Early Life Experiences as Determinants of Global Leader Emergence: Insights from Interviews with 25 Japanese General Managers at MNCs in Japan

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Abstract

Leadership experts and CEOs cite an urgent need to develop more global leaders in an increasingly interconnected and complex business world. However, most global talent development programs continue to produce poor results. One potential limiting factor of many current leadership interventions may be that they are based almost entirely on research conducted with adults in organizational settings, neglecting to consider the development that takes place much earlier on in life, particularly during childhood, adolescence, and emerging adulthood. Recent studies into leader development across the lifespan indicate the significance of the formative leader development that occurs well before individuals even enter the workplace, with accumulation of experience being widely agreed upon as the biggest determining factor in successful leadership role emergence. The goal of this study was to identify common early life experiences as determinants of emergence in global leadership roles among 25 Japanese general managers working with foreign multinational companies in Japan. Analysis of data gathered through semi-structured interviews indicated seven categories of early life experience which may have played a significant role in contributing to interviewees' successful development and emergence as global leaders. Implications for the future development of global leaders, and practical recommendations for the design of global leader development interventions in Japan are discussed.

Contents

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges facing multi-national corporations (MNCs) – firms simultaneously operating dispersed business units across multiple different geographical regions, countries, and markets outside their country of origin (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1990) – is finding, developing, and retaining global leaders who are able to effectively lead teams and grow businesses in culturally diverse, complex, and multi-faceted contexts (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014; Tarique & Schuler, 2010; Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011). MNCs single out global talent development as their biggest potential barrier to future growth (PwC, 2017), while a recent survey of MNC CEOs cited talent development and global marketplace operations as their two most urgent strategic concerns (Groysberg & Connolly, 2015). There is a widespread consensus among business leaders and commentators that we are facing a critical shortage of future global leaders at all levels of organizations (Caligiuri & Dragoni, 2014; Mendenhall, 2006; Osland, 2009) – a looming "global leadership vacuum" (Maznevski et al., 2013, p. 494) which has led to nothing less than an outright "global war for leadership talent" (Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2011.)

MNCs have customarily taken it upon themselves to train and develop leaders with the specific skills and capabilities necessary for taking up future senior management roles in their organizations (Day, 2000). Investment into global employee development is now at an all-time high (Statista, 2019), with a wide range of global talent management initiatives being introduced and implemented across international organizations in recent years (Scullion, Collings, & Caligiuri, 2010; Oddou & Mendenhall, 2008). Despite this, most global leader development programs show poor results (Mendenhall & Bird, 2013), and there is little conclusive evidence that MNCs are managing global talent effectively (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Lacerenza et al., 2017). Most global CEOs are sceptical about the efficacy of the global leader development interventions being implemented within their own companies (Feser et al., 2017), with many studies suggesting a significant proportion of global expatriate assignments result in failure (e.g. Lovvorn & Chen, 2011).

A global leader is defined in the literature as, "An individual who inspires a group of people to willingly pursue a positive vision in an effectively organized fashion while fostering individual and collective growth in a context characterized by significant levels of complexity, flow and presence." (Mendenhall et al., 2012). Given the looming shortage of future global leaders and the challenges being faced by organizations across all areas of private, public, as well as non-profit sectors when it comes to producing such talent (Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2012; Apostu, 2013), one solution would be to start developing these leaders from an earlier stage in life, well before they begin their professional careers as adults. In order for this to happen, there needs to be clearer and more effective strategic collaboration, as well as shared understanding and ownership, for producing global leaders between these organizations and the institutions supporting individuals' development during childhood and adolescence. These include families, communities, schools, youth sports clubs, and universities – for whom practical, accessible, and applicable approaches for nurturing and preparing potential future global leaders from the early stages of life must be made more readily available.

Still, global leader development remains a nascent field of study（Mendenhall et al., 2012）. One fundamental challenge is the current lack of empirical research into leader development in general（Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2011; Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009）, which continues to limit our knowledge and understanding of the pathways through which leaders can be nurtured and, ultimately, produced. Furthermore, the vast majority of extant studies focus on leader development that takes place among adults in company or workplace settings, with far fewer studies that pay attention to the development which occurs earlier on in life（Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Liu et al., 2020）. For example, the CEO Genome Project（Botelho et al., 2017）– a much-publicized US study based on assessment data from 2,600 leaders – focuses not on examining the origins, beginnings, and developmental journeys of successful CEOs（as the study's title might suggest）but on assessing their behaviours in corporate settings. This is despite conclusive research indicating that the processes through which a person becomes a leader start from a very early age（Fukada et al., 1994; Mawson, 2011）, and that the early stages of childhood and adolescence are critical periods during which foundational leader development takes place（Arvey et al., 2006; Arvey et al., 2007）when aspects such as behavior, personality, and skills are more malleable and readily developed than in adulthood（Arnett, 2000; Murphy & Johnson, 2011）. A recent meta-analysis of leadership development interventions showed a significantly stronger impact on leaders younger than 22 years old when compared with leaders over the age of 45（Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2011）. Indeed, some experts argue that opportunities for leader development diminish significantly from early adulthood onwards, when factors such as self-regulatory focus, motivation to lead, learning goal orientation, and leader self-efficacy – all of which start out as dynamic capacities or states – start to become increasingly fixed（Sorcher & Brant, 2002）, and that "much of leadership talent is hardwired in people before they reach their early or mid-twenties"（Sorcher & Brant, 2002, p. 3）– in other words, before many people even enter the workplace. If this is indeed so, we urgently need to cultivate a more practical understanding of the key experiences and processes through which youth accumulate the skills, capabilities, and mindset necessary for leadership roles later on in life（Murphy & Johnson, 2011）, in order to be able to design and implement effective youth leadership interventions to support them through this holistic developmental journey.

When it comes to the age-old question of whether leaders are born or made: thanks to recent advancements in the field of genetics, including the identification of the rs4950 gene that is significantly associated with leadership role occupancy（De Neve et al., 2013）as well as multiple studies involving sets of identical and fraternal twins（Polderman et al., 2015）, we now know that genetics, including heritable traits related to aspects such as personality（Bouchard & Loehlin, 2001; Judge et al., 2002）and cognitive ability（Judge & Long, 2012; Reitan & Stenberg, 2019; Zaccaro et al., 2018）play an important part in leadership role emergence. At the same time, it is also widely agreed that genetics accounts for only approximately one third of the variance associated with leadership role occupancy（Arvey, et al., 2006）, and that the far more significant remaining portion is influenced by life experience – which is shaped by life factors such as parental upbringing, family environment, training and education, social relationships, and work experience（Arvey et al., 2006; Arvey et al., 2007）. We do not yet understand the complex interplay that takes place between genetics, personality, traits, capacities, life experiences,

and environmental factors – i.e. the interplay that occurs "inside the body" and "outside the body" (Duster, 2006) – and which results in individuals emerging into leadership roles as adults (Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2011). However, it is clear that life experience plays an undeniably central role in the leader development process – and that leaders are, therefore, born *and* made.

Furthermore, recent studies suggest it is the experiences which occur during the early stages of life that have a comparatively significant impact on how leaders develop (Day, 2000; Day, 2011; Castillo & Trinh, 2018; Day & Dragoni, 2015), with some research showing a correlation between higher exposure to early life leader experience and likelihood of taking up leadership roles later on (Amit et al., 2009). This may be because as an individual grows in confidence as a leader, they become more likely to engage in leadership activities (Hannah et al., 2008), and increasingly expected to do so by others around them (Eden, 1993). Avolio & Hannah (2008) discuss the notion of "developmental readiness" – the capacity for self-regulation, motivation, goal orientation, and self-efficacy necessary for emerging adults to approach leadership roles. Developmental readiness can only be learned and accumulated through ongoing exposure to specific situations and experiences which trigger leader development. In order to offset the looming leadership shortage, Avolio & Vogelgesang (2011) suggest an urgent need to enhance developmental readiness among younger individuals through exposing them to such experiences via appropriate youth-oriented leadership interventions, based on "the assumption that each and every member of our future generation of youth has the opportunity and the ability to make an impact as an effective leader" (p. 253).

Global Leader Development in Japan

Japanese business and management practices have been the focus of much attention over the years, following Japan's rise to becoming one of the world's largest and most successful post-World War Two economies during the 1980's (Bowles & Woods, 2012). Despite this, there have been remarkably few studies conducted into how business leaders are developed in Japan (Fukushige & Spicer, 2007; Morinaga & Tateno, 2015). While some studies have focused on the progress of managers at Japanese companies in Japan, or at Japanese MNCs overseas (Bozkurt, 2012), there is almost no research in the existing literature providing us with any meaningful understanding or insight into the processes through which global Japanese leaders are developed. Japanese companies currently face a unique convergence of socio-economic factors including a rapidly aging society, a shrinking local workforce, a saturated domestic consumer market, and intense competition from overseas firms (Yonezawa, 2014), all of which pose significant challenges for future sustainable economic growth. The capacity for Japanese businesses to develop and grow outside of Japan is therefore fast-becoming a matter of survival, presenting an urgent need for more Japanese leaders who can be effective at a global level. One important group of emerging Japanese global leaders, which could help us to gain deeper insight into how Japanese global leadership talent can be nurtured and developed, appears to have been completely overlooked in the academic literature so far: top Japanese executives employed by foreign MNCs in Japan.

Foreign MNCs in Japan

Foreign MNCs have played a critical role in the development of Japan's modern economy as a catalyst for the creation and development of industry（Kuwahara, 2009）. As of 2018, there were 3,287 foreign MNCs in Japan employing 552,388 regular workers（METI, 2019）, representing approximately 0.74% of Japan's working age population of 75.072 million（Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2019）. Employees of foreign MNCs in Japan often need to work in close alignment with managers and colleagues located at global company headquarters or other international subsidiaries, and to be able to function effectively within complex corporate environments typically characterized by Westernized business cultures, values, and expectations. Foreign MNCs predominantly rely on mid-career recruiting in order to hire employees in Japan, and typically look for individuals with a high level of English language ability and some direct experience of, or strong familiarity with, Western cultures and styles of communication. This is particularly true when it comes to hiring the most senior level leaders for their Japan entities – "Japan General Managers" or "Japan Country Managers".

Japan Country Managers are expected to play a pivotal role facilitating communication between the Japan subsidiary and regional or global management, influencing decisions as part of a multi-cultural global leadership team while ensuring that both local and international stakeholders are constantly aligned on all sides. This is in addition to managing local organizational demands and ensuring the company's global corporate culture and values are understood, replicated, and instilled within all layers of the Japan entity, as well as driving inter-organizational relationships with diverse Japan stakeholders such as government representatives, strategic partners, customers, and suppliers. In short, they must constantly strive to find a balance between competing country, business, and functional concerns（Murtha et al., 1998; Evans & Doz, 1993）while dealing with the complexity wrought by multiple organizational environments, structural indeterminacy, and cultural heterogeneity—all of which characterize contemporary MNCs（Doz & Prahalad, 1991）. In order to be successful, MNC leaders in any global market including Japan must possess a "global mindset" – the "ability to influence individuals, groups, organizations, and systems that have different intellectual, social, and psychological knowledge or intelligence from your own"（Cohen, 2010, p. 3）.

Japanese companies potentially have much to learn through better understanding the developmental pathways of senior Japanese leaders at MNCs in Japan – particularly when it comes to designing more effective recruitment or development strategies for increasing global leadership potential within their organizations. Furthermore, given the significance of the leader development that takes place early on in life, through detailed examination of the early life stages of this group of leaders, our hope is to gain insight into experiences which play a particularly important role in influencing global leader emergence later on. This would hold valuable implications not only for Japanese companies, but also for institutions such as schools, universities, student groups and youth sports clubs, as well as parents and families in Japan, when it comes to accelerating the development of the next generation of Japanese global leaders.

Literature Review

Early Life Leader Development

A review of the existing research reveals a nascent but growing body of literature which contributes to shaping our understanding of how certain individual, environmental, and contextual factors start to play an important role in influencing leader development during the early stages of life. Family environment has been shown to play an important part in an individual's future development as a leader (Zhang et al., 2009), with experiences such as caring for younger siblings and household chores linked with leadership role emergence later on (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Parenting has also been connected with leader development (Liu et al., 2019), with parenting style often categorized into four types – authoritarian, neglectful, indulgent, and authoritative (Santrock, 2010) – and an authoritative parenting style shown to have more positive leadership outcomes than others (Murphy, 2011; Popper, 2011; Avolio et al., 2009). Other studies examine relationships between specific childhood personality characteristics and emergence in leadership roles at the same point in time (e.g., Rechia, 2011) and leadership outcomes later on as an adult (e.g. Popper, 2011). Schneider et al. (1999, 2002) examined leadership behavior among adolescents and its relationship with predictive variables including personality, interests, motivation, and academic performance. Other research correlates certain personality traits such as dominance, extraversion, and social competence with leadership ratings by teachers or peers (Lease et al., 2002; Recchia, 2011; Shin et al., 2004). Further research has suggested that certain skills developed through participation in organized activities such as youth sports (Chelladurai, 2011) and extra-curricular activities (Bartone et al., 2007) are transferrable to leadership situations later on as adults. Other studies focus on leader behavior and development among specific groups such as high school students (e.g., Schneider et al., 1999; Schneider et al., 2002), university students (e.g., Komives, 2011; Sternberg, 2011), or military cadets (e.g., Bartone et al., 2007) – although they do not go as far as connecting this development with leadership role emergence in adulthood.

Global Leader Development

Research into the early life development of global leaders is at a similarly nascent stage, with most studies into global leadership so far concerned primarily with working adults in global workplace settings (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Caligiuri, 2006; Cappellen & Janssen, 2008; Hollenbeck, 2001; Konyu-Fogel, 2011; McCall, 2001; Mendenhall, 2006; Ng et al., 2009; Osland, 2009, 2011) and focused on designing global leadership competencies (Story & Barbuto, 2011) – although there is also an emerging discussion in the literature regarding the antecedents to global leadership. This includes research into Adult Third Culture Kids, or "ATCKs" (Burrus, 2006; Cottrell & Useem, 1994; Cho, 2009; Lam & Selmer, 2004; Van Reken, 2009; Bousch, 2009) – adults who spent at least one of their formative years growing up in a foreign country (Lam & Selmer, 2004). Researchers suggest that ATCKs have a predisposition, on account of their early life experiences which are different to people who grow up in "unicultures" to interact cross-culturally as global leaders and expatriates in adulthood (Cho, 2009; Lam & Selmer, 2004). Characteristics of ATCKs have been suggested to include adaptability, intercultural literacy, open-mindedness, and a multicultural identity (Moore & Barker, 2012), as well as comfort with change, inner confidence, and strong self-

reliance（Van Reken, 2009）. Additionally, they are described as being motivated to lead internationally （Boush, 2009）, and as being globally minded and cosmopolitan（Cho, 2009）. While ATCKs are an exciting new area of study, subject experts themselves are the first to acknowledge there is still a great deal to learn in a nascent field of research that is still in the early stages of developing its own language and terminology, with much more research needed（Stokke, 2013）.

In summary, the empirical research into early life leader development, as well as the early life development of global leaders, remains in its infancy（Day, 2011; Gottfried et al., 2011）, with commentators calling for more studies examining youth leadership, as well as the effects of early life experiences on adult leadership（Murphy & Johnson, 2011）. Furthermore, while some of the extant research is helpful in terms of offering various snapshots into how early life factors may contribute to emergence in leadership roles later on, most studies are cross-sectional by design, and do not enable us to meaningfully connect the dots between early life factors and adult leadership outcomes, or to better understand the complex ongoing journey of leader development, as they neglect to take into account the critical aspect of time（Castillo & Trinh, 2018）.

Leader Development in Japan

While the success of Japanese companies and management practices became the subject of much research and discussion during the few decades following Japan's emergence as a significant economic power post-World War II, empirical studies about leadership and leadership development in Japan have remained sparse（Fukushige & Spicer, 2007; Morinaga & Tateno, 2015）. This is despite Japanese companies increasingly investing into leadership development programs for their employees（Herbes & Goydke, 2016; Furuno, 2000）.

The majority of extant studies about leadership development in Japan focus on discussing leadership behaviors and capabilities at Japanese companies, as opposed to exploring how leaders actually develop or are developed. For example, Misumi & Peterson（1985）designed the Performance-Maintenance（P-M）theory of leadership, proposing two types of leadership behaviours（performance and maintenance）as critical to organizational success. Several leadership invention programs were developed and evaluated based on Misumi's P-M theory, evaluated by Seki et al.（1992）. Other studies focus on identifying and categorizing leadership capabilities. Shimizu（1995）proposed entrepreneurship, management, and leadership as key capabilities of top executives at Japanese companies. Niihara（2002）identified seven core capabilities as being critical to success, and Morinaga & Tateno（2015）explored leadership behaviours expected of Japanese employees by their companies. Lastly, other studies have focused on the relationship between job experience and leadership skill development among employees at Japanese companies（e.g., Taniguchi, 2006）.

Another body of research examines and discusses the characteristics of Japanese leadership within the context of the global leadership behavioural discourse. According to Hofstede's much quoted（1980, 2001）research into global leadership, Japan is moderate on power distance and individualism, while

high on masculinity and uncertainty avoidance when compared to leadership preferences in other cultures. Yokochi-Bryce (1989) on the other hand found that Japanese leaders utilize a transformational style of leadership more frequently than transactional or laissez-faire styles. By contrast, Hayashi & Baldwin (1988) posited that the traditional Japanese leader practices "inconspicuous" leadership as opposed to the classic Western leader who leads "from the front of the orchestra." Ishikawa (2012) found that gatekeeping leadership was effective in enhancing innovative ideas among Japanese R&D teams, whereas transformational leadership had the opposite effect. Fukushige & Spicer (2007) explored the applicability of Bass & Avolio's (1997) full-range global leadership model in Japan, concluding that a new Japanese leadership model based on contemporary Japanese leaders' preferences is needed. As such, while these studies contribute to the discussion about what successful leadership looks like in Japan when compared with other world cultures, there appears to be little of a conclusive nature, and they do not inform our understanding of how such leaders are developed in the first place.

When it comes to global leader (or leadership) development in Japan, there exists – again – a paucity of empirical research. While several commentators have examined initiatives for internationalizing the Japanese education system with a view to producing more future global leaders (e.g. Hashimoto, 2005; Goodman, 2007; Yonezawa 2011; Yonezawa 2014; Kudo & Hashimoto, 2011) while suggesting an urgent need for more global leaders in Japan, they do not discuss the leadership outcomes of such initiatives. Overall, very few studies explore how global leaders can, in fact, be developed in a Japan context. Graen & Hui (1999) conducted a longitudinal study which concluded that the eventual career progress of Japanese global leaders can be predicted by three behaviors observable during the first three years of their career: 1) Building effective working relationships characterized by trust, respect, and obligation with immediate supervisors; 2) Networking with contacts at prestigious universities; and 3) Performing beyond expectations in the face of difficult and ambiguous situations. Another study by Hirai & Suzuki (2016) examined core competencies and facilitating developmental factors among eight Japanese individuals with international backgrounds working in various capacities with non-profit, academic, and commercial entities in Japan and the US. The research, based on 90-minute interviews, found that self-management, relationship building, and intercultural competencies, as well as flexibility and resilience, are key to global leader development. While these studies are useful in terms of proposing some potential characteristics of Japanese global leaders, what constitutes a "global leader" is loosely defined, and the developmental pathways to becoming a successful global leader are left largely up to the imagination.

Leader Development Across the Lifespan

Longitudinal research provides us with a broader and longer-term view of the pathways through which individuals develop into leaders over time. Still, longitudinal studies are often conducted within limited timeframes (Li et al., 2011), and those investigating leadership development from childhood through to adulthood remain scarce (Reitan & Stenberg, 2019). One of the few existing longitudinal studies that is long-term in scope, and which has tracked a cohort of individuals from infancy to adulthood, is the Fullerton Longitudinal Study, which has followed the lives of 130 children and

their families since 1979. Results from this ongoing North-American study so far suggest a variety of early life factors as significant predictors of emergence into leadership roles in adulthood – including extraversion, academic intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, temperament, and a positive family environment（Gottfried et al., 2011; Guerin et al., 2011; Oliver et al., 2011; Reichard et al., 2011）. Overall, however, researchers call for more longitudinal studies to help us to understand which early attributes and experiences are particularly impactful for leader development, at which periods in life, and their relationship with leadership outcomes later on（Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Liu et al., 2020）.

　A separate stream of theoretical research has been focusing on the search for the roots of leadership emergence, through examining how the accumulation and interaction of various individual and environmental factors, life events, and learning experiences over time may influence the leader development process "across the lifespan," starting from the earliest stages of life（Day, 2000; Day et al., 2009; Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2011; Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Liu et al., 2020）. Given that the process through which a person becomes a leader is dynamic and iterative（Murphy & Johnson, 2011）occurring across time and context during the entire life cycle（Day et al., 2014; Castillo & Trinh, 2018; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Oc, 2018）, lifespan research significantly contributes to the overall literature on leader development by proposing theoretical frameworks for how the "seeds of leadership"（Murphy & Johnson, 2011）may initially be planted, nourished, and then go on to develop and flourish starting from preschool and childhood throughout life into late adulthood（Arnett, 2000; Erikson & Erikson, 1998; Murphy & Johnson, 2011）. This allows us to step back and view the overall journey of leadership development through a more holistic and long-term lens, and to draw potential connections between the interplay of certain factors and experiences which occur during each stage of the life cycle, and an individual's emergence into leadership roles later on in adulthood.
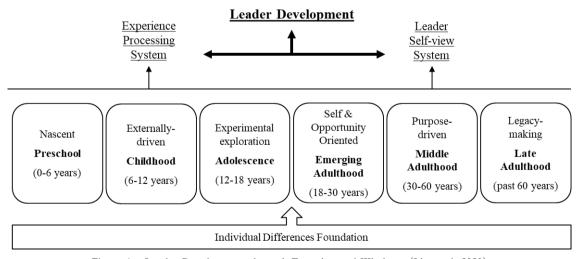

Figure 1.　Leader Development through Experimental Windows（Liu et al., 2020）

Murphy & Johnson（2011）constructed a dynamic model of leader development across the lifespan, proposing a theoretical framework that describes the ongoing interaction between early life developmental factors（early influences, parenting styles, and early learning experiences）and the development of leader identity and capacity for self-regulation, while taking into account moderating environmental and contextual considerations（societal expectations, time in history, and age）, and the resulting influence on emergence in leadership roles and leadership effectiveness.

Liu et al.（2020）presented a framework（see Figure 1）that explores the leader development process among workplace leaders during experiential windows at specific stages across the lifespan – from preschool, childhood, and adolescence through to emerging adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood – positing that development can be influenced by the ongoing dynamic interaction between two systems: the leader's experience processing system, and the leader's self-view system. The overall process of leader development is moderated by foundational differences between each leader – i.e., genetic predisposition and certain foundational traits, as well as the individual's experience processing and self-view systems. For the purposes of this study, we have adapted Liu et al.'s framework to focus on key experiential windows during the early life stages of leader development, from Preschool to Early Adulthood（see Figure 2）.

This present study aims to expand the body of literature for global leader development in Japan, as well as leader development across the lifespan, by examining common early life experiences of twenty-five Japanese General Managers employed by foreign-affiliated companies in Japan. This builds on a previous research study by the same authors, which was based on interviews with nine such General Managers（Kimura & Osborn, 2021）. In doing so, we seek to gain insight into the early life experiences which may play a particularly important role as determinants in influencing an individual's emergence into global leadership positions later on during adulthood. While personality measures have been
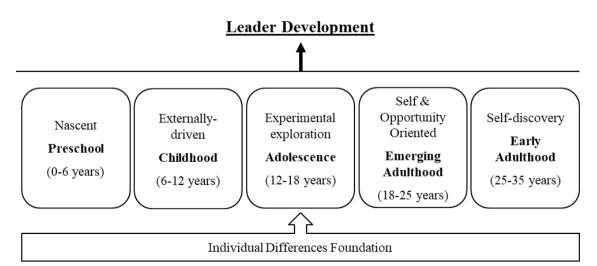
Leader Development

| Nascent
Preschool
(0-6 years) | Externally-driven
Childhood
(6-12 years) | Experimental exploration
Adolescence
(12-18 years) | Self & Opportunity Oriented
Emerging Adulthood
(18-25 years) | Self-discovery
Early Adulthood
(25-35 years) |

Individual Differences Foundation

Figure 2. Analytical framework for semi-structured interviews（adapted from Liu et al., 2020）

included in our research, for the purposes of this paper, our focus will be primarily on the leaders' experiences and other environmental factors during early life, and not on individual factors such as genetics or cognitive ability etc. – i.e. what happens "outside the body" as opposed to "inside the body" (Duster, 2006). While we do not intend to downplay the significance of the latter, or of the interplay that takes place between the two, and recognize that they cannot be treated as mutually exclusive considerations (Jencks, 1980), our hope is that our research will contribute towards shedding further light on the potential significance and impact of certain early life experiences during the lifespan development journey of global leaders in Japan.

Research Method

This qualitative study attempts to derive propositions with regards to common early life and early career experiences among Japanese global leaders. For the purposes of this research, we define "global leader" as the most senior representative of a foreign-affiliated company or brand in Japan, i.e., Representative Director, Chief Executive Officer, Country Manager, or General Manager for Japan. Semi-structured research interviews were conducted with twenty-five Japanese global leaders, designed to encourage interviewees to freely express and then expand and reflect on experiences which occurred during each window of early life – from their Preschool years to Early Adulthood, by which time they had completed the foundational period of their professional careers.

In order to design the interview structure for this research, the lead author of this paper, a specialist in leadership assessment, interviewed the other author, one of the global leaders included in the interview group, on February 2, 2020. The data from this interview has been included in our study. In order to gather additional interviewees for our research, we approached other Japanese global leaders for their participation on a completely voluntary basis. We included executives from diverse professional backgrounds and industries including sports & fitness, consumer packaged goods, retail, luxury, and technology, in order to present as wide a representation of our sample target population as possible.

Analytical Framework: Leader Development through Experiential Windows

An analytical framework for leader development was designed based on experiential "windows" (stages) during the lifespan ranging from an individual's nascent years through to early adulthood, adapted from research by Liu, et al. (2020), which is shown in Figure 2. Each stage, characterized by specific formative experiences, serves as a window of opportunity for an individual's development as a leader.

The initial stage is defined as "Preschool," which is both the nascent period of life (ages 0-6 years old) and the foundational period for subsequent stages. During this stage, attachment relationships with caregivers – typically parents – are formed (Erikson & Erikson, 1998) and play experiences are developed (Brownell & Brown, 1992), both of which have critical influences on future lifelong development as a leader (Mack et al., 2011; Day & Dragoni, 2015). The second stage is "Childhood" (ages 6-12 years old), during

which children enter elementary school and become involved in various social, academic, and sports activities, thereby starting to develop communication, cognitive, and interpersonal abilities (Johnson & Johnson, 1998; Sun et al., 2017) – while still dependent on external influencers such as parents, teachers, and other caregivers to provide them with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The third stage is "Adolescence" (ages 12–18 years old), a critical period of transition through middle school and high school during which individuals start to develop a deeper sense of self-identity and personal world view (Erikson, 1968; Erikson & Erikson, 1998), exploring and experimenting with their leadership skills both independently as well as with peers and adults. The fourth stage is "Emerging Adulthood" (ages 18–25 years old), during which individuals may experience university and, after graduation, typically begin their professional careers or pursue further education at a postgraduate level. During this period, individuals gain exposure to diverse opportunities for developing their leadership skills (Murphy, 2011), and to engage in various new challenges and experiences which help nurture their sense of self for further growth and achievement (Perreault, Cohen, & Blanchard, 2016). The last stage in the framework is "Early Adulthood" (ages 25–35 years old), during which individuals develop their foundational careers. Some may experience major life events such as marriage and parenthood during this period, while being exposed to various new styles of communication, engagement, and leadership in the workplace (Gray & Bishop, 2009).

Big Five Personality Test

As an additional point of reference, we requested each interview participant to complete a Big Five Personality assessment (John et al., 1991), which breaks down and describes specific personality traits in terms of numerical scores. The individual scores are easily comparable with global sample averages. The five broad personality traits described by the test are: extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. The test was administered online, and data was collected anonymously.

Results

Interviews were conducted with our group of twenty-five global leaders between March 3rd, 2020 and July 1st, 2022. The average duration of each interview session was approximately two hours, with follow-up interview sessions held with some participants as necessary in order to ensure that all relevant experiences during each experiential life window were covered and discussed in sufficient detail. The profiles of the twenty-five interviewees are summarized in Table 1 (pseudonyms are used throughout).

Table 1. Interviewee Profiles

NAME	AGE	CAREER SUMMARY	DATE
Hiro	40's	Spent 10 years in sales with a Japanese company. Joined a global company, becoming Sales Director for Japan. Moved to another global company as Japan General Manager during early 40's.	Mar-20
Rei	50's	Spent 20 years with a global Japanese company, working in Japan and internationally. Subsequently held Japan executive roles with 4 global companies. Became Japan President of a global company during 50's.	Mar-20
Akane	40's	Spent 15 years with a global Japanese company in Japan & overseas. Moved to a global company in Japan and became General Manager during late 30's. Is now a senior executive with another global company.	Mar-20
Yohei	50's	Spent 30 years with a global Japanese company. Promoted to President of Japan subsidiary in early 30's, then held several leadership roles in Japan and internationally. Became Japan President & CEO of another global company during mid-50's.	Mar-20
Taro	50's	Began career with a local Japanese company, then held roles of increasing seniority with 3 global companies in Japan for the next 15 years. Became Japan Country Manager for a global company during early 40's, then CEO of a Japanese company during 50's.	Mar-20
Takashi	40's	Worked in Japan sales for a global company for 5 years. Held Japan roles of increasing seniority with several other global companies, then became Japan General Manager with a global company during early 40's. Subsequently, became Japan Managing Director for another global company during late 40's.	Mar-20
Sayaka	40's	Spent first 10 years of career with a Japanese company. Moved to Japan subsidiary of a global company holding roles of increasing seniority, then became Japan Country Director for another global company during early 40's. Subsequently, became Country Director for another global company in mid 40's.	Apr-20
Tatsuya	50's	Worked with global firms in Japan for 5 years, before moving to a Japanese company. Subsequently joined a European subsidiary of a Japanese company, prior to holding Japan and international Country Manager roles for a global company during 30's. Held Japan Country Manager roles for 3 other global companies during 40's and early 50's.	Apr-20
Ayumu	50's	Spent 5 years with a Japanese company, then worked internationally and in Japan for 4 global companies in roles of increasing seniority for the next 20 years. Became Japan General Manager for a global company during early 40's.	Apr-20
Jun	40's	Spent 7 years with a global company in Japan, Europe, and China. During the next 10 years, worked with 4 Japanese and global companies in Japan and China in various general management roles. Subsequently, spent 5 years as Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Corporate Officer with a global company in Japan during late 30's, then joined another global company as Japan Chief Marketing Officer in late 40's.	May-20
Daisuke	40's	Spent 13 years working with 2 global companies in Japan, in increasingly senior roles, eventually becoming Japan CEO for both entities during early 30's. For the next 5 years, held general management roles with 2 global companies and a Japanese business, before becoming Japan head of sales & marketing for a global company during mid-40's.	May-20
Hide	40's	Worked at a Japanese company for 6 years then joined the Japan operations of a global company, holding various leadership roles in Japan, Asia, and Europe. Subsequently, joined another global company in a Japan commercial leadership role, prior to moving to another global company as CEO for Japan and Asia-Pacific in early 40's.	Jun-20

NAME	AGE	CAREER SUMMARY	DATE
Emi	30's	Spent 6 years in government and diplomatic-related roles in Japan, Asia, and various countries in Africa. Joined the European subsidary of a global Japanese company as a divisional general manager for one year. Concurrently established and operated an independent NPO as executive director. Subsequently, founded an international Japanese company as CEO in mid-30's, and became non-executive director of a Japanese company.	Jun-20
Hikaru	40's	Worked with a Japanese company for 3 years in Japan and Latin America, before moving to another Japanese company 2 years in a Japan. Joined the Japan operation of a global company for 4 years, prior to moving to another global company as Japan Vice President for Strategy for 4 years. Subsequently, joined another global company, and was Corporate Executive and Managing Director for 10 years during early 40's. Moved to a global company in Japan as head of a business division, then joined another global company as Japan COO in late 40's.	Jun-20
Ichiro	40's	Spent first 5 years of career with a global firm in Japan, before moving to the Japan subsidiary of another global company for 7 years, being promoted to Japan/APAC General Manager after 5 years during mid-30's. Then joined another global firm as Country Manager, APAC & Japan during early-40's.	Mar-21
Katsu	40's	Spent 20 years with a global company working in increasingly senior positions in Japan, North America, Europe, and Asia. Became General Manager for an Asia subsidiary during late 30's, then President of a Japan subsidiary. Subsequently moved to another global company as General Manager Japan during mid-40's.	Apr-21
Ken	40's	Joined a global company in Japan, spending the next 11 years in various positions in Japan and Europe. Promoted to General Manager, Japan after 8 years during early 30's. Spent the next 4 years with 2 other global firms in Japan, before joining another international company as Senior Manager for North-East Asia in early 40's.	Apr-21
Ryota	50's	Spent initial 30 years of career with a Japanese company, working in Japan and various countries across Asia-Pacific, holding first Managing Director post after 14 years during mid-30's. Became Managing Director of a JV alliance with a global company after 26 years. Subsequently, moved to a global company as General Manager for 2 years, then joined another global company as General Manager for Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.	Apr-21
Akio	50's	Spent first 9 years of career with a global firm, working in Japan as well as the UK for 1 year. Then moved to another global company for 3 years, before establishing own firm for 1 year. Spent the next 4 years in senior positions with two global companies, then held role of Japan General Manager with another global company for 14 years during early 40's. Subsequently, moved to a Japanese company as a senior executive.	May-21
Daiki	40's	Spent first 14 years of career with a Japanese firm, before moving to the Japan operations of a global firm for one year, and then joined another global company for 4 years as Business Unit Head, Japan during mid-30's. Subsequently joined another global firm as Business Division General Manager.	May-21
Kei	40's	Spent first 2 years of career with a Japanese company, before moving to another Japanese firm for 4 years. Joined a global company in Japan for 6 years, before becoming General Manager for another global company for 2 years during mid-30's, and Country Manager for a separate global business for 1 year. Then joined another global company for 9 years, being promoted to Japan General Manager during 6th year. Subsequently, became General Manager of another global company	Jul-21

NAME	AGE	CAREER SUMMARY	DATE
Masa	40's	Spent first 9 years of career with a global company in Japan, before moving to the Japan subsidiary of another global company for 4 years. Moved to another global company as an executive for 3 years, becoming Managing Director after 2 years during early 40's. Then moved to another global company as a senior executive.	Oct-21
Manabu	40's	Spent first 3 years of career with a Japanese company in Japan. Then joined the Japan subsidiary of a global company, spending the next 16 years in roles of increasing seniority in Japan and Asia-Pacific. Joined a global company as Japan Managing Director & Country Manager for 4 years during mid-40's, then moved to another global firm as General Manager Japan.	Nov-21
Takeru	60's	Spent first 20 years of career with a global Japanese company holding various roles based in Japan and the US. Left to join a global company as Japan President for 3 years during early 40's, before moving to US/Japan joint venture company as Japan President for 6 years. Subsequently moved to a Japanese firm as President for 6 years.	Jan-22
Kota	40's	Spent first 6 months of career with a Japanese business, before moving to a global Japanese company in Japan for 3 years. Then joined the Japan subsidiary of a global company for 3 years, spending the following 2 years with 2 other global firms, before joining another global firm in a regional Asia-Pacific role for 6 years. Then joined a global company in Japan in a senior leadership position for 2 years, before becoming Japan Country Manager for another global firm during early 40's.	Jul-22

Interviews were structured and designed according to the experiential windows as shown in the analytical framework in Figure 2, discussing, probing, and delving more deeply into major life events and related experiences which occurred during each window. Transcripts were taken during each interview session, and the interview data were then reviewed, categorized, and grouped under general headings, or "themes," as shown in Table 2. In doing so, we were able to identify the early life experiences that were most common or prevalent among all interviewees, and which may, therefore, have played a particularly significant role contributing to their developmental journey in becoming global leaders later on in life.

In a previous research study that presented and discussed our findings from interviews conducted with nine initial global leaders（Kimura & Osborn, 2021）, we identified several specific common early life experiences from each experiential life window. In this paper, with an expanded interview group of 25 global leaders, our goal was to identify common areas or patterns of experience which accumulate and emerge collectively during the period of early life as a whole, starting from Preschool through to Early Adulthood. In doing so, our intention was to capture experiential themes that can be generalized to early life overall, as opposed to those which fall within each specific life window.

Table 2. Summary of Categorized Data from 25 Global Leader Interviews

WINDOW	EXPERIENTIAL CATEGORY	O's
Active participation in competitive sports and other organized activities during Childhood & Adolescence		
B	Had a broad range of interests/curiosity about a wide range of topics during Childhood	22
B	Actively and regularly participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during elementary school	23
C	Actively participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during junior high school years	23
C	Actively participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during high school years	22
D	Actively participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during university years	7
B	Experienced being captain or vice captain of a team or a club during Childhood	11
C	Experienced being captain or vice captain of a team or a club during Adolescence	10
D	Experienced being captain or vice captain of a team or a club during Emerging Adulthood	4
B	Experienced gaining self-confidence through participating in sports/other organized activities during Childhood and Adolescence	20
C	Describes participation in sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during their youth as being critical to their early development as a leader	23
C	Was more focused on sports and other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) than academics during Adolescence	8
C	Balanced both academic studies as well as sports and other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during Adolescence	15
C	Clearly prioritied academic studies over sports and other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during Adolescence	2
Experience living internationally outside Japan for one year or more from Preschool to Early Adulthood		
A	Lived internationally outside Japan for one year or more during pre-school years	3
A	Attended international preschool in Japan	1
B	Attended elementary school internationally outside Japan for one year or more	5
B	Attended international elementary school in Japan	1
B	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more by the time of elementary school graduation	5
C	Attended junior high school internationally outside Japan for one year or more	4
C	Attended international junior high school in Japan	2
C	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more by the time of junior high school graduation	8
C	Attended high school internationally outside Japan for one year or more	6
C	Attended international high school in Japan	2
C	Had lived outside Japan for one year or more by the time of high school graduation	11
C	Attended local high school in Japan, and participated in short-term international student exchange programs	7
C	Experienced at least some short-term interntaional travel (school or family/personal-related) from Childhood to Adolescence	20
D	Gained direct experience of the world outside Japan from Emerging Adult years onwards only	3
D	Studied for undergraduate degree at an international university outside Japan	5
D	Studied for undergraduate degree in Japan, and participated in a one-year overseas student exchange program	4
D	Studied for undergraduate degree in Japan and experienced participating in international projects/internships/other organized global programs	5
D	Studied for undergraduate degree in Japan and spent time traveling internationally during university years	11
D	Had gained at least some direct experience of the world outside Japan through travelling or living internationally by the time of university graduation	24
D	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more from Pre-School through to Emerging Adulthood	20
E	Studied for a post-graduate qualification (MBA etc.) at an international university outside Japan during Early Adulthood	15
E	Experienced an overseas work assignment of one year or more during Early Adulthood	17
E	Studied for an interarntional postgraduate qualification and/or experienced overseas assignment for one year or more during Early Adulthood	21
E	Collaborated professionally with global colleagues/companies/customers during first 10 years of career	24
E	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more by Early Adulthood	23
Experience actively creating diverse new social relationships and networks		
B	Transferred to school in a new location, or to a new type of school, in Japan at least once (as a "Tenkosei") during Childhood	5
C	Transferred to school in a new location, or to a new type of school, at least once in Japan during Adolescence	6
B	Transferred schools internationally during Childhood	5
C	Transferred schools internationally during Adolescence	10
B-C	Transferred schools internationally during Childhood and/or Adolescence	11
B-C	Transferred to school in a new location, or to a new type of school, either in Japan or internationally during Childhood or Adolescence	16
D	Transferred to a university in completely new location, either domestically or internationally, during Emerging Adulthood	13
B	Experienced building new social networks and connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during childhood years.	15
C	Experienced building new social networks and connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during adolescent years.	17
B-C	Did not transfer to schools in new location/new type of school, but did experience building new social networks/connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during Childhood and/or Adolescence.	4
B-C	Experienced building new social networks and connections with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during Childhood and/or Adolescence.	20
D	Gained experience building new social networks and connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during university	21
Experience actively developing connections with senior role models from Adolescence to Emerging Adulthood		
A-B	Grew up around the influence of a wide and tight-knit adult family network (Grandparents, uncles/aunts etc.) during childhood	17
B	Father/close family member was a company executive/senior manager/small business owner; grew up aware of those business relationships and networks	20
A	Experienced frequent interactions with / exposure to influential working adults / working society (family / non-family) during Preschool years	17
B	Experienced frequent interactions with / exposure to influential working adults / working society (family / non-family) during Childhood years	16
C	Developed relationships/connections with influential senior or adult role model figures during Adolescence (junior high school / high school)	17
D	Developed relationships/connections with influential senior or adult role model figures during university years	21
C-D	Had relationship(s)/connection(s) with influential senior or adult role model figures during Adolescence and/or Emerging Adulthood	24

A: Preschool (0-6 years); B: Childhood (6-12 years); C: Adolescence (12-18 years): D: Emerging Adulthood (18-25 years); E: Early Adulthood (25-35 years)

Table 2.　Summary of Categorized Data from 25 Global Leader Interviews（cont.）

WINDOW	EXPERIENTIAL CATEGORY	O's
**Experience developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals from Adolescence to Early Adulthood**	
C	Experienced developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals during Adolescence.	21
D	Experienced developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals during Emerging Adulthood	23
E	Experienced developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals during during Early Adulthood	25
	Experience actively pursuing extracurricular activities during Emerging Adulthood	
D	Focused primarily on academic studies while at university	4
D	Actively and intensively pursued extra-curricular activities at university (outside of academic study)	24
D	Gained experience leading or coordinating people or groups of people through extra-curricular activities at university	21
D	Actively participated in music activities (musical band, orchestra etc.) during university years	4
	Actively gained a wide of range of professional experience during Early Adulthood	
E	Was highly active in life outside professional career / the workplace (E.g. Hobbies, sports, NGOs etc.)	9
E	Changed companies at least once during Early Adulthood	16
E	Experienced an overseas work assignment for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	17
E	Studied for an international postgraduate degree or qualification for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	15
E	Studied for international postgraduate qualification and/or experienced an overseas assignment for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	21
E	Changed companies at least once and/or experienced overseas work assignment/studied for international post-graduate qualification for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	25
	School education and leadership development	
B	Participated in elementary school-related clubs / circles	8
B	Gained leadership or "people coordination" experience at elementary school	9
B	Nominated as "seito kaicho" (class captain) or "gakkyuucho" (year captain) during elementary school	7
C	Played role as "seito kaicho" (class captain) or "gakkyuucho" (year captain) during junior high school	5
C	Played role as "seito kaicho" (class captain) or "gakkyuucho" (year captain) during high school	2
	Academic ability & performance / grades at school	
B	Was seen by others as being of above-average intelligence / academically gifted at school during Childhood	12
B	Was a "Yutosei" (elite top-grade student) during elementary school	10
C	Was a "Yutosei" (elite top-grade student) during junior high school	7
C	Was a "Yutosei" (elite top-grade student) during high school	7
B	Recalls getting mediochre (neither top nor bottom) grades at elementary school	12
C	Recalls getting mediochre (neither top nor bottom) grades at junior high school	10
C	Recalls getting mediochre (neither top nor bottom) grades at high school	11
C	Started to study significantly harder from end of junior high school / early high school onwards	7
	Parental influence	
B	Parents encouraged participation in a wide range of extra-curricular group activities (sports/other) during Childhood	23
B	Grew up in an "affluent" / "privileged" environment during Childhood	11
B	Grew up in an "underprivileged" household environment during Childhood	1
B	Grew up in an "average" household environment during Childhood	13
C	Father or close family member worked for a company as a senior executive or senior leader	15
C	Father or close family member was a business founder / small business owner	5
	Sibling order	
B	Older of two siblings	8
B	Eldest of three (or more) siblings	3
B	Younger of two siblings	7
B	Youngest of three siblings	3
B	Middle of three siblings	2
B	Only child	2
	Career development	
E	Started career at Japanese company in Japan	15
E	Started career at foreign capital company in Japan	10
E	Started career doing something very different to what they are doing now	23
E	MBA was sponsored by company	7
	Educational background	
A	Spent pre-school overseas	3
A	Attended international preschool / interanational elementary school in Japan	1
B	Attended elementary school overseas	4
B	Attended public elementary school in Japan	21
B	Attended private elementary school in Japan	0
C	Attended junior high school in Japan	20
C	Attended interanational junior high school in Japan	2
C	Attended junior high school overseas	4
C	Attended local high school in Japan	15
C	Attended interanational high school in Japan	2
C	Attended high school overseas	6
D	Graduated from university (undergraduate degree) in Japan	20
D	Attended top flight (equiv. Ivy League) university in Japan	14
D	Gained undergraduate degree from overseas university outside Japan	5
E	Attended MA / MBA program at an international university during first ten years of career.	15

Our interview transcript data was analysed, structured, and categorized as shown in Table 2[1]. General themes of experience were identified, under which sub-categories were included to describe the specific nature and details of each experience, under the life window during which they occurred. In order to achieve a systematic evaluation of the data, as well as to minimize subjective bias in our evaluation, the number of "O"s for each category was counted, and items with 20 or more "O"s out of a total of 25 (i.e. 80% or more of the group) were selected and highlighted as common experiences (as shown in Table 2).

Seven common key themes relating to the early life experiences of our group of global leaders were identified, as follows:

A) Actively participating in sports and other organized group activities during Childhood and Adolescence
B) Actively creating new social relationships and networks with different types of people during Childhood and Adolescence
C) Actively developing connections with role model figures during Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood
D) International experience living outside Japan for one year or more from Childhood through to Early Adulthood
E) Actively setting and striving towards clear aspirational goals from Adolescence to Early Adulthood
F) Actively participating in extracurricular activities during Emerging Adulthood
G) Actively gaining a diverse range of professional experiences during Early Adulthood

Note that we have included "actively" as a key descriptor in almost all of the themes to denote the nature of the experience as being something in which the individual deliberately, consciously, and intentionally engaged – as opposed to being something in which they were passively, unconsciously, or unwillingly involved.

A) Actively participating in sports and other organized group activities from Childhood to Adolescence

Almost all of the global leaders in our group actively participated in competitive sports or other organized group activities at least two or three times per week during Childhood (23 out of 25) and Adolescence (24 out of 25). Competitive sports included soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball, tennis, athletics, kendo, swimming, and basketball. Other organized group activities included orchestra groups, musical bands, and boy scouts. Interviewees reported that their experience of participating in these activities had a significant impact on their personal development at the time – particularly in terms of enhancing their self-confidence. Taro said, "As I got better at swimming, I grew in confidence. Other kids who didn't go to swimming school couldn't do the butterfly, and they saw that I was good at it. I realized that I could do things that would impress other people." Masa described a strikingly similar

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1) A full version of Table 2 has been included in the Appendix under Table 4.

experience from his childhood: "I loved soccer but was slower, weaker, and smaller than the other boys. But then I started getting really good at skiing, and found I was better than others. That gave me confidence. I was still only 11 or 12 years old at the time, but I can still remember that feeling."

Interviewees reported many other ways in which they developed through their participation in sports and other activities, including increased self-awareness, self-control, resilience, and competitive spirit. For example, Takeru was a member of the high school soccer team, and said, "I learned about continuous improvement through daily practice, about self-control, and developing a tough mindset – as you have to control yourself emotionally and develop yourself physically to be strong enough for the competition." Kota played competitive soccer and tennis and said, "Sports gave me discipline, a sense of focus and urgency, and an ability to manage anxiety and uncertainty – especially tennis. Soccer is a team sport, but tennis is all about you as an individual being super-focused in the moment."

Many interviewees described their experience of sports and organized group activities as being foundational to their development as future leaders, and directly connected these experiences with their approach to leading, motivating, and building relationships with others later on as adults in the workplace. Ichiro was captain of the local baseball team in elementary school, and said, "Baseball taught me so much about leadership. I learned that if someone messes up, it's not their fault, it is the captain's fault. Leaders are responsible for how people behave, and as captain, you have to be a role model for behaviour." Katsu reported, "Soccer was critical to the leader I became. Without it, I would have been very different. Sports taught me about my role in the team. Showing respect to others, and acknowledging people for what they do. Recognizing people individually. Wanting to perform better not for yourself, but for the other people on your team. I have been able to develop great relationships during my professional career because of my sports experience." Ken was in the Boy Scouts from his Childhood through to Emerging Adulthood years, and said the experience of being in charge of a small group of younger Scouts when he was 11 years old was "like an early leadership lesson in responsibility."

Many interviewees also described sports and music as being "universal languages" which enabled them to quickly develop new connections and make new friends when transitioning into new communities and environments during Childhood and Adolescence – in many cases, in countries outside Japan where they were initially not able to communicate in the local language. Sayaka played softball during elementary school, and said, "When I moved to the United States, softball helped me to be accepted by new friends locally; it worked as a universal language." Takeru spent one year in the US during high school, and described how soccer helped him to integrate himself into his new community: "The soccer team quickly became a huge part of my life, and gave me confidence. There were Mexicans, Iranians, Europeans, as well as Americans in the team. It was multinational, and I was no longer an outsider." Akane played the violin and joined a junior orchestra when she moved to the US during junior high school. She said, "Violin worked as a communication tool. Music helped me integrate, and to be accepted by new friends."

It is also noteworthy that out of our group of 25 global leaders, less than half (12/25) gained leadership experience in their respective sports or organized activities as captains or group leaders during Childhood and Adolescence – even though all of those who participated in such activities felt that doing so had significantly influenced their development as a future leader.

B) Actively creating new social relationships and networks with different types of people during Childhood and Adolescence

20 out of 25 individuals in our group had accumulated substantial experience actively developing relationships with new people from different social and cultural backgrounds during their childhood and adolescent years – either by necessity or through personal activities and interests in which they were involved during this early period of their lives.

Many experienced situations where they needed to make new friends having transitioned to new schools – in some cases, multiple times. 11 people transferred to new schools in Japan – either to schools in different regions of the country, or to different types of schools where the majority of students came from social groups that were new for them (for example, moving from a local state-funded school to a private international school, or vice-versa) – and 11 individuals experienced moving schools internationally. Overall, a total of 16 interviewees experienced either local or international school transitions (or both) during Childhood and Adolescence, whereupon they needed to build new social connections, and integrate themselves into new communities. Ryota said, "I had changed schools 6 times by the time I was twelve. Each time, I made friends with everyone in the class by finding out what their hobbies were, and by learning to play new sports. Looking back, my experience as a "tenkosei" (transfer student) helped me to quickly adapt to new communities and learn how to make new friends." Masa said, "My dad worked as a doctor and was rotated to different hospitals around the country. As a result, I attended three different elementary schools, and had to make new friends every time. I am naturally shy, so it was good training for me. I learned how to open new doors, build new friendships, and adapt to new environments, occasions, and cultures." Jun commented, "I had gone to a very rough local junior high school, but transferred to the best public high school in a very rich area. There were diverse students who had come from different regions of Japan, many from very wealthy families. One of my new friends once came to my apartment, and he thought I must be living there by myself. He could not believe that my whole family could fit into that tiny space! It was a really fresh experience for me, and for the first time I started to realize the difference between my family and others."

Kota also talked about his experience of building new relationships with people from different social backgrounds when he returned to Japan with his family as a 14-year-old, having grown up in the US and Australia. He started going to a junior high school in Osaka, and said: "I had grown up overseas with rich ex-pat Japanese kids. Now in a local Osaka school, I realized that not everyone was like that. A lot of people were very poor. I would go to friends' houses, and they would have plastic roofs. One of my friends had 9 brothers, and his hand-me-down school uniforms would be faded from black to grey

because they had been worn so much. The experience affected me. I would intentionally make friends with people from this group, and would sometimes share my bento lunch with them, as they would come to school with rice and nothing else to go with it. This is something I had never done in the past. They may have been poor, but I found them to be very pure, and very happy. I realized that money does not necessarily make you happy – it is more about your friends and your family. I got a much better energy from them than from the miserable rich kids who spent their lives in the juku (cram school). I didn't realize it at the time, but from then onwards I became drawn to people who have this kind of good energy." Manabu needed to build new relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds after his family moved from Japan to the US when he was in the first year of junior high school. He said, "During my very first summer in the US, I went to a summer camp. Not being able to speak a word of English, it was confusing – but it was also fun. All the other kids were curious about me as a Japanese, and I realized there was not so much difference between me and them. I was then able to make friends with my ESL class, where everyone came from different countries like Vietnam, Costa Rica, and Venezuela, as well as the other kids in the local church community."

Out of the 9 remaining interview participants who had experienced more typical local school transitions in Japan from elementary school through to high school during Childhood and Adolescence, 4 discussed similar experiences of building diverse new social relationships through their involvement in activities that exposed them to people from new social or cultural backgrounds. For example, Daiki became a member of a Tokyo-based international student exchange group and said, "I was very fortunate to make 30 new friends with whom I went on a tour of the US. Some were very new types of people for me. They weren't interested in going to university, but wanted to become musicians etc. It was an eye-opening experience as I was just attending a normal Japanese school, and it is usually very difficult to get into these alternative communities." Rei grew up in Tokyo and attended local schools in the area, but was also able to develop relationships with individuals from different backgrounds through becoming friends with people from US military families, as a result of which he even experienced going on ski trips with US military personnel. Tatsuya was born and raised in Nagoya and attended local schools in the area, but was able to develop social connections with people from various other countries as a teenager through becoming a member of an international pen pal association. He started writing to people all around the world, and eventually had one hundred regular pen pals, including a medical student in Egypt.

C) Actively developing connections with role model figures from Adolescence to Emerging Adulthood

Role models are defined in the literature as "individuals who influence role aspirants' achievements, motivation, and goals by acting as behavioural models, representations of the possible, and/or inspirations" (Morgenroth, Ryan & Peters, 2015). 24 out of 25 global leaders in our group discussed experiences of developing relationships with adults or more experienced peers who could be described as role model figures during Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood, and who went on to have a significant influence on their lives during these important formative years. Such figures included

seniors in sports clubs, schoolteachers, university professors, individuals encountered during domestic or overseas travel, managers or older colleagues in part-time jobs, senior band members, business executives, as well as friends of parents. In each instance, participants reported being able to develop new perspectives about themselves and others, and gaining a higher level of clarity and conviction when making important decisions about the direction in which they wanted to take their lives, as a direct influence of these relationships. Additionally, many also shared that these figures provided them with an image of what adults or adult leaders looked like – including role models they wanted to aspire to be like in the future, as well as those whom they wanted to avoid becoming.

Many interview participants cited people who were working adults as early role model figures during Adolescence. Emi started attending an English conversation group run by international Japanese and Canadian journalists during junior high school. She said, "The lady there was extraordinary, and not a typical Japanese. She was vocal, and had strong views. She showed us that if you want to become someone, you have to grab opportunities yourself. She told us many stories about why you need to take action instead of just complaining about things, if you want to become someone who makes a difference in the world. She really opened up my mind, and influenced me a lot. If hadn't met her, I wouldn't be where I am now." Kota had a part-time job at a Japanese restaurant while attending high school in New York. He became friends with the sushi chef as well as other restaurant staff. He recalled, "I was always the youngest, and everyone else was in their thirties or older. I enjoyed hanging out with these adults, although I also had a growing awareness that their life was not the life I wanted for myself." He added, "Later on, I found I was easily able to build positive relationships with people more senior than me, all thanks to my experiences of being around adult figures as a teenager in the US." When reflecting on his teenage years, Masa said, "I was heavily influenced by my relatives, especially my aunt on my mum's side. She was a famous designer in Harajuku, and I would sometimes stay with her when I was in Tokyo. I thought she was very cool for following her dreams and achieving things through her own effort and initiative." Daisuke was an aspiring guitarist as a teenager, and had won a place to study music at a prestigious music college in the US. During his final year at high school in Japan, he had an opportunity to act as an interview translator for one of his role models – a very well-known guitarist from the US. When Daisuke told him about his plans to go to music college and to become a professional musician, he was told, "Good luck, because you will need it." He went on to explain the harsh realities of becoming a successful professional in the world of music – as a result of which Daisuke made the decision not to accept his offer to the music college after all, even though his father had already made a down payment. He ended up applying for a local university in Japan instead and, looking back, said it was the right decision, as deep down he knew that he probably didn't have what it took to become a successful musician. Kei described how his soccer coach helped him to gain a different perspective of adult lifestyles after moving to Germany towards the end of his elementary school years. He said, "My coach was a truck driver. We had two training days during the week, and one game day on weekends. He would come to training sessions right after finishing his shift. He coached our team, and also enjoyed being part of the local soccer community. At that time back in Japan, adult involvement with kids' sports was still limited, because most dads were too busy with

their work. For them, their company was their community. But in Germany our coach had his job, his professional network, and was also part of the soccer community. He had a multi-dimensional life, and I learned that people could enjoy sports as a lifetime hobby."

Other study participants talked about more experienced peers who became role model figures during Childhood and Adolescence. Taro joined a martial arts club when he was 12 years old, and described how his relationships with his seniors in the club started to change his perspective. "The older members of the dojo were university students and young adults in their early twenties, and they looked after me. As I was the youngest, the older boys took me under their wing and took me to lots of different places. They showed me the world of adults, which opened my eyes to new aspects of society from a young age." When Ken was in high school, between the ages of 16 to 18, he would spend time with the senior members of his Boy Scout group who were a few years older than him, aged 18 to 26. He said, "I looked up to them. One was a university medical student, another was a naval architect, and another studied media and joined NHK. Through speaking with them, I was able to envision what my future career might look like – something I could not possibly have done otherwise. I could also share issues I was experiencing with my parents or schoolteachers, and they would ask me questions and give me advice. They were great role models and mentors for me, and helped to open my eyes."

It is also noteworthy that 20 out of 25 interviewees in our group had fathers who were either company executives or small business owners. These individuals recalled growing up with a strong awareness of their father's profession and social standing as a business leader, and regularly spoke and interacted with their fathers' business colleagues, associates, or employees. Many described their father as an early life role model, and believed their father had had some degree of influence over their development as individuals, as well as leaders, during the early stages of their lives. Ichiro's father ran a small local business and said, "When I was growing up, I really looked up to my dad. He was always out in the evenings for business engagements, or away playing golf on the weekends. But he would invite me along to company events, and I always felt proud that he was my dad - even though it was just a very small company he ran." Taro's father was the president of a ten-person manufacturing business, and commented on what he learned from observing his father at work: "I saw that as a shacho (president), you can't run away from anything. I saw my dad dealing with lots of challenges, and never running away from them. He would always face things head-on. He usually had a very short temper, but when he was dealing with customers he would always be very calm, and hold his tongue." Hiro described his father, who was an executive at a public Japanese company, as "A big role model," adding that "Over time, he has become a successful person in this field of professional salarymen. I look up to him because he tends to accomplish big things, but gets there by doing the little things one at a time. The little things all add up to something in the end."

It was clear from our interview discussions, therefore, that relationships with senior role models – family as well as non-family related – had played a pivotal role in shaping participants' perspectives and influencing their decisions during their Adolescent and Emerging Adulthood years, in many cases

changing the course of their lives.

D）International experience living outside Japan for one year or more from Childhood to Early Adulthood

11 out of 25 global leaders in our interview group had experienced living in a foreign country outside Japan for at least one year by the end of Adolescence. By the end of Emerging Adulthood, 20 out of 25 had gained similar experience of living outside Japan, and by Early Adulthood, 21 out of 25 individuals had done so – either through being deployed on international assignments by their employers, or in order to study post-graduate degrees at overseas universities. It is also noteworthy that out of the 25 people in our interview group, 24 people worked in job roles where they were regularly collaborating with global stakeholders during the first ten years of their career.

Interviewees who spent a year or more living outside Japan during the early part of their life spoke about the profound impact their experience had on them. Hide recalled his experience of moving to the US for his father's job when he was 15 years old: "The first 6 months of high school were very tough. I couldn't understand what anyone was saying, and no one knew who I was. I was one of only 6 Japanese out of 2,400 students. I lost all my confidence and my sense of identity, and just wanted to go back to Japan. But after a year, I realized you have to be proactive in order to adapt to new cultures, and that unless you ask for help, no one will ever help you. My English started to improve, and people started to recognize me. I regained my confidence, and my identity. At first, I had hated being unique, but now I enjoyed it. I learned that when you face a new challenge you cannot just wait. You have to take action, and find a way. You have to believe in yourself, and stand up for what you believe." Hiro spent several years growing up in the US between the ages of 11 to 14, and reported, "Living in the US made me more flexible. You have nothing to lose if you try to communicate, and everything to lose if you don't. I figured out that if you just try your best, things will work out in the end. And to be more mindful of similarities than differences. Growing up, I could only see the differences." Kei's family moved to Germany with his father's job when he was in elementary school. He commented, "My time in Germany broadened my perspective. When I was 12, I decided to become a diplomat. I thought it would be cool to represent your country. My desire to do something global was directly connected to my experience growing up in Germany."

It is worth mentioning that 23 out of 25 leaders in our group reported they had developed a strong interest in the world outside Japan by the end of their adolescent years through their personal interests or activities in which they were involved, with 20 individuals experiencing at least some short-term international travel during Childhood and Adolescence, even if they had not yet lived internationally for an extended period of time. For many interviewees, therefore, the decision to move overseas was a culmination of a developed interest in the world outside Japan that had accumulated over the course of several years previously.

E）Actively setting and striving towards clear aspirational goals from Adolescence to Early Adulthood

Interviewees in our group described distinct experiences of developing, setting, and striving to achieve clear aspirational goals for themselves by Adolescence (21/25), Emerging Adulthood (23/25), and Early Adulthood (25/25). Aspirational goals discussed by interviewees included: "To experience and to touch all the colours, shapes, and smells out there in the world" (Taro); "To become the coolest guitar player in school" (Daisuke); "To meet people from different countries around the world" (Tatsuya); "To get on the honours roll board at school" (Katsu); "To earn enough money for myself and my parents" (Jun); "To create a world where kids don't need to live in poverty" (Emi); "To create a new identity for myself" (Akio); "To become an international business person" (Takeru); "To ensure the survival of the junior high school track & field team" (Ryota); "To become a fighter pilot" (Ayumu); and "To become the coolest city mayor in Japan" (Takashi).

For our interviewees, these aspirational goals became a powerful driver for actively seeking to gain new life experiences they believed would propel them forward in their desired direction. These experiences would go on to open up important opportunities for new learning and reflection, through which they would develop the confidence and the conviction necessary for making independent and often bold decisions that would often result in altering the course of their lives – in many cases, despite contradictory expectations or advice from the people around them. For example, Jun dropped out of university after his first year without telling his parents, having made up his mind that his goal was to start earning enough money to support himself and his family as soon as possible. He worked three different jobs in parallel for a year – as a cram school teacher, a security guard, and a convenience store clerk – sleeping 3 hours a day, before ultimately deciding to go back to university one year later, having experienced first-hand the challenges of building the successful career he wanted without a degree. He eventually graduated from one of Japan's top universities, and was accepted onto an international management training program with a global European company. Ichiro was a self-described junior high school dropout living in a small town in Chiba prefecture when he was 14, when a week-long trip to L.A. inspired him to set himself a goal of "becoming someone whom people would see as a success in the US." He started to study English intensively, and convinced his parents to allow him to attend an international school in Tokyo, and then a high school in California – even though it meant they needed to take out a loan to support his overseas education. He needed to work long hours in part-time manual jobs while studying in order to pay for rent and tuition, which even resulted in him being hospitalized for fatigue while attending community college. Several years later, he would graduate from an American university, and develop a successful career working with some of the world's most respected US technology companies. In his final year of high school, Ayumu decided he wanted to become a fighter pilot and applied for the defence academy without informing his parents, who had expected him to go to university like his older brother. He was accepted by the academy and joined later on that year, even though his mother "cried every day" until his departure. While he didn't end up achieving his goal of becoming a fighter pilot, he persevered through four years of the academy's tough training program, towards the end of which he developed another aspiration to

become an international business leader, and left the military after graduating in order to study for an MBA in the US. He went on to become a successful business executive, holding roles for global companies in Japan, Singapore, and Australia during the first half of his professional career.

In each case of these cases, the aspirational goals which each individual created for themselves not only set them on a new and clear direction in life, but also became a powerful source of tenacity and resilience that would enable them to persevere through, endure, and eventually overcome significant challenges and hardship along the way. For many of the leaders in our group, the early habit of setting and striving towards clear goals had clearly become integral to the way they approached life in general. Ichiro said, "I strongly believe that once you decide what you want to do, you just have to go for it and do your best. It is so important not to just run away." Hiro said, "Anyone can achieve what I've done. You just have to commit to your goal, work hard, and have passion for what you do. Everyone has the potential to do this – but some people just see the things that get in the way, and start complaining. The complaints may be valid – but where's complaining going to get you?" Similarly, Daisuke reported, "If you really want something, you have to figure out how to bend the world to get it for yourself. When I'm determined enough, I will find a way to get to any goal. If it's possible, I will get it done." Kota said, "Ever since my early years, I continuously adjusted my goals, and my goals became clearer as I learned more about the real world. I have always planned ahead, at least 5 years out."

F）Actively participating in extracurricular activities during Emerging Adulthood
24 out of 25 global leaders in our interview group reported a high degree of involvement in extracurricular（non-academic）activities as university students during Emerging Adulthood, with only 4 saying they prioritized their academic studies over other areas of their life during this time. Participants engaged in a wide range of activities that involved interacting with, building relationships with, and in some cases coordinating various different types of people – experience which many connected to their development as global leaders later on in life. The scope of extra-curricular activities that interview participants discussed included planning and embarking on extensive international backpacking trips, working as a night club bouncer, teaching classes to high school students, setting up a graphic design business, playing in a jazz band at restaurants and clubs, being a Japan representative for international non-governmental organizations, being a leader in the college yacht club, and organizing inter-college social groups for students.

Masa said, "I was in the seminar group for protein and malaria research. But I also played in a band, organized events, and became a DJ. After finishing my degree, I then studied design at the same university, and founded a fashion company. There's simply no way I could have survived my professional career without the experience I gained during my university years." Akane reported, "During my first year at university, I became the representative for a peace NPO. I created various programs, organized camp activities, raised funds, developed promotions, worked with international politicians, and even had to deal with accidents and crises. Through this experience, I was able to connect with working members of society, and became more confident and independent. Looking back,

this created the foundation for my career." Ryota joined the university yacht club during his first year as a student and said, "I spent 50% of my first 3 years living with 25 other guys in the boathouse, and was either sailing yachts on the water or maintaining boats on the beach. 80% of my university memories are from the yacht club! In my third year I was nominated as Captain of the Sea, responsible for leading the boat on the ocean. Since then I have always connected sailing with business. Once you set sail, even if conditions are tough, you won't achieve anything by complaining about it. You have to find a way to navigate through. Captaining a boat is like being a company president. You always have to look after your people, no matter what happens."

Emi joined an international Model United Nations club during her first year of university and said, "Students across the world would play the role of diplomats representing their different countries. We discussed rules for world trade, climate change etc. and organized many committees, conferences, debates, speeches, resolutions, and votes etc. Ten students were selected from Japan to join a UN conference in New York. I went twice, the second time as the Japan team leader. The experience impacted my career decisions and helped me learn how to engage with people, organize things, and to communicate with people outside of Japan."

G）Actively gaining a diverse range of professional experiences during Early Adulthood
All 25 interviewees gained a diverse range of professional experience during the first ten years of their careers as Early Adults. This included 16 people who changed companies at least once during this period, 15 people who studied for an international MBA, and 17 people who experienced an overseas company assignment.

Many participants made a succession of career changes during their early adulthood years in order to develop new skills and capabilities. Kota spent his university years working in a Japanese restaurant in New York. He returned to Japan after graduating from university and worked as a construction site manager for 6 months. He then worked as a bilingual assistant for the president of a major sports brand, which gave him "an amazing perspective" of how organizations work. After 3.5 years, he had decided he wanted to gain experience in marketing, and so moved to a marketing role with a US company in Japan for 2 years, following which he decided to study for his MBA in the US in order to develop his commercial knowledge and acumen. Hikaru described a similar trajectory during the first ten years of his career. He joined a top Japanese trading company which sent him to Mexico for 12 months during his second year with the firm. However, he became bored, and upon his return to Japan the following year, decided to leave and join a Japanese movie production company as he loved films. He enjoyed his experience there, but after two years, realized he needed to improve his business skills, and so accepted an offer to join an international management trainee program with an American manufacturing company. Kei also joined a large Japanese trading company after graduating from university, as he wanted to gain global business experience. However, he was assigned to the human resources department, and when he learned he would need to work in HR for the next 5-10 years, left within two years to join a consulting firm where he could gain experience working with various

international clients across multiple different industries, while strengthening his business acumen and learning English. After 4 years with the firm, he joined an American consumer products company where the primary language was English, to gain experience working with a larger global business.

Other participants such as Akane and Sayaka were able to gain diverse professional experience while working with one company during the first ten years of their careers. After graduating from university, Akane joined a global Japanese company where she spent her first two years in corporate affairs. She then worked as the president's secretary for 3 years, after which she studied for an MBA in Europe. She was then transferred to the company's media business in the US for two years, following which she was moved to Scandinavia for a year in a role with their joint-venture telecommunications business. Sayaka joined a Japanese manufacturer as a new graduate, and was rotated through various different roles in nationwide sales, marketing, supply chain, and distribution for her first 6 years, before being assigned to a cross-functional role with a newly-formed task-force mandated with converting consumer insights into new company products for three years. The division had a significant budget, was directly overseen by the company president, and the experience was "like creating a new business within the company." During her tenth year with the organization, she decided to study for her international MBA in order to deepen her understanding of international business – after which she decided to leave and join a foreign capital company in Japan, to build her career as a global business person.

Big Five Personality Test

We anonymously collected Big Five Personality Test (BFPT) data on a voluntary basis from 22 out of 25 interviewees. Given that personality considerations are outside the direct scope of our study, this data was collected as a supplementary reference point to search for any potential patterns in personality characteristics among the group. A summary of the personality test data is shown in Table 3, which demonstrates some clear tendencies when compared to the average global population scores made public on the online survey website[2].

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2) https://www.truity.com/test/big-five-personality-test

Table 3. Big Five Personality Test Results

Responses	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
1	69	52	87.5	67	2
2	96	71	81	62.5	10
3	83	62.5	42	83	37.5
4	75	75	48	77	40
5	79	94	77	56	19
6	67	71	75	71	46
7	100	83	37.5	83	0
8	83	54	56	71	23
9	75	85	83	67	0
10	83	44	69	73	42
11	67	50	83	65	8
12	87.5	65	71	69	31
13	81	69	67	75	27
14	58	85	62.5	54	23
15	71	54	62.5	42	48
16	77	67	94	81	17
17	85	60	69	81	42
18	58	85	73	56	19
19	73	48	71	69	12.5
20	94	71	52	54	58
21	65	67	48	52	21
22	79	71	52	77	29
	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Average Participant Scores	78	67	66	68	25
Average Population Scores	58	55	51	63	54
Difference vs. average	20	12	15	5	-29

21 out of 22 participants scored lower than the average population for neuroticism, indicating a high level of resilience and less of a tendency to experience "difficult" feelings such as anger, sadness, anxiety, and self-consciousness than others. 20 out of 22 scored above average for "openness," which describes an individual's tendency to think in complex and abstract ways. 18 out of 22 scored higher than the average population for "extraversion" (i.e. Being outgoing, energetic, and friendly by nature), and 17 out of 22 were more "conscientious" than the average population, indicating a tendency to be more persistent and determined when pursuing their goals than others. Lastly, scores for agreeableness (being concerned with getting along with others, as opposed to serving their own interests) were more mixed, with 15 out of 22 showing scores that were higher than average.

Discussion

Based on the common themes of early life experience identified among our 25 interview participants, we developed the seven propositions below as potential determinants of global leader role emergence later on during adulthood:

Proposition 1: Active participation in sports and other organized group activities during Childhood and Adolescence contributes to emergence as a global leader.
Our results showed a clear correlation between active participation in sports and other organized

group activities during Childhood and Adolescence, and emergence as a global leader in adulthood. This is consistent with a substantial body of literature supporting the benefits of sports and other organized activities for youth leader development (Atwater et al., 1999; Murphy, 2011; Bartone et al., 2007; Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Reitan & Stenberg, 2019), with participation in youth sports programs being associated with higher rates of initiative, emotional regulation, and teamwork (Larson et al., 2006). Some studies have proposed involvement in organized youth activities as a predictor of future leader development (Bartone et al., 2007; Reitan & Stenberg, 2019), with higher levels of involvement associated with more positive leadership outcomes (Reitan & Stenberg, 2019; Mahoney et al., 2006; Linver et al., 1999).

Other organized youth activities such as choirs, musical bands, theatre groups, and scouts, have been shown to provide opportunities for exposure to adult role models and observing and recognizing effective and ineffective adult leaders (Ruhm, 1992), as well as learning and practicing leadership skills (Dobosz & Beaty, 1999; Karagianni & Jude Montgomery, 2018; Hancock, Dyk, & Jones, 2012; Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Ruhm, 1992). A longitudinal study by Reitan & Stenberg (2019) based on data from the Project Metropolitan showed that active participation in scouts or sports clubs had a clear and positive association with leadership emergence in both childhood and early adulthood – with a particularly strong association for scouting.

Additionally, the direct influence which our interviewees described of youth sports and other organized activities on their development as leaders in adulthood is similar to findings by previous studies. Chelladurai (2011) suggested that skills developed through youth sports such as visioning, self-efficacy, competitiveness, task and ego-orientation, and enjoyment of flow experience are transferrable to leadership situations later in life. Atwater et al. (2009) positively associated participation in youth sports with effectiveness in adulthood leadership roles overall.

In the specific context of global leader development: many interviewees described activities such as sports and music as being a "universal language" which enabled them to quickly win trust and acceptance among new peers, and to make new friends without being able to speak the local language, having moved overseas. The personal skills and competence they were able to develop through these early experiences may have been helpful for them when encountering similar situations later on as adults – for example, when building new relationships with people from different cultures and backgrounds in the workplace.

Proposition 2: Experience actively creating new social relationships and networks with different types of people during Childhood and Adolescence contributes to emergence as a global leader.
20 out of 25 individuals in our interview group gained distinctive experience developing new social relationships and networks with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during Childhood and Adolescence. The process of learning how to build and nurture new friendships and relationships is a well-established aspect of psychological and social development for all children and adolescents (Brown, 2004; Cairns et al., 1995). Social skills – the ability to express oneself in social interactions, to "read"

and understand different social situations, knowledge of social roles, norms, and scripts, interpersonal problem-solving skills, and social role-playing skills（Riggio & Reichard, 2008）– have been shown to be a key component of socio-emotional development and emotional intelligence（Charbonneau & Nicol, 2002; Lopes et al., 2004）as well as leader development processes and leadership outcomes（Riggio & Lee, 2007; Riggio & Reichard, 2008; Riggio, Riggio, Salinas, & Cole, 2003）.

What is striking about the results from our study is the type of people with whom individuals in our group developed relationships as children and teenagers – i.e. with people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds that were new to them at the time – as well as the high frequency with which they did so. As such, their experience differs significantly from most other children and adolescents growing up in Japan, who progress through a highly centralized elementary, junior high, and high school system largely within their local area of residence（Tsuneyoshi, 2017）. It is usual, therefore, for youths to be surrounded by the same social relationships, networks, and communities throughout the entirety of their formative years, with relatively few opportunities to encounter and build relationships with new types of people from different backgrounds.

Research shows us that social skills and their related interpersonal and leadership competencies can only be learned, developed, and improved through actual experience and practice（Mumford et al., 2000）. The greater one accumulates experience and practice, the more one enhances social competence over time（Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2012; Murphy & Johnson, 2011）. Previous studies have found that adolescents who gain more "practice" building diverse interpersonal relationships in a wide range of situations have more opportunities to develop and hone their social skills than their peers（Benson, 2007; Fredricks et al., 2006）. Extensive research also documents the connections between sociability, socio-emotional competency, and communication competency with emergence in leadership roles（Bass & Bass, 2008）, with emotional and social intelligence suggested as necessary precursors to becoming an effective leader in a conceptual model of youth leadership development（Murphy, 2011）.

It can be suggested that the experiences of actively developing new social relationships and networks with a diversity of people from different social and cultural backgrounds during Childhood and Adolescence – as described by the 20 individuals in our sample group – became foundational relationship building and social skills "practice" that accelerated the development of their interpersonal competencies, which in turn contributed to their emergence in global leadership roles later on – roles which required the ability to constantly establish and develop relationships with multiple new global stakeholders from around the world.

When it comes to the personality side of relationship building, the trait most associated with a high level of social skills in the Five-Factor Model（McCrae & Costa, 1987）is extraversion（Judge et al., 2002）. Extraverts are highly sociable – they like people and large groups or gatherings, and are assertive, active, and talkative（Costa & McCrae, 1989）. Research shows that while personality traits are initially inherited from parents at birth, they are also mutable and evolve, change, and develop over time,

influenced by multiple variables – in particular, experience and environmental factors (Caspi, 1998; Plomin & DeFries, 1985). Studies suggest that children who are more approaching of new people, experiences, environments, and situations are likely to tend towards extravert-like behaviour in adolescence (Windle, 2013; Caspi & Silva, 1995; Guerin et al., 2011), and thereby likely to gain more opportunities for practicing and developing their social skills as they transition from adolescence into adulthood (Guerin et al., 2011). Extraversion has been shown to be the most important trait of effective leaders (Judge et al., 2002), and as the strongest correlate of transformational leadership in the Five-Factor Model (Bono & Judge, 2004), with extraverts more likely to be perceived as effective leaders by others (Riggio & Reichard, 2008).

Among our interview participants, 18 out of 22 scored more highly in extraversion than the average population, with a mean extraversion rating of 66 compared with 51 for the average population. While we are not able to establish, through this present study, whether their early life experiences of social interaction contributed to the development of their extraverted personality traits, or whether their original tendency towards extraversion led them to seek this social interaction in the first place, these results are in line with previous research into personality and leadership development, which has associated extraversion with emergence in leadership roles (Judge et al., 2002). Findings from our study are supported by longitudinal research based on the ongoing Fullerton Longitudinal Study (Gottfried, 1985). Investigating the developmental roots of leadership potential using longitudinal data spanning three decades, Guerin et al. (2011) found that children who are more approaching of new people, places, and experiences tend to become adolescents who are more extraverted. As adults, these individuals evidence greater social skills, and are more likely to emerge as leaders. Additionally, the authors suggest that children who may naturally tend towards introversion could benefit from interventions which allow them to experience more social interaction during adolescence, helping them to develop the necessary skills for leadership roles in the future.

Proposition 3: Experience actively developing connections with role model figures during Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood contributes to emergence as a global leader.
Almost all (24 out of 25) individuals in our sample group talked about relationships they had developed with specific seniors or adults during Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood, and described the positive and enduring influence which they had had on their personal development, their sense of confidence and self-identity, their understanding and perspective of the world, and their future direction in life.

The critical role played by role models in youths' leadership development is well-documented in the literature (Astin, 1997; Campbell et al., 2012; Dugan & Komives, 2007; McNeill, 2010). Although our understanding of the process through which this development occurs is still limited (Bowers et al., 2016), it has been suggested that, as adolescents are still in the process of solidifying their self-identities, role models such as parents, teachers, peers, or a great figure in history, can significantly impact this formation process (Bell, 1970).

Adult role models have been shown to provide youth with a safe place for reflection where they can

make meaning of their experiences, in addition to the affirmation and support necessary for growing in self-confidence as they shape their identities as individuals as well as leaders（Komives et al., 2006）. Furthermore, Bandura's（1977）social learning theory suggests that the indirect influence of adult role models in the socialization process can be a more effective driver of behaviour change for individuals during the formative years of adolescence than authority figures who directly tell them what they should or should not do. The two types of role models that have been most highlighted in the literature in the context of youth leadership are psychosocial – those who instil a sense of competence, foster healthy identity development, or provide guidance towards achievement in some capacity（Bowers, Rosch, & Collier, 2016）, and career – those who provide vocational or job skills coaching（Daloz, 2012; Kram, 1985; Flouri & Buchanan, 2002）. Both types of role models were cited by the global leaders in our group as important figures for them during their transition from Adolescence into Emerging Adulthood.

Our interviewees also reported that the presence of role models helped them to envisage the kind of person they wanted to become, or wanted to avoid becoming, in the future – as such, serving as important points of reference for the kind of life they would lead if they were to follow in their footsteps. This is consistent with previous studies, which suggest that exposure to senior role models can provide children and adolescents with an image of what leadership looks like（Garcia et al., 2017）. This can allow them to start discerning between effective and non-effective adult leaders（Ruhm, 1992）, while observing weaknesses in certain role models can become "a learning opportunity"（Bowers, Rosch, & Collier, 2016, p.11）.

Many of the individuals in our group talked about the influence of their fathers as early life role models. This is consistent with previous research suggesting that parents play a major role in the development of children（Wade & Tavris, 2008）as well as in early life leader development, by serving as models of leadership themselves（Popper & Mayseless, 2003）. It has been posited that parents influence children by the leader behaviours and experiences they encourage in them（Avolio et al., 2014）, with certain parenting behaviours and practices impacting on their children's leader development later on in life（Kasser et al., 2002）. As such, it is likely that many of the global leaders in our group were influenced by parental as well as non-parental role models during the early stages of their lives.

Van Linden and Fertman（1998）call for more adults to work with adolescents as facilitators of youth leadership development, to help enhance self-awareness, communication effectiveness, and interpersonal competencies – while Inzer & Crawford（2005）suggest a key role for formal and informal mentoring in the development of youth leaders. Similarly, the findings from this study also support the positive benefits which role models can have on the development of future global leaders.

Proposition 4: Gaining experience living internationally for one year or more from Childhood through to Early Adulthood contributes to emergence as a global leader.
The 21 global leaders in our group who experienced living internationally outside Japan for one year or more during their childhood, adolescent, emerging adulthood, or early adulthood years all described

the experience as having a profound and enduring personal impact on them, influencing how they saw themselves and others, how they perceived and interacted with the world and people around them, and how they responded to new situations and challenges. For many, the experience was clearly a difficult and challenging one to begin with, but went on to become a rewarding and positive turning point in their lives, and a key factor behind their decision to pursue global careers later on.

Recent studies exploring the developmental pathways of global leaders suggest Childhood and Adolescence as critical life stages during which some of the foundational skills and characteristics essential to effectiveness as a global leader can be developed (Burrus, 2006; Cho, 2009; Lam & Selmer, 2004). Most importantly, this includes the development of a global mindset and related intercultural competence – the "ability to influence individuals, groups, organizations, and systems that have different intellectual, social, and psychological knowledge or intelligence from your own" (Cohen, 2010, p. 3) – through direct experience of the nuances of behaviour expected in other cultures compared to one's own, in addition to how one's own cultural values and assumptions compare with those of others (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009). Nurturing a global mindset and intercultural competence early on in life has been shown to predispose individuals for cross-cultural global leadership roles in adulthood (Cho, 2009; Lam & Selmer, 2004).

Individuals who experience this type of global exposure during their formative years (i.e. before the age of 18) have come to be defined in the literature as Adult Third Culture Kids, or "ATCKs" (Lam & Selmer, 2004). Lifespan research into ATCKs (Burrus, 2006; Cottrell and Useem, 1994; Cho, 2009; Lam and Selmer, 2004; Van Reken, 2009; Bousch, 2009) suggests that their unique childhood and adolescent experiences help to nurture a global mindset (Lam & Selmer, 2004; Cho, 2009). Studies posit that ATCKs cultivate a variety of characteristics including adaptability, intercultural literacy, open-mindedness, and a multicultural identity (Moore & Barker, 2012), as well as comfort with change, inner confidence, and strong self-reliance (Van Reken, 2009) as a result of their cross-cultural experiences while growing up. Similar developmental experiences were self-reported by interviewees in our sample group when describing the impact which living overseas had on them during the early stages of their lives.

It has also been suggested that ATCKs are more likely to actively seek out international work assignments, and to be motivated to lead cross-culturally than individuals who grew up in "unicultures" (Boush, 2009; Stokke, 2013). Again, the results of this study show similar findings, with 24 out of 25 individuals working in globally-oriented job roles where they regularly collaborated with international stakeholders during their emerging adulthood years.

It is noteworthy that among our group of 25 global leaders, while 20 had experienced at least some short-term international travel by the time they were 18 years old, and 23 reported they had developed a strong interest in the world outside Japan by this time, only 11 had actually experienced living outside Japan for one year or more by the end of Adolescence, thereby matching the required criteria for an ATCK. Other study participants gained their one year of international experience later

on during Emerging Adulthood（9）and Early Adulthood（3）. This suggests that the international exposure experienced by almost half **(12)** of our interviewees during Emerging and Early Adulthood life windows may have had a similar influence on their development to that which international exposure is said to play in the developmental journey of ATKCs during the earlier life windows of Childhood and Adolescence.

Proposition 5: Experience actively setting and striving towards clear aspirational goals from Adolescence to Early Adulthood contributes to emergence as a global leader.

The experience of creating and then striving towards clear aspirational life goals became an invaluable process of ongoing learning, self-reflection, and development for all 25 global leaders in our interview group during their adolescent, emerging adulthood, and early adulthood years. In each case, the pursuit of their personal goals turned into a journey of self-discovery, exposing them to new types of people, situations, opportunities, challenges, and experiences through which they were able to learn new skills, develop new capabilities, grow in confidence, and build new perspectives. Goal setting became a key habit for success, which they would continue to apply through their development as business leaders later on.

Regulatory focus theory（Higgins, 1997）tells us there are two different methods of self-regulation that drive movement towards desired end-states（i.e. goals）: approach（promotion）or avoid（prevention）. Each regulatory focus has different consequences when it comes to perception, decision making, and emotions, as well as individual behaviour and performance. When one actively approaches a specific goal, or takes a "promotion focus", he or she attempts to advance or develop towards an ideal. By contrast, when one avoids a specific goal, or takes a "prevention focus," he or she is more concerned with protecting the status quo. Promotion goals represent the "ideal self" and include hopes, wishes, and aspirations, whereas prevention goals represent the "ought self" and include duties, obligations, and responsibilities. Individuals who take a promotion focus are more aspirational, and therefore more likely to achieve greater accomplishments through their goal-attaining desires. On the other hand, those who take a prevention focus may perform their duties effectively, but do not strive towards achieving a higher level of success（Lapidot, Kark, & Shamir, 2007）. Kark & Van Dijk（2007）suggest that individuals who develop a promotion focus are more likely to emerge as transformational or charismatic leaders, and that by contrast, individuals who develop a prevention focus are most likely to adopt a transactional or monitoring leadership style.

Studies suggest that the development of a specific self-regulatory focus is influenced from the early stages of life, initially through interactions experienced with parents（Manian et al., 2006）. Children whose parents encourage them to attempt challenging tasks and to engineer opportunities for success are shown to develop a promotion focus, while children who experience parents who are overly concerned about their safety, and attempt to instil responsibility while criticising mistakes, are shown to develop a prevention focus（Manian et al., 2006）. In order to develop the next generation of leaders, Avolio & Vogelgesang（2012）recommend instilling the idea of a promotion focus within children and adolescents

in order to increase the likelihood of aspirational goal-setting, and of taking on challenging leadership roles even if they may result in failure – with the experience of failure itself being a critical part of the leader development process.

It seems clear that all 25 global leaders in our interview group developed a strong promotion focus (as opposed to a prevention focus) by setting clear aspirational goals for themselves during the early life stages of their lives – a key habit for success which they continued to demonstrate into their professional careers as adults. It is also noteworthy that almost all interviewees (23 out of 25) recalled that their parents encouraged them to gain new experiences and try out new activities during their childhood – which may have helped them to develop a promotion focus from the early stages of their lives.

Proposition 6: Experience actively participating in extracurricular activities during Emerging Adulthood contributes to emergence as a global leader.

Almost all of the global leaders in our interview group (24 out of 25) actively pursued extracurricular activities during their university years in Emerging Adulthood, with only a small minority (4 out of 25) reporting they focused their time primarily on their academic studies during this period. Participants described various ways in which they were able to develop as a result of their experience, including greater self-confidence, an enhanced understanding of business and society, improved communication and relationship building skills, a clearer sense of self-identity, and a higher level of clarity around professional and career aspirations. This is consistent with other research suggesting Emerging Adulthood as a critical period of psychosocial development during which individuals experience enhanced social interactions that help them to define their self-concept (Kegan, 1982, 1994), explore their social status (LaFontana & Cillessen, 2010), and hone their ability to function among peer groups (Lansu & Cillessen, 2012). Similarly, previous studies have also shown involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, student organizations, and part-time jobs to be an essential aspect of the social learning process for emerging adults, with greater participation associated with higher psychosocial development and educational as well as occupational aspirations (Marsh, 1992; Larson, 1994).

Involvement in extracurricular activities has also been shown to support early leader development, as they provide scenarios for developing leadership potential through utilizing leadership-related skills in real-world situations (Murphy, 2011; Sternberg, 2011). Such scenarios can serve as meaningful involvement experiences for students, and as opportunities to cultivate leadership readiness and develop leadership identity through the clarification of personal values and interests, the development of new skills, and learning more deeply about themselves as well as their diverse peers (Komives et al., 2005). Various positive leadership related outcomes have been associated with participation in extracurricular youth activities including higher self-esteem, feelings of control, and higher achievement aspirations (Holland & Andre, 1987; Larson, 1994). Young people who participate in extracurricular activities have a higher likelihood of emerging into adult leadership roles overall (Bartone et al., 2007; Reitan & Stenberg, 2019).

Proposition 7: Actively gaining a diverse range of professional experience during Early Adulthood contributes to emergence as a global leader.

All 25 global leaders in our group actively developed a diverse range of professional experience during the first ten years of their careers as early adults – experiences which opened up a myriad of opportunities to work with different types of people, to familiarize themselves with other countries and cultures, to experience new situations and challenges, and to develop new skills, capabilities, and learnings. This is striking, particularly in a Japan context, where "the celebrated lifetime employment system appears to be still well and alive" (Kambayashi & Kato, 2017, p.10), and where graduating university students cite career stability and work life balance as their top priorities when choosing an employer (Nippon.com, 2019). By contrast, our interviewees proactively sought out new experiences during the first decade of their careers, changing companies, requesting international assignments, and choosing to study overseas to ensure they kept on learning, developing, and experiencing as much as possible.

A growing body of literature points to the importance of early career experience and its significant influence in the leader development process (Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2012; Liu et al., 2019; Amit et al., 2009; Benjamin & O'reilly, 2011). McCall et al. (1988) argue that accumulated experience is the most important factor in the development and functioning of leaders in organizations, positing that "The world can only be grasped by action, not by contemplation" (p. 9). Research shows that the experience of dealing with a wide range of challenges at work facilitates the development of strategic, cognitive, and behavioural leadership skills (Day et al., 2009; DeRue & Wellman, 2009; McCall, 2001). Experts suggest that individuals benefit most from developmentally-challenging experiences earlier rather than later on in their careers (Benjamin & O'reilly, 2011), and that managers view their early career experiences as the most informative in creating their self-identity as leaders (Akin, 1994; Kotter, 1988; McCall et al., 1988). Benjamin & O'reilly (2011) conducted a study of early adult leaders and reported one of their most striking findings as "the sheer number and diversity of transitions that our emerging leaders weathered," which included "a variety of situations – beyond role changes – that produced significant transitions in the way they thought about and practiced leadership" (p. 430).

In his book Range, Epstein (2020) suggests that the most successful professionals who rise to the top of their respective disciplines are not specialists, but generalists who accumulate a wide range of experiences early on. These are individuals who are exposed to multiple domains, have diverse interests, and often find their path later in life. Epstein suggests that such leaders are more creative, more agile, and able to make connections which their more specialized peers are not able to see. It seems likely that the global leaders in our group were able to benefit from the wide range of experience which they actively developed during their early adulthood years in a similar way to the successful leaders Epstein describes.

   Conclusion

This study has several important implications related to the early life experiences of global leaders, as

well as global leader development in Japan. First, our findings add to the growing body of literature focusing on "leader development across the lifespan," which posits that leader development is a cumulative process that begins in the early stages of life during Childhood and Adolescence – well before Adulthood, which is where the vast majority of leader development research and related interventions have focused so far (Murphy & Johnson, 2011; Liu et at., 2020). Our study suggests that, while the early lives of global leaders are unique, dynamic, and multi-faceted, there are some key areas of common experience that play a particularly important role in contributing to their emergence into leadership positions later on.

Additionally, the consistencies between the results of our study and other existing international research into leader development suggest that there may be more similarities than differences when it comes to the early life experiences of global leaders in Japan and those in other countries around the world. This is despite Japan's unique cultural context as a highly homogenous and largely monolingual country (Heinrich, 2012) where 98.5% of the population is Japanese (Worldpopulationreview, 2023), and less than 9% speak English (Rakuten Research, 2016). The similarities, as well as contrasts, between the early life experiences of global leaders in Japan and in other countries is an area worthy of further research.

This study also contributes to the notion that, given that 30% of leadership role emergence is hereditary, with the far greater portion being related to experience (Arvey et al., 2006), leadership – including global leadership – is a pathway that is open to anyone, and not just an elite or privileged few. The 25 global leaders in our research group came from a wide range of backgrounds, but all found their individual pathways to global leadership roles as a result of the accumulation and interaction of specific experiences which began during Childhood and Adolescence. Through developing strategic interventions to empower more youth in Japan with the appropriate early life experience, it follows that greater numbers will emerge as global leaders in the future – irrespective of their social background or their start in life. As such, we strongly agree with Avolio & Vogelgesang's (2012) suggestion, "We can start with the assumption that each and every member of our future generation of youth has the opportunity and the ability to make an impact as an effective leader" (p. 253). This would also be one step towards helping to resolve the current "global leadership vacuum" (Maznevski et al., 2013, p. 494) as well as the critical shortage of global leadership talent already being experienced by many companies in Japan (Yonezawa, 2014).

Furthermore, our research also has practical implications and recommendations for the design of global leader development interventions for Japanese youth, as well as for the organizations responsible for implementing such interventions in Japan including schools, universities, and other educational or vocational institutions. These include:

- The strategic inclusion of youth sports and other organized group activities in these programs, given the positive global leader outcomes observed in in our research. This includes, importantly, empowering youth with sports, music, or other group activity-related skills that can serve as a

"universal language" when building new friendships and communities in foreign countries. In cases where the necessary resources do not exist within the institution, possibilities for initiating partnerships with local youth sports clubs and other similar associations could be explored.

- Providing opportunities to directly learn and experience other countries and cultures through an extended period of living overseas, in order to nurture the beginnings of a global mindset and its related intercultural competence. While current research suggests that international experience should occur before the age of 18 in order to have the desired results (Burrus, 2006; Cho, 2009; Lam & Selmer, 2004), the outcomes of our study imply that individuals can gain similar developmental benefits through gaining this exposure later on, during the windows of Emerging and Early Adulthood.

- On a related note, designing programs which encourage children and adolescents to discover and actively deepen a genuine personal interest in the world outside Japan prior to living overseas may help to prepare them for being able to gain the most out of their international experience - as was the case for many of the participants in our study. This is particularly noteworthy in a Japan context, where opportunities to gain direct experience living in a foreign country are limited for most people until their university years or later on.

- Greater involvement of adults and/or more experienced seniors as role models in youth global leader development programs. While role models existed in non-formal contexts for our study participants, the positive influence which they had on their early life development – particularly during the transition from Adolescence through Emerging Adulthood – is consistent with previous research supporting the benefits of structured and formalized role modelling or mentoring programs for young people (Dugan, & Komives, 2012). This could be of particular importance in Japan, where youth mentoring and role modelling programs are still in their infancy when compared with most Western countries (Watanabe, 2022).

- Including initiatives to foster a strong goal orientation and promotion focus among children and adolescents from early on, to help nurture an ongoing habit of setting and striving towards clear personal goals – which can be carried on into their university and professional careers as young adults.

- Providing opportunities for building new connections and forging new friendships with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For the participants in our study, this experience functioned as foundational "practice" through which they were able to develop the social and interpersonal skills necessary for success in global leadership roles as adults. Such exposure could be particularly important for children and adolescents who are naturally shy or introverted, and thereby less likely to actively seek this kind of experience for themselves.

Our study also bears significant implications for Japanese companies seeking to develop their next generation of global leaders as they expand their businesses and organizations into international markets. Our research highlights certain areas of early life experience that play a particularly important role in global leader emergence, which can readily be evaluated and quantified during interview processes when hiring individuals for global leadership positions, or when assessing existing

employees for their potential to assume global leadership roles within the organization. Furthermore, insights from this study can be utilized when designing experience-based global leader development interventions for employees, and to customize these programs to cater to their specific individual needs and areas of growth, based on an assessment of their past experience – or lack thereof – during the formative stages of their lives thus far.

Lastly, this study provides meaningful insights for Japanese children, adolescents, and emerging adults aspiring to become global leaders in the future – along with implications for their parents. The results shed light on some areas of early life experience that could profoundly influence their successful development and emergence as global leaders in Adulthood. These experiences are not confined to a select few, but are available and accessible to anyone. As such, our research sends an important message that every young person in Japan has the potential to become a future global leader, if they choose to pursue such an aspiration.

Our study is subject to several limitations, which warrant acknowledgement. First, our research data was collected through in-person interviews that relied on participants' subjective recollection of past experiences and events, which may introduce recall bias. While efforts were made to minimise this bias through the utilization of a semi-structured interview format, comprehensive probing of experiences during in-person interviews, and by ensuring participants were not made aware of the study's developing propositions, it was not possible to completely eliminate this effect. In future research, adopting a longitudinal approach to track early life experiences over time, and establishing connections between these experiences and subsequent leadership outcomes, would be an ideal strategy to address this limitation.

It is also important to note that our research focused on one particular subset of Japanese global leaders, namely general managers affiliated with foreign capital companies in Japan. Consequently, the insights generated from our study may be contextually bound to this specific population of leaders. To gain a more holistic understanding of Japanese global leader development and the factors influencing their emergence, further investigation encompassing leaders from different fields and sectors would be recommended.

Additionally, our study focused on examining experience, and we were not able to account for genetic, psychological or cognitive moderating factors such as personality or intelligence. While we took Big Five Personality Test measures for almost all of our interview participants, we were not able to establish causality between personality data and leadership outcomes – including whether experience had shaped personality over time, or the other way around. Existing research has indicated correlations between genetics (De Neve et al., 2013; Polderman et al., 2015), certain personality traits (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002), and cognitive ability (Judge & Long, 2012) and emergence into leadership roles in adulthood. Longitudinal studies integrating regular measures for genetics, personality, and cognitive ability would help to shed further light on the interplay that takes place between internal and external

factors during the early life development of global leaders.

Another limitation of this study is that we were unable to account for how gender impacts on global leader emergence in Japan. Out of our 25 interview participants, only 3 were female leaders. We would have liked to include more female participants in our research in order to gain more meaningful insight into how gender differences may influence early life experience and global leadership outcomes in Japan. We recommend this as one area of high priority for future research.

Lastly, our study focused on investigating the early lives of global leaders, from Preschool through to Early Adulthood. We did not include participants' experiences from the age of 35 onwards. Most individuals in our group held their first Japan General Manager role during their late 30's or early 40's. While it is widely agreed in the literature that the greater part of leader development takes place during the earlier stages of life – when aspects such as behaviour, personality, and skills are more malleable and readily developed than in adulthood（Arnett, 2000; Murphy & Johnson, 2011）, we recognize that leader development is a lifelong journey, and that there may be important aspects of this journey which we were not able to account for in our study. Further research into the nature of global leader development that takes place later on in life, from Adulthood onwards, is therefore recommended.

Leadership commentators across all sectors have been citing an urgent need for the development of more global leaders for many years. This is particularly true in the field of business, where we face an ongoing "global leadership vacuum"（Maznevski et al., 2013, p. 494）in a world that is becoming increasingly complex, dynamic, and interconnected. Japan is confronted with a particularly urgent need to develop the next generation of global leaders due to a unique convergence of socio-economic, cultural, and demographic factors. For many Japanese companies, this will be nothing less than a matter of survival. Our study focuses on investigating a specific category of Japanese global leaders that – to the best of our knowledge – has not been the subject of previous academic research. Our results suggest that there are some critical areas of early life experience which play a particularly important role in the development of global Japanese leaders, and which may be pivotal to their successful emergence into global leadership roles as adults. By offering perspectives into early life experience as determinants of global leader emergence, we hope to accelerate much-needed dialogue and idea exchange among scholars, and educational and business leaders, and the parents of young individuals who aspire to be active on the global stage in the future. We also hope that our study will encourage others to investigate the multi-faceted roots of global leadership in Japan more deeply and comprehensively. In doing so, they will surely help to instil more confidence and ambition among young people in Japan from all walks of life, inspiring them to pursue their own unique paths as global leaders in the future.

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Appendix

Table 4.　Summary of Categorized Data from 25 Global Leader Interviews (full version)

Column headers (people): O's, Hiro, Rei, Akane, Yohei, Taro, Takashi, Sayaka, Tatsuya, Ayumu, Jun, Daisuke, Hide, Emi, Hikaru, Ichiro, Katsu, Ken, Ryota, Akio, Daiki, Masa, Manabu, Takeru, Kota

Active participation in competitive sports and other organized activities during Childhood & Adolescence

WINDOW	EXPERIENTIAL CATEGORY	O's
B	Had a broad range of interests/curiosity about a wide range of topics during Childhood	22
B	Actively and regularly participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during elementary school	23
C	Actively participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during junior high school years	23
C	Actively participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during high school years	22
D	Actively participated in competitive sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during university years	7
B	Experienced being captain or vice captain of a team or a club during Childhood	11
C	Experienced being captain or vice captain of a team or a club during Adolescence	10
D	Experienced being captain or vice captain of a team or a club during Emerging Adulthood	4
B	Experienced gaining self-confidence through participating in sports/other organized activities during Childhood and Adolescence	20
C	Describes participation in sports/other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during their youth as being critical to their early development as a leader	23
C	Was more focused on sports and other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) than academics during Adolescence	8
C	Balanced both academic studies as well as sports and other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during Adolescence	15
C	Clearly prioritized academic studies over sports and other organized activities (music, scouts etc.) during Adolescence	2

Experience living internationally outside Japan for one year or more from Preschool to Early Adulthood

WINDOW	EXPERIENTIAL CATEGORY	O's
A	Lived internationally outside Japan for one year or more during pre-school years	3
A	Attended international preschool in Japan	1
B	Attended elementary school internationally outside Japan for one year or more	5
B	Attended international elementary school in Japan	1
B	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more by the time of elementary school graduation	5
C	Attended junior high school internationally outside Japan for one year or more	4
C	Attended international junior high school in Japan	2
C	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more by the time of junior high school graduation	8
C	Attended high school internationally outside Japan for one year or more	6
C	Attended international high school in Japan	2
C	Had lived outside Japan for one year or more by the time of high school graduation	11
C	Attended local high school in Japan, and participated in short-term international student exchange programs	7
C	Experienced at least some short-term international travel (school or family/personal-related) from Childhood to Adolescence	20
D	Gained direct experience of the world outside Japan from Emerging Adult years onwards only	3
D	Studied for undergraduate degree at an international university outside Japan	5
D	Studied for undergraduate degree in Japan, and participated in a one-year overseas student exchange program	4
D	Studied for undergraduate degree in Japan and experienced participating in international projects/internships/other organized global programs	5
D	Studied for undergraduate degree in Japan and spent time travelling internationally during university years	11
D	Had gained at least some direct experience of the world outside Japan through travelling or living internationally by the time of university graduation	24
D	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more from Pre-School through to Emerging Adulthood	20
E	Studied for a post-graduate qualification (MBA etc.) at an international university outside Japan	15
E	Experienced an overseas work assignment of one year or more during Early Adulthood	17
E	Had experienced living outside Japan for one year or more by Early Adulthood	23

Experience actively creating diverse new social relationships and networks

WINDOW	EXPERIENTIAL CATEGORY	O's
B	Transferred to school in a new location, or to a new type of school, in Japan at least once (i.e. a "Tenkosei") during Childhood	5
C	Transferred to school in a new location, or to a new type of school, at least once in Japan during Adolescence	6
B	Transferred schools internationally during Childhood	5
C	Transferred schools internationally during Adolescence	10
B-C	Transferred schools internationally during Childhood and/or Adolescence	11
B-C	Transferred to school in a new location, or to a new type of school, either in Japan or internationally during Childhood or Adolescence	16
D	Transferred to a university in completely new location, either domestically or internationally, during Emerging Adulthood	13
B	Experienced building new social networks and connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during childhood years	15
C	Experienced building new social networks and connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during adolescent years	17
B-C	Did not transfer to schools in new location/new type of school, but did experience building new social networks/connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during Childhood and/or Adolescence	4
B-C	Experienced building new social networks and connections with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during Childhood and/or Adolescence	20
D	Gained experience building new social networks and connections from scratch with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds during university	21

Experience actively developing connections with senior role models from Adolescence to Emerging Adulthood

WINDOW	EXPERIENTIAL CATEGORY	O's
A-B	Grew up around the influence of a wide and tight-knit adult family network (Grandparents, uncles/aunts etc.) during childhood	17
B	Father/close family member was a company executive/senior manager/small business owner, grew up aware of those business relationships and networks	20
A	Experienced frequent interactions with / exposure to influential working adults / working society (family / non-family) during Childhood	17
B	Experienced frequent interactions with / exposure to influential working adults / working society (family / non-family) during Childhood years	16
C	Developed relationships/connections with influential senior or adult role model figures during Adolescence (junior high school / high school)	17
D	Developed relationships/connections with influential senior or adult role model figures during university years	21
C-D	Had relationships/connections/with influential senior or adult role model figures during Adolescence and/or Emerging Adulthood	24

Table 4. Summary of Categorized Data from 25 Global Leader Interviews (full version) continued

WINDOW / EXPERIENTIAL CATEGORY	O x
Experience developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals from Adolescence to Early Adulthood	
C — Experienced developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals during Adolescence.	21
D — Experienced developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals during Emerging Adulthood	23
E — Experienced developing, setting, and striving towards clear aspirational goals during Early Adulthood	25
Experience actively pursuing extracurricular activities during Emerging Adulthood	
D — Focused primarily on academic studies while at university	4
B — Actively and intensively pursued extra-curricular activities at university (outside of academic study)	24
D — Gained experience leading or coordinating people or groups of people through extra-curricular activities at a university	21
E — Actively participated in music activities (musical band, orchestra etc.) during university years	4
Actively gained a wide of range of professional experience during Early Adulthood	
E — Was highly active in life outside professional career / the workplace (E.g. Hobbies, sports, NGOs etc.)	9
E — Changed companies at least once during Early Adulthood	16
E — Experienced an overseas work assignment for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	17
E — Studied for an international postgraduate degree or qualification for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	15
E — Studied for international postgraduate qualification and/or experienced an overseas assignment for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	21
E — Changed companies at least once and/or experienced overseas work assignment/studied for international post-graduate qualification for 1 year or more during Early Adulthood	25
School education and leadership development	
B — Participated in elementary school-related clubs / circles	8
B — Gained leadership or "people coordination" experience at elementary school	9
B — Nominated as "seito kaicho" (class captain) or "gakkyuucho" (year captain) during elementary school	7
C — Play role as "seito kaicho" (class captain) or "gakkyuucho" (year captain) during junior high school	5
C — Play role as "seito kaicho" (class captain) or "gakkyuucho" (year captain) during high school	2
Academic ability & performance / grades at school	
B — Was seen by others as being of above-average intelligence / academically gifted at school during Childhood	12
B — Was a "hhaxsa" (elite top-grade student) during elementary school	10
C — Was a "hhaxsa" (elite top-grade student) during junior high school	7
C — Was a "hhaxsa" (elite top-grade student) during high school	7
B — Recalls getting mediocre (neither top nor bottom) grades at elementary school	12
C — Recalls getting mediocre (neither top nor bottom) grades at junior high school	10
C — Recalls getting mediocre (neither top nor bottom) grades at high school	11
C — Started to study significantly harder from end of junior high school / early high school onwards	7
Parental influence	
B — Parents encouraged participation in a wide range of extra-curricular group activities (sports/other) during Childhood	23
B — Grew up in an "affluent" / "privileged" environment during Childhood	11
B — Grew up in an "underprivileged" household environment during Childhood	1
B — Grew up in an "average" household environment during Childhood	13
C — Father or close family member worked for a company as a senior executive or senior leader	15
C — Father or close family member was a business founder / small business owner	5
Sibling order	
B — Older of two siblings	8
B — Eldest of three (or more) siblings	3
B — Younger of two siblings	7
B — Youngest of three siblings	3
B — Middle of three siblings	2
B — Only child	2
Career development	
E — Started career at Japanese company in Japan	15
E — Started career at foreign capital company in Japan	10
E — Started career doing something very different to what they are doing now	23
E — MBA was sponsored by company	7
Educational background	
A — Spent pre-school overseas	3
A — Attended international preschool / international elementary school in Japan	1
B — Attended elementary school overseas	4
B — Attended public elementary school in Japan	21
B — Attended private elementary school in Japan	0
C — Attended junior high school in Japan	20
C — Attended international junior high school in Japan	2
C — Attended junior high school overseas	4
C — Attended local high school in Japan	15
C — Attended international high school in Japan	2
C — Attended high school overseas	6
D — Graduated from university (undergraduate degree) in Japan	20
D — Attended top flight (equiv. Ivy League) university in Japan	14
D — Gained undergraduate degree from overseas university outside Japan	5
E — Attended MA / MBA program at an international university during first ten years of career.	15

Participant columns (left to right): Hiro, Rei, Akane, Yohei, Taro, Takashi, Sayaka, Tatsuya, Ayumu, Jun, Daisuke, Hide, Emi, Hikaru, Ichiro, Katsu, Ken, Ryota, Akio, Daiki, Kei, Masa, Manabu, Takeru, Kota — each cell marked O or X.