2020 JAPAN ASSOCIATION FOR MIGRATION POLICY STUDIES (JAMPS)
Winter Conference International Session (ONLINE)

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December 12, 2020 (Saturday), 12:10～14:10

Moderator: **GREEN, David (Nagoya University)**
Co-Hosts: **SAEKI, Yasutaka (Osaka University)**
MILLY, Deborah (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
TSUDA, Yolanda (Kobe College)

1. **DUANGKAEW, Sutpratana (Mahidol University) and TANGCHITNUSOR, Kanokwan (Chulalongkorn University),** *"Migration and Shukatsu: Japanese individual strategies in the third age and beyond"*

Abstract

The era of globalization has made it easier for retirees to select their desired place to live. According to International Retirement Migration (IRM) it is a popular choice for retirees from the most advanced economic countries to retire in less-developed destinations. In addition, some retirees use this channel to decide to live in a foreign country until the last days of their lives, indirectly making these decisions as part of their preparations for the final chapter of their lives, known as Shukatsu. This retirement migration may affect the economic and social conditions of both the sending and receiving countries.

The research is aimed at addressing two later-life strategies employed by Japanese retirees in response to Japan's super-aged population structure: Shukatsu and IRM. Shukatsu is a trending Japanese term that means "a preparation for the end of life," which often refers to the management of one's last will and funeral arrangements. The practices of Shukatsu stemmed from the idea of Japanese people not wanting to become a burden to others, even after they have departed from life. On the other hand, IRM is a long-term or permanent move involving searching for a better way of life at a new destination abroad during the third age and beyond. Like Shukatsu, IRM is a popular alternative among new-retirees to financially, physically, and emotionally sustain their independence. Many Japanese retirees and senior citizens of Western countries choose to retire in Southeast Asia, especially Thailand and Malaysia. In the destination country, Japanese IRM are welcomed as a type of tourist who are long-term travelers or "long-stayers". Due to unclear timing requirements for the Japanese people retiring abroad, IRM could be considered a pre-episode of Shukatsu before returning to Japan or a part of Shukatsu for those who intend to spend the rest of their life overseas.

The literature on IRM and Shukatsu regarding Japanese retirees will be reviewed in light of the nexus of these two strategies and policy implications in both sending and receiving countries. Suggestions for further research will also be discussed.

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2. **MILLER, Russell (The University of Tokyo),** *"Mental well-being among international migrants in Japan: barriers, facilitators and the impact of COVID-19"*

Abstract

Migration is a stressful process of resettlement and acculturation that has the potential to negatively impact the mental health of those starting a new life abroad (Renzaho, 2016). International migration to Japan has been growing steadily amid an aging domestic population and severe labor shortages. However, in comparison to multi-ethnic Western

destinations of migration, little research attention has been paid to the psychological well-being of international residents or their integration in Japan. Evidence on migrant well-being is crucial to understand what is, and is not, supportive for this minority population in order to design more effective social policies and maintain Japan's international appeal for talented migrants. This paper describes three research efforts: 1) to investigate the state of mental well-being research among migrants in Japan, 2) to assess local volunteering as a mental well-being promotion strategy for this population and 3) to utilize the COVID-19 pandemic as a natural experiment to observe the vulnerabilities in migrant well-being.

The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual can realize his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his society" (WHO, 2014). Mental well-being is an expanded continuum which includes positive and negative affect often generalized as "happiness" or "life satisfaction" (Keyes, 2013). Objective 1 of this paper was to understand the state of research describing the barriers and facilitators of mental well-being for non-natives in Japan. English and Japanese databases were systematically reviewed for studies on the mental well-being of migrants in Japan published in the last 10 years. In total, 55 relevant studies with primary data collection were identified which surveyed a combined total of 8,649 migrants. The most commonly studied migrant nationalities were Brazilian (36%), followed by Chinese (27%) and Filipino (8%). Thematic analysis of barriers to mental well-being chiefly identified 'language difficulties', 'being female' and 'lack of social support', whereas the primary facilitators were 'social networks' followed by 'cultural identity' (Miller, 2019). Access to social support networks of various types appeared to be one of the most influential factor affecting the mental well-being of international migrants in Japan. This finding was further addressed in the next phase.

Prosocial behavior, like volunteering in one's local community, has been demonstrated to improve mental health in native populations. Our hypothesis was that volunteerism may be a mental health promotion strategy applicable to non-native migrants as well. In order to assess such a hypothesis, Objective 2 was to investigate the mental well-being of international migrants living in Tokyo, who did or did not participate in formal volunteering. This convergent mixed-methods study assessed mental well-being with a quantitative survey (n=300) and qualitative follow-up interviews (n=20). After adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics in a regression model, volunteering was not associated with higher mental well-being score, but instead, 'not feeling isolated', 'feeling connected to Japan' and 'employment satisfaction' were significantly associated with mental well-being. Interviews similarly demonstrated that migrants participated in various social activities to promote personal well-being and deeper social connections with Japanese, regardless of volunteering status (Miller, 2020). Beyond volunteering, social connections with the Japanese community is a key to promoting migrant mental well-being and an inclusive Japanese society.

Objective 3 is to assess the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on various aspects of migrant well-being in a controlled before-after experiment. The data collection methods and outcomes for Objective 2 (several months before COVID) will be repeated several months after restrictions as a comparator to assess impact on mental well-being (IOM, 2020). Secondary analysis of Japanese census microdata and vital statistics from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare including this period will further inform the analysis. For this natural experiment, we expect to directly observe particular vulnerabilities in various domains of migrant well-being in Japan. Preliminary results will be presented in this paper.

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3. **MURAMATSU, Hideo (Utsunomiya University) and ISHII, Daiichiro (Utsunomiya University),** *"The Value Consciousness Constructs of Immigrants (Permanent Foreign Residents) Living in Utsunomiya City, Japan"*

Keywords: Immigrants (Permanent Foreign Residents), Value Consciousness, Social Capital

Abstract

This research aims to explore the value consciousness of immigrants (permanent foreign residents) living in Japan and provides a basis on which to delineate the direction of multicultural society as regards immigrants and natives in the area. With MGTA (Modified Grounded Theory Approach), this paper qualitatively analyzes the interview survey data of 15 middle-class (not unskilled workers) immigrants in Utsunomiya City, most of whom have obtained permanent residency and have had some experience of living in Japanese communities. The results indicate that immigrants significantly value the "courteousness" and "honesty" which Japanese people generally show and the "sense of security" they feel as a result of having access to a "healthcare system as a social institution". It has been shown that their value consciousness varies with the progress of their migration phase and life stage from "hesitation" to "positiveness", then through a "reconciliation" period to "acceptance," and finally to "understanding," and that the quality and dimension of multicultural coexistence between immigrants and hosts also vary accordingly. Furthermore, it is implicated that with the acquisition of social capital and Japanese language proficiency, the period of "reconciliation" among the phases plays a key role in reaching "acceptance" and "understanding."

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