

Attendance at JALT Conferences: An Exploratory Survey

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Borg (2016) found that attendance at ELT conferences improves teaching practice, provides opportunities for networking, and improves teacher confidence. This research project contends that in line with JALT's mission "to promote excellence in language learning, teaching, and research by providing opportunities for those involved in language education to meet, share, and collaborate," JALT conferences should be accessible to its members. This paper will discuss the results of an online survey conducted in 2018 which primarily examined the demographics of who goes to JALT conferences and who does not. This survey was undertaken in response to previous research findings that some membership demographics are highly underrepresented at JALT chapter meetings (McCandie, 2018). Demographic data on conference attendance is a necessary step in extending the scope and ascertaining representation at conferences. Demographics in the survey include sex, first language, age, job status, and membership status. The analysis provides insight to suggest ways JALT can adapt and develop to become a more diverse and inclusive association.

Introduction

Conference attendance improves teaching practice, provides opportunities for networking, and improves teacher confidence (Borg, 2016). It also provides tremendous career development opportunities (Mata et al., 2010). The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) mission statement declares that JALT's goal is "to promote excellence in language learning, teaching, and research by providing opportunities for those involved in language education to meet, share, and collaborate" (JALT, n.d). To achieve this stated goal, JALT should foster opportunities for all members to attend conferences. Furthermore, conferences are also beneficial for the organization itself. They have the potential to raise the profile of the organization, foster networks within and beyond the organization,

provide academic legitimacy, and generate operating revenue.

This research, conducted in 2018, used an exploratory survey (see Appendix A) to gather information about who does and does not attend JALT conferences with the aim of identifying issues regarding conference attendance and accessibility. The objective of the survey was thus to identify needs and gaps in conference attendance, knowledge of which could be useful for honing JALT's relevance and outreach. This survey may also provide information to help more teachers access conferences. Generating data from which to make decisions about increasing conference attendance is more reliable than relying on simple intuition about underrepresented groups. The results give insight into correlations between conference attendance and sex, first language, job status, funding, and JALT membership, and they provide a foundation for making recommendations to improve conference participation.

Since the survey was conducted, COVID-19 has turned the world of conferences upside down. In 2020 and 2021, both the annual JALT International Conference and JALT PanSIG Conference were held online. Online conferences have, perhaps temporarily, replaced in-person conferences. Whether or not the conference model will change permanently to adapt to changed expectations and newly accessible technology remains to be seen. For many, online conferences have meant better access to professional development (Rommel, 2021), more so for those previously unable to attend (Woolston, 2020) due to the financial burden and other difficulties such as childcare and visa-related issues (Olena, 2020).

We embarked on this project expecting certain groups, particularly women, Japanese, and non-full-time teachers, would be underrepresented at conferences; however, in previous research, there were no data to substantiate this assumption. This study thus aimed to quantify the extent to which this hypothesis was borne out. At the least, this survey is a snapshot of what JALT conferences were like

pre-COVID. Despite the changes brought by COVID, these findings still provide insight into improvements needed to address accessibility to professional development, networking, teacher collaboration, and research opportunities for all JALT members.

Overview of 2018 Membership Demographics

The survey was conducted in 2018 and utilized membership data from the same year, which were provided by the JALT Head Office. JALT's data were reviewed to understand the demographic makeup of JALT at the time the survey was conducted. The data also provide a guide to ascertain the extent to which the demographics of the survey respondents mirrored the actual demographics of JALT. According to the 2018 data (see Table 1), almost 70% of JALT members are non-Japanese, and 30% are Japanese. The makeup of non-Japanese is unclear as JALT data do not differentiate nationality or first language within this group. A majority of JALT members, approximately 59%, are men, while 41% are women. For at least the past decade, based on Head Office membership figures, non-Japanese men and Japanese women have been the two largest groups within the organization. Based on 2014 data, for example, non-Japanese men made up 47%, Japanese women comprised 24%, Japanese men 11%, and non-Japanese women 18% (Appleby, 2014). While the percentage of Japanese and non-Japanese women is now almost balanced, membership rates for Japanese, for both women and men, are declining at a higher rate than the membership rates of non-Japanese.

2018	Total (2483)	Percentage of Members
Non-Japanese men	1219	49%
Non-Japanese women	493	20%
Japanese men	243	10%
Japanese women	528	21%

Table 1. 2018 Membership Demographics

Method

Research to establish who does and does not attend JALT conferences was conducted in May of 2018 using a bilingual Google Forms survey. A

survey was chosen as the appropriate methodology as it collected data that did not previously exist. The data can inform decision-making about increasing conference attendance. Participants for the research primarily accessed the survey via English-teaching websites. A link to the survey was posted on numerous JALT SIG and Chapter Facebook pages and was shared on personal Facebook and Twitter accounts by both JALT and non-JALT members. This resulted in snowballing as participants shared the survey link beyond the researchers' networks. Because the research question interrogated both who does and who does not attend conferences, social media was more suitable than a survey conducted at a conference because it is able to reach those who do not attend. Although attendance at JALT conferences is the subject of the research, the survey was not restricted to JALT members. The rationale for this is that we also wanted to include people who may be interested in becoming JALT members, those who have been JALT members in the past, as well as teachers who could be JALT members but have made a conscious decision not to join. The survey was anonymous, although participants were given the option of including their email address if they were interested in participating in future research.

Respondents were screened with questions to ensure that they were English teachers in Japan. The first section asked for demographic information: age, sex, first language/s, job status, teaching environment, level of research budget if any, and whether the respondent was a JALT member. The second section divided respondents into four mutually exclusive groups: JALT conference attendees, former JALT conference attendees, aspiring JALT conference attendees, and JALT conference non-attendees. In the third section, respondents were given different questions based on their answer in part two and were asked why they did or did not attend JALT conferences. This paper focuses on parts one and two, examining the demographics of those who do and do not attend.

After the survey, adjustments were made to the question about job status to provide more accurate and complete answers. The survey asked respondents to identify their primary job status from the categories of full-time permanent, full-time contract, part-time, or casual. During the analysis stage, it became apparent that these categories do

not adequately account for school owners. Twenty-two people who answered “full-time” also identified themselves as school owners, a large enough group to be its own category. In addition, because a number of school owners identified as full-time teachers, it combined the full-time self-employed with full-time employed and resulted in patterns being obscured in the data, particularly with regard to conference attendance and access to funding. Full-time teachers employed by an institution generally have employer support to attend conferences, whereas school owners are more likely to fund their own conference attendance and may also be paying for someone to cover their classes. As a result, we decided to re-categorize the work status of “school owner” participants. All respondents who identified as school owners had their job status re-classified from these categories to a newly created category of “school owner.”

A further point to note about the survey is that, unlike JALT, this survey used sex, not gender, as means of self-identification.

Participants

When the survey was closed, there were 302 confirmed participants. Similar to the demographics of JALT shown in Table 1, 43% of survey participants were non-Japanese males, and 17% were Japanese females. However, only 3% of survey respondents were Japanese males, and 37% identified as non-Japanese females. In other words, fewer Japanese men and more foreign women answered the survey relative to the JALT membership data. The disproportionate percentages raise questions about how to distribute surveys so as to ensure representative coverage of the target groups.

	Total (302)	Percentage of Participants
Japanese male	8	3%
Japanese female	50	17%
Japanese non-binary	0	0%
Non-Japanese male	129	43%
Non-Japanese female	112	37%
Non-Japanese non-binary	3	1%

Table 2. Survey Participants

Results: Conference Attendance

Sixty-eight percent of people who responded to the survey have attended a JALT conference; this includes 20% who responded that they no longer attend. More than 30% have not attended JALT conferences, including 10% who do not want to.

	I attend	I want to attend but haven't	Used to attend	I haven't been and don't want to go
Total (302)	48%	22%	20%	10%

Table 3. Do You Attend JALT Conferences?

Results: Sex

Conference attendance patterns varied by sex. More women answered the survey, but proportionally, fewer attend conferences. Only 39% of female respondents attend conferences, twenty percentage points fewer than their male counterparts. There was also a wide gap between men and women who answered that they would like to attend a conference but have not yet done so. One-third of women who responded want to attend conferences but haven't; this compared to 10% of men. In contrast, there was little difference between the responses of men and women to the options of “I used to attend JALT conferences but no longer do” and “I have not attended JALT conferences and don't want to.” There were three respondents who identified their sex as “other.” One replied that they used to attend JALT conferences but no longer do. Another has not been and doesn't want to go, and the third had not been but would like to go. The three respondents have been omitted from Table 4 because each was less than 1% in their category.



	I attend	I want to attend but haven't	Used to attend	I haven't been and don't want to go
Female (162)	39%	33%	19%	9%
Male (137)	60%	10%	21%	9%

Table 4. Sex

Results: Language

Respondents were asked to identify as “Japanese first language,” “English first language,” or “neither English nor Japanese first language.” Respondents could select more than one, although none did. In line with JALT’s 2018 data, respondents were not asked to identify their nationality.

Japanese first language speakers are underrepresented in the survey. Only 19% of respondents are Japanese. This is a lower proportion than the 2018 JALT membership, which is 31%. In addition, 20 respondents had a first language which was neither English nor Japanese. Because the JALT 2018 data do not differentiate groups within “non-Japanese,” it is not possible to know the extent to which the survey data reflect the language composition of all JALT members. The survey data show substantial differences in conference attendance by first language. Almost three-quarters of English first language respondents have been to JALT conferences. This compares with just over half of Japanese first language respondents and 45% of “neither English nor Japanese first language” speakers. Representing 21% of their respective totals, English and Japanese first language speakers were equally likely to have stopped attending conferences, while only 5% of those who identify as “neither English nor Japanese first language speakers” reported that they had stopped attending.

Among those who have not been to conferences, there was also a difference by language background. The survey showed that few English first language speakers, only 16%, wanted to go to a conference but had not been. In contrast, the percentage of Japanese and people whose first language is neither English nor Japanese was much

higher, at 40% and 45%, respectively. There was minimal difference between language backgrounds for those who do not want to go to JALT conferences.

	I attend	I want to attend but haven't	Used to attend	I haven't been and don't want to go
English first language (224)	53%	16%	21%	10%
Japanese first language (58)	32%	40%	21%	7%
Neither E/J first language (20)	40%	45%	5%	10%

Table 5. First Language

Results: Job Status

Difference in job status revealed differences in conference attendance patterns. The group with the highest proportion of conference attendees, at 59%, are employed in full-time, permanent positions. This group also had the smallest proportion of people, 11%, who want to go to a JALT conference but have not been. Although there may be an anecdotal perception that people stop attending JALT conferences once they get a tenured position, the survey results did not show this. The relative proportion of people in permanent employment no longer attending JALT conferences was lower than that of those on limited contracts. As expected, there were many non-permanent teachers who want to go to conferences but have not been: limited contract (24%), part-time (23%), and casual (33%). It should be noted that the survey did not ask whether or not teachers’ contracts had renewal limits. Although relatively few in number, school owners were notable for the fact that almost all either go to conferences or want to go to conferences.

	I attend JALT conferences	I haven't attended any JALT conferences and don't want to	I used to attend conferences but don't now	I want to attend but haven't
Casual (6)	33%	17%	17%	33%
FT Perm/tenure (105)	59%	7%	23%	11%
Limited contract (111)	47%	13%	16%	24%
PT (57)	37%	12%	28%	23%
School owner (22)	32%	5%	5%	59%

Table 6. Job Status

Results: Funding

There is a strong correlation between funding and conference attendance. Sixty-eight percent of respondents who receive funding attend JALT conferences. In contrast, only 29% of those who receive no funding attend. The percentage of people attending conferences increases with each bracket of funding. At the upper level of funding, 300,000 yen or more, almost three-quarters of people attend.

The probable influence of funding on conference attendance is also evident when comparing those who want to attend but have not yet done so.

Thirty-four percent of those with no funding would like to attend conferences. In contrast, among respondents with a research budget of 200,000 yen or more, only 5% responded that they have not been but would like to go. At the same time, however, these relatively well-funded respondents were also more likely to answer that they used to go to JALT conferences but no longer do. Lack of interest in attending a JALT conference was greatest among those who receive no funding.

	I attend	I want to attend but haven't	Used to attend	I haven't been and don't want to go
Receive no funding (134)	29%	34%	22%	14%
Receive some funding (148)	68%	9%	18%	5%
Funding (22) ¥1-99,9999	64%	23%	9%	5%
Funding (26) ¥100,000-199,999	65%	23%	8%	4%
Funding (38) ¥200,000-299,999	65%	5%	21%	5%
Funding (62) ¥300,000+	71%	0	23%	6%
Unsure (19)	31%	47%	11%	11%

Table 7. Funding Demographics

Results: Organization Memberships

Respondents were asked whether they were a member of any of three Japan-based English teachers' associations: JALT, JACET, and ETJ. Respondents could check all that applied. Almost two-thirds of survey respondents were JALT members, and more than half of them also belong to JACET or ETJ. The purpose of the question was to see if there was a correlation between being a member of JALT and attending JALT conferences. As shown in Table 7, there was a very high correlation between membership and attendance. However, conference attendance was not affected by whether a person belonged to another English teaching organization. Another notable point is that JALT members are interested in conferences; only 3% of JALT members replied that they have not been to and are not interested in attending JALT conferences.

	I attend	I want to attend but haven't	Used to attend	I haven't been and don't want to go
Member of JALT only (82)	74%	5%	17%	4%
Member of JALT and another organization (99)	74%	6%	18%	1%
Not a JALT member (120)	9%	48%	23%	20%

Table 8. Organization Memberships

Discussion

The survey results have provided demographic information about who does and does not go to JALT conferences and contain comparisons with JALT's limited demographic data. As expected, women, Japanese first language speakers, and people who are not full-time teachers are underrepresented at conferences. These results raise

questions about JALT itself as an organization and about how to develop vibrant inclusive conferences within a thriving organization. Conference attendance is not the only way to participate in an academic organization; however, it is one of the main benefits of membership. In addition to learning from watching presentations, participants who give presentations also benefit from employment gains due to publication opportunities in conference proceedings. Moreover, conferences provide opportunities to develop transferable skills, become involved in networking, and meet possible research partners. The discussion below is premised on the belief that conference attendance is good for the organization, for its members, and for teachers in general; as such, increasing conference attendance should be a priority of the organization. The following paragraphs outline areas for discussion to achieve this end.

The results of the survey show that there is potential for increasing the number and diversity of attendees at JALT conferences. Even though all respondents are teaching in English or teaching English, fewer than half attend JALT conferences. Among those who do not attend, approximately one-fifth used to go but no longer do, and about the same number have not been but would like to go. This indicates strongly that there is untapped potential for increasing the number of people attending JALT conferences. In addition to gathering conference data from attendees, which has become a practice within JALT, learning more about the people who do not attend may help increase attendance.

In addition, the responses show a wide gap between male and female conference attendance. Sixty percent of men who responded to the survey answered that they attend JALT conferences. In contrast, 39% of the women who responded report attending. This gap is also evident in the responses to whether a respondent would like to attend a JALT conference but have not. There is a twenty percentage point gap between men and women. This gap merits further investigation to determine correlating factors such as job status, JALT membership, and access to research funds. In addition, further analysis is needed to determine whether men and women have different reasons for attending or not attending conferences.

Much has been written about the struggles of balancing motherhood and academia (Aiston & Jung, 2015; Goncalves, 2019), including in the Japanese context (McCandie, 2021; Yoshida & Uchida, 2020). Issues such as lack of childcare at conferences have been widely discussed by JALT's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and Executive Board Members. Follow-up qualitative research would help to develop a more nuanced understanding of the reasons for attendance or non-attendance. Why is the gap between men's and women's participation so great? Are there measures JALT can take to address this gender disparity at conferences and the seemingly passive membership of women?

The survey results also show that Japanese people are underrepresented at JALT conferences. Forty percent of Japanese respondents said they have not been to a conference but would like to go. In addition to this finding, research points to broader questions about the participation of Japanese in JALT. The 2014 membership data for JALT showed that 34% of the membership is Japanese. By 2018, this proportion had fallen to 31%. According to JALT's website, the organization has a policy of being "open to all teachers, professionals, and students interested in language education no matter what their nationality, where they were teaching, working, or studying, or what language they were teaching" (JALT, n.d.). To demonstrate commitment to this, JALT should give more attention to its Japanese membership. It seems an area ripe for research. Is JALT interested in increasing Japanese membership, and if yes, what strategies can be developed? Why do relatively few Japanese people attend JALT conferences?

In addition to the relatively few Japanese JALT members and low rates of Japanese people attending JALT conferences, there is a further issue in the survey regarding the lack of Japanese respondents. Even though the survey was bilingual, only 19% of respondents were Japanese. However, the survey results do not indicate whether the reason there were fewer responses from Japanese people was that fewer saw the survey or that fewer of those who saw the survey responded. In addition, the lack of Japanese respondents raises questions about the study's methodology, specifically whether distributing a survey on JALT-related social media is

an adequate way to reach Japanese English teachers.

Although JALT has access to members' email addresses whereas researchers do not, social media platforms are one of the main ways that JALT distributes information about events and conferences. As such, lack of engagement with the survey may be a problem that goes beyond this survey. If the low rate of responses is because Japanese people didn't see the postings, the effectiveness of communicating with Japanese members and potential members via social media may need to be reconsidered in favour of more effective methods.

JALT is making efforts, for example in post-conference surveys, to gain more information about the ways in which people access information. Nonetheless, the low number of Japanese members remains a concern since the organization values inclusivity and has a mission to provide opportunities to members. Japanese are over-represented in the group that want to go to conferences but have not been. How do members usually get information about JALT events, including conferences? What else can be done to ensure that members and potential members have appropriate information about events?

Unsurprisingly, the results show that access to funding correlates with attending conferences. The higher the funding bracket, the more likely a person is to attend a conference. Only 29% of people with no funding attend JALT conferences. This compares to 68% of those who do have access to funding. Furthermore, gender is an issue regarding access to funding; women who answered the survey are much less likely to have funding to attend conferences. Fifty-five percent of the women who responded to the conference do not receive conference funding compared with 39% of men. Notably, 16 of the 19 people who were unsure whether they had funding were women. A possible reason for this is that women may lack workplace networks that would make this information more accessible.

JALT provides some grant opportunities for attending conferences to those who do not have funding. For example, many chapters and SIGs, such as the TD, LD and CUE SIGS, have their own grants to help with conference attendance. Despite this, there are still people who want to go to conferences but have not been. The reasons for this disparity

need further exploration.

In Japan, as in the rest of the world, there is a growing gap in the education sector based on job status. This gap is reflected in the survey, with job status strongly correlated with conference attendance. The survey showed that full-time teachers are more likely to have attended conferences. Almost a quarter of part-time and limited-contract teachers had not been to a JALT conference, even though they wanted to. This compares with just 11% of full-time teachers. Only three full-time university teachers responded that they wanted to attend JALT conferences but had not. Teachers employed in tenured positions have job stability and are not on a periodic cycle of having to apply for new jobs. Even though job status strongly correlates with conference attendance, it should be noted that the survey findings cannot be interpreted to mean that full-time status enables attendance at conferences. Survey respondents who were full-time were also older than other groups of teachers, and being further advanced in their career might make it more likely that they have already been to conferences. Furthermore, attending conferences was likely to have been a factor in full-time teachers gaining full-time employment. To what extent is JALT aware of the job status inequity with regard to conference attendance? Are there any steps being taken to mitigate the effects of this inequity? Can more be done?

A striking point of the survey results is the high proportion of people who are not JALT members but want to go to a JALT conference. This suggests there is an untapped pool of potential members who would like to participate in conferences. This should be a point of reflection for JALT. One issue may be the cost of membership vis-a-vis the benefits of being a member. In addition, because this survey shows a correlation between membership and conference attendance, it raises the possibility that increasing membership may also increase conference attendance. What is the relationship between conference attendance and JALT membership? Why do non-members want to attend JALT conferences? To what extent does JALT target non-members for conference attendance?

The survey also raises questions about the demographic categories that JALT uses. This survey asked about first language/s, giving three language options: English, Japanese, and neither English nor

Japanese. The answers were not mutually exclusive though no respondents gave more than one answer. Even though this survey has focused on teachers teaching English, JALT is an organization for all language teachers in Japan. Providing an opportunity for people who are not Japanese or English language first language speakers to identify themselves helps to get a broader sense of language teaching in Japan. It also provides a rudimentary opportunity to create awareness and support for teachers who are not English or Japanese first language speakers.

A single category for non-Japanese renders the non-Japanese, non-English first language members invisible in the organization. Research shows that first-language speakers of languages other than Japanese or English have more barriers to advancing their career (Holliday, 2013; Rivers, 2013; Matikainen, 2019). In addition, this survey did not include nationality or racial demographics. Omitting these categories also resulted in a survey that overlooks the challenges faced by teachers from both outer and expanding circles (Kachru, 1992) and teachers who are racial minorities. Racial minorities face even more marginalization (Gerald, 2020; Kobayashi, 2014; Kobayashi, 2011; Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Mahboob et al., 2004). Collecting more demographic data is a starting point, but within JALT, how can the organization better include and serve the needs of members who are ethnic or language minorities in the organization?

Raising these discussion points provides an opportunity to reflect on JALT and JALT conference attendance. In addition to furthering the discussion about increasing conference attendance, this consideration might help to increase the inclusiveness and vibrancy of the English teaching community in Japan. Below, we outline our recommendations to address the issues outlined in this section.

Recommendations

It is easy to find fault and concerns within any large organization regarding the need for equity and social justice. JALT is attempting measures to achieve equity. It offers research grants to JALT members and assistance with writing abstracts via workshops and its writers' peer support group. It recently started mentoring programs and professional development support through Zoom.

There are, however, areas that could be improved. Listed below are changes that could be made within the organization to help provide better support and address the needs of underrepresented groups.

1. Try to increase conference attendance, both inside and outside the membership. Of the 128 respondents who are not JALT members, 48% expressed interest in attending conferences but had not. From this survey, there are significant numbers of teachers who are not members of JALT but are interested in the professional development or networking offered by JALT conferences. Attracting non-members to conferences also has the added benefit of potentially increasing the membership.
2. Provide a centralized, easy-to-access part of the JALT website where all JALT conferences are listed. A hyperlinked table with dates, call for papers, early-bird rates, and whether or not there are subsidies or grants available, and if so, for whom and under what conditions, would help create awareness about events and may increase attendance. Steps have already been made towards this objective.
3. Collect the demographic information of the membership and conference participants. In particular, gender/sex, job status, first language (English, Japanese, other, and an option to fill in other languages). In the sex section, three respondents answered "other," but JALT data does not always include a non-binary option. It should. JALT also does not include first language and race, areas that affect career advancement in ELT. Since completing this survey and presenting the results at the JALT International and PanSIG conferences, as well as speaking to senior figures in JALT, it is apparent that greater effort is being made to collect demographic information on the membership. Knowing who the members are is necessary for catering for their needs. For example, it is important to investigate the effectiveness of the ways in which information to the membership is being disseminated, particularly to Japanese members. A question as part of JALT membership renewal on the preferred medium of correspondence may give information about the most effective methods.
4. Conduct research, or facilitate research, into Japanese first language speakers' attitudes and experiences of professional development and JALT. By doing so, JALT can better understand why the proportion of Japanese members who have stopped attending conferences is disproportionately high and why Japanese membership numbers are decreasing faster than non-Japanese.
5. Since the proportion of women who want to attend conferences but have not is relatively high, there should be more research specifically into women's participation in conferences and the factors that may make it easier for them to attend. One step is to provide childcare, which the organization has already made some efforts to do. How effective is this? Are there other measures that would help increase the participation of women?
6. Promote funding opportunities. Lack of knowledge about access to funding was a surprising finding of the survey. Currently, some SIGs and chapters offer financial support to members for conferences by way of grants, but JALT itself only supports research grants. Consideration could be given to providing grants for participating in conferences. While the Grant Committee continues to promote their research grants, more thought should be given to creating awareness among members that there is financial support available to those in need.
7. Encourage senior member participation. Although conference attendance is highest among full-time teachers, full-time teachers also tend to stop attending conferences. Encouraging a narrative of "paying back into JALT" among experienced teachers, particularly through mentorship, is likely to build the organization and conference attendance. In addition to facilitating opportunities for mentees, peer support among mentors may also foster a "pay back

into JALT mindset.

8. Innovate. JALT has experimented with giving discounted or free rates to local teachers for conferences, such as PANSIG 2018. There is scope for other initiatives:
 - a. issuing presenters with invitation cards that would give conference discounts to friends or colleagues;
 - b. providing SIGs and Chapters with discount vouchers for conference fees or expenses that have some limitations such as only for first-time attendees or people with no or limited research budgets; and
 - c. offering a discount on first-time JALT membership for non-member volunteers at conferences.
9. Continue related survey research. For the benefit of researchers conducting similar research in the future, we recommend noting the following points to assist with survey design:
 - a. divide JALT's "non-Japanese" category to gain a better understanding of first language(s) and non-Japanese, non-English first language teachers;
 - b. consider including race and nationality as categories in recognition of that fact that non-white, non-Japanese teachers may face additional employment obstacles in Japan, including accessing conferences;
 - c. distinguish between contracted teachers with and without limits on contract renewals; and
 - d. create a discrete category for school owners in job status because "full-time" does not adequately describe their situation.

Conclusion

Attending JALT conferences affords attendees many benefits such as professional development, networking, and career opportunities. These opportunities, however, are not accessible to all JALT members due to various factors that have been addressed. JALT is an organization built on the backs of volunteers, and appreciation should be shown to those who help organize and run these conferences and the organization as a whole. For improvement,

there is more that could be done, or done differently, to ensure greater equity and access to all the benefits a JALT membership provides, including conferences. We have provided information about the demographics of JALT conferences and highlighted issues about the lack of demographic information being collected and utilized by JALT. We have discussed the needs and reasons for change, and finally, suggestions were made with regard to these needs. It is our hope that this article not only increases awareness about inequity in conference attendance, but also provides concrete ideas for action and change within the organization. We hope that these recommendations will help JALT to live up to its mission statement of promoting "excellence in language learning, teaching, and research by providing opportunities for those involved in language education to meet, share, and collaborate" (JALT, n.d). We also hope that it can spark innovation about how to achieve this worthy goal.

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Author Bios

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Appendix

Conference attendance of English teachers.

英語教師の会議への参加について*

1. Required

We are collecting information from teachers who currently teach English or in English in Japan. From this survey we want to understand why people do or do not attend academic conferences. We also want to learn about why people present at academic conferences and whether there are factors that discourage people from presenting. All information is confidential and anonymous. Do you agree to complete this survey?

この調査は現在日本で英語を教えている方、または英語で教えている方を対象に情報収集をしております。この調査で人々が学術会議に参加する/しない理由を知るとともに、学術会議でプレゼンテーションをする理由・プレゼンテーションするを妨げる要因があるのかを調べております。すべての情報は極秘で匿名です。この調査に回答することに同意しますか？

Yes/はい No/いいえ

2. Are you involved in English education in Japan?

現在あなたは、日本での英語教育の関係者ですか

Yes/はい No/いいえ

3. Do you teach English or teach in English?

日本で英語を教えていますか、または、英語で教えますか

Yes/はい No/いいえ

4. What is your sex? 性別を教えてください。

Male/男性

Female/女性

Other/その他

5. How old are you? 年齢を教えてください。

< 26

26-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45-49

50-54

55-59

60+

6. What best describes your language background?

あなたの言語環境についてどれが最も当てはまりますか？*Tick all that apply.

I am an English native speaker/英語が母語である

I am a Japanese native speaker/日本語が母語である

I am neither an English nor a Japanese native speaker 母語は英語でも日本語でもない

7. Are you a member of any of the following Japan based language organizations? 日本を拠点とした次のいずれかの語学団体に所属していますか？当てはまるものすべてを選んでください。* Tick all that apply.

JALT/全国語学教育学会

JACET/大学英語教育学会

ETJ(English Teachers in Japan)

I am not a member of any of the organizations mentioned above./上記のどの

団体にも所属していない

8. Which environment do you teach in? どの環境で教えていますか？当てはまるものすべてを選んでください。*Tick all that apply.

Elementary school/JHS 小学校 /中学校

HS/高校

Senmon gakko/ Tandai/専門学校 /短期大学

University/大学

Own your own school/自分の学校を持っている

Language school/語学学校

Juku (cram school)/塾 Other/ 他

9. Which best describes your employment status ? あなたの教員としての雇用形態を教えてください。1つの答えを選んでください。

Casual/臨時

Part-time/非常勤

Limited-term contract/任期付き契約

Full-time permanent (Tenured)/終身在職権ありの常勤

10. How long have you have you held your current employment status? どのくらいの間現在の雇用形態で働いていますか？

less than one year/1年未満

1-5 years/1～5年

6-10 years/6～10年

10+ years/10年以上 11.

11. Which best describes your current research funding from your employer/s per year.雇用主から受け取る年間の研究費の助成金について最も当てはまるものを選んでください。

¥0

¥1-100,000

¥100,0001 - 200,000

¥200,001 - 300,000

¥300,000+

I don't know/わからない

12. Which best describes you 最も当てはまるものを選んでください。

I attend JALT conferences.

JALTの大会に参加している

I want to attend JALT conferences but I haven't. JALTの大会に参加したいがしていない

I used to attend JALT conferences but no longer do. 以前は年次JALTの大会・学会に参加していたが、現在はしていない

I haven't been to JALT and don't want to go. JALTの大会参加したことはなく、行きたいと思わない

There may be follow up interviews. Please check if you are willing to be interviewed. 追加でインタビューがある場合、ご協力いただける方はチェックを入れてください。 In order to contact you for the above, we need your email address. My email address メールアドレス If you have any other comments about this research / survey please comment below. この研究や調査に関して他にコメントがあればこちらにお書きください。