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Abstract of thesis entitled: Factors Affecting Persistence in Japanese Language Study at the University of Macau. Submitted by Hiroko Izumi for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Macau in June 2001.

There are many students who study Japanese in the beginning course at the University of Macau; however, after one year about a half of the students withdraw from Japanese language study. This study examines the reasons why students withdraw from Japanese language study by comparing attitudinal and motivational factors which were assessed by administrating a survey questionnaire and open-ended interviews. Subjects of this study were 67 students who enrolled in Japanese I in September 2000 at the University of Macau. The subjects were divided into two groups: students who continued to study Japanese and students who did not continue, according to the enrollment list of Japanese II.

The questions examined in this study were as follows: 1) Are there any demographic characteristics that distinguish students who continued in the Japanese course from the students who withdraw from the course? 2) Are there any differences in the frequency of contact with Japanese between students who continued and students who withdrew? 3) Are there any differences in reasons for studying Japanese between these two groups? 4) Are there any differences in motivational strength between these two groups? 5) Are there any differences in attitude towards the Japanese course between these two groups? 6) What reasons do a small sample of continuing and drop-out students give for the lack of persistence in the Japanese course?

The results showed that gender and the medium of instruction in secondary school were associated with persistence in the Japanese course. Secondly, students' contact with Japanese was not very frequent; however, students who continued studied Japanese at home

more than did students who withdrew. Thirdly, students who continued to study Japanese did so because they wanted to understand the Japanese people and culture and because they believed Japanese was useful in their future careers. On the other hand, students who withdrew were less interested in Japanese and saw less importance of Japanese language in their future careers. Fourth, students who enrolled in Japanese I had a desire to study Japanese but students who withdrew did not try very hard in studying Japanese. Fifth, students' attitudes toward the Japanese course were positive or neutral; however, students who withdrew felt that the workload of Japanese course was heavy. Finally the reasons for the lack of persistence in the Japanese course given by the students who were interviewed were mostly the heavy workload of the course and lack of time to study Japanese.