



## Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style as Predictors of Empowerment of Assistant Language Teachers in Japan

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### ABSTRACT

The study is about how Empowerment, a crucial concept for all teachers, is influenced by the Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style among Assistant Language Teachers in Japan. A causal and correlational quantitative approach was used to generalize and to find the relationship between the variables. The data from 268 respondents were collected using Google Form and were analyzed using linear regression analysis. The results revealed that though both have significant relationships with Empowerment, the Model of Role Identity has a greater influence on Empowerment than the Behavioral Creativity Style. This showed the importance of Kanter's theory of structural empowerment, in this case where ALTs with a much clearer role and who were not in isolation within the structure were more empowered. This implies that one factor in increasing the empowerment, and thereby the effectiveness, of ALTs, is the need for greater Model of Role Identity.

### INTRODUCTION

The inefficient use of, sense of isolation at the workplace, ambiguities between expected duties and actual roles, (Grady, 2016; Marchesseau, 2014; Ohtani, 2010; Walter & Sponseller, 2020), and the undervaluing and underutilization (Carley, 2013; Johannes, 2012; Allen, 2013) of Assistant Language Teachers are some issues that are experienced by Assistant Language Teachers in Japan. This is due to communication problems, differing approaches to teaching (Johannes, 2012; Ohtani, 2010) teachers' pride, age, academic position as well as differences in the cultures of the Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and (non-Japanese) Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) (Carley, 2013; Nall & Hiratsuka, 2023), all contributing to a lack of empowerment for ALTs.

As the use of ALTs is a key part of efforts (Ohtani, 2010) to improve English language education in Japanese schools (as well as in some other parts of Asia) any impediments to their effectiveness, such as a lack of empowerment, curb the process of developing enhanced English education in Japan. Therefore, in order for anything to improve regarding the above-mentioned problems regarding ALTs in Japan, particularly with regard to their employers, the researcher believes that it is important to more accurately understand the reality of the situation as experienced by the ALTs, especially concerning empowerment, which is one of the keys to being a productive and successful teacher (Balyer *et al.*, 2017).

Let us consider each of the variables (Empowerment, Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style), first separately and then with regard to their relationships. Empowerment is a complex concept that is crucial in teachers' professional aspects. It can be defined as the

opportunity of teachers to participate in school decision making in terms of goals and policies in what they perceive as appropriate and meaningful ways based on their professional expertise or judgment (Balyer *et al.*, 2017).

Additionally, Thomas (2017) asserted that teacher empowerment as a process is important nowadays to bring out the teachers' intrinsic motivation as well as their potential. Similarly, the study of Emery *et al.* (2019) showed that empowerment can be a tool to ameliorate the unwanted effects of perceived differences in contexts. Thomas (2017) postulated that teacher empowerment is self-driven and the contextual culture determines the nature and extent of possible empowerment in each setting. Also, for teacher empowerment to be considered relevant in non-western contexts, it must be adapted to the contextual culture. Furthermore, Amoli and Youran (2014) pointed out that teacher empowerment increases job satisfaction and suggested that teachers must know the differences in their responsibilities and empowerment to efficiently perform their role.

A lack of empowerment is a crucial problem that can limit the effectiveness of educators and it is a factor that is often cited as one of the most problematic by ALTs in Japan (Ohtani, 2010). ALTs have very little actual authority within the career hierarchy, their roles are adjusted based on the expectations of the school and the individual JTEs, and typically JTEs do not consider their ALTs to be their equals (as the "assistant" part of their job title clearly implies) (Mahoney, 2004). Without a greater understanding of the issues faced by ALTs it is difficult for individual ALTs, their employers and their Japanese colleagues to address any areas of their common situations which could benefit from improvement.

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Thus, a greater understanding of empowerment among ALTs in Japan is an important step in gaining insight into problems that hinder the development of English language education in Japan.

Problems specific to communication and poor utilization were stated in the study of Kano *et al.* (2016) where ALTs in elementary schools faced problems connected with communication with the homeroom teachers (HTRs) in charge of English, whereas in junior high schools ALTs reported being dissatisfied with their utilization (or lack of it) and of not being involved enough in lesson planning. This reflects their previous results where ALTs at junior high schools had less responsibility and freedom than those at elementary schools and reported lower levels of satisfaction.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Let's look at the previous studies on how these three variables of teacher Empowerment, Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style can be linked to one another, whilst also introducing the remaining two variables. According to the study of Amoli and Youran (2014), empowerment is a key element for teachers to be effective (and satisfied). For instance, the study of Walter and Sponseller (2020) revealed that to align collective efficacy, the ALT should be allowed more involvement in the teaching-learning process. This is similar to the view of Avidov-Ungar *et al.* (2014) who state that the leadership position of the teacher and their own perception of that position is seemingly related to their level of empowerment. Also, enhancing teachers' performance appraisal increases confidence and efficacy (Mungasia, *et al.*, 2022). While generally the JTEs clearly understood their role in team teaching, ALTs felt otherwise because the ALTs' perceived role depends on the clarity of communication with their JTEs, institutional supervision, and collaborative teaching experience (Sponseller, 2016). Keeping that in mind, Model of Role Identity is another feature that can help explain the success, or otherwise, of educators, and this multifaceted concept is important in both pre-service training and in developing successful teaching approaches (Kaplan & Garner, 2017). Consequently, according to Kaplan and Garner (2017) the Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity is a holistic model that helps to show that theoretical and procedural teacher education is inextricably linked with self-definitions, self-perceptions, purpose and teaching goals: the teacher's professional role identity. Significantly, Collier (2001) defines this as a situation where members of a group reduce conflicting ideas in their role/identity by comparing themselves to other members of that group who believe that the role is real because of its utility in achieving the goals of the group.

Behavioral Creativity Style involves how individuals manage their environment and self-regulate their behavior to create effectively by controlling stimuli (Kumar *et al.*, 1997). It refers to the extent to which the ALTs use discriminative stimuli to be creative. Discriminative

Stimuli not only refer to coffee, tea, and so on but also to the other stakeholders the ALTs work with and the work environment where the ALTs are placed. It may be an environment where they can function well or an environment that limits the activities they can do. Chan and Yuen (2014) expand on this by showing that having both a creative personality and positive beliefs in creativity predicts the fostering of creativity by the teacher and that the more a teacher is involved in creative activities, the more their belief in its efficacy increases. Behavioral creativity style encompasses the various ways individuals express creativity, such as through divergent thinking, risk-taking or innovation. Not having a good working relationship means they can not ask each other for comments or questions (Walter & Sponseller, 2020). Going further, Tripon (2021) believes that being able to innovate and transform is now more important than being able to reason. The ability to learn is a gift and everything around us is a source for learning. In a time of new logic, quickly changing cultures and mental transformations, creativity becomes predominant in achieving professional success, with intuition, behavioral flexibility, intellectual agility, imagination and adaptation all playing key parts. Considering the above, the study is based on Kanter's theory (1993) of structural empowerment: the structure of opportunity and the structure of power (Spence Laschinger *et al.*, 2010). Rosabeth Moss Kanter developed it and it was subsequently applied to nurse empowerment, as well as to other fields. This theory stipulates that individuals in high opportunity jobs take the initiative in solving problems that arise and actively engage in change and innovation, as well as having access to knowledge and information to efficiently do the job, while people in low opportunity jobs display "stuck" behavior.

Now to further consider the relationships between the three variables. Firstly, regarding the connection between Model of Role Identity and Empowerment, it is clear that a strong role identity can: increase self-esteem and self-confidence; enhance motivation and engagement; add to a sense of control and the ability to make decisions; augment both greater social interactions and a willingness to access support networks and help personal goals be in line with organizational goals, increasing motivation and commitment (Orgambidez-Ramos & Borrego-Alés, 2014). All of these contribute to greater empowerment. Next, let us look at Behavioral Creativity Style and Empowerment. Whereas employee empowerment has been regularly found to be a predictor for creativity (Yang *et al.*, 2019; Adeel *et al.*, 2019) the reverse can also be true. Increased Behavioral Creativity Style can lead to greater self-expression, problem-solving, innovation, adaptability and collaboration, all of which contribute to a sense of agency and control (Kim *et al.*, 2023), in effect, empowerment.

Lastly, the links between Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style. A strong Model of Role Identity can lead to increased Behavioral Creativity Style and vice versa. The self-perception of role identity can

foster confidence and motivation, influencing how creatively people approach both tasks and problems (Dollinger *et al.*, 2005). Considering it from the other direction, people with more prominent Behavioral Creativity Styles may adapt their roles to become more fluid and adaptable, may engage more strongly in their roles, developing both stronger identification with their job and contributions to their organization. Also, if they are perceived by others to be creative, this can affect how the person views themselves and their own roles (Craft, 1997).

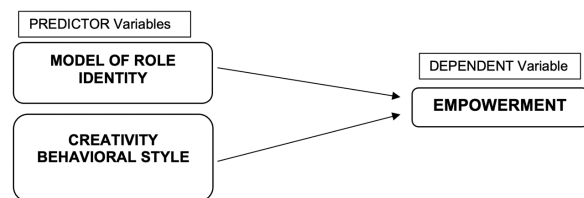
The researcher believes that as applied to this study, Kanter's theory holds that the independent variables, Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style would be expected to influence the dependent variable, Empowerment, because if their role in the structure is clearly emphasized, the Assistant Language Teachers get the opportunity and power to be part of the realization of the goal. However, there should be clearer guidelines that both ALTs and JTEs have access to regarding the role an ALT should take to have a shared understanding on how to approach a lesson (Pearce, 2020). This is also supported by Kelly's Personal Construct Theory (1963) where people make sense of and explore their world and make personal constructs based on the phenomena that they encounter (Reynolds, 2013). Additionally, as cited in the study of Hinshelwood (2018), Kurt Lewin's Field Theory articulates that human behavior is a result of the role of the person and the environment, that is to say that the vectors or the outcomes motivate a person to work toward the goal. By that token, finding the level of empowerment allowed to ALTs and correlating it to Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style might shed light on how to better work around (or within) the system to maximize ALTs' full potential to achieve improved outcomes in the teaching-learning process in the classroom. As mentioned above, the three variables are all interconnected (at least to some degree) and we may expect an increase in one to predict an increase in another, for example a heightened Model of Role Identity or Behavioral Creativity Style might be expected to be related to increased Empowerment.

Subsequently, shown in Figure 1 below, is how the three variables are linked with one another based on the assumptions drawn above, how the Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style influence Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers in Japan. Empowerment as the dependent variable has six categories (Short & Rinehart, 1992). These are decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy and impact. Decision-making refers to the engagement of the teachers in making important decisions in their work. Professional growth means having access to continuous learning and improving the teacher's knowledge and skills. Status describes how the teachers are perceived in the field. Self-efficacy relates to the skills and abilities of teachers to effectively implement the teaching-learning process. Autonomy is the freedom

to handle particular situations and decisions at work. Finally, Impact denotes the effect of the teachers on other stakeholders.

The first of the predictor variables is Model of Role Identity (Sahragard & Sadeghi, 2016) which has 13 indicators, as follows. The teacher as a Learner means not only teaching the students but also learning from the students. Interaction supervisor pertains to management of the interactions in the classroom. Pundit entails deep knowledge about the teacher's pedagogy. Social panacea involves supporting the students and working to address student issues in and out of the classroom environment. Juggler assigns multiple tasks at the same time to help enhance students' creativity. Promoter motivates students to engage in classroom activities. Arbitrator assesses students' performance in the classroom and provides them with constructive feedback when they make errors. Trader approaches his/her job as a financial transaction and behaves as if he/she is looking to exchange their teaching services. Collaborator discusses their expertise with peers and collaborates with them in academic affairs. Knowledge transmitter imparts their knowledge and shares information with the students. Entertainer provides interesting lessons to students. Tutelage-Provider means establishing a good rapport with the students. Cultural adapter shows respect and awareness in cultural differences among students and between the teacher and students.

Lastly, the second predictor variable, Behavioral Creativity Style (the environmental control/behavioral self-regulation), pertains to how much a person sets up, develops and controls cues in order to make it easier to create (Kumar *et al.*, 1997).



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

As one of the ALTs employed in Japanese schools, the researcher has experienced at first hand the urgency of the need to consider this subject in order to have better understanding between Japanese and non-Japanese teachers. There have been numerous studies regarding the employment of ALTs in Japan (Escarda, 2024). Many have been focused on the weaknesses in the various programs and on the difficulties of the JTEs and ALTs in working together successfully (Walter & Sponseller, 2020). None, so far, have considered the ALTs with regard to their empowerment in relation to whether they are allowed to do their job in (what they, at least, consider to be) an effective way, and the potential links between that and their identity as professional educators and creativity.

The study sought to establish the influence of

Behavioral Creativity Style and Model of Role Identity on Empowerment of Assistant Language Teachers in Japan. Specifically, the study aimed to attain the following objectives: First, to ascertain the level of model of role identity in Assistant Language Teachers in terms of Learner, Interaction supervisor, Pundit, Social panacea, Juggler, Promoter, Arbiter, Trader, Collaborator, Knowledge transmitter, Entertainer, Tutelage- Provider, and Cultural adapter. Second, to assess the level of Behavioral Creativity Style among Assistant Language Teachers in Japan. Third, to describe the level of Empowerment among the Assistant Language Teachers in Japan in terms of Decision making, Professional Growth, Status, Self- efficacy, Autonomy and Impact. Fourth was to determine the significance of the relationship between the following: Model of Role Identity and Empowerment in Assistant Language Teachers in Japan; and the Behavioral Creativity Style and Empowerment of Assistant Language Teachers in Japan. Fifth was to determine the significance of the singular influence of the domains of Model of Role Identity on Empowerment in Assistant Language Teachers in Japan, the singular influence of Model of Role Identity on Empowerment in Assistant Language Teachers in Japan, the singular influence of Behavioral Creativity Style on Empowerment in Assistant Language Teachers in Japan and the combined influences of Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style on Empowerment in Assistant Language Teachers in Japan.

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Firstly, there is no significant relationship between Behavioral Creativity Style, Empowerment and Model of Role Identity. Secondly, Behavioral Creativity Style and Model of Role Identity have no significant relationship on Empowerment in Assistant Language Teachers.

As more and more efforts are made to improve English education in Japan and as the subject continues to move towards being taken more seriously, particularly in regard to communicative skills, the role of the ALT is more than ever under scrutiny. Both government and private recruiters are increasing their efforts to implement better training, both pre and in service. A limiting factor in better utilizing the expensive and often under-used resource of ALTs is the demotivating effects of many ALTs feeling that their talents and abilities are being underutilized, if not wasted. This has a detrimental impact on job performance, as well as on recruitment and retention. The researcher anticipates that a better understanding of ALTs' role identity, creativity style and empowerment will be of benefit not only to the ALTs, but also to employers, recruiters and to the numerous JTEs who work alongside them. Regarding the wider significance of this study, this researcher believes that as more interest is focused on the role of empowerment in the workplace, it is necessary to regard this from a wide variety of perspectives and in a range of professions in order to more fully comprehend it. As such, this research will be helpful in contributing to

the understanding of the role of Empowerment across professions and communities, as well as being to the benefit of future researchers who wish to understand the world of ALTs in Japan better.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Respondent

The researcher used a Quota Random Sampling Technique to a minimum of 250 respondents from the population of Assistant Language Teachers in Japan, estimated by Japan's education ministry to be 18,127 in fiscal 2023 (Miyagawa, The Asahi Shimbun), by using pre-specified characteristics (Anieting & Mosugu, 2017; Ilyasu & Etikan, 2021). The data was collected voluntarily within the population of Assistant Language Teachers in Japan through Google Forms to companies employing and dispatching ALTs to schools, and AJET (Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching, an association mainly of Japan Exchange and Teaching ALTs, with chapters in each prefecture of Japan) with the permission of their organizations. Given the difficulty in obtaining responses it was not possible to limit the locale of the study to a narrower area. The respondents were from different nations (mainly from the US, the UK, the Philippines, and African countries) and consisted of native and non-native speakers of the English language. The respondents were a mix of female and male ALTs, mainly in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, holding bachelor's degrees or above. The respondents were also ALTs with at least six months experience regardless of age and were currently employed as an ALT. This was to ensure that the respondents could relate to the topic being studied and that their experiences were contemporaneous. Their background in education was not considered as it is not a requirement to be an ALT. The income of the participants was not also relevant to the topic at hand. The participants of the study could withdraw their response and to enable this a unique response ID was assigned to each questionnaire completed and received.

### Materials and Instrument

The study was conducted using questionnaires through surveys as it was suitable to draw generalizations from the ALTs (Franklin, 2012) about their Empowerment, Behavioral Creativity Style and Model of Role Identity. The study quantitatively gathered the data to describe the heterogeneity on a macro- level (Kelle, 2006) and adopted three research instruments, each covering one of the variables. Empowerment was adapted from the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES), developed by Short and Rinehart. It has 38 items and is divided into six dimensions: decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. Model of Role Identity was measured using the Model of Role Identity by Rahman Sahragard and Moslem Sadeghi. This instrument has 55 items and is composed of 13 factors, namely Learner, Interaction supervisor, Pundit, Social panacea, Juggler, Promoter, Arbiter, Trader, Collaborator,

Knowledge transmitter, Entertainer, Tutelage- Provider, and Cultural adapter. Behavioral Creativity Style utilized the Creativity Styles Questionnaire by Dr. V.K. Kumar *et al.* (1997). The research tool has 78 items and has six categories which are: belief in unconscious process; use of techniques; use of other people; final product orientation; environmental control/ behavioral self-regulation; superstition and use of sense. The researcher only adopted one of these indicators, environmental control/ behavioral self-regulation, as one of the independent variables. It has 18 statements.

The adopted instrument comprises a total of 111 statements and is answerable on a Likert scale, from one to five, where one is Strongly Agree and five is Strongly Disagree. The dependent variable Empowerment adopted 38 statements from the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES), Model of role identity took 55 statements and Behavioral Creativity style adopted the indicator “environmental control/behavioral self-regulation” with 18 statements.

The instrument was validated and underwent pilot testing for reliability. The Behavioral Creativity Style has .837 Cronbach's Alpha which means it has a good internal consistency, while Model of Role Identity has .908 Cronbach's Alpha and School Empowerment has .933 Cronbach's Alpha, both having an Excellent internal consistency interpretation. The average validation rating of the instruments from the five expert validators was Very Good.

### Design and Procedure

This study sought to find out the relationships between the three variables to conclude with a result that is internally valid and could be generalized externally. The researcher also wanted to demonstrate and check if the relationships between variables validate, prove, or disprove the theories anchored in this study. Hence, through gathering quantifiable data from the ALT population, the researcher believed that this would objectively answer the research hypotheses and yield enough information to reveal any correlations between the variables. Based on the nature of the study, the researcher employed the causal and correlational quantitative design to look into the relationships between variables (Leavy, 2022; Creswell, 2003; Connell, 2016).

To undertake this, the researcher secured approval from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee to conduct the study. Then, the researcher asked permission from her company to conduct the pilot study and the actual data collection in writing. The pilot study was done to ensure the validity and reliability of the modified adopted instrument to determine further improvement and revisions before conducting the actual data collection. The researcher asked 30 respondents who were not included in the actual data gathering (Creswell, 2003).

The researcher considered two ways to gather the data for both the pilot study and the actual data gathering to have higher chances of getting responses. One was to do

it in person during the On-Going Training of the ALTs, usually done three times a year, and the other was through email. A four-phase administering process seemed appropriate to ensure a higher response rate, as suggested by Salant and Dillman (Creswell, 2003). When the number of respondents proved to be insufficient, further requests were made to other companies employing ALTs and to associations and groups whose members consist of or include ALTs.

The data was collected from anonymous respondents (or in cases where a unique identifier might reveal an individual, confidentially). The data was stored on a device in a secure location protected with a strong password. Any backups were also similarly password protected and kept in a secure location. Mobile devices were not used to store data. All files containing any data collected were deleted in full as soon as possible. The researcher used Google Forms using appropriate means to ensure security of the data. The above information was communicated to all bodies and individuals to whom requests for survey participation were made. The pilot study was conducted in November 2023 and the data collection was done between November 2023 and February 2024. The collected data were analyzed using Path Analysis by Sewall Wright to model the relationships between the three variables. The researcher wanted to test causal models and identify direct and indirect effects between each variable.

The researcher adhered to the following ethical principles for the entirety of the study: confidentiality of data; the willingness and readiness of the respondents to take part in the study; the security and management of respondents' responses and analysis of the responses avoiding the misconduct of research such as fabrication, falsification and plagiarism. The University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee issued Certificate of Approval with the UMEREC Protocol No. UMEREC-2023-403 on October 31, 2023.

The researcher provided adequate information about the study and made sure that all the participants understood before agreeing and signing the Informed Consent Form to take part for the whole duration of the study. All participation was totally voluntary. Neither the researcher nor any organization involved pressured anyone into answering the survey and if there were questions that made the respondents feel uncomfortable or considered to be inappropriate, the respondents were able to withdraw their participation at any time, including after the completion of the questionnaire.

The research was designed to draw on generalized knowledge, therefore it does not directly benefit the participants of this study on a personal level. To acknowledge the appreciation of the researcher all respondents were to be entered into a prize draw with three winners, each receiving an Amazon voucher worth 3,000 yen. There are no conflicts of interest with the researchers, the respondents, or organizations involved. The researcher together with her adviser, Dr. Jocelyn B.

Bacasmot, are the authors and take full responsibility for all aspects of this study, while others who contributed to the refining of the manuscript are acknowledged.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Presented in Table 1 are the standard deviations and means of the level of Model of Role Identity in Assistant Language Teachers, which has an overall standard deviation of 0.41 and an overall mean value of 3.85 indicating a high descriptive level. Specifically, there are three indicators of Model of Role Identity, namely Learner (4.66), Cultural Adapter (4.55) and Arbiter (4.27), showing a very high descriptive level. The 8 indicators Knowledge Transmitter (4.11), Collaborator (4.02), Entertainer (3.96), Pundit (3.95), Promoter (3.91) Tutelage (3.70), Interaction Supervisor (3.62), Social Panacea (3.40) have high descriptive levels. Lastly, there were 2 indicators with moderate descriptive levels, namely; Juggler (3.25) and Trader (2.66).

The high descriptive level of the Model of Role Identity implies that it is frequently perceived among ALTs. While the indicators with very high descriptive levels, Learner,

Cultural Adapter and Arbiter, suggest that these are always perceived. Also, Knowledge Transmitter, Collaborator, Entertainer, Pundit, Promoter, Tutelage, Interaction Supervisor, and Social Panacea have high descriptive levels implying that these indicators are frequently perceived. Finally, Juggler and Trader, with moderate descriptive levels, indicate that these two indicators are sometimes perceived among ALTs.

The results highlighted the chosen and imposed roles of ALTs (Nambu, 2015). Cultural Adapter is the most clearly defined and imposed role given to ALTs and they are also viewed as experts in the target language by other stakeholders. Furthermore, Arbiter points out a chosen role which shows a high descriptive level. These results confirm the findings of Sahragard and Sadeghi (2017) that EFL teachers' perceived identities are complex and include the various dimensions of manager, professional, and acculturator.

Presented in Table 2 is the overall standard deviation and mean of the level of Behavioral Creativity Style among Assistant Language Teachers which has an overall standard deviation of 0.49 and an overall mean value of 3.11 indicating a moderate descriptive level.

This implies that Behavioral Creativity Style is sometimes perceived among Assistant Language Teachers. This is in line with the study of Nambu (2015) which states that how ALTs perceived themselves depends on how they adjust in dealing with the school cultures, such as passively adjusting to the school culture, positively coping with the school cultures and finding another place outside the school which is closely equated to how they view their status in their schools.

Furthermore, the moderate level of Behavioral Creativity Style found is indicative of the fact that if creativity is not valued and nurtured by both teachers and their environment, it will not be demonstrated to the students and thus will not help to develop creative thought in them (Cremin & Chappell, 2019). This is likely the same sentiment expressed by some ALTs of not belonging to a teaching team and not being treated equally as educators (Walter & Sponseller, 2020), where ALTs may feel restricted to only performing tasks assigned by their JTEs rather than utilizing a greater co-creative role in crafting the lessons (Binns & Johnston, 2022).

**Table 1:** Level of Model of Role Identity in Assistant Language Teachers

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Learner	0.50	4.66	Very High
Interaction Supervisor	0.54	3.62	High
Pundit	0.73	3.95	High
Social Panacea	0.81	3.40	High
Juggler	0.88	3.25	Moderate
Promoter	0.61	3.91	High
Arbiter	0.50	4.27	Very High
Trader	0.98	2.66	Moderate
Collaborator	0.77	4.02	High
Knowledge Transmitter	0.67	4.11	High
Entertainer	0.76	3.96	High
Tutelage	0.69	3.70	High
Cultural Adapter	0.56	4.55	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>High</b>

**Table 2:** Level of Behavioral Creativity Style among Assistant Language Teachers

Items	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
I have set aside a particular place (or places) for creative work.	1.29	3.14	Moderate
I have set aside a particular time (or times) for creative work.	1.24	3.00	Moderate
I have a particular place (or places) where I do most of my creative thinking.	1.28	3.04	Moderate
I have a particular time (or times) during the day when I do my creative thinking.	1.25	2.76	Moderate
I don't smoke (cigarette, pipe, cigar) before beginning creative work.	0.92	4.71	Very High
I don't drink tea/ coffee/ other drinks with caffeine before beginning creative work.	1.47	2.45	Low
I don't smoke frequently when engaged in creative work.	1.06	4.63	Very High
I don't drink a lot of tea/ coffee/ other drinks with caffeine when engaged in creative work.	1.44	2.80	Moderate
I ordinarily smoke after I have worked on my creative idea(s) for a designated period of time.	1.02	1.36	Very Low

I ordinarily drink tea/ coffee/ other drinks with caffeine after I have worked on my creative ideas for a designated period of time.	1.38	2.72	Moderate
I reward myself in some way after I have worked on my creative idea(s) for a designated period of time.	1.32	3.34	Moderate
I tend to do my creative work in a quiet place.	1.08	3.72	High
I typically have background music when I am engaged in creative work.	1.34	3.31	Moderate
I don't use alcohol to get into a mood for creative work.	1.23	4.34	Very High
I don't use mind altering substances (other than alcohol) to get into a creative mood.	1.27	4.43	Very High
I typically start my creative work with a prayer.	1.14	1.58	Very Low
I typically meditate before I begin my creative work.	1.00	1.56	Very Low
I tend to snack when I am engaged in creative work.	1.30	3.01	Moderate
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Exhibited in Table 3 is the overall standard deviation and mean of the level of Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers, which has an overall standard deviation of 0.63 and an overall mean value of 3.11. As shown below, the indicators; Self-Efficacy (3.54), Status (3.72) and Professional Growth (3.54) display a high descriptive level. The indicator Impact has a mean value of 3.30 with a moderate descriptive level. Finally, the indicators; Autonomy (2.20) and Decision Making (2.07) show a low descriptive level.

The moderate descriptive level of Empowerment among ALTs implies empowerment is sometimes perceived. Specifically, Impact also suggests that it is sometimes perceived, having a moderate descriptive level. However, Self-Efficacy, Status and Professional Growth all designate a high descriptive level thus implying that these indicators are always perceived. Finally, the indicators Autonomy and Decision Making with low descriptive levels stipulate that these two indicators are seldom perceived among ALTs.

The moderate descriptive level of Empowerment among ALTs is likely due to a lack of mutual understanding between JTEs and ALTs about the ALTs' job descriptions (Grady, 2016) causing confusion among ALTs and frustration on the part of JTEs (Ohtani, 2010). It is also important to note that the indicators Autonomy and Decision-making as perceived by ALTs coincide with the interview done by Fujimoto-Adamson (2005) that ALTs' lack of freedom according to their preferred pedagogy is due to the over dominance of their Japanese counterpart.

**Table 3:** Level of Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Decision Making	0.73	2.07	Low
Professional Growth	0.82	3.54	High
Status	0.79	3.72	High
Self-efficacy	0.77	3.83	High
Autonomy	1.00	2.20	Low
Impact	0.85	3.30	Moderate
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

However, this may not be true from the JTEs perspective as they regard this as cooperation and not control (Binns and Johnston, 2022).

Displayed in Table 5 is the significance of the relationship between Model of Role Identity and Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers. The overall R-value is .588 with a p-value of .000, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between these two variables. Moreover, the indicators of Model of Role Identity when paired to the Empowerment indicator Decision Making shows an overall R-value of .357 with the p-value of .000, hence its importance.

However, the indicators: Learner (R-value.052; p-value .394), Arbiter (R-value -.002 p-value .976) do not show a significant relationship on Decision making. Also found to be important was the Model of Role Identity indicators on Self-Efficacy giving an overall R-value of .607 with .000 p-value. However, Trader shows no significant relationship on Self-efficacy, with the R-value of .049 having a p-value of .425.

Likewise, Autonomy when paired to the indicators of Model of Role Identity has an overall R-value of .264 and a p-value of .000 revealing a significant relationship; however, four Model of Role Identity indicators reveal no significant relationship on Autonomy, namely: Learner (.047; .439), Arbiter (.077; .209), Entertainer (.087; .154) and Cultural Adapter (.059; .333). On the other hand, indicators of Model of Role Identity are correlated with Professional Growth, Status and Impact, having an R-value of .378, .556 and .568 respectively all with .000 P-value.

The overall results revealed that the Model of Role Identity has a significant and positive relationship with Empowerment. This means that when the Model of Role Identity increases, Empowerment also increases. These results echo the study of Thomas (2017) where teacher empowerment is shown to be self-driven and the contextual culture determines the nature and extent of possible empowerment in each setting. A further implication is that the more teachers are engaged in the reflections and dialogs regarding their role identity, the more they will be able to promote their empowerment (Golzar, 2020).

**Table 5:** Significance of the Relationship between Model of Role Identity and Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers

Model of Role Identity	Empowerment						
	DEM	PRG	STA	SEE	AUT	IMP	Overall
LEA	.052	.166**	.250**	.358**	.047	.274**	.245**
	.394	.006	.000	.000	.439	.000	.000
INS	.198**	.180**	.338**	.324**	.236**	.324**	.349**
	.001	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PUN	.300**	.269**	.586**	.451**	.208**	.444**	.485**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
SOP	.371**	.226**	.380**	.522**	.248**	.485**	.480**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
JUG	.228**	.218**	.274**	.284**	.212**	.321**	.334**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PRO	.280**	.322**	.465**	.530**	.254**	.471**	.501**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
ARB	-.002	.273**	.273**	.363**	.077	.234**	.262**
	.976	.000	.000	.000	.209	.000	.000
TRA	.218**	-.019	.154*	.049	.181**	.133*	.158**
	.000	.762	.012	.425	.003	.029	.009
COL	.273**	.387**	.389**	.428**	.082	.354**	.406**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.181	.000	.000
KNT	.261**	.288**	.399**	.398**	.168**	.403**	.412**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.006	.000	.000
ENT	.123*	.190**	.234**	.289**	.087	.265**	.255**
	.044	.002	.000	.000	.154	.000	.000
TUP	.201**	.211**	.300**	.401**	.128*	.393**	.351**
	.001	.001	.000	.000	.037	.000	.000
CUA	.131*	.343**	.348**	.486**	.059	.358**	.367**
	.032	.000	.000	.000	.333	.000	.000
<b>Overall</b>	<b>.357**</b>	<b>.378**</b>	<b>.556**</b>	<b>.607**</b>	<b>.264**</b>	<b>.568**</b>	<b>.588**</b>
	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Legend:

LEA- Learner

INS- Interaction Supervisor

PUN- Pundit

SOP- Social Panacea

JUG- Juggler

PRO- Promoter

ARB- Arbiter

TRA- Trader

COL- Collaborator

KNT-Knowledge Transmitter

ENT- Entertainer

TUP- Tutelage-Provider

CUA- Cultural Adapter

DEM- Decision Making

PRG- Professional growth

STA- Status

SEE- Self-Efficacy

AUT- Autonomy

IMP- Impact

Revealed in Table 6 is the significance of the relationship between Behavioral Creativity Style and Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers. The overall R-value is .344 with a corresponding p-value of .000, denotes a significant relationship. Regarding the indicators of Empowerment and their R-values, that is to say, Decision Making (.216), Professional Growth (.219), Status (.341), Self-Efficacy (.280), Autonomy (.172) and Impact (.364) and their corresponding p-values of .000- .005, this suggests a significant relationship.

The positive relationship between Behavioral Creativity Style and Empowerment suggests that if the Behavioral

Creativity Style increases, the Empowerment will also increase. Increased Behavioral Creativity Style can lead to greater self-expression, problem solving, innovation, adaptability and collaboration, all of which contribute to a sense of agency and control (Kim *et al.*, 2023), in effect, empowerment.

This is connected to the research of Nall and Hiratsuka (2023) which indicates the capacity of ALTs to gain and apply pedagogical knowledge is significantly influenced by navigating different situations in Japanese schools, in contrast to those in their own countries, and working with colleagues who have diverse characteristics, teaching

philosophies, and approaches to team-teaching. Hence, according to Zainal and Matore (2019), creativity is also affected by empowerment. Self-efficacy is one of the key factors in promoting teachers' innovative behavior, a crucial area for improvement in educators. This

suggests that empowerment is a cause of innovation. This is supported by Lee *et al.* (2019) who conclude that employee creativity is improved by an environment that fosters empowerment, a view also held by Zhang and Bartol (2010).

**Table 6:** Significance of the Relationship between Behavioral Creativity Style and Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers

Behavioral Creativity Style	Empowerment						
	DEM	PRG	STA	SEE	AUT	IMP	Overall
	.216**	.219**	.341**	.280**	.172**	.364**	.344**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000	.000

Legend:

DEM- Decision Making

STA- Status

AUT- Autonomy

PRG- Professional Growth

SEE- Self-Efficacy

IMP- Impact

Featured in Table 7 is the singular influence of the domains of Model of Role Identity, (which are Learner, Interaction supervisor, Pundit, Social Panacea, Juggler, Promoter, Arbiter, Trader, Collaborator, Knowledge transmitter, Entertainer, Tutelage-provider and Cultural Adapter) on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers in Japan. As shown by the F-value of 14.223 with a corresponding p-value of .000, the regression model is significant, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. It can be argued that here is a variable that can predict the level of Empowerment of Assistant Language Teachers. However, some indicators such as Learner (.108), Interaction Supervisor (.970), Juggler (.564), Arbiter (.326), Trader (.547), Knowledge Transmitter (.071), Entertainer (.930), Tutelage- Provider (.473) and Cultural Adapter (.406) show as not statistically significant. On the other hand, Pundit and Promoter both at .000, and Social Panacea at (.019) and Collaborator at (.028) indicate that these four are statistically significant on Empowerment, having a  $p < 0.05$ .

The overall results show that the collective domains

of Model of Role Identity has a significant impact on Empowerment. Individually, the domains Pundit, Promoter, Social Panacea and Collaborator imply a dominant role of ALTs in the classroom. The fact that Pundit (who acts as one who has a profound knowledge about his own teaching) and Promoter (one who encourages or promotes students in their activities in the classroom) showed the most significant links with Empowerment indicates that individuals who are capable and confident in their role in the classroom feel more empowered.

This suggests that experienced and/or trained teachers, who should already be confident in their knowledge of teaching and their skills and desire to encourage their students, will be more effective (Kini & Podolsky, 2016) as well as feeling empowered to a greater extent than those with less classroom experience (Rosenholtz, 1989). ALTs can be seen as multifaceted and adaptable individuals - learning, teaching, and playing key roles in a diverse and evolving work setting (Nall & Hiratsuka, 2023).

**Table 7:** Significance of the Singular Influence of the Domains of Model of Role Identity on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers

Model of Role Identity	Empowerment			
	B	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	.377		1.089	.277
Learner	-.125	-.099	-1.613	.108
Interaction Supervisor	.003	.002	.038	.970
Pundit	.200	.232	3.694	.000
Social Panacea	.117	.150	2.351	.019
Juggler	.024	.034	.577	.564
Promoter	.247	.239	3.737	.000
Arbiter	-.076	-.060	-.984	.326
Trader	.020	.031	.603	.547
Collaborator	.108	.132	2.210	.028
Knowledge Transmitter	.113	.120	1.812	.071
Entertainer	.004	.005	.088	.930
Tutelage- Provider	.041	.045	.718	.473

Cultural Adapter	.062	.055	.833	.406
R	.649			
R <sup>2</sup>	.421			
ΔR	.392			
F	14.223			
ρ	.000			

Shown in Table 8 is the significance of the singular influence of Model of Role Identity on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers in Japan having an F-value of 140.223 with a P-value of .000 showing a significance in the regression model rejecting the null hypothesis. It can be said that there is a variable that can predict Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers. Moreover, the R<sup>2</sup> of .345 denotes 34.5 percent of the variation in Empowerment is explained by the variable Model of Role Identity and 65.5 percent could be attributed to other factors.

This implies that feeling empowered and satisfied depends on how the ALTs perceive their role, as stated in the study of Allen (2013), where many are considered successful

in their role. However, others felt otherwise, even when having a strong identity as educators because of factors like differing teaching approaches and the weakness of the English curriculum.

This is in line with what is stated in the study of Ohtani (2010) where ALTs feel alienated and are given less information on certain topics such as the curriculum and the students which are crucial during the teaching process. In addition, not being considered as equal (Mahoney, 2004) and the over-dominance of JTEs over ALTs in the classroom, as seen by the students, highlighted the inequality of status between JTE and ALT and might lead to students not respecting the ALTs (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2005).

**Table 8:** Significance of the Singular Influence of Model of Role Identity on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers

Independent Variable 1	Empowerment			
	B	β	t	Sig.
Constant	-.332		-1.136	.257
Model of Role Identity	.894	.588	11.842	.000
R	.588			
R <sup>2</sup>	.345			
ΔR	.343			
F	140.223			
ρ	.000			

Presented in Table 9 is the significance of the singular influence of Behavioral Creativity Style on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers, which has the F-value of 35.798 with a p-value of .000, thus the regression model is significant, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. So it can be said that Behavioral Creativity Style can predict Empowerment. Furthermore, the R<sup>2</sup> of .119 tells that only 11.9 percent of the variation in Empowerment is due to the predictor variable Behavioral Creativity Style and 88.1 percent of the variation could be linked to other variables/factors.

Thus, the connection exists but is relatively weak. The Creativity Styles Questionnaire (Kumar *et al.*, 1997) (adapted for use in this study) revealed that more creative people tended to have a stronger belief in unconscious processes, use more techniques to be creative, and be less

concerned about developing a final product. The survey reflects the importance of not only the techniques and beliefs regarding the creativity of the respondents, but also the physical environment around the respondents, which can greatly affect creativity (Atyah, 2020).

The fact that no strong link between Behavioral Creativity Style and Empowerment was found may be attributable to the difference in these environments. Most lesson planning is done at school, in the teachers' room. Some ALTs have their own desk, some share a desk, some have a supportive atmosphere, others are isolated (Tsuido *et al.*, 2012), some teachers' rooms are noisier and with more interruptions than others. The lack of a more clear connection between the two variables here may be impossible to explain without more data regarding these differences.

**Table 9:** Significance of the Singular Influence of Behavioral Creativity Style on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers

Independent Variable 2	Empowerment			
	B	β	t	Sig.
Constant	1.723		7.341	.000
Behavioral Creativity Style	.447	.344	5.983	.000

R	.588
R <sup>2</sup>	.345
ΔR	.343
F	140.223
ρ	.000

Presented in Table 10 is the significance of the Combined Influences of Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers. As indicated by the F-value of 71.412 with a corresponding p-value of .000, the regression model is significant. Hence, it leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It can be stated that there is a variable that can predict Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers. In addition, the R<sup>2</sup> of .350 signifies that 35 percent of the variation in Empowerment is explained by the predictor variables, Model of Role Identity, and Behavioral Creativity Style. This means that 65 percent of the variation could be attributed to other factors aside from these three variables. The analysis also revealed that the standard coefficient of Model of Role Identity has the highest beta of .835. This indicates that the Model of Role Identity has a greater influence on Empowerment

compared to Behavioral Creativity Style with .105. These results are in line with the study of Jang *et al.* (2010) implying that intercultural teaching and learning programs can be enhanced by finding suitable roles for all participating teachers. Their study also suggests how to take the best of Asian and Western methodologies to help make the partnership successful. It is necessary for language teachers to consider their roles constantly with reference to both themselves and their colleagues, including many features of being a teacher and of teaching, such as their teaching beliefs, values and emotions (Farrell, 2011). An increase in teachers' psychological empowerment through empowering leadership leads to greater innovation, as well as increasing the connection between innovative behavior and team psychological safety (Zhu *et al.*, 2019).

**Table 10:** Significance of the Combined Influences of Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style on Empowerment among Assistant Language Teachers

Independent Variable 2	Empowerment			
	B	β	t	Sig.
Constant	-.430		-1.435	.153
Model of Role Identity	.835	.549	9.718	.000
Behavioral Creativity Style	.105	.081	1.431	.154
R	.592			
R <sup>2</sup>	.350			
ΔR	.345			
F	71.412			
ρ	.000			

### CONCLUSION

The results showed that Model of Role Identity is frequently perceived among Assistant Language Teachers, while Empowerment and Behavioral Creativity Style are sometimes perceived with moderate descriptive levels. There is a significant relationship between Model of Role Identity and Empowerment. Also, Behavioral Creativity Style and Empowerment are significantly related, although less strongly. The domains of Model of Role Identity showed a significant singular influence on Empowerment, as does the Model of Role Identity on Empowerment. Behavioral Creativity Style also revealed a singular influence of significance on Empowerment. Thus, both reject the null hypothesis. The combined influence of Model of Role Identity and Behavioral Creativity Style indicated that both can have a significant impact on Empowerment. These results are in line with Kanter's theory of Structural Empowerment: if the ALTs are given more opportunity in their workplaces they can

be empowered. Empowerment leads to increased job satisfaction, innovation and employee retention. These can create a virtuous circle, or hopefully, an upward spiral, where they will tend to reinforce or create further empowerment.

The domains of Model of Role Identity that showed the greatest predictive relationship with Empowerment were Pundit, Promoter, Social Panacea and Collaborator, indicating the need to either select for these factors in recruitment or foster them in training. Previous recommendations for improving the ALT system, such as increasing training for JTEs in using ALTs (Hiratsuka, 2023), JTEs increasing the time for JTEs and ALTs to plan together (Shiobara & Sakui, 2019; Grady, 2016) and making team teaching voluntary for JTEs, are not specific to Empowerment. In order to increase Empowerment for ALTs, especially regarding the Model of Role Identity, the following would probably be effective. First, increase awareness of the importance of role identity in pre-

service and in-service training to ALTs, HRTs and JTEs as well as having clearly defined roles and responsibilities (Sponseller, 2016). Second, hire more already trained and/or experienced teachers as ALTs (Igawa, 2009) who already have a strong Model of Role Identity. Lastly, increase the direct hiring of ALTs, which would likely increase their sense of status and improve role identity, as well as helping with retention and preventing the loss of experience.

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