

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
< 35	37.2	39.5	37.9
35 - 39	29.8	26.3	28.8
40 +	33.0	34.2	33.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	(94)	(38)	(132)

3.1.1 Education

Most of the respondents obtained their diploma or bachelor degree from Japan. Table 2 reveals that some 64 per cent of the respondents obtained bachelor degree, some 29 per cent of them got diploma, and about 13 per cent received postgraduate degrees (master or PhD) from Japan universities. Some 6 per cent of respondents received

multiple qualifications from Japan universities/colleges. Thus, it is not surprised that most of them did not obtain any bachelor or postgraduate degrees from Malaysia, as shown in Table 3. However, some 35 per cent of the respondents had received other academic qualifications from Malaysia (Table 3). The majority of the respondents were majoring in engineering, which made up 77 per cent, another 14 per cent were majoring in social sciences related courses and some 9 per cent were in other fields of study (Figure 1). Males were more likely to major in engineering as compared to females, who were more likely to be in social sciences and other fields of study.

Table 2: Per Cent and Number of Male and Female Respondents by Degree Obtained in Japan by Gender

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Diploma	36.2	34	10.5	4	28.8	38
Bachelor	57.4	54	78.9	30	63.6	84
Master	12.8	12	10.5	4	12.1	16
Doctor	0.0	0	2.6	1	0.8	1
Others	1.1	1	2.6	1	1.5	2
Number of Cases		94		38		132

Table 3: Per Cent and Number of Male and Female Respondents by Degree Obtained in Malaysia

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Diploma	14.9	14	5.1	2	12.0	16
Bachelor	5.3	5	5.1	2	5.3	7
Master	2.1	2	2.6	1	2.3	3
Doctor	0.0	0	2.6	1	0.8	1
Others	38.3	36	28.2	11	35.3	47
Number of Cases		94		39		133

When respondents were asked about their proficiency in Japanese Language, one quarter of them perceived themselves are very good in listening and speaking, less than 1 per cent reported not good at all. In regards to reading the Japanese Language, nearly one fifth per cent of them can read very well. Writing the Japanese Language seems to be a more difficult task compared with reading, listening and speaking Japanese Language. Only 11 per cent of them claimed they are very good, and some 18 per cent admitted they are not good in writing the Japanese Language (Table 4). Nevertheless, more than 80 per cent of them perceived themselves were good or very good in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Fields of Study

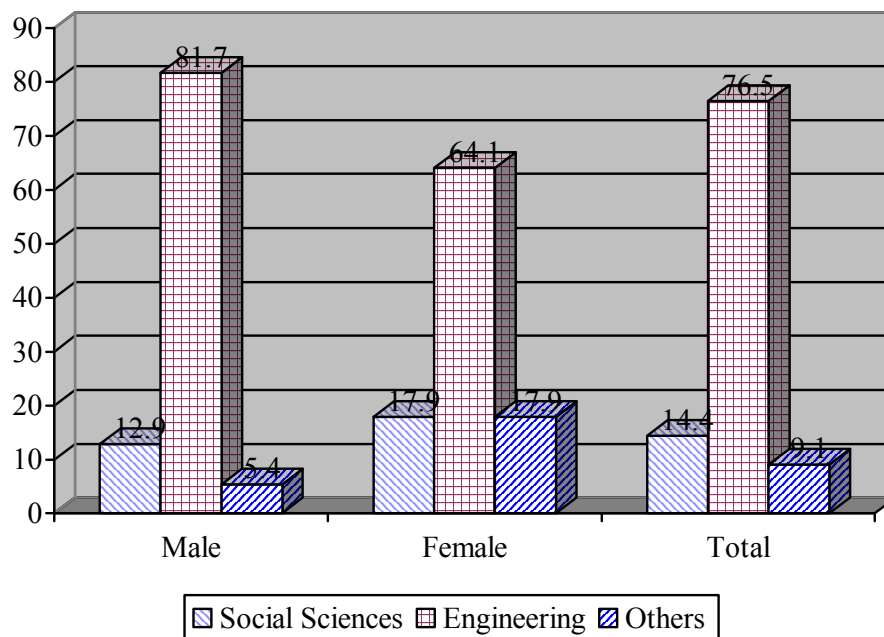


Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by the Level of Command of Japanese Language

<i>Command of Japanese Language</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Listening and Speaking</i>			
Very Good	26.6	20.5	24.8
Good	72.3	79.5	74.4
Not Good	1.1	0.0	0.8
<i>Reading</i>			
Very Good	20.2	12.8	18.0
Good	72.3	84.6	75.9
Not Good	7.4	2.6	6.0
<i>Writing</i>			
Very Good	11.7	10.3	11.3
Good	64.9	79.5	69.2
Not Good	21.3	10.3	18.0
Not at All	2.1	0.0	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	94	39	133

3.1.2 Work and Income

The majority of the respondents served as employees in professional or managerial work (88 per cent), while those in manual work such as factory work made up 5 per cent and 3 per cent were in clerical, sales, or service work (Table 5). Only about 3 per cent of respondents were self-employed. Females were more likely to be involved in the professional or managerial work compared with males.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Employment Status

<i>Employment Status</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Self-employed (Including, employed in family business)	4.3	0.0	3.0
Employee (Professional or managerial work)	85.1	94.9	88.0

Employee (Clerical, sales, or service work)	3.2	2.6	3.0
Employee (Manual work such as factory work)	6.4	2.6	5.3
Student	1.1	0.0	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	94	39	133

After returning to Malaysia, a high percentage of them joined the Japanese companies (67 per cent), and only 14 per cent of respondents worked with the Malaysian companies (Table 6). The rest, 5 per cent of respondents engaged with the foreign companies other than Japanese companies, 5 per cent were in government sector, another 5 per cent were engaged with local universities/colleges, and 2 per cent were self-employed.

There were a variety of sources of information for getting the current jobs. They could be through mass media, schools, friends and clubs. About 18 per cent of the respondents obtained the information through the schools they graduated, another 17 per cent of them got the information from the newspapers or magazines in Malay Language and 13 per cent of them heard about it from Muslim friends from Malaysia (Table 7). Male and female respondents had different sources of information, for example, some 17 per cent of female respondents got the information through Malaysian student club compared to only 5 per cent of male respondents.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Work Place

<i>Work Place</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Japanese Companies	63.4	76.9	67.4

Malaysian Companies	16.1	7.7	13.6
Foreign Companies (other than Japan)	6.5	2.6	5.3
Government	3.2	5.1	3.8
Universities, Colleges	3.2	7.7	4.5
Self-employment	3.2	0.0	2.3
Other	4.3	0.0	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	93	39	132

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Currently Working Male and Female Respondents by the Source of Information on the Availability of Current Job

<i>Sources of Information</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Newspaper/magazine in Japanese language	5.4	5.7	5.5
Newspaper/magazine in your mother tongue	18.5	11.4	16.5
Through the school you graduated	19.6	14.3	18.1
Internet	5.4	2.9	4.7
By Muslim friends from Malaysia	13.0	11.4	12.6
By other friends from Malaysia	9.8	11.4	10.2
By Japanese Muslim friends	1.1	0.0	0.8
By other Japanese friends	3.3	2.9	3.1
Through Malaysian student club	5.4	17.1	8.7
Accidentally	1.1	5.7	2.4
Newspaper/magazine in your mother tongue & Internet	2.2	0.0	1.6
Others	15.2	17.1	15.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	92	35	127

Table 8 shows that nearly one-fifth of respondents earned RM3000 and less per month and some 40 per cent of respondents earned more than RM5,000 per month. Males earned more than females (Table 6). About 46 per cent of males earned more than RM5,000 per month compared with only 28 per cent of females.

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Income Group

<i>Income Group</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Up to RM\$3000	16.7	25.6	19.4
RM\$3001-4000	15.6	17.9	16.3
RM\$4001-5000	22.2	28.2	24.0
RM\$5001-6000	17.8	12.8	16.3
RM\$6001-7000	10.0	10.3	10.1
RM\$7001 +	17.8	5.1	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	90	39	129

3.1.3 Place of Residence and Living Arrangement

Majority of the respondents (58 per cent) were residing in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor and about 40 per cent of respondents were living in other places of Malaysia (Figure 2). Only about 2 per cent of respondents lived in other countries. A higher percentage of 83 per cent of the respondents stayed with their spouses and about 78 per cent of them were staying together with children. Only about 5 per cent of respondents stayed alone and 2 per cent of them stayed with other family members other than spouse, children, parents/parents-in-law and siblings (Table 9). A further analysis on the living arrangement shows that the majority of respondents were staying with spouse and children, 13 per cent of them were staying with spouse only, and 8 per cent were staying with children only (Table 9). The family size of respondents ranged from one to nine persons, with a mean of 4.7 persons. During the time of survey, one-fifth of respondents reporting not having any children staying with them, one-third reported having 1-2 children staying with them, 38 per cent of respondents reported having 3-4 children staying with them, and the rest, 7 per cent of them were having 5-7 children staying with them.

Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Current Living Places

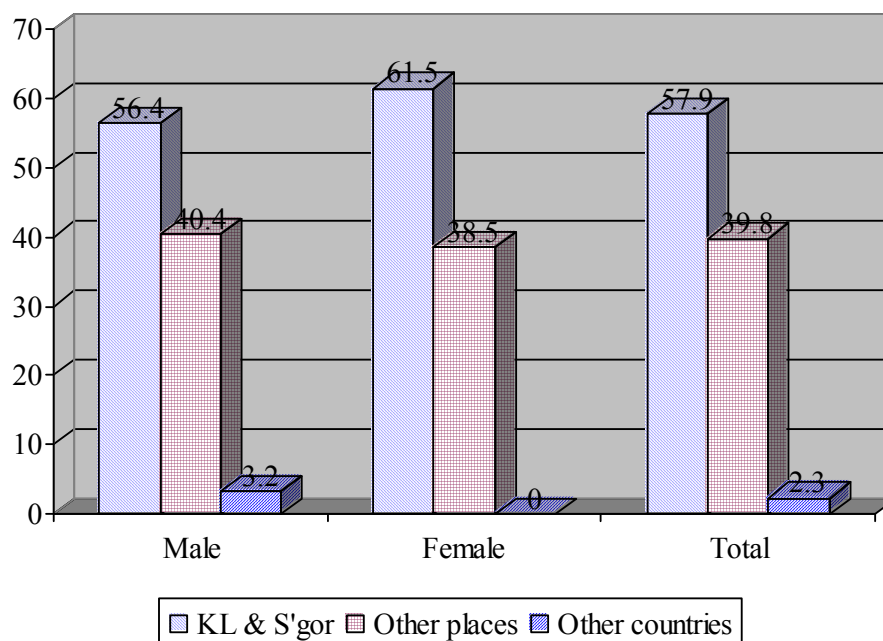


Table 9: Per Cent of Male and Female Respondents by Current Living Arrangement

<i>Living Arrangement</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Alone	5.4	2.6	4.5
With spouse and children	60.2	66.1	62.1
With spouse only	12.9	12.8	12.9
With children only	7.5	7.7	7.6
With spouse and children and parents/parents-in-law	6.5	5.1	6.1
With parents/parents-in-law	4.3	0.0	3.0
With spouse and children and parents and siblings	0.0	2.6	0.8
With spouse and children and others	1.1	2.6	1.5
With others	2.2	0.0	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	93	39	132

3.2 Life in Japan

The respondents in this study visited Japan as foreign students between 1982 and 2001. The period of stay at Japan ranged from 30 months to 132 months, with a mean of 54.04 months (standard deviation = 16.25 months).

3.2.1 Studying in Japan

The advancement in the technology and economic development of Japan attracted respondents chose to study in Japan (Table 10). However, some 39 per cent of respondents expressed that they just wanted to study abroad elsewhere. Some 30 per cent reported that studying in Japan would be advantageous when searching for a job. Nearly one-quarter of respondents were interested in Japanese culture or language.

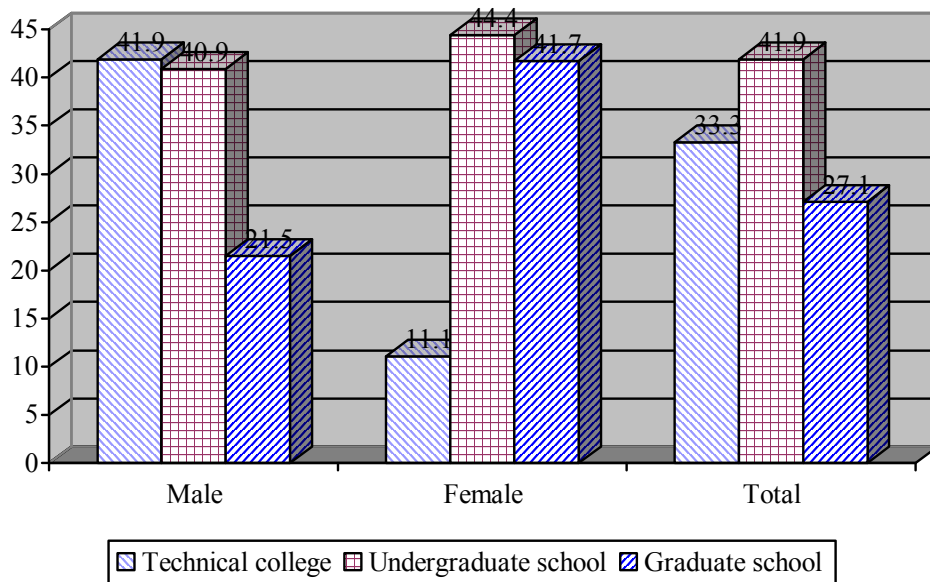
Table 10: Per Cent of Male and Female Respondents by the Reasons for Studying in Japan

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Its technology and economy are developed	51.1	50.0	50.8
Wanted to study abroad anywhere	41.3	34.2	39.2
It would be advantageous when searching for a job	32.6	23.7	30.0
Interested in Japanese culture or language	20.7	28.9	23.1
Sponsored by government	12.0	7.9	10.8
Its safety	4.3	5.3	4.6
Recommended by family, relative, acquaintance or people around	2.2	5.3	3.1
Family members or relative staying in Japan	1.1	2.6	1.5

There was a school respondent wanted to attend	0.0	2.6	0.8
Acquaintances or friends staying in Japan.	0.0	2.6	0.8
Others	7.6	2.6	6.2
Number of Cases	92	38	130

Some 42 per cent of the respondents went to the undergraduate schools or colleges, about 33 per cent of the respondents attended technical colleges and 27 per cent of the respondents attended graduate schools when they were studied in Japan (Figure 3). Higher percentage of females studied in graduate schools while the males were more likely to be in technical colleges.

Figure 3: Percentage of Male and Female Respondents Attended the Following Schools



All respondents were having scholarship for their studies in Japan. More than 85 per cent of the respondents received the Malaysian government scholarship under the LEP to further their study in Japan (Table 11), only 12 per cent of the respondents received Japanese government scholarship (Monbusho/Monbukagakusho), and 4 per cent were having both Malaysian and Japanese government scholarship (Monbusho/Monbukagakusho).

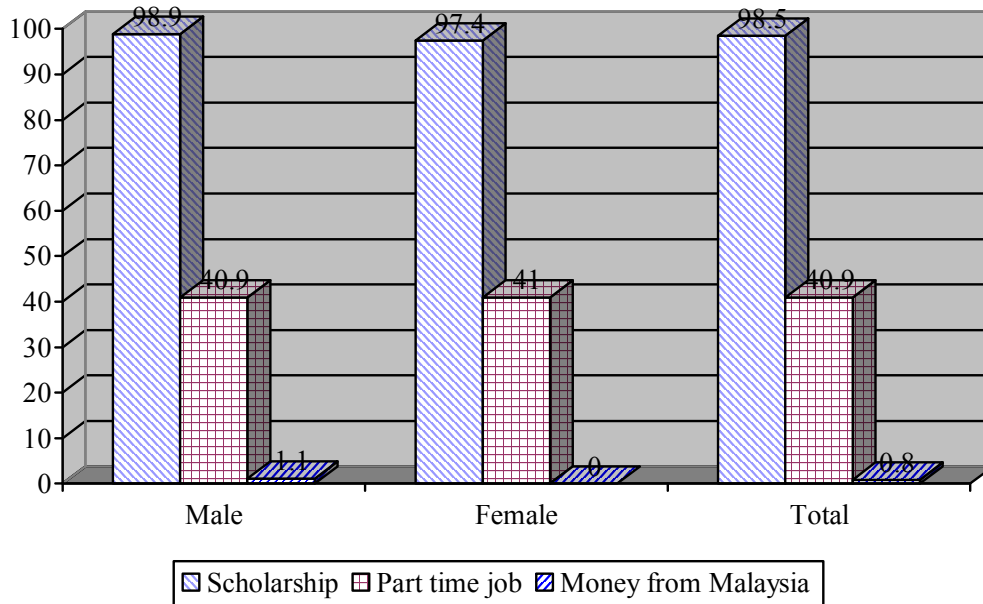
Nearly all the respondents relied on the scholarship as sources of living expenses when they studied in Japan (Figure 4). However, the scholarships received from the Malaysian or Japanese governments seemed like not enough to cover the living expenses and study expenses. About 40 per cent of respondents financed part of their living expenses from part time jobs. The two most common part time jobs involved by respondents were manual work and service or sales. Most of the respondents found the part time job through non-Muslim Japanese friends, the school graduated and Muslim friends from their own country, Malaysia. The salary earned from the part time job were used for various purposes, most of them used it for living expenses, to enjoy the life, and for saving purpose.

Table 11: Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Types of Scholarship

<i>Type of Scholarship</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Japanese government scholarship (Monbusho/Monbukagakusho)	9.7	5.3	8.4
Malaysian government scholarship	84.9	89.5	86.3
Japanese (Monbusho/Monbukagakusho) and Malaysian government scholarship	4.3	2.6	3.8

Malaysian government and other scholarship	1.1	2.6	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	93	38	131

Figure 4: Percentage of Male and Female Respondents by Sources of Living Expenses



3.2.2 Place of Residence in Japan

The place of residence of the respondents were of quite wide spread during their study in Japan. Table 12 shows the distribution of the respondents' place of residence when they studied in Japan. Tokyo, Niigata, and Fukouka are the common prefecture, this may due to the location of the universities they studied.

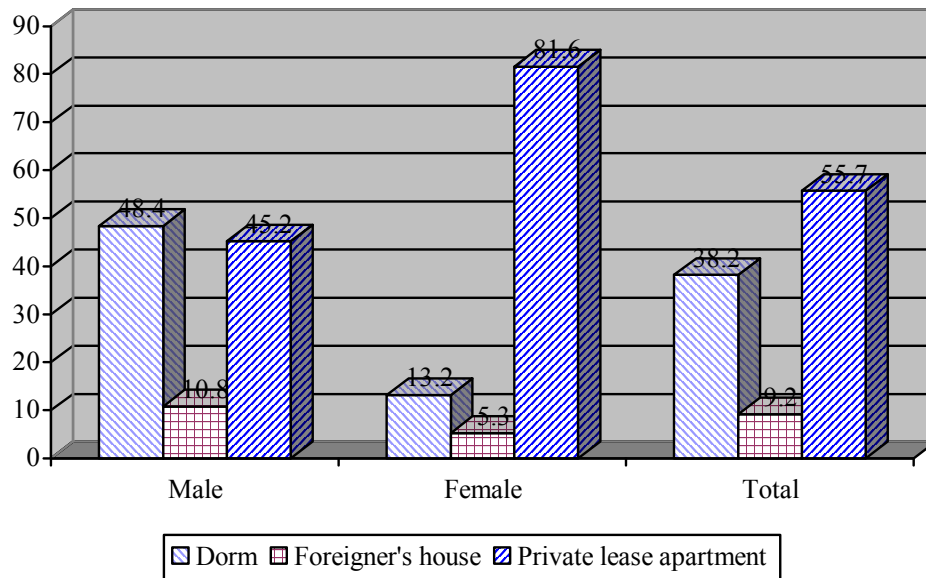
Table 12: Percentage and Frequency Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Prefecture

Prefecture	%	n	Prefecture	%	n
Tokyo	7.9	10	Mie	2.4	3
Niigata	5.5	7	Ehime	1.6	2
Fukouka	5.5	7	Fukui	1.6	2
Yamaguchi	4.7	6	Gunma	1.6	2
Gifu	3.9	5	Iwate	1.6	2
Akita	3.9	5	Miyagi	1.6	2
Ibaraki	3.9	5	Nara	1.6	2
Hiroshima	3.1	4	Nagano	1.6	2
Kagawa	3.1	4	Saga	1.6	2
Kumamoto	3.1	4	Shizuoka	1.6	2
Oita	3.1	4	Tokushima	1.6	2
Okayama	3.1	4	Yamanashi	1.6	2
Toyama	3.1	4	Kagoshima	0.8	1
Yamagata	3.1	4	Kanagawa	0.8	1
Aichi	2.4	3	Kitakyushu	0.8	1
Chiba	2.4	3	Miyazaki	0.8	1
Fukushima	2.4	3	Tochigi	0.8	1
Hokkaido	2.4	3	Shiga	0.8	1
Ishikawa	2.4	3	Okinawa	0.8	1
Nagasaki	2.4	3	Kanto	0.8	1
Wakayama	2.4	3			

Total Number of Cases = 127, n = number of cases

More than half of them stayed in private lease apartment (Figure 5). About 38 per cent of respondents resided mostly in dorm annexed respondent's school and only 9 per cent of them lived mostly in foreigner's house such as foreign students house. Private lease apartments were the most common place for female respondents to reside when they studied in Japan, while males were either stayed in the dorm annexed to respondent's school or private lease apartment.

Figure 5: Per Cent of Male and Female Respondents Resided in the Following Housing



Living arrangement may indicate the support available to occupants, in terms of emotional, social or financial supports. It is a basic social network for respondents when they studied abroad. This study found that the majority of respondents (60 per cent) stayed with Muslim friends from Malaysia (Table 13). Non-Muslim Japanese friends and Non-Muslim friends from another country (other than Japan) were also common roommates or housemates of respondents; some 20 per cent and 18 per cent of respondents lived with them, respectively. Only about 13 per cent of respondents chose to reside with their Muslim friends from another country (other than Japan). While about 4 per cent of respondents lived with the family members, some 14 per cent of

respondents prefer to stay alone. Male respondents were more likely to stay with non-Muslim friends than female respondents. Another interesting finding was that females had a higher percentage of staying alone compared with males (Table 13).

Table 13: Percentage of Male and Female Respondents Lived With the Following Persons While Living in Japan

<i>Persons</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Alone	11.0	21.1	14.0
Muslim friends from Malaysia	60.4	57.9	59.7
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	22.0	15.8	20.2
Non-Muslim friends from another country (other than Japan)	20.9	10.5	17.8
Muslim friends from another country (other than Japan)	14.3	10.5	13.2
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia	13.2	7.9	11.6
Spouse or child	3.3	2.6	3.1
Parents of you or your spouse	1.1	0.0	0.8
Japanese Muslim friends	1.1	0.0	0.8
Others	14.3	13.2	14.0
Number of Cases	91	38	129

3.2.3 Social Network

Friendship is considered one of the central human experiences and it is important for human as it may indicate emotional links and support in times of need. Aristotle quoted that friend as a single soul dwelling in two bodies. The data of this study shows that nearly 70 per cent of respondents did not have any Japanese Muslim friends (Table 14). About one quarter of them had one to five Japanese Muslim friends and only 6 per cent of them had more than five Japanese Muslim friends.

On the contrary, almost all the respondents had Muslim friends from Malaysia. About 45 per cent of respondents had more than 10 Muslim friends from Malaysia. This shows that they were comfortable to associate with the people who have same background and culture.

Table 14: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Types of Friends by Number of Friends

<i>Number of Persons</i>	<i>Types of Friends</i>					
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>
None	69.1	2.3	14.0	3.9	20.7	10.7
1	12.7	2.3	7.0	0.8	9.9	9.1
2	5.5	3.1	11.4	3.1	16.5	10.7
3	0.9	5.3	13.2	5.5	7.4	14.0
4 to 5	5.5	9.9	15.8	15.7	22.3	12.4
6 to 10	2.7	32.1	27.2	24.4	15.7	24.8
More than 10	3.6	45.0	11.4	46.5	7.4	18.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	110	131	114	127	121	121

A = Japanese Muslim friends, B = Muslim friends from Malaysia, C = Muslim friends from other countries (except Japan), D = Non-Muslim Japanese friends E = Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia, F = Non-Muslim friends from other countries (except Japan)

Almost all the respondents had non-Muslim Japanese friends and more than 47 per cent of them had more than ten non-Muslim Japanese friends (Table 14). This indicates that some of the respondents socialized well while they studied in Japan.

About one fifth of the respondents did not have any non-Muslim friends from Malaysia. Nevertheless, majority of them had about one to five non-Muslim friends from Malaysia.

While 46 per cent of the respondents had one to five non-Muslim friends from other countries (except Japan), some 11 per cent of them did not have any non-Muslim friends from other countries (except Japan). The study shows that about one quarter and 18 per cent respondents had six to ten and more than ten non-Muslim friends from other countries (except Japan), respectively.

A high percentage of 86 per cent of respondents have developed friendship with Muslim friends from other countries (except Japan). Most of the Muslim friends are from Muslim countries like Indonesia, Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan. Indonesia has very similar cultural background of Malaysia and geographically located very close to Malaysia, it is, thus, not surprising that a high percentage of the Muslim friends of respondents were from this country (Table 15).

Table 15: Percentage and Frequency Distribution of the Origin Countries of Respondents' Foreign Muslim Friends

Country	Per Cent	Number of Cases
Indonesia	92.3	108
Bangladesh	37.6	44
Egypt	25.6	30
Pakistan	23.9	28
Thailand	13.7	16
Turkey	12.8	15
Morocco	12.8	15
Saudi Arabia	10.3	12
Singapore	7.7	9

India	7.7	9
Sudan	6.0	7
Sri Lanka	5.1	6
Ghana	5.1	6
Iran	5.1	6
Tunisia	5.1	6
UAE	3.4	4
Brunei	3.4	4
Philippine	2.6	3
Afghanistan	2.6	3
Syria	2.6	3
China	1.7	2
Korea	1.7	2
United States	0.9	1
Senegal	0.9	1
Palestine	0.9	1
Brazil	0.9	1
Mongolia	0.9	1
Myanmar	0.9	1
Yemen	0.9	1
Vietnam	0.9	1
Other nationalities	5.1	6

Total Number of Cases = 117

In this study, the respondents were most likely participated in the Malaysian (student) society (56 per cent) and sports or outdoor activities (40 per cent) (Table 16). They were also likely to join the NGO or civil volunteer activity group (25 per cent) and foreign students' association (25 per cent). About 22 per cent of respondents were involved in study and cultural group, and community group. Only about 18 per cent and 15 per cent of the respondents were participated in international exchange group and foreigner's society in Japan. Attending religion group activities was only interested to some 6 per cent of respondents. Male respondents were more likely to join sports or outdoor activity group, study and cultural group, while the female respondents were much involved in Malaysian (Student) society, NGO or civil volunteer activity group, foreign students' association, and foreigner's society in Japan.

Table 16: Per Cent of Male and Female Respondents Participated in the Listed Circle or Club Activities When Living in Japan

<i>Circle or Club activities</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Malaysian (Student) society	51.6	66.7	56.2
Sports or outdoor activity group	44.0	30.8	40.0
NGO or civil volunteer activity group	22.0	30.8	24.6
Foreign students' association	20.9	33.3	24.6
Study and cultural group	25.3	15.4	22.3
Community group	23.1	20.5	22.3
International exchange group	18.7	15.4	17.7
Foreigner's society in Japan	12.1	23.1	15.4
Religion group	5.5	7.7	6.2
Others	6.6	2.6	5.4
Number of Cases	91	39	130

More than two thirds of the respondents did not participate in the activities listed in Table 17 except purchasing Halal food and having meal at Halal Restaurant. A high percentage of respondents did not subscribe to newspapers in their mother tongue, this may due to the unavailability of the particular newspaper in Japan. Only five per cent of respondents subscribed to newspapers in their mother tongue more than four times in a month. On average, they subscribed newspapers in their mother tongue 12 times per month.

Up to 92 per cent of respondents had purchased the Halal food at least once in a month but only half of them were at least once a month having meal in Halal Restaurant. On average, respondents purchased the Halal food 12 times per month and visited the Halal restaurant 2 times per month.

Only 7 per cent and 21 per cent of the respondents, respectively, attended the prayer service in Mosque or in Musallah more than four times in a month. About 85 per cent of the respondents did not participate in Tabligh Jama'at. Some 16 per cent of the respondents had attended lecture or joined the study group related to Islam at least once in month.

Table 17: Percentage Distribution by the Number of Times (in a Month) Male and Female Respondents Participated in the Selected Activities

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Frequency per month</i>					<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i><1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2-3</i>	<i>4+</i>		
Subscription of newspapers in your mother tongue	91.2	0.0	2.9	1.0	4.9	100.0	102
Purchasing Halal food	6.9	1.5	39.7	29.0	22.9	100.0	131
Halal Restaurant	44.1	5.9	28.0	15.3	6.8	100.0	118
Prayer service in Mosque	82.6	0.9	6.4	2.8	7.3	100.0	109
Prayer service in Musallaah	67.9	1.8	7.3	1.8	21.1	100.0	109
Lecture or study group related to Islam	81.1	2.8	6.6	1.9	7.5	100.0	106
Tabligh Jama'at	84.5	0.0	2.7	0.9	11.8	100.0	110

<1 = once in few months, n = Number of Cases

3.2.4 Support Network

When respondents were in trouble about their health, the first person came into their mind were Muslim friends from Malaysia provided much support and very much support to them when they had trouble about their health (Table 18). They were also relied a lot on the local friends, for example, nearly half of them

were getting a lot of support from their local non-Muslim Japanese friends. Other persons that were much supportive and very much supportive when they had health problem were family members in Malaysia (49 per cent), non-Muslim friends from Malaysia (48 per cent), supervisors in their schools (42 per cent). Spouse (40 per cent) was another important people who was very much supportive when they were having health problem.

Table 18: Percentage Distribution of Persons that Respondents Asked for Support When They Had Trouble in Health by Degree of Support

<i>Persons</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
Muslim friends from Malaysia	0.0	3.1	17.6	30.5	48.9	100.0	131
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia	12.8	10.3	29.1	29.9	17.9	100.0	117
Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	20.5	17.1	35.9	23.1	3.4	100.0	117
Non-Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	22.2	26.5	29.1	18.8	3.4	100.0	117
Japanese Muslim friends	64.6	11.4	7.6	11.4	5.1	100.0	79
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	6.5	13.0	30.9	35.8	13.8	100.0	123
Spouse	54.9	0.0	5.6	9.9	29.6	100.0	71
Family in Malaysia	20.4	10.7	20.4	19.4	29.1	100.0	103
Friends in Malaysia	47.9	18.1	20.2	7.4	6.4	100.0	94
Religious leader living in Japan	84.6	5.1	6.4	2.6	1.3	100.0	78
Religious leader living in Malaysia	83.1	7.8	2.6	3.9	2.6	100.0	77
Religious leader living in another country	89.5	5.3	2.6	0.0	2.6	100.0	76
Supervisor in your school	24.1	6.9	26.7	25.0	17.2	100.0	116
Others	64.7	0.0	0.0	17.6	17.6	100.0	17

Note: 1 = No support, 2 = A bit of support, 3 = A certain measure of support, 4 = Much support, 5 = Very much support, n = Number of cases

Muslim friends from Malaysia again were the important persons to approach for support when respondents were in need of help in living expenses. About 70 per cent of respondents received much support and very much support from their Muslim friends

from Malaysia (Table 19). Family in Malaysia (42 per cent), non-Muslim friends from Malaysia (30 per cent) and spouse (28 per cent) were among other important persons for respondents to refer to when they were in need of living expenses

Table 19: Percentage Distribution of Persons that Respondents Asked for Support When They Were in Need of Living Expenses by Degree of Support

<i>Persons</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
Muslim friends from Malaysia	3.2	5.6	21.6	41.6	28.0	100.0	125
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia	31.6	12.3	26.3	20.2	9.6	100.0	114
Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	43.8	27.6	21.0	6.7	1.0	100.0	105
Non-Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	47.2	27.4	15.1	9.4	0.9	100.0	106
Japanese Muslim friends	71.1	8.4	13.3	4.8	2.4	100.0	83
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	39.3	15.2	24.1	18.8	2.7	100.0	112
Spouse	61.1	5.6	5.6	8.3	19.4	100.0	72
Family in Malaysia	34.7	8.2	15.3	15.3	26.5	100.0	98
Friends in Malaysia	70.0	14.4	6.7	7.8	1.1	100.0	90
Religious leader living in Japan	90.5	6.8	0.0	1.4	1.4	100.0	74
Religious leader living in Malaysia	88.2	7.9	1.3	0.0	2.6	100.0	76
Religious leader living in another country	89.3	6.7	2.7	0.0	1.3	100.0	75
Supervisor in your school	59.8	13.4	13.4	8.2	5.2	100.0	97
Others	82.8	0.0	6.9	3.4	6.9	100.0	29

Note: 1 = No support, 2 = A bit of support, 3 = A certain measure of support, 4 = Much support, 5 = Very much support, n = Number of cases

When respondents had problems with their studies, they preferred to seek help from non-Muslim Japanese friends and Muslim friends from Malaysia. Some 71 per cent and 69 per cent of respondents expressed that non-Muslim Japanese friends and Muslim friends from Malaysia, respectively, are much supportive and very much supportive to provide help when they had problem with their studies (Table 20). Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia (49 per cent) and supervisors in their school (48 per cent) were another two persons that respondents looked for help when they had problems with their studies.

Table 20: Percentage Distribution of Persons that Respondents Asked for Support When They Had Problems With Their Studies by Degree of Support

<i>Persons</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
Muslim friends from Malaysia	6.5	3.2	21.0	37.1	32.3	100.0	124
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia	18.4	7.9	24.6	36.0	13.2	100.0	114
Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	27.5	15.7	27.5	25.5	3.9	100.0	102
Non-Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	24.8	16.5	30.3	23.9	4.6	100.0	109
Japanese Muslim friends	68.8	3.9	13.0	10.4	3.9	100.0	77
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	7.2	3.2	18.4	48.0	23.2	100.0	125
Spouse	58.1	1.4	6.8	14.9	18.9	100.0	74
Family in Malaysia	48.3	11.2	18.0	12.4	10.1	100.0	89
Friends in Malaysia	61.4	18.1	10.8	7.2	2.4	100.0	83
Religious leader living in Japan	91.5	5.6	1.4	0.0	1.4	100.0	71
Religious leader living in Malaysia	90.1	5.6	1.4	0.0	2.8	100.0	71
Religious leader living in another country	91.5	5.6	1.4	0.0	1.4	100.0	71
Supervisor in your school	32.7	3.8	15.4	23.1	25.0	100.0	104
Others	83.3	0.0	3.3	6.7	6.7	100.0	30

Note: 1 = No support, 2 = A bit of support, 3 = A certain measure of support, 4 = Much support, 5 = Very much support. n = Number of cases

When respondents had trouble with human relationships, a high percentage of respondents were seeking help from their Muslim friends from Malaysia (Table 21). They also relied on the local non-Muslim Japanese friends (49 per cent) to deal with the human relationships problem. Other persons were much supportive and very much supportive to respondents when they had trouble with human relationships were non-Muslim friends from Malaysia (47 per cent) and family members in Malaysia (43 per cent). Spouse was mentioned by 37 per cent of respondents as one who was much

supportive and very much supportive to them when they had trouble with human relationships.

Table 21: Percentage Distribution of Persons that Respondents Asked for Support When They Had Trouble with Human Relationships by Degree of Support

<i>Persons</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
Muslim friends from Malaysia	1.6	1.6	19.7	34.4	42.6	100.0	122
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia	17.0	8.0	27.7	32.1	15.2	100.0	112
Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	22.3	15.5	32.0	22.3	7.8	100.0	103
Non-Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	23.3	14.6	39.8	16.5	5.8	100.0	103
Japanese Muslim friends	61.8	7.9	17.1	10.5	2.6	100.0	76
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	12.4	10.6	28.3	34.5	14.2	100.0	113
Spouse	52.1	2.7	8.2	15.1	21.9	100.0	73
Family in Malaysia	35.6	3.3	17.8	17.8	25.6	100.0	90
Friends in Malaysia	56.8	14.8	13.6	9.9	4.9	100.0	81
Religious leader living in Japan	88.7	5.6	4.2	0.0	1.4	100.0	71
Religious leader living in Malaysia	84.5	7.0	4.2	0.0	4.2	100.0	71
Religious leader living in another country	90.0	7.1	1.4	0.0	1.4	100.0	70
Supervisor in your school	44.3	8.2	18.6	16.5	12.4	100.0	97
Others	79.3	0.0	3.4	6.9	10.3	100.0	29

Note: 1 = No support, 2 = A bit of support, 3 = A certain measure of support, 4 = Much support, 5 = Very much support. n = Number of cases

Regarding culture gap, the majority of the respondents reported receiving much support and very much support from Muslim friends from Malaysia (Table 22). Some 58 per cent of respondents mentioned that non-Muslim Japanese friends provided much support and very much support when respondents experienced culture gap in Japan. Other persons provided much support and very much support to respondents when respondents experienced culture gap includes non-Muslim friends from Malaysia (46 per cent), supervisors in their school (39 per cent), family in Malaysia (33 per cent), and spouse (32 per cent).

Table 22: Percentage Distribution of Persons that Respondents Asked for Support When They Experienced Culture Gap

<i>Persons</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
Muslim friends from Malaysia	4.3	5.1	20.5	38.5	31.6	100.0	117
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia	16.5	4.6	33.0	33.0	12.8	100.0	109
Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	24.2	11.1	35.4	26.3	3.0	100.0	99
Non-Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	24.8	16.8	33.7	20.8	4.0	100.0	101
Japanese Muslim friends	66.7	6.9	12.5	11.1	2.8	100.0	72
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	10.6	9.7	22.1	36.3	21.2	100.0	113
Spouse	59.4	0.0	8.7	18.8	13.0	100.0	69
Family in Malaysia	42.7	6.7	18.0	14.6	18.0	100.0	89
Friends in Malaysia	58.8	12.5	15.0	10.0	3.8	100.0	80
Religious leader living in Japan	83.8	11.8	1.5	1.5	1.5	100.0	68
Religious leader living in Malaysia	82.4	7.4	4.4	2.9	2.9	100.0	68
Religious leader living in another country	86.6	9.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	100.0	67
Supervisor in your school	37.4	5.5	18.7	22.0	16.5	100.0	91
Others	70.0	0.0	3.3	13.3	13.3	100.0	30

Note: 1 = No support, 2 = A bit of support, 3 = A certain measure of support, 4 = Much support, 5 = Very much support. n = Number of cases

When respondents faced religious problems while they were living in Japan, some 77 per cent of respondents reported receiving much support and very much support from their Muslim friends from Malaysia, only 2 per cent mentioned did not get any support from this group of friends (Table 23). Family in Malaysia was an important support to respondents when they faced religious problem while living in Japan. Some 55 per cent of respondents reported receiving much support and very much support from them. Other than Muslim friends and family from Malaysia,

respondents were also seeking and receiving much support and very much support from their Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan).

Table 23: Percentage Distribution of Persons that Respondents Asked for Support When They Faced Religious Problems While Living In Japan by Degree of Support

<i>Persons</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
Muslim friends from Malaysia	1.6	2.4	19.4	31.5	45.2	100.0	124
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia	44.3	17.5	21.6	11.3	5.2	100.0	97
Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	21.6	4.9	27.5	33.3	12.7	100.0	102
Non-Muslim friends from other countries (other than Japan)	55.3	14.9	24.5	4.3	1.1	100.0	94
Japanese Muslim friends	65.8	5.3	6.6	14.5	7.9	100.0	76
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	52.1	12.8	19.1	11.7	4.3	100.0	94
Spouse	59.4	2.9	7.2	11.6	18.8	100.0	69
Family in Malaysia	25.5	4.3	14.9	21.3	34.0	100.0	94
Friends in Malaysia	48.2	11.8	17.6	15.3	7.1	100.0	85
Religious leader living in Japan	80.6	9.7	5.6	1.4	2.8	100.0	72
Religious leader living in Malaysia	77.0	8.1	6.8	4.1	4.1	100.0	74
Religious leader living in another country	88.7	7.0	2.8	0.0	1.4	100.0	71
Supervisor in your school	57.5	14.9	13.8	8.0	5.7	100.0	87
Others	92.6	0.0	0.0	7.4	0.0	100.0	27

Note: 1 = No support, 2 = A bit of support, 3 = A certain measure of support, 4 = Much support, 5 = Very much support. n = Number of cases

3.2.5 Communication with Friends and Family Living in Malaysia

This part explores the frequency and methods of communication between respondents and their friends and families living in Malaysia when they were living in Japan. In general, about one quarter of the respondents had hardly written letter to family in Malaysia, majority of them either wrote a few time a year or a few times a month (Table 24). Females wrote more frequent to their families in Malaysia than

males. Some 51 per cent of female respondents wrote a few time a month compared to only one-fifth of males respondents did so. Letter writing to friends in Malaysia was not so common as writing to family in Malaysia. More than half of the respondents hardly wrote any letters to their friends in Malaysia (Table 24). Again, females wrote more frequently to their friends in Malaysia than their male counterparts.

Table 24: Percentage Distribution by Frequency of Male and Female Respondents Written to Family Members and Friends When They Were Living In Japan

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Family</i>			<i>Friends</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Almost everyday	0.0	2.6	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.8
A few times a week	3.4	7.7	4.7	2.2	2.6	2.4
A few times a month	20.2	51.3	29.7	11.2	21.1	14.2
A few times a year	44.9	25.6	39.1	29.2	36.8	31.5
Hardly	31.5	12.8	25.8	56.2	39.5	51.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	89	39	128	89	38	127

About two thirds of respondents called a few times a month to their families in Malaysia when they studied in Japan, nearly a quarter of them called a few times a year, and less than 10 per cent of called a few times a week (Table 25). However, there were about 6 per cent of them hardly called their families. Females respondents tended to call more frequently to their families in Malaysia than their male counterparts.

Table 25: Percentage Distribution by Frequency of Male and Female Respondents Called to Family Members and Friends When Living In Japan

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Family</i>			<i>Friends</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Almost everyday	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
A few times a week	3.4	23.1	9.4	2.2	0.0	1.6
A few times a month	60.7	64.1	61.7	12.4	10.5	11.8
A few times a year	27.0	12.8	22.7	21.3	36.8	26.0
Hardly	9.0	0.0	6.3	64.0	52.6	60.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases	89	39	128	89	38	127

Three fifth of respondents hardly called their friends in Malaysia, more than a quarter of them called a few times a year and more than 10 per cent called a few times a month. Calling to friends was less frequent than calling to the families.

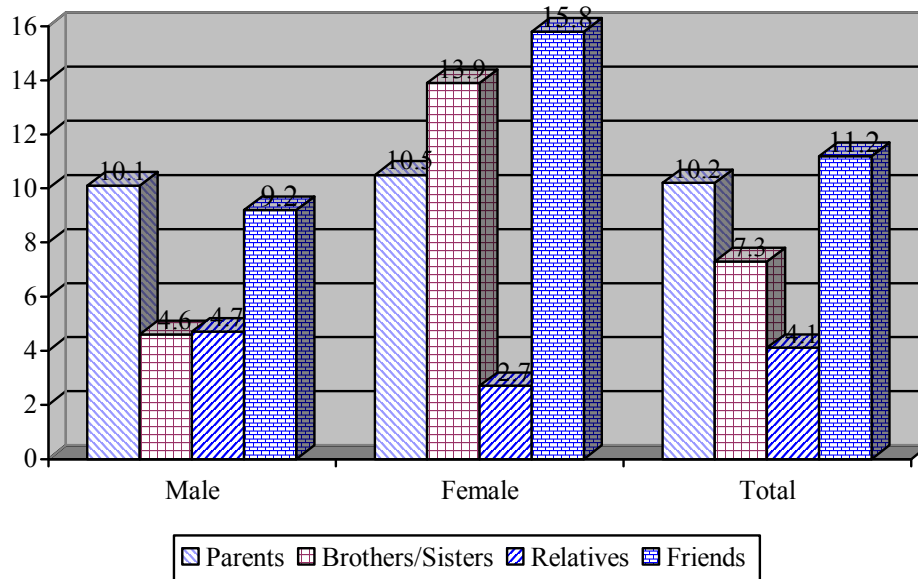
The existence of the internet provides an alternative for respondents to communicate with the family members and friends through email. However, not many respondents emailed their families while they were in Japan. This may due to the lack of accessibility to the internet at home during that period of time. Only 2 per cent of respondents emailed their families everyday, less than 20 per cent of them either emailed a few times a week or few times a month, less than 10 per cent emailed their families few times a year and nearly two-third had hardly emailed to their families (Table 26). However, sending an email to a friend in Malaysia was more common than sending to family, especially for male respondents. There was 11 per cent of male respondents sent an email almost everyday to their friends in Malaysia compared to 7 per cent of female respondents..

Table 26: Percentage Distribution by Frequency of Male and Female Respondents Sent an E-mail to Family Members and Friends When Living In Japan

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Family</i>			<i>Friends</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Almost everyday	2.7	0.0	2.0	10.8	6.7	9.6
A few times a week	11.0	13.8	11.8	13.5	13.3	13.5
A few times a month	13.7	20.7	15.7	16.2	23.3	18.3
A few times a year	9.6	3.4	7.8	12.2	0.0	8.7
Hardly	63.0	62.1	62.7	47.3	56.7	50.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	(73)	(29)	(102)	(74)	(30)	(104)

Due to the high cost of living in Japan, it is not surprising that not many people visited the respondents when they were studying in Japan. Only 10 per cent of respondents reported they had been visited by their parents, another 11 per cent being visited by their friends (Figure 6). Female respondents were more likely to be visited, especially by their siblings and friends, compared to male respondents.

Figure 6: Per cent of Male and Female Respondents Had Been Visited by the Following Persons when They Studied in Japan



Most of the respondents went back to Malaysia when they were student in Japan, only 8 per cent of them did not go back (Figure 7). The majority of them went back once a year. Female respondents went back to Malaysia more frequent than male respondents.

The data indicates that some one third of the respondents did not send any gifts to their family members in Malaysia (Figure 8). However, more than a third of them sent gifts more than one time in a year, another one quarter of them sent gifts once a year. Females had a higher percentage of sending gifts more than one time in a year compared to their male counterparts.

Figure 7: Percentage Distribution by the Frequency of Male and Female Respondents Went Back To Malaysia

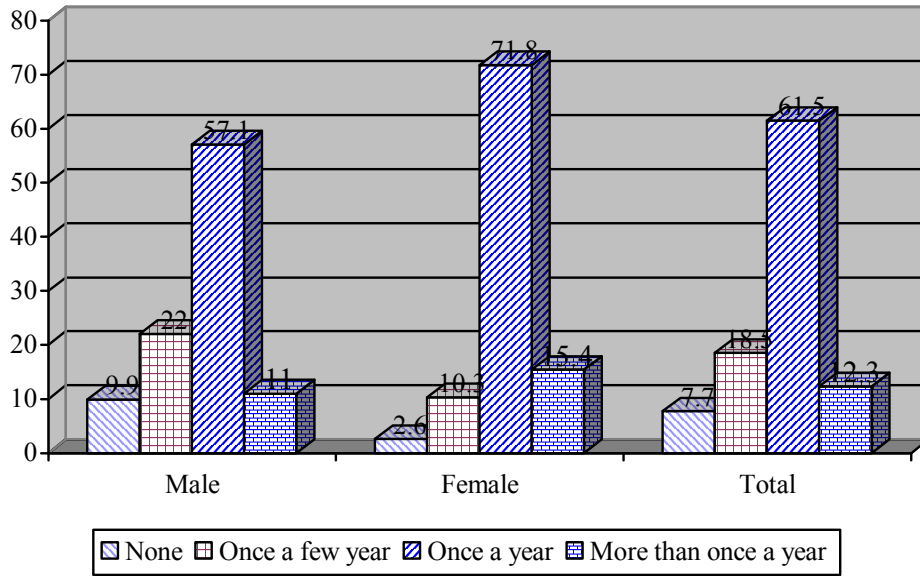
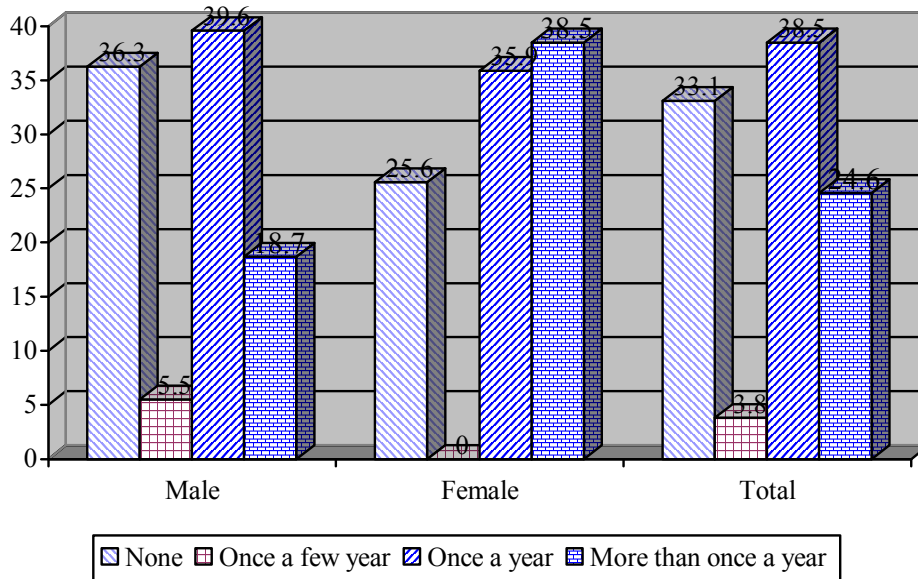


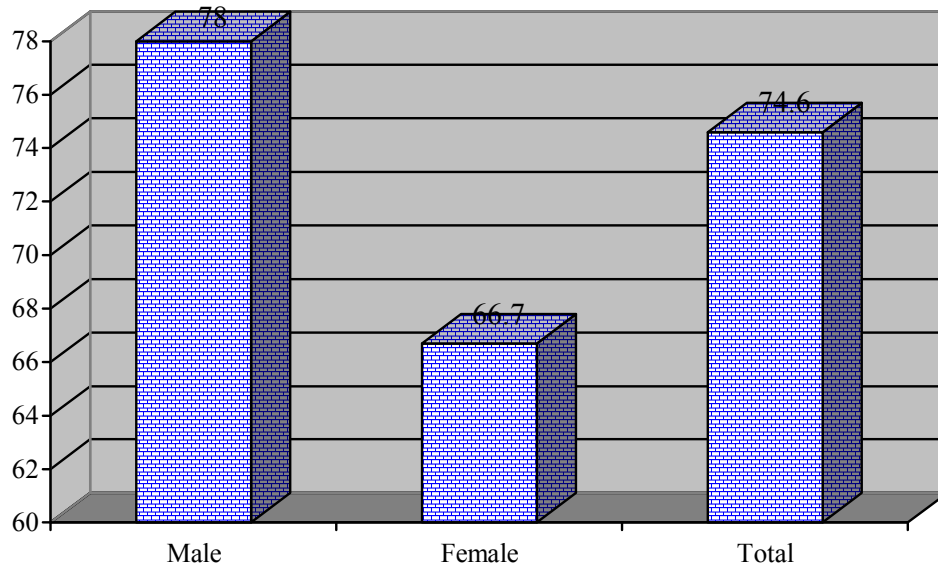
Figure 8: Percentage Distribution by the Frequency of Male and Female Respondents Sent Gifts to Their Family Living in Malaysia



3.3 Returning to Malaysia

This study show that almost all the respondents did not further their studies abroad after returning to Malaysia, except, one male respondent further his study at Norway. About three quarter of respondents revisited Japan after completed their students' life in Japan (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Percentage of Male and Female Respondents Revisited Japan after Their Studies in Japan



3.3.1 Communication with Friends

After returning to Malaysia, the majority of respondents did not meet their friends except, Muslim friends from Malaysia that they met in Japan and non-Muslim Japanese friends (Table 27). Some 32 per cent and 8 per cent of respondents contacted 6 or more Muslim friends from Malaysia that they met in Japan and non-Muslim Japanese friends, respectively. About 42 per cent of them contacted their Muslim friends from Malaysia that they met in Japan more than 5 times in a year. Some 92 per cent of them were also contacted non-Muslim Japanese friends at least once in a year.

It is surprising to note that nearly 80 per cent of the respondents did not meet non-Muslim friends from Malaysia that they met in Japan. Among those who had

contacted with non-Muslim friends from Malaysia, nearly 60 per cent of them met once a year.

Table 27: Percentage Distribution of the Number of Friends Contacted by Respondents after Returning to Malaysia

<i>Friends</i>	<i>The Number of Contacted Friends</i>							<i>Total</i>	<i>n</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6+</i>		
Japanese Muslim friends	93.9	3.0	0.8	0.0	1.5	0.8	0.0	100.0	132
Non-Muslim Japanese friends	43.8	9.2	13.8	10.0	7.7	7.7	7.7	100.0	130
Foreigner Muslim friends other than Japanese	91.0	4.5	1.5	2.3	0.8	0.0	0.0	100.0	133
Non-Muslim foreigner friends other than Japanese	87.2	7.5	3.0	1.5	0.0	0.8	0.0	100.0	133
Muslim friends from Malaysia you met in Japan	46.9	0.8	3.1	5.4	3.8	7.7	32.3	100.0	130
Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia you met in Japan	78.6	6.1	6.1	2.3	1.5	1.5	3.8	100.0	131
Religious leaders living in Japan	99.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	133
Supervisors in the school you graduated from	75.9	12.0	6.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	1.5	100.0	128

6+ = 6 friends and above or many friends, n = Number of Cases

Some 76 per cent of respondents did not contact the supervisors in the school they graduated from. Among those who have contacted the supervisors, more than half of them contacted their supervisors one time in a year.

The geographical factor may be the reason for not contacting the foreigner Muslim friends other than Japanese and non-Muslim foreigner friends other than Japanese. Among those who contacted the foreigner friends, majority of them contacted their foreign Muslim and non-Muslim friends other than Japanese once a year.

3.3.2 Gained from Experience in Japan

Regarding the most valued thing that respondents had gained as a foreign student in Japan, some 16 per cent of respondents gave more than one answer. Thus, each answer would analyse as an individual response.

The perceived most valued thing that had gained by respondents was the ability to master the Japanese Language. Some 60 per cent of respondents reported that they had learned and mastered the Japanese Language (Table 28). More than a quarter of respondents learnt to appreciate the value of time and to be punctual. While some 21 per cent of respondents acquired the ability to work hard and professional skills or knowledge, respectively, only 13 percent of respondents claimed that they developed friendship in Japan. A higher percentage of female respondents felt that they had gained profesional skills/knowledge, friendship, ability to work hard and punctuality than their male counterparts.

Table 28: Per Cent of Male and Female Respondents Perceived Most Valued Thing That Had Gained

Most Valued Thing Had Gain	Male	Female	Total
Ability of Japanese language	60.4	59.0	60.0
Professional skills/knowledge	19.8	23.1	20.8
A friendship developed in Japan	11.0	17.9	13.1
The ability to work hard	19.8	23.1	20.8
The value of being on time (punctuality)	20.9	38.5	26.2
Number of Cases	91	39	130

Nearly all of the respondents claimed that their experience in Japan had at least brought to them some benefits in their subsequent career and life (Table 29). About 42 per cent of the respondents were agreed that their experience in Japan have brought to them a great benefit and a considerable benefit, respectively, in their subsequent career and life. Only one male respondent reported that he received negligible benefit through his experience in Japan.

Table 29: Percentage Distribution by Degree of Benefit from Experience in Japan for Male and Female Respondents

<i>Degree of Benefit</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
A great benefit	41.8	41.0	41.5
A considerable benefit	41.8	41.0	41.5
Some benefit	15.4	17.9	16.2
Negligible benefit	1.1	0.0	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	91	39	130

Overall, the majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of staying as a student in Japan. Nearly half of them and 40 per cent of them were very satisfied or satisfied with their experience of staying as a student in Japan (Table 30). However, some 12 per cent of respondents were neither satisfied nor

unsatisfied with their experience of staying as a student in Japan, and only two respondents acclaimed that they are unsatisfied. Females were more likely to be satisfied with their experience of staying as a student in Japan than males.

Table 30: Percentage Distribution by Degree of Satisfaction of Male and Female Respondents with Their Experience of Staying As a Student in Japan

<i>Degree of Satisfaction</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Very satisfied	46.2	51.3	47.7
Satisfied	38.5	38.5	38.5
Neither	14.3	5.1	11.5
Unsatisfied	1.1	5.1	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of Cases	91	39	130

4 Summary and Conclusions

The sample of this study consists of 136 respondents age between 25 and 58 years old, with the mean of 36. The majority of them obtained bachelor degrees or higher academic qualification in engineering and social sciences related courses from technical colleges or universities in Japan. During the survey, more than half of the respondents were residing in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, and the rest were living in other places of Malaysia. They stayed with their spouses and children, except 4 per cent of them were staying alone.

Nearly all the respondents perceived themselves as proficient in listening, speaking and reading the Japanese language. However, there were about one fifth of them perceived themselves are not good in writing Japanese language

Graduating from Japan may promise a lucrative pay in Malaysia, for example, a high majority of respondents earned more than RM4,000 per month. Most of them

worked as employee in professional or managerial work and served in the Japanese companies, very few worked in Malaysian companies. The source of information for getting the current jobs of respondents was quite varied. They got the information from the school that their graduated, newspaper or magazine in Malay language or heard from Muslim friends from Malaysia.

The respondents of this study were in Japan as foreign students between the year 1982 and 2001. Among the main reasons that attracted respondents to study in Japan was the developed technology and economy of Japan, just wanted to study abroad elsewhere, studying in Japan would be advantageous when searching for a job, and interested in Japanese culture or language. They were studied at the undergraduate schools or colleges (42 per cent), technical colleges (33 per cent), and graduate schools (27 per cent).

The location of the place of residence of respondents when they were studied in Japan were rather quite wide spread, however, Tokyo, Niigata, and Yamaguchi were the three places mentioned by the most number of respondents. Private lease apartment were the most common choice of respondents to reside mostly as they were studied in Japan, especially for females. Some of them were also stayed in dorm annexed respondent's school and only a few of them were resided in foreigner's house. Majority of the respondents was staying with Muslim friends from Malaysia. About one-fifth of them lived with Non-Muslim Japanese friends and non-Muslim friends from another country (other than Japan).

All of the respondents received scholarship for their studies in Japan, mostly from Malaysian government, and few from Japanese government. However, the scholarships received from the Malaysian or Japanese government seemed like not enough to cover their living expenses and study. Some respondents engaged in part time job to finance their living expenses and study expenses.

Other than Muslim friends from Malaysia and other countries, some respondents had developed friendship with their Non-Muslim Japanese friends and also non-Muslim friends from other countries. Most of the respondents participated in the Malaysian (student) society and sports or outdoor activities. Some of them joined the NGO or civil volunteer activity group, foreign students' association, study and cultural group, and community group. A few of them were participated in International exchange group, foreigner's society in Japan and religion group activities.

Most of the respondents did purchase Halal food and have meal at Halal Restaurant. However, only a few of them subscribed the newspapers in their mother tongue, attended the prayer service in Mosque and prayer services in Musallah, participated in Tabligh Jama'at and attended lecture or joined the study group related to Islam.

The five most persons that respondents asked for support ('much support' and 'very much support') when they faced the problems in Japan were Muslim friends from Malaysia, Non-Muslim Japanese friends, Family in Malaysia, Non-Muslim friends from Malaysia and spouse of respondents. Whenever respondents faced the health problem,

in need of living expenses, personal relationship problem, experienced the culture gap, and religious problem in Japan, the first person that they asked for support and help was their Muslim friends from Malaysia. It may be due to the fact that Muslim friends from Malaysia shared many things in common such as their culture and religious background. Moreover, the majority of the respondents were staying with Muslim friends from Malaysia. However, when they had a problem with their studies, they sought the help from their Non-Muslim Japanese friends.

In general, respondents were more likely to call to their family member and friends than to write a letter or email to them when they studied in Japan. Females tended to contact the family members and friends in Malaysia more frequently as compared with males. Communication with families in Malaysia was more frequent than communication with friends in Malaysia. Most of the respondents did go back to Malaysia at least once a year. However, only a small percentage of respondents claimed that their parents, siblings, relatives and friends visited them. The data indicates that some one third of the respondents did not send any gifts to their family members in Malaysia. The majority of the respondents enjoyed their students' life in Japan, and they would like to revisit Japan. However, the majority of respondents do not maintain their network with their friends that they met in Japan except, Muslim friends from Malaysia that they met in Japan and non-Muslim Japanese friends.

The perceived most valued thing that was gained by respondents was the ability to master the Japanese language (60 per cent), learnt to appreciate the value of time and to be punctual (26 per cent), acquired the ability to work hard (21 per cent) and

professional skills or knowledge (21 per cent), and develop the meaning friendship in Japan (13 per cent). Overall, nearly all of the respondents claimed that their experience in Japan had at least brought to them some benefit in their subsequent career and life and the perceived satisfaction on their experience of staying as a student in Japan is very positive.

References

ALEPS (2006). ALEPS in Brief. Retrieved from <http://www.aleps.org/> on 1 December 2007.