EPOK Research Project

Spring 2021
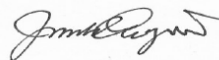
About EPOK Research Project

　EPOK リサーチプロジェクトは、岡山大学の交換留学 EPOK 生の個別研究です。日本の社会や文化を探求する視野から自由に個々の課題を設定し、実践的なフィールドワークを念頭にリサーチを行い、その成果をエッセイにまとめました。研究テーマは、日本の社会構造や日本人の思考から科学や環境など、自由かつ多岐に広がり、「日本」を学ぶという地域研究の豊かな学際的学びと学生たちの取組みがよく表れています。この文集には、それらを Japan's nature, environment, & science / Japan and the international mobility / Japanese mentality / How Japan/Japanese are viewed のセクションに分けて、11 のリサーチプロジェクトを掲載しています。

　2021 年度春期の EPOK リサーチは、コロナ禍で来日が適わず、遠く日本を想いながら調査をすることになりました。本来のフィールドワークができない中、オンラインでのアンケートやインタビューなどを多くの学生が採り入れ、工夫しました。このエッセイ集は、各々のテーマにおける発見のみならず個々の不屈の探求心と真摯な取り組みの軌跡でもあります。

　　　　In the course of EPOK Research Project EPOK the 11 students worked on the individual research theme in relation to their interest in Japanese culture and society in the spring of 2021. The compilation of the research essay shows the final product of their exploration and discovery. The EPOK research essay collection displays a good variety of their interest, including Japan's social issues, culture and life of the Japanese people, the environment and science. The essays can be found in the corresponding categories such as Japan's nature, environment, & science / Japan and the international mobility / Japanese mentality / How Japan/Japanese are viewed.

　　　　In the spring of 2021, the students were forced to pursue the research on Japan virtually under the unusual circumstance of the covid-19. Despite the difficulty of searching the theme on a place and its people without fieldwork, the students endeavored to get connected with Japan and people for instance through questionnaires and interviews. This collection demonstrates their vigorous interest and sincere contribution in exploring the topics remotely. May this be a token of their discovery, presence and endeavor in the spring of 2021 at Okayama University, Japan.

2021 年 8 月

Obayashi Junko　大林純子
EPOK advisor
Institute of Global Human Resource Development
Okayama University

Japan's nature, environment, & science

1. **KAM Sean Chuan Shen** (University of Malaya)

   Umi-hotaru, Japan's blue marvels

2. **NEUMANN Ramon** (Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences)

   The characteristics and challenges of Japanese agriculture

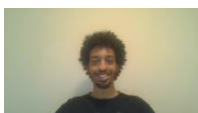3. **JIMENEZ Daniela** (University of East Anglia)

   Urgent needed action to combat Climate Change. An insight from Okayama Prefecture.

4. **ARIBAH, Dzikra Ridha Dwi** (University of Malaya)

   Responds to Robots in Japan: The Uncanny Valley

Japan and the international mobility

5. **ABDI Ridwan** (University of East Anglia)

   An investigation into the use of mutual aid projects during the pandemic in Japan

6. **KOBLIK Mikhail** (Leibniz Universitat Hannover)

   Main Factors Affecting the Decision of Foreigners to Migrate to Japan for Academic or Professional Purposes

Japanese mentality

7. **GENCO Mattia** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

   Mental issues caused by the Covid-19 on Japanese university students, and possible repercussion on the society in the future

8. **HUIJZER Jacqueline** (Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences)

   The difference in behaviours and social views between Japan and The Netherlands towards *Hikikomori*

9. **MAHMUD Muhammad Farrhan Bin** (University of Malaya)

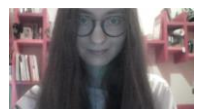   *Honne & Tatemae*: Communication across Japanese society

How Japan/Japanese are viewed

10. **VAN ASTEN Tycho Floris** (Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences)

    There are more things to do in Japan, apart from eating *sushi*

11. **GIRALDI Diletta** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

    An insight on the Western and Japanese view of Japanese Culture through the analysis of the public's opinion on movies

Umi-hotaru, Japan's blue marvels.
ウミホタル〜日本の青い奇跡〜
Sean KAM Chuan Shen カム、ショーンチュアンシェン

University of Malaya (Malaysia)

Summary: ウミホタルは、美しくユニークな海洋甲殻類です。本研究では、ウミホタルについての知識、直面している脅威、保護するためのアイデアを明らかにすることを目的としています。調査は、オンラインフォームを使用しました。調査の結果、ほとんどの回答者が、これまでにウミホタルについて聞いたことがないことがわかりました。ウミホタルの認知度は日本人の方が外国人よりも高く、21‐40歳までの年齢層では、ウミホタルの認知度が低いことがわかりました。ウミホタルが直面している最大の脅威は、汚染、海ゴミ、生息地の喪失です。一方、保護のための最良の方法は、認知度の向上、環境保護、汚染の軽減であると示唆されました。

Thesis Statement

The purpose of this project is to determine the familiarity and opinions of Japanese people and the international community about umi-hotaru (*Vargula hilgendorfii*). This project also intends to determine the threats faced by umi-hotaru, raising awareness of them in the process. Besides that, ideas and suggestions from the survey respondents are collected and presented in a concise manner for any interested authorities to implement for the conservation of umi-hotaru. Lastly, a brief description of umi-hotaru is prepared to increase understanding of this relatively unknown species.

Umi-hotaru is a unique, beautiful creature found only in Japan. According to Thompson et al. (1989), umi-hotaru was much more common in the past, and it is currently suffering from a population decrease. Unfortunately, most people are not aware of its existence. This lack of awareness coupled with global and localized environmental changes could lead to further population decreases and even extinction. With this project, I hope to raise awareness and possible contribute to preventing the extinction of this beautiful and unique species.

Literature Review

Not to be confused with the similarly named Umihotaru rest stop in the middle of the Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line Expressway, or the well-known hotaru-ika (firefly squid) which is eaten by many Japanese people, the lesser-known umi-hotaru (sea-firefly) is a species of ostracod

crustacean. According to Thompson et al. (1989), Umi-hotaru is a small animal around 3mm in length, with a nocturnal habit. It lives in the sand in shallow waters, and feeds actively at night. When it is disturbed, it secretes luciferin and luciferase into the sea water, which reacts and produces a bright blue luminous cloud. As stated by Katsunori Ogoh & Yoshihiro Ohmiya (2005), umi-hotaru has a poor swimming ability which limits the extent of which they can spread. Their breeding season is between spring to autumn in the coastal waters of the major Japanese islands. According to their research, umi-hotaru is distributed by the Japan Current. However, due to their poor swimming ability, they are unable to survive in areas where the current is too strong and rough. Besides that, they are also not found in the northeast region of Japan due to low water temperatures.
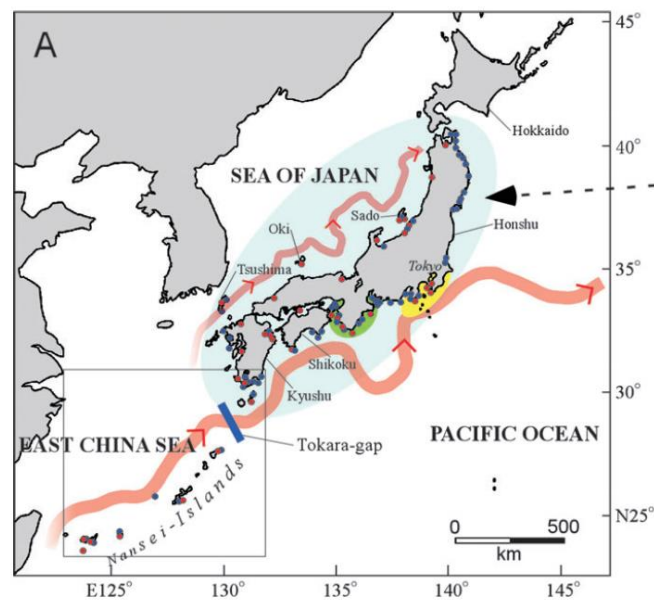

Figure 1. Distribution of umi-hotaru. (Source: Katsunori Ogoh & Yoshihiro Ohmiya, 2005)

Figure 2. A photograph of a male umi-hotaru. The scale bar is 1mm. (Source: Katsunori Ogoh & Yoshihiro Ohmiya, 2005)

<u>Methodology</u>

The main method used to gather data for this research project is using an online survey form via Google Forms. This method ensures a fresh data supply, which is the best solution for fieldwork during the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey form consists of 13 questions. Among the 13 questions, 4 are regarding demography, 4 regarding umi-hotaru identification, and 5 regarding umi-hotaru threats and conservation. Most of the data gathered by the survey form is quantitative data. However, there was also some qualitative data collected in the form of open-ended opinion/suggestion questions. This research project was also supposed to involve field trips to the beaches of the Seto Inland Sea to collect and observe umi-hotaru specimens from the wild. Unfortunately, I was unable to travel to Japan during this term thus the field trips were unable to be carried out.

<u>Discussion</u>

In total, there were 40 responses to my survey form. In terms of age, 14 (35%) respondents are between 1 to 20 years old, 21 (52.5%) are between 21 to 40 years old, and 5 (12.5%) are between 41 to 60 years old. Out of the 40 respondents, 22 (55%) does not live in Japan while 18 (45%) lives in Japan. Among the 18 respondents who lives in Japan, 9 (50%) lives in the Chugoku region, 4 (22.2%) lives in the Kansai region, 1 (5.6%) lives in the Kanto region, and 1 (5.6%) lives in the Shikoku region. 3 (16.6%) respondents who live In Japan did not provide an answer to the hometown region question. Among the 22 respondents who do not live in Japan, 18 (81.8%) lives in Asia, 3 (13.6%) lives in Europe while 1 (4.6%) lives in Africa.

When presented with a close-up picture of 4 marine organisms and asked which picture represents umi-hotaru, 35 (87.5%) respondents answered correctly, while 5 (12.5%) picked the wrong picture. This indicates that most of the respondents have an idea of how umi-hotaru looks like.

When presented with 3 pictures, showing green, blue and red bio-colouration, 27 (67.5%) respondents chose blue, which is the correct colour representing umi-hotaru's

bioluminescence. On the other hand, 11 (27.5%) choose green while 2 (5%) choose red. This indicates that a majority of the respondents are aware of umi-hotaru's bioluminescent colour, however there are still quite a few who are unaware of its bioluminescent colour.

When presented with the question "have you heard of umi-hotaru before this survey?", 26 (65%) respondents answered "no" while 14 (35%) answered "yes". This shows that most of the respondents have not heard of umi-hotaru before attempting my survey. Based on this finding, there is evidence to prove my inference that umi-hotaru is an organism that is not well known. Some further analysis was made to see if there is a relationship between age of respondents and knowledge of umi-hotaru, as well as between location of residence and knowledge of umi-hotaru.

Among the 14 respondents between 1 to 20 years old, 8 (57.1%) answered "yes" while 6 (42.9%) answered "no". Among the 21 respondents between 21 to 40 years old, only 2 (9.5%) answered "yes" while 19 (90.5%) answered "no". Among the 5 respondents between 41 to 60 years old, 4 (80%) answered "yes" while 1 (20%) answered "no". Based on the data obtained, it can be summarised that a slight majority (57.1%) of people between 1 to 20 years old are aware of umi-hotaru. On the other hand, a large majority (90.5%) of people between the age of 21 to 40 years old are unaware of the existence of umi-hotaru. The trend reversed again when it came to those aged between 41 to 60 years old, as a large majority (80%) are aware of umi-hotaru. This is a very interesting finding, that there appears to be a lack of awareness of umi-hotaru particularly among those aged between 21 to 40 years old. Further investigation could be carried out by an interested party as the sample size is small at only 40 respondents, thus a conclusive statement with sufficient evidence is unable to be made.

Among the 22 respondents who do not live in Japan, only 3 (13.6%) answered "yes" while 19 (84.6%) answered "no". This indicates that most people who do not live in Japan are not aware of the existence of umi-hotaru. The 3 respondents who answered "yes" all happen to be from Asia. However, with only 4 respondents who live in continents other than Asia out of the total of 22, no conclusive statement can be made on a relationship between continent of residence and knowledge of umi-hotaru.

Among the 18 respondents who live in Japan, 11 (61.1%) answered "yes" while 7 (38.9%) answered "no". This indicates that there is a majority of people who live in Japan that are aware of the existence of umi-hotaru. 7 (77.8%) out of the 9 respondents from the Chugoku region answered "yes", while 3 (75%) out of the 4 respondents from the Kanto region answered "yes". This indicates that there is a possibility that there is a link between the geographical

location of a respondent's hometown with the distribution of umi-hotaru (as shown in Figure 1 above), as their hometown region coincides with the region where umi-hotaru is found. There is insufficient data from respondents from other regions to come to a wider conclusion.

When asked about their opinion on umi-hotaru, 33/40 (82.5%) of respondents found it to be beautiful, 18/40 (45%) of respondents found it to be amazing and 9/40 (22.5%) of respondents found it to be cute. Conversely, 3/40 (7.5%) of respondents found it to be weird. Therefore, it can be summarised that most of the respondents have a favourable opinion of umi-hotaru.

When asked about the threats that umi-hotaru are facing, the largest threat faced by umi-hotaru according to the respondents is pollution, with 36/40 (90%) of the respondents thinking as such. Following pollution is garbage being thrown into the sea at 30/40 (75%), and habitat loss at 27/40 (67.5%). Global warming and sea acidification are both tied at 23/40 (57.5%). Lastly there is radiation at 13/40 (32.5%) and overfishing at 11/40 (27.5%). Therefore, based on the data from this survey, the most important threats to umi-hotaru that needs to be focused on is pollution, garbage being thrown into the sea and habitat loss.

When asked if they feel that umi-hotaru should be protected, a huge majority of 39/40 (97.5%) of the respondents answered "yes", while only a single respondent (2.5%) answered "no". There is a clear conclusion that most of the respondents want umi-hotaru to be protected. Delving deeper, the 39 respondents provided reasons why they think umi-hotaru should be protected. Since there are a wide variety of reasons, it will be displayed in the form of a pie chart for ease of reading (Figure 3). From Figure 3, it can be observed that the biggest reason to protect umi-hotaru is to preserve them for future generations, followed by safeguarding Japan's natural heritage. On the other hand, the respondent who felt that umi-hotaru should not be protected gave the reasoning that it is because umi-hotaru are insignificant creatures.
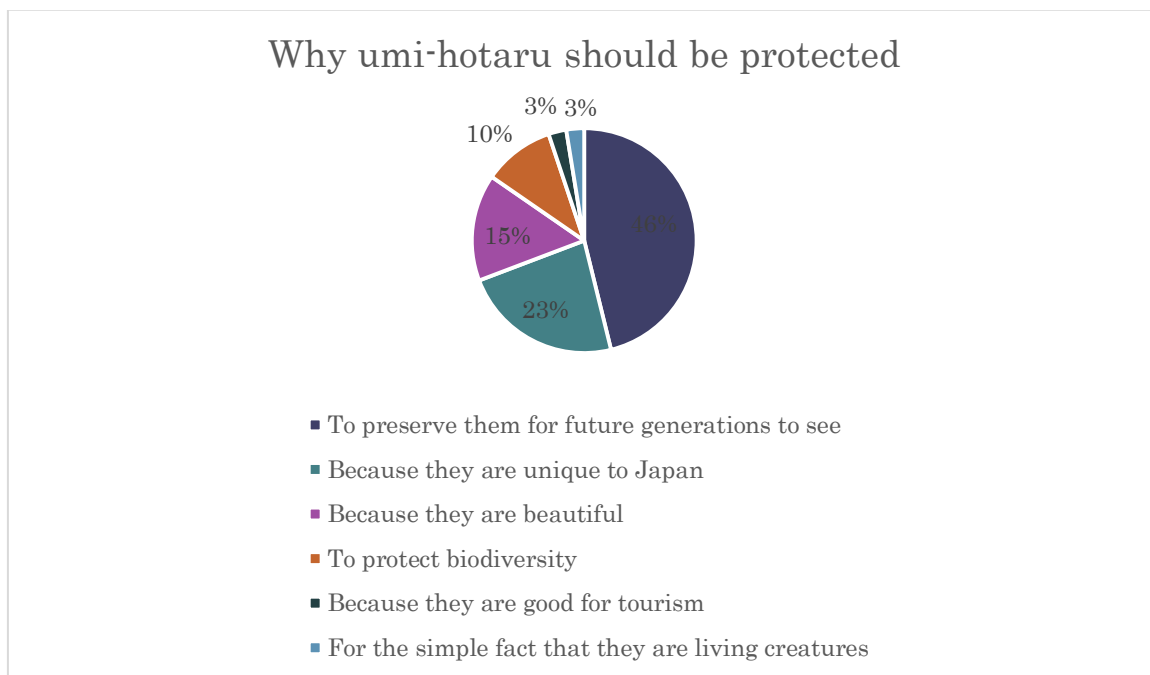
Figure 3. Reasons why umi-hotaru should be protected.

Lastly, suggestions were collected from the respondents on what they think should be done to protect umi-hotaru. The suggestions are summarised and displayed in Table 1 below.

Suggestion	Frequency
Raise awareness of umi-hotaru, its beauty and its environment	8
Protect the environment and maintain its cleanliness	6
Control and reduce pollution	6
Avoid throwing garbage into the oceans and coastal areas	3
Voluntary cleaning of coastal areas	3
Protect the habitat of umi-hotaru	3
Prevent overfishing	2
Introduce new legal regulations to protect umi-hotaru	2
Increase recycling efforts	1

Table 1. Suggestions by the respondents to protect umi-hotaru.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purposes of this research project were fulfilled. This research project found that most people are not familiar with umi-hotaru. Generally, those who live in Japan has a higher probability of knowing about umi-hotaru than those who do not live in Japan. An interesting finding is that there is a lack of awareness of umi-hotaru especially among those in the age range of 21 to 40 years old. Besides that, threats faced by umi-hotaru, and suggestions to protect umi-hotaru have also been collected.

<u>References</u>

Katsunori Ogoh, Yoshihiro Ohmiya, Biogeography of Luminous Marine Ostracod Driven Irreversibly by the Japan Current, *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, Volume 22, Issue 7, July 2005, Pages 1543–1545, https://doi.org/10.1093/molbev/msi155

Thompson, E. M., Nagata, S., & Tsuji, F. I. (1989). Cloning and expression of cDNA for the luciferase from the marine ostracod Vargula hilgendorfii. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *86*(17), 6567–6571. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.86.17.6567

Characteristics and challenges of Japanese Agriculture

日本の農業の特徴と諸問題

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Summary: この研究は日本の農業の特徴と諸問題を明らかにする。日本の農業は、主に露地栽培が特徴だ。日本農業で特徴的なのは棚田に見れれる傾斜地の農地だ。日本の農業の中でいろいろな難題がある。まず、農家の数が減っている。また、エンバイロンメントの難題がある。そして、解決策がある。たとえば、農家の数を増やすために AI と ICT を紹介するようにして農業の魅力を高めることができる。エンバイロンメントの解決策もある。しかしながら、将来、日本は世界市場よりも国内市場を重視する可能性が高いことが分かった。

Introduction & methodology

The research question of this paper is:

<u>**"What are the developments in the agricultural sector in Japan?"**</u>

To answer the research question, sub-questions have been formulated as the following:

1. What are the characteristics of the agriculture in Japan?
2. Which are the challenges Japanese new and existing farmers are facing in Japanese agriculture?
3. What are the environmental challenges of Japanese Agriculture?
4. What are the solutions to these challenges?

The objective of the research is to identify and map the developments of Japanese agriculture, identify areas of challenges within Japanese agriculture, and make an accurate prediction of the future of Japanese agriculture based on the findings. Specifically, the objectives of the research will be focused on the characteristics of Japanese agriculture, the developments of agriculture in Japan, the challenges that Japan faces when it comes to their agricultural environment, and other challenges that the Japanese agriculture might be facing.

For performance of the research, both field and desk research have been performed. However, the primary source of information is from the field research. Desk

research has been performed to support the answers to sub-question 1. sub-questions 2, 3 and 4 are further supported by means of field research. The field research has been performed through interviews with experts in Japanese agriculture.

This research is part of the EPOK program from Okayama University, Japan. During the EPOK program, exchange students perform a research to learn more about Japan and deepen their knowledge of a specific subject. The student is free to choose their research subject if it meets the educational interests of Okayama university. As a person interested in global agriculture, and especially the technologies involved in modern day agriculture, I have decided that my theme for the research will be directed towards agriculture in Japan.

The desk research has been performed through credible sources that contain in-depth, and up to date information about the Japanese agricultural sector. For example, reports from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, market reports from credible market researchers, and other statistical websites or entities specialised in Japanese agriculture.

The objective of performing the field research was to obtain up to date and relevant information of experts in the field, with the aim of answering the research questions. To do so efficiently, a structure had been setup for a smooth interaction during the interview:

1. Introduction phase: during this phase of the interview, the primary goal was to get know the interviewee. Questions that were covered in this phase were questions such as what their position is.

2. Information phase: This phase did contain the critical information. This information can be anything from the way the person in question gathers information about new developments, ongoing developments they personally see, and challenges they see or face in Japanese agriculture.

3. Closing phase: this phase did conclude the interview. During the closing of the interview, the interviewee did get the chance to give final remarks, things they felt like they had to share, and talk about the future of Japanese agriculture.

A total of 3 experts in the field of Japanese agriculture have been interviewed for this research. These experts are as following:

1. Fuminori Suzuki, young cucumber farmer in Okayama prefecture.
2. Tsutomu Harada and Mami Kondo, Okayama Prefecture Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department.
3. Professor Onaka, Okayama University Faculty of Agriculture.

Characteristics of Japanese agriculture & desk research discussion.

This chapter describes the Japanese agriculture market, segments the market, and explains the general challenges that Japanese agriculture is facing. Agriculture can be divided into 3 different main segments:

1. Outdoor farming
2. Indoor farming
3. Animal farming

This research purely focusses on the scope of outdoor and indoor farming, with the main focus on outdoor farming as it makes up most of Japanese agriculture. Outdoor and indoor farming together are segmented as followed:

- Cereals: 43.8%
- Vegetables: 26.8%
- Fruit: 16.8%
- Roots & tubers: 6.3%
- Sugar: 1.1%
- Oil crops: 0.8%
- Other: 4.3%
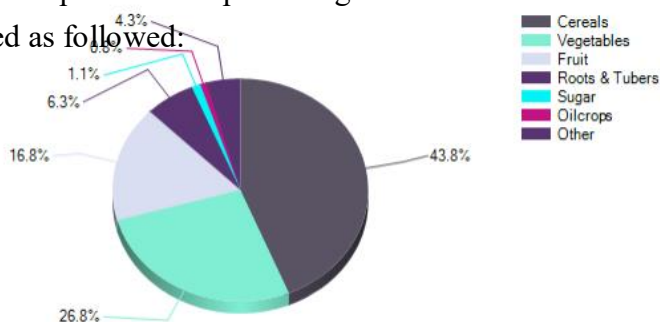
(Marketline, 2020, p. 12)*Figure 1: Japan agricultural products market category segmentation: % share, by value, 2019 [Marketline, 2020]*

From this total, around 29% of the vegetables and cereals are grown indoors. Most of the fruit are also grown indoor, meaning that around 30% of all crops are grown indoors, and the other 70% is grown outdoors. (Japan Greenhouse Horticulture Association, 2017) Rice falls under the cereals category, which explains why cereals is a big portion of the Japanese agriculture. Rice is often grown on so called Tanada's, which are Iconic sights of Japanese agriculture. They are small rice fields usually on steep slopes. They resemble "steps" of a staircase. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2021)

Below is shown how crops that are both grown indoor and outdoor are distributed between indoor and outdoor farming:

- Tomatoes: 74% indoor, 26% outdoor
- Strawberries: 88% indoor, 12% outdoor

- Cucumbers: 61% indoor, 39% outdoor

- Spinach: 24% indoor, 76% outdoor

(Japan Greenhouse Horticulture Association, 2017)

When compared to other countries such as the Netherlands, Japan's increase of indoor farming productivity and capacity has barely increased. To measure this, a comparison has been made of productivity per 10.0a., The Netherlands has 5 times more productivity per 10.0a than Japan. (Japan Greenhouse Horticulture Association, 2017)

Through desk-research environmental challenges within Japanese agriculture have been identified. The most important environmental challenge of Japan is abandonment farmland. Japan has undergone an unprecedented increase of abandonment farmland. (Su, Okahashi, & Chen, 2018)

The abandonment farmland causes serious environmental issues as well as socio-economic issues for Japan. Biodiversity plays a key-roll in the stability of ecosystems. When farmland gets abandoned, the ecosystem around the farmland changes, which can damage the biodiversity of an area. Sustainable farming and agriculture are essential for Japan to preserve natural resources and maintain rural landscapes as well as rural communities. (Su, Okahashi, & Chen, 2018, p. 1) At last, Japan has also seen an increase in the use of chemical fertilizer usage. This causes the issue of groundwater pollution, which can cause ground erosion and poison of local water sources which wildlife depends on. (Department of Agriculture, School of Agriculture, Meiji University, Kawasaki, Japan., 2020, p. 129)

Field research discussion

This chapter describes and interoperates the results of the field research. The field research has been performed through 3 sources. The first source is a Japanese cucumber farmer. The second source is the Okayama Prefecture Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department. The last source is a professor of the Okayama University Agriculture faculty.

After interviewing Fuminori Suzuki, age 36, multiple problems could be identified in Japanese agriculture, that are especially visible among young farmers. First of all, Mr. Suzuki from Kanagawa has been farming cucumbers for two years. As a new and young farmer, he only possesses a small farm. He only cultivates and area of 20are. Most of his work processes are done manually. This is due to the fact that his farm cannot provide enough revenue to invest in machinery. The initial investment costs for new farmers are

high, which makes it difficult for new farmers to expand their farmland. This is also backed up by professor Onaka from the Okayama University Faculty of Agriculture. He said:

> *"it is difficult to earn a high income through farming. Depending on the nature of the farming business, this is because the initial investment is large, the risks are high, and the work is more demanding than in other industries."* (Onaka, 2021)

According to professor Onaka, the initial high investment costs and the difficulty to earn a high income are the main reasons why young people do not want to become a farmer. Fuminori Suzuki has said it is possible to obtain subsidiary from the government, but in general if you start making more profit, you have to pay back the money, which makes it potentially more expensive to buy machinery in the long-term. The machinery is still too expensive to invest in. Professor Onaka has also said that agriculture is also seen has highly intensive labor. This can linked to the fact that most of the agriculture is still done by hand. This is because of the inaccessibility of machinery, making agriculture more intensive than it has to be. Because of the intensive agriculture, young people are less interested in becoming a farmer. The aging population of Japan is also contributes towards the general decline of farmers in Japan.

Through the interview with Fuminori Suzuki, I also learned that the main source of information on potential interesting machinery is through agriculture exhibition, which the biggest ones are in Tokyo every year. (Suzuki, 2021) Another source is the internet, but this source is not as popular and in general farmers want to be able to see the machinery. This makes it difficult for farmers to find cheaper alternatives for machinery, as it is not viable for all farmers to go to these exhibitions. Because most farmers cannot invest in machinery, they spend most of their days on the farm which means they cannot go to these exhibitions in Tokyo.

With help from the Okayama Prefecture Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department information was obtained about agriculture in the Okayama prefecture. The prefecture decides what the farmer grows. The prefecture decides on general policies for Okayama prefecture's agriculture. These are usually revised every two or four years depending on the policy. [Okayama Prefecture Agricuture Forestry and Fisheries Department Agricultural extension unit] According to Tsutomu Harada and Mami Kondo from the Okayama Prefecture Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department, it is usually difficult for family-owned farms to acquire more land. That is the reason why

family farms usually turn themselves into companies, so that it is easier for the Okayama prefecture to invest in them. Usually, a new farmers and existing farmers have to be able to show to the prefecture that they can be profitable as a farmer. According to the Okayama prefecture representatives, they have not seen an increase of new farmers or land expansion.

In Okayama the growing methods differ from the rest of Japan. Okayama's farmers specialise in peach farming. In Okayama, the entire peach farming process is done manually, which makes the peaches the most beautiful and highest quality peaches of the country. (Harada & Kondo, 2021) Because of the lack of new farmers, this craftmanship tradition of farming high quality peaches cannot be passed on to future generations. At last, according to the representatives of Okayama Prefecture Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department, usually in Japan the post-harvesting processing is highly automated. This is usually the packing and transportation stage. This is an interesting fact since the farming methods themselves are not automated. They said that usually processing facilities are close to the farmlands.

According to professor Onaka from Okayama University Faculty of Agriculture, there are some solutions towards the challenges in Japanese agriculture. First of all, the most important challenge that Japanese agriculture is facing, namely the decreasing number of farmers because of the population aging and urbanisation. This challenge can be solved by promoting agriculture through introducing new technologies and AI into Japanese agriculture. This reduces the amount of physical labor that seems difficult for younger and new farmers, and makes it higher skilled labor which is more attracting for young people. It is also a good idea to find methods to increase profit margins for young farmers. It is often thought that farmers cannot make a lot of money. According to professor Onaka, there are currently no measures taken towards the decreasing agricultural product prices. The government can increase profit margins for domestic farmers by putting import tariffs on foreign products, whilst supporting the production of products that are short in demand. By doing so, the farmers will make a larger profit. Not only does that make farming more attracting for young people, but it also supports existing farmers by means of extra investment opportunities.

The environmental challenges can be solved by exploring new agricultural methods. First of all, new cultivation methods that do not rely on chemical fertilizers can prevent further degradation of agricultural land through using fertilizers and pesticides that are

not damaging to the soil. Nowadays there are plenty of those available. The abandoned farmlands also have to be taken care of. Often after these lands are left behind, the surrounding ecosystem changes, which can be devastating for wildlife and plants that relied on these farmlands. The main issue with abandoned farmland is that they are abandoned because there are no succeeders for these farmlands. If the issue of decreasing farmers can be solved through the methods mentioned in the paragraph above, this issue might partly solve itself. For the land that does not get taken over, other methods have to be found. Professor Onaka did not provide any possible ideas for that.

At last, this research looks at the future of Agriculture in Japan. Mr. Suzuki predicts that in the future, Japanese agriculture will be more mechanised, however, it will have a slow pace, as the farmers in Japan cannot afford machinery. On top of that, there is a sense of craftmanship in the Japanese agriculture culture, causing farmers wanting to do manual labor to deliver high quality products. According to professor Onaka, In the future the Japanese agricultural production will most likely focus on domestic production and not play an important role in the global food market. However, Japan will play an important role in supporting developing countries through providing technology. If Japan properly manages the challenges they face in their agriculture, mainly tackling the decreasing number of farmers by increasing the number of new farmers through promoting ICT and AI technologies in agriculture, the Japanese domestic food market will become more profitable. This can potentially make agriculture more interesting for new and young farmers, as well as help solve environmental issues that come with abandonment farmlands by putting them to use again. Professor Onaka said that the decrease of farmers due to aging population and young people not wanting to become farmers is Japan's biggest issue.

Conclusion

The Japanese agriculture can be characterised by mostly outdoor farming, which can be represented by around 70% of outdoor farming and 30% of indoor farming. Japan's biggest output is cereal, mainly rice. They are often grown on Tanada's, which are an iconic sight in Japanese agriculture. Japan faces environmental challenges in their Agriculture. The two most important ones are the abandonment farmlands and use of chemical fertilizer that can damage the ground. Outside of the environmental challenges, Japan also faces the issue of a decreasing number of farmers. This is due to the aging population of Japan, as well as young people not being interested in becoming a farmer. It is often difficult to become a farmer in Japan because of the high initial investment costs, which makes it difficult to buy farmland. Japanese agriculture is also considered

highly intensive labor. This is due to the fact that a lot of the agriculture is still done by hand due to the importance of craftmanship in Japan. This also makes it less attracting for young people to become a farmer. Investing in machinery is difficult due to the low profit margin and the high prices of machinery, which is a problem for both existing and new farmers. This can be solved by increasing profit margins for farmers, such as imposing import tariffs on foreign agricultural products. At last, in the future the Japanese agricultural market will most likely be focusing on satisfying their domestic market, rather than becoming important on global scale. However, Japan will have a global role through technology. The main issue that Japan has to focus on is solving the decreasing number of farmers through making farming more attracting for young people and recruiting foreign workforce from abroad.

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Urgent needed action to combat climate change. An insight from Okayama Prefecture.

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他の多くの国と同様に、日本も気候変動の影響に直面しています。気候変動は、その名前が示すように変化し続けていますが、私たちはどのように対処したらいいでしょうか。岡山大学では、緊急に気候変動に対処するという必要性と目標のために、いくつかの SDGs プロジェクトとモジュールを通じて、学生が自然環境の保全と再生に取り組んでいます。この調査から、教育により学生たちに将来について考え、活動をさせることが持続可能な社会を実現するための鍵であり、私たちにはその力があることを認識しました。

Introduction

Climate change is a long-term change that has cohabitated with humans for a long time. As NASA describes it: "Climate change is also a change in Earth's climate", (NASA, 2014).Those changes are products of affairs like pollution, contamination, the fishing and meat industries, an increase of natural disasters, sea levels rising, etcetera. This research paper explores the issue of how climate change is affecting the Japanese nation.

This paper focuses on the needed action required to adapt and build resilience towards climate change. It aims to show how the Japanese prefecture of Okayama is dealing with the challenge of climate change through the power of education. This research project will give an in-depth analysis and perspective on how Okayama University uses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its leading tool to create awareness regarding climate change. Additionally, it will provide insight into how locals and students work together on several projects.

The final goal of this project is to create awareness of how climate change is affecting us and how, can restore our Earth, our planet.

An Overview of Japan's Climate Change situation

Climate change is an issue that requires immediate actions by the international community. Based on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, the Conference of Parties (COP) has been a pivot for active discussions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the global level every year since several years ago. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has actively participated in the negotiations on climate change in coordination with other government offices such as the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Economic, Trade and Industries to enhance its national interest in this urgent matter.

Moreover, our efforts as an International Community are not enough to bring this issue to a better situation. As the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction states, over 700,000 people have lost their lives, over 1.4 million have been injured, and approximately 23 million have been made homeless as a result of natural disasters. On the other hand, The Bank's Shock Waves highlights that climate change threatens to push an additional 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2030 due to extreme weather events.

Extreme weather events are one of the main visible effects in the Japanese landscape due to climate change. An example of this phenomenon is back in July of 2018. A devastating downpour in the Western side of Japan forced 2 million people to evacuate their homes. This deluge flooded hundreds of thousands of homes and, unfortunately, claimed over 200 lives. "In the aftermath of the event, experts agreed that the intensity of this storm was fueled by our changing climate",(The Climate Reality Project, 2019).

An assessment done by the Intergovernmental Panel on climate change (IPCC) has shown that global service temperatures have been increasing— This got recognised for various reasons like the increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases caused by human activities like the burning of fossil fuel and deforestation (Mintzer, 129).

Therefore, we can say that "island nations around the globe face some of the most severe impacts of our changing climate — and Japan is no exception" (The Climate Reality Project, 2019). Examples of how it threatens the Japanese nation is coastal threats, floodings and rising temperatures or, food security like the case of the rice planting. However, Japan has recently gone through great efforts to protect its nation and the world from the massive effects of climate change.

The lastest goal for the Pacific nation is to be a decarbonised society by 2050. This strategy makes explicit current challenges and future actions by prioritising fields and formulating action plans. The strategy aims to cover comprehensive policies such as budgets, taxes, regulation reforms and standardisation, international collaboration like the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry stated.

Japan also showed its concern about climate change before in 2015 when signing the Paris Agreement at COP21 in Paris as a new international framework for greenhouse gas reductions in the post-2020 period. This agreement is fair and applicable to all Parties, which is why Japan had advocated following the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol with the Doha Amendment to come years later. Japan aims to work with other countries to develop guidelines for the Paris Agreement to achieve effective greenhouse gas reductions by all Parties. However, even after all these policies, collaborations and efforts, the current concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere is now the highest it has been for the past 500,000 years, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fourth assessment stated.

 In 2019, Japan emitted 1212 Mt CO2eq (carbon dioxide), making it the 5th largest producer of carbon emissions, as the International Energy Agency stated in its analysis. Due to that, Japan was heavily criticised by the Paris Agreement countries. But, that did not stop Japan and its fight against climate change. Especially in the region of Okayama Prefecture

Methodology

The methodology used in this research project was through a primary source, an interview with students from Okayama University. The interrogation aimed to see if students were aware of how climate change and their projects were related to Okayama's university tool, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, the interview gave a deeper insight on the "Hotaru Project", "Lake Kojima Project" and how students view SDGs and climate change.

To further seek information regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Change current situation in Japan and Okayama's actions/programs towards achieving climate neutrality, I created a six-question, interview as mentioned before. The following key questions to my research are:

1) How would you describe the climate change situation in Japan?

2) What current restraints or methods are put to reduce climate change?

3) How would you say climate change is affecting us? Especially in the region of Okayama and general Japan.

4) Are you aware of the fight for SDGs 13?

5) I heard all of you are doing quite a few projects to protect the ecosystem. Regarding water, animals, etc. What is the " Hotaru Project" about? What's its purpose?

6) Is there enough awareness to this day that we can stop climate change straight away? Or at least slow it down?

Through this methodology, my interview focused solely on people studying at Okayama University, especially from the Faculty of Environmental Science and Technology. Other Japanese students would also be able to benefit from this research and interview's answers as the study is about increasing awareness and knowledge on the affair of climate change and the SDGs through the interaction of two Okayama's projects, Lake Kojima and the Hotaru Project. The interview was conducted online due to the current situation of COVID-SARS and people being in different locations at the time to comply with the government's restrictions. It was conducted through a zoom meeting with professor Mohri as the language supporter.

It resulted in answers from 10 participants. I carefully chose questions in a way that students in this specific faculty can relate to broadening their minds and vision of climate change and SDGs.

Analysis and Evaluation

The survey had a small number of participants in which is not enough to represent every individual's view and knowledge regarding climate change and SDGs.

My hypothesis from the answers of the interview was that the participants would show little knowledge towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, when talking about the Hotaru Project, they were not aware they were defending several SDG causes like

SDG 13, climate change or SDG 9 and 6 mentioned above. ,

Furthermore, students did show a mixed interest in climate change and came out of their comfort zone to answer my questions with their answers.

Before the interview and while conducting my research on Okayama, I did expect more knowledge on the general matter of Climate Change and the fight of the SDGs since they are a big impact on the nation's decision-making and policy-making.

But through their answers, many participants mentioned some examples of how the government is dealing with the situation of climate change that is established in the whole nation. An example of these measurements is the actual "charging for plastic bags, trying to conserve energy and the use the electric cars" as one student answered or the "reduction of carbon dioxide emissions through international conferences" as other students stated.

Okayama University tackles the issue of the SDGs through education. Meaning that the modules and classes are focused and directed to address the different affairs that SDGs support. Some of these modules are "Study of Japan A with SDGs" in which Professor Obayashi gathers students to learn and deepen about sustainable lifestyle through traditional Japanese culture (bizenyaki, Igusa Guesthouse), or the Model United Nations module (JUEMUN) by Professor Fujishima and Professor Cowie. This year, students had the opportunity to be a national delegates in the fight of SDG 9, SDG 11 and SDG3 13.

However, as one of my interviewees said, "We hear a lot of talk about the SDGs, but to be honest, we do not have much awareness that we are working on the SDGs".

The statement describes the situation of many people across the globe. SDGs have many categories. For instance, SDG 14 addresses life below water or SDG 6 that tackle clean water and sanitation. These are just some examples of SDGs. But the issue is that students lack knowledge of them when doing projects that involve them.

From my perspective and experience in both modules cited, I could see not many students had as much knowledge regarding SDGs and climate change policies. They were more focused on researching one-on-one SDGs as happened during the MUN module since we had to gather all information available.

On the other hand, many of the students interviewed were aware that climate change is real and we need to act now. One of the students talked about how "every year, the summer is getting hotter, and how he feels global warming is progressing".

Additionally, students acknowledged how the heat island phenomenon is increasing and

progressing rapidly and how "individuals are less conscious of stopping climate change". These statements refer to the aforementioned introduction and overview paragraphs. Another student also shared their experience with landslides caused by the rising water and flooding caused by heavy rains in both Okayama and Hiroshima(another Japanese Prefecture). These findings keep showing that Climate Change is an urgent matter that affects wildlife, our environment and flora.

The last part of the interview was purely focused on the two main projects the students were conducting. As mentioned before, these projects are The Hotaru Project and the Lake Kojima Project.

When asked question 5, the students' interest peaked and were highly motivated to talk about the importance of having clean waters for these creatures. However, what is the meaning behind the Japanese term 'Hotaru'? The English term for this Japanese term is 'firefly'.

The Hotaru Project aims toward creating a new environmentally coexistent society. The students at Okayama University who are undertaking this project explained that fireflies were long cherished in Japan since old times. Upon researching why they are symbolic, I came across these phrases: "They are beloved – a metaphor for passionate love in poetry since Man'you-shu (the 8th-century anthology). Their eerie lights are also thought to be the altered form of the souls of soldiers who have died in war", as Namiko Abe expressed.

However, when asked why they joined this project, they all answered that because "it sounded fun". Later on, after experiencing the forest, many realised that they couldn't see them anymore and they wanted to preserve them with their actions. Fireflies require a clean and safe environment but the light pollution, the use of chemicals and residuals are making their appearance decrease in numbers at a fast rate.

(Figure 1. Fireflies in Okayama Prefecture by Tsuneaki Hiramatsu)

One of the participants also raised the issue that there is not enough awareness of the disappearance of these marvellous light creatures. He explained that we should involve

more people and spread the "Firefly Festival" to make the neighbourhood more aware of the situation.

The Hotaru Project is only one of the main works students from this faculty are realising. Moreover, this project relates to the second project mentioned above, Lake Kojima.

Lake Kojima is a reservoir which construction finished in 1959. The purpose of building a lake into campus is for the students' learning achievement and progress. However, ever since it was built, pollution has corrupted the water and made all the wildlife and flora disturb the current ecosystem at the time.

The project aims to raise awareness and the "ADTPAC water environment specialists". See Figure 2 below for reference.The final objective of this project as researched and explained by some fo my interviewees is to improve the water quality of the lake so wildlife, fauna and humans can keep cohabitating.

The program outline prepares students to carry the adequated practices and become specialists who would be able to continue the fight of the SDGs ang global warming through their knowledge and actions. To do so, they also require the cooperation of locals living in the prefecture such as community organisations or other universities and colleges.

(Figure 2. ADTPAC meaning)

Conclusion

Climate Change and SDGs are in a current fight in which individuals from different ages, nationalities and ideologies are joining. Global warming does not discriminate or affect one type of ecosystem, it affects us all in different ways, could be a temperature rise, pollution levels making us unable to breathe and make our waters dirty and contaminated.

Climate change and SDGs aim for international and local cooperation as so does the Lake Kojima Project by Okayama University.

This research project aimed to show how Japan is suffering from climate change effects

and how even a prefecture alone can support the cause by sharing knowledge, creating awareness and cooperating between individuals. Climate Change is not a one-solution matter, it will require perseverance, unity and changes.

During my research and interviews, I could see different aspects and views on climate change and the existence of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, if we want to achieve climate neutrality and end instability, we need to keep creating platforms available for everyone just as Okayama University is doing with these projects to spread the knowledge and how we can help our ecosystem be the way it was. We depend on the ecosystem and, the ecosystem depends on us.

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Responses to Robots in Japan: The Uncanny Valley
日本におけるロボットに対する反応：不気味の谷現象について
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Summary:

　　　日本の自動化・ロボット化は、ロボットのデザインとともに進化しており、より人間に近いロボットがデザインされている。人間に近いデザインは、より親しみやすい印象を与えたり、社会にとっていくつかの利点をもたらします。しかし、日本のロボット工学の第一人者である森政弘氏は、「不気味の谷」という概念を提唱しました。これは、人型ロボットをより人間に近づけると親近感を感じても、ある度合いに到達すると突然、不気味さを感じるという現象です。本研究では、日本におけるロボットに対する人々の反応を調査し、その結果をもとに不気味の谷の概念との関連性を考察した。

Introduction

　　　Japan has been known to be one of the most advanced countries in the world, especially in the expansion of Artificial Intelligence and robots. The use of robots has started to become common in Japan. Based on the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in 2015, the Japanese government has set its sights on a 20-fold increase in the use of robots in the non-manufacturing sector and a three-fold growth rate of labor productivity in the service sector, both by 2020.

　　　Robot's appearance types could be divided into two types based on the robot's characteristics (Kwak et al., 2014): Human-oriented vs. Product-oriented. Human-oriented robot appearance is designed to resemble a human's appearance while product-oriented robot appearance is designed to maximize the dedicated functions of the robot. Human-oriented robots are designed to look like humans for intuitive collaboration, and the latest locomotion and AI technology are helping to speed up their development. In Japan these robots are starting to be used to help around in places like airports, cafes, and hotels, facilitating the people around Japan with their helping hands.

　　　A Japanese robotics professor, Masahiro Mori, identified a concept about the relationship between the degree of an object's resemblance to a human being and the emotional response to such an object. The concept is that making machines more human-like is good up

to a point, after which they become discomforting, until they achieve human likeness, which is the best design of all.

With the number of robots Japan has been using in the past decade, this paper is set to find out the relation between people and robots, especially human-like robots. To see the responses of the people and find out how it correlates with the Uncanny Valley.

Japan, Robot, and The Uncanny Valley

Driven by a rapidly aging population and low productivity rates, Japan is the third most automated country in the world, right after Singapore and South Korea (IFR, 2017). Automation provides the opportunity for humans to focus on higher-skilled, higher-quality, and higher-paid tasks. It is stated that Japan is the world's predominant robot manufacturing country with 47% of the global robot production are made in Japan. As of 2020, Japan has 200 to 300 AI-related companies (Data Artist, 2020), and is number one in the world as a supplier of industrial robots (OSA DC, 2018).

Human-like robots, or humanoid robots, are one of the types of robots that are used in Japan. It is started to get popular in use in the last decade, providing human help with their services. A human-like shape robot produces emotional feelings useful for friendly communication between robots and humans. Humanoid robots can work in many kinds of environments, bumps, dents, slopes, stairs, narrow corridors, etc. without requiring any changes of them (Yokoi K., 2004). However, the application of human-like robots within society has also brought some concern due to their appearance.

The Uncanny Valley was identified by the Japanese robotic professor, Masahiro Mori. He hypothesized that a person's response to a humanlike robot would abruptly shift from empathy to revulsion as it approached, but failed to attain, a lifelike appearance. In climbing toward the goal of making robots appear more like humans, people's affinity for them increases until it comes to a valley (Figure 1), which is then called the uncanny valley. While trying to make the robot seems more like a human, at some point the robot may become sufficiently realistic that its remaining nonhuman features become noticeable and disturbing. Thus, entities of intermediate perceived humanness, such as androids, appear eerier than those of low or high perceived humanness, such as mechanical-looking robots or real human beings (MacDorman, K. F., & Entezari, S. O., 2015).
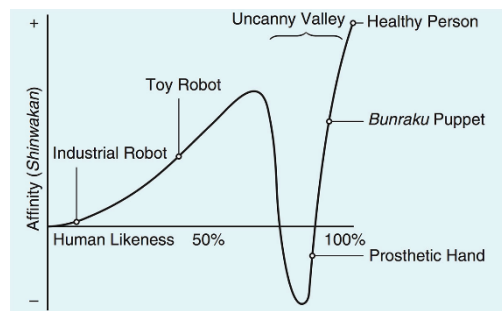
Figure 1

After the identification of the uncanny valley, there have been various researches done to find scientific reasons behind the uncomfortable feeling from robots that fall under the uncanny valley. Some of the theoretical and hypotheses found by MacDorman & Entezari are perfectionism, anxiety, and personal distress.

Methodology

An online survey was conducted to gain people's opinions about the topic. The survey was sought to get information about, but not limited to, respondent's awareness of robots' implementation and how the respondents feel about robots. Questionnaires relating to the research topic are made in Google Form and shared with respondents through email, broadcast messages to group chats, personal chats, etc. e. This survey was conducted with university students and general adults focused more on the people in Japan but also is open for non-Japan residents to fill in the survey for a more general and global result.

The survey was divided into 3 parts, multiple choices questions, scale questions, and another multiple choices questions. The first part was focused on gaining background information of the respondents like their age, where they are from, and how they feel about the implementation of robots in Japan. In the second part, scale questions are given to figure out how the respondents feel when looking at the given pictures related to the topic. The respondents are given a scale from 1 (very uncomfortable) to 5 (very comfortable) to various types of robots, and some non-robots, using what is on the chart from Masahiro Mori about the Uncanny Valley; industrial robot, toy robot, a humanoid robot, prosthetic hand, Bunraku Puppet, and healthy person. In the last part of the survey, another multiple choices question, the respondents are asked which robot makes them feel the most comfortable and the one that makes them feel the

most uncomfortable from the previous part of the survey. The respondents are also asked what may be the reason for someone to feel uncomfortable looking at robots.

The results of the online survey were then compiled and analyzed to assist the completion of the research. The results from the online survey are formed into pie charts and diagrams to show the overall answers of the respondents. Using Google Form as the media of the online survey was a good choice as it automatically showed the summarized result of the survey in real-time and it changed every time a new response was recorded.

Results

The survey gained 60 respondents with 60% of the respondents are from Japan and 40% from outside of Japan. Even though 40% of the respondents are from outside Japan, 100% of the respondents have seen robots in Japan, may it be from TV or the internet. 98% of the Respondents agreed that the use of robots in Japan may be necessary. On the question "Have you ever felt uncomfortable looking at robots?" the answers divided almost evenly as 56.7% answered yes and the rest, 43.3% of the respondents, answered no.

On the scale questions, the respondents are given a scale from 1 (very uncomfortable) to 5 (very comfortable) to various types of robots, and some non-robots, using what is on the chart from Masahiro Mori about Uncanny Valley; industrial robot, toy robot, humanoid robots, prosthetic hand, Bunraku Puppet, and healthy person. This part gathered how the respondents feel when they are looking at the pictures.

	1	2	3	4	5
Industrial robot	1.7%	10%	**38.3%**	23.3%	26.7%
Toy robot	17%	3.3%	15%	38.3%	**41.7%**
Humanoid robot I (Pepper)	5%	18.3%	26.7%	**36.7%**	13.3%
Humanoid robot II (Telenoid R1)	**51.7%**	26.7%	16.7%	5%	0%
Humanoid robot III (Actroid-DER2)	15%	**33.3%**	23.3%	20%	8.3%
Prosthetic hand	1.7%	5%	21.7%	33.3%	**38.3%**
Bunraku Puppet	11.7%	21.7%	**40%**	11.7%	15%
Healthy person	1.7%	1.7%	13.3%	18.3%	**65%**

Table 1

Among all the pictures shown in the second part, healthy person has the most percentage of 5, 65%, with 0% answered 1 and 2. Whereas among the robots, Toy Robot got the most 5, 41.7%, with only 5% on the uncomfortable side. And the one that got the most percentage on the uncomfortable side is Humanoid robot II (Telenoid R1), with 51.7% respondents choosing 1 and 26.7% choosing 2.

In the last part of the survey, the respondents are asked which among the robot pictures shown makes them feel the most comfortable and which makes them feel the most uncomfortable. Toy robot was chosen by 51.7% of the respondents as the robot that make them feel the most comfortable. On the other hand, Humanoid robot II (Telenoid R1) was chosen by 80% of the respondents as the robot that make them feel the most uncomfortable (Figure 2).
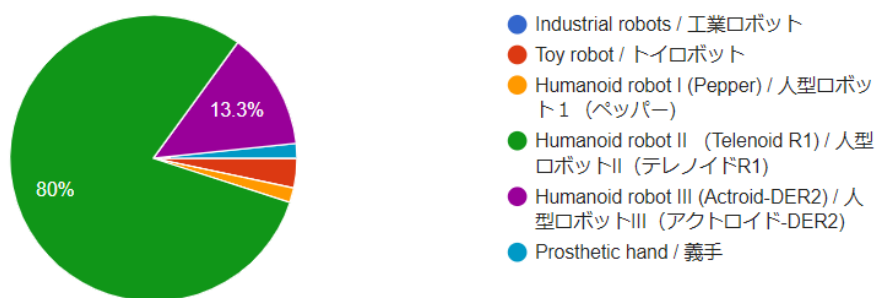

Figure 2

The last question of the survey was "What do you think can make the appearance of a robot make someone uncomfortable?" and the respondents are given some options that they could choose from, and also a blank option if they wanted to give their reasonings. "It looks scary" was chosen the most by the respondents with 70%, then followed by "It resembles human but not perfectly" with 60%.

Discussion

Findings

The implication of robots in Japan, may it be industrial robots, that offer help in doing repetitive and hard labor, or human-like robots, that offer help in accommodation and services, is due to a clear reason that is mainly because of how Japan has a rapidly aging population and low productivity rates. 70% of the respondents from the online survey agree that the use of

robots in Japan is indeed necessary, and additionally, 28.3% think that it *may* be necessary. This shows how most people can see that the current use of robots in Japan does help Japanese society.

Moreover, the research is trying to see whether or not the implementation, the use of these robots brings any uncomfortable feeling to some people, based on the looks of the robots, and if it correlates with the uncanny valley theory by Masahiro Mori. When asked straightforwardly if the respondents have ever felt uncomfortable looking at a robot, the answers are divided almost evenly with 56.7% answered yes and the rest, 43.3% of the respondents, answered no. This even almost even result may come from how the question is very general, it did not specify on what kind of robot. Nevertheless, when given scale questions to measure the level of uneasy feeling they feel looking at a robot, the results showed a clear result on which robot makes most of the participants feel uncomfortable and which does not.

The results of the survey, when matched with the chart of the uncanny valley, do prove the theory initiated by Masahiro Mori. The majority of the respondents feel neutral about the industrial robot, then majority feel very comfortable with the appearance of the toy robot, but then as the robot becoming more human-like, the respondents feel very uncomfortable by the appearance of the robot, especially of the Telenoid R1 robot. Then it reached back to the peak of comfort when it comes to healthy person.

Implications

As robots are designed to be more and more like humans, the responses of the people to the human-like appearance of robots need to also be more considered in the designing process, making sure that the robots do not give off any negative impression. To do so, the robotics engineers need to avoid the area where the uncanny valley falls at.

Conclusion

The use of robots in Japan has not only been about the technological advancement of the country, but it has also become a necessity. Due to the rapidly aging population and low productivity rates of Japan, the implementation of robots has become essential to keep the country's economy running. The development of robots is not only evolving around industrial robots but also around human-like robots. Many human-like robots' development focused on designing the robots to become as similar as a real human. The Uncanny Valley, identified by the Japanese robotic professor Masahiro Mori, hypothesized that a person's response to a humanlike robot would abruptly shift from empathy to revulsion as it approached, but failed to attain, a lifelike appearance.

A survey was held to see the responses of the people when shown various designs of human-like robots. The survey result showed that there is a clear pattern on which design makes the respondents felt uncomfortable. This pattern matched up with the chart of Uncanny Valley from Masahiro Mori and therefore proved the theory to be very likely to be true. By seeing the result of the survey, it can be concluded that the area where uncanny valley falls should be avoided by robotic engineers when designing the humanoid robots, it is to make sure that the appearance of the robot does not make anyone feels uncomfortable.

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Give Some, Take Some: An investigation into the use of mutual aid projects during the pandemic in Japan.

持ちつ持たれつ：日本のパンデミック時における相互扶助プロジェクトの利用に関する調査

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Summary:

本研究テーマは、日本におけるコロナウィルスのパンデミック時の相互扶助の利用である。「北長瀬コミュニティ冷蔵庫」のような相互扶助活動に対する態度を明らかにすることを目的とし、官僚主義に起因するギャップを相互扶助によって埋めることができるか調査した。パンデミックは、相対的貧困、食糧不安、政府による既存の支援の利用率の低さ等を露呈させた。日本政府や慈善団体等は、立場の弱いコミュニティ支援をしたが、スティグマや官僚主義によって、支援は十分に行き届いていない。よって、この状況が、一般市民による相互扶助を広く採用する機会になるかどうかも評価した。

Introduction

Japan has consistently had one of the highest levels of relative poverty amongst the OECD countries in the past two decades. Relative Poverty is defined as having 50% less than average household incomes. Issues such as an ageing population and stagnant economy, since the prolonged recession of the 1990's, have also put significant pressure on government spending. Gross government debt which has risen past 219% of GDP, the highest ever recorded in the OECD area. (OECD, 2017). Whilst public spending on cash transfers, services, and tax breaks for working age people and families in Japan during 2015 is amongst the lowest in the OECD, at just over 1.5% of GDP. These figures are important due to the consequence of people experiencing relative poverty being more vulnerable to having their income significantly impacted by the pandemic.

Mutual aid is defined as political and social participation; whereby, people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions. Mutual aid has become a popular topic surrounding discourses about how we can tackle the inequality and poverty that has been perpetuated by the pandemic. Subsequently, this research topic was created to examine the ongoing effects of the pandemic in Japan and solutions to overcome them. This topic was of particular interest to me due to opening

of Japan's first 'community fridge' opening in Okayama in 2020 for people in need during the coronavirus pandemic. The newly opened food fridge in Okayama offers fresh vegetables and perishables for free around the clock. This provides a lifeline to families struggling because of lost income and work due to covid restrictions. Whilst Japan also has significant stigma attached to charity and government help, researching mutual aid could provide solutions to navigate and bypass these cultural issues.

Relative Poverty and Stigma:

Japan has had some of the worst wealth inequality and highest rates of child poverty in the developed world this decade with a UNICEF report, released in April 2016, ranking it 34th out of a total 41 industrialised nations (Justin McCurry, 2017). An estimated 3.5 million children in Japan are from households who are experiencing relative poverty. Relative poverty is defined by the OECD as having income at or below 50% of the median national income. However, out of the 3.5 million children who are eligible for state support only 200,000 receive any (Justin McCurry, 2017). Campaigners believe that this is largely due to the stigmas attached to living on social security that exist in Japan.
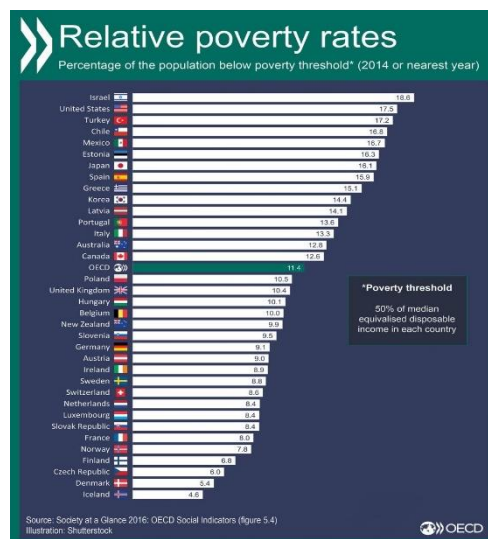
The existing literature by scholars provides a number of explanations for the stigma that is associated with the receipt of public assistance; known as Seikatsu Hogo. The Seikatsu Hogo system differs from the means testing found in the UK or Europe; this is because it asserts legal responsibility of the family through assessing whether relatives have the capacity to support

Figure 1: OECD Relative Poverty Rates table showing Japan having the 7th worst rate

members in need (Eileen Sutton, 2014). Benefit receipts become not just the shame of the individual recipient, but also the family network that has failed to support them (Nishio 1994). This poses as barrier to seeking out assistance from local government or charities.

Extensive research by scholars such as S. Omatsu   and Iwata Shoten tells us that service users report feelings of stigma related to receipt of social care services namely from experiencing welfare assessment processes, which they say can serve to reaffirm feelings of personal worthlessness and low esteem (Omatsu, 2008; Iwata, 2008). These characteristics such as welfare assessment processes do not apply to mutual aid projects.

Some groups also face significant obstacles in receiving assistance. A decision by Japan's Supreme Court in 2014 meant that permanent foreign residents of Japan are not entitled to welfare benefits, which has discouraged local authorities from helping these groups. Whilst Japan has provided all residents with one of stimulus payment of 100,000 yen via the Special Fixed Benefits (SFB) programme at the start of the pandemic; further payments was not being considered (Kubato et al 2020). Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato stated that various government support schemes were available. Mutual aid projects such as community fridges can therefore provide support in areas where future gaps of universal government support may develop.

Mutual Aid:

Mutual aid unlike charity and government issued social services, which commonly blame social problems on individuals' moral failings, recognizes that capitalist institutions are responsible for producing poverty, inequality, and violence. Mutual aid works to build lasting alternatives to state-sponsored systems of care by organizing grassroots networks of support that are reciprocal, transparent, and guided by participants' resources, skills, and knowledge. It is these characteristics and the separation from charity and institutional help that in theory could help bypass the social stigmas that exist in existing support solutions in Japan. (Alexia Arani 2020)

Mutual aid as a political concept was established based on the work of anarchist and scientist Peter Kropotkin. Kropotkin's 1902 book 'Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution' argued that human cooperation rather than competition is what has facilitated the survival of our species. He proposed that the most efficient and moral system of economic and social organization is one based on mutual exchanges rather than coercion and the profit-motive (John Gulick 2020). Assistance from public and private institutions is often insufficient and has lengthy processes in order to obtain. In Japan

these forms of assistance also come with stigma associated with them as discussed earlier. This is where mutual aid projects such as Okayama Fridge are able to fill the gaps. Mutual Aid is seen as a form of solidarity and is used by groups to generation community cohesion, therefore; it has the benefit of not being perceived as a form charity.

Mutual aid is not a form a charity, with many mutual aid groups using the slogan "Solidarity not Charity" to drive home this message. Charity groups create centralised institutions whereby one organisation is giving to others, forcing them to become dependent on yet another relationship negotiating their access to material resources. Mutual aid on the other hand aims to create and foster a symbiotic relationship, where all people offer material goods or assistance to one another. Mutual aid organizing is volunteer-run, transparent, and driven by the needs articulated by community members.

Kita-Nagase Community Fridge

One of the core purposes of this project is to establish whether mutual aid projects such as Kita-Nagase Community Fridge can make a difference. The first 'community fridge' opened in Okayama for people in need during the coronavirus pandemic. The newly opened food fridge in Okayama offers fresh vegetables and perishables for free around the clock. This provides a lifeline to families struggling as a result of lost income and work due to covid restrictions. The community fridge was set up by Kenichi Narita, who was inspired by his research of Hubbub a Charity which runs over 100 fridges in the UK.

Many studies have also highlighted that food banks are unable to provide a healthy balance of foods, relying heavily on non-perishable goods. With the current evidence suggesting that the dietary intake of food bank users does not meet government recommendations. Okayama's Kita-Nagase Community Fridge; however, is able to provide a wide variety of perishable food. Registered users can gain access 24 hours a day via a smartphone app, which unlocks the facility, making the service relatively easy to access compared to support from government and other institutions. These fridges offer a community-focused and co-operative solution to the challenges of delivering food justice, addressing food insecurity, and eliminating food waste. Whilst emergency solutions like food banks are sadly necessary when people reach a crisis point in their lives, community fridges can help people avoid needing food banks in the first place and assist people to move on from becoming reliant on them.

Methodology:

I used an anonymous online survey in order to investigate the use of and attitudes towards community fridges and mutual aid services in Japan. The use of a survey was the chosen strategy due to its panoramic view, efficiency, and effectiveness at collecting volumes of data; as well as the approach lending itself to quantitative data (Denscombe, 2010). This form of research could be done remotely and online which is important due to the limitations posed on my research because of the coronavirus pandemic.

In order to gather information and data regarding the attitudes towards mutual aid and its use in Japan during the pandemic, I designed a nine-question online survey. This survey was aimed at people living in Japan and was distributed through online communication channels provided by the University of Okayama. The following below represent the key questions from my survey:

1.   Have you lost income, including earning opportunities, during the coronavirus pandemic?
2.   Have you ever faced food insecurity?
3.   Have you ever used a mutual aid service or any another community service before?
4.   Have you heard about Kita-Nagase Community Fridge in Okayama?
5.   Kita-Nagase Community Fridge allows registrants to bring home food for free 24 hours a day. Would you try this service?

In total I received six responses to my survey, this was a lot smaller than expected but given the nature of the topic, questions regarding income loss and use of charity; this could be explained by the existing literature that suggests there is stigma attached to poverty and using government support. In future stressing the

8) この公共冷蔵庫では、登録者は24時間いつでも無料で食品を持ち帰ることができます。この サービスを使ってみようと思う。詳細 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbNmYtdOF6U (English: Kita-Nagase Community Fridge allows registrants to bring home food for free 24 hours a day. Would you try using this service? Details: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbNmYtdOF6U)
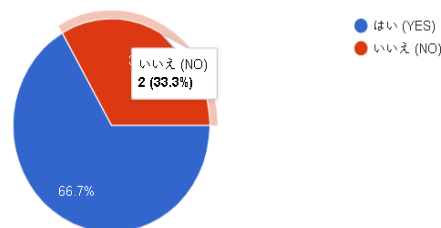
6 responses

Figure 1: Pie chart showcasing results of a key question

anonymous nature of the survey and omitting questions that could be perceived as personal would ensure a significant increase in the number of respondents.

The number of respondents that lost income or income earning opportunities during the pandemic was 50%, with 50% also stating they had faced food insecurity in their past. Whilst 66.7% also stated they would try using a service such as Kita-Nagase Community Fridge. All of the participants found the Okayama Community Fridge project to be a very good idea when asked to rate it using a 5-point scale from "I don't think it's good at all" to "I think it is a very good idea".

Conclusions

The results very much followed what was expected based on the existing literature regarding stigma around assistance in Japan. Although the respondents represent a small cohort, it provides us with insight to a difference in how mutual aid projects such as Okayama's Kita-Nagase Community Fridge is perceived in comparison to government support systems. Suggesting that these projects and community-based forms of assistance can fill gaps left behind by stigma and inaccessibility associated with government support systems and institutions. Kita-Nagase Community Fridge is housed in centrally located and publicly accessible place; that can be accessed 24/7 through utilising an app. This ensures surplus perishable food donated and provided by the community and is freely available to members of the public who need it. The surplus food is regularly provided by local businesses, restaurants, and members of the public. These actions can be considered forms of solidarity that not only instill a sense of community but can be leveraged to create social movements to bring changes to government policies and processes.

Although this research topic mainly focuses on Japanese citizens and their perception of mutual aid, it is also important to recognize that these projects can be a lifeline to foreign citizens in Japan. This is due to a number of issues, but mainly the issue of technically having no recourse to public funds such as welfare benefits. Other groups that are unable to easily navigate government bureaucracy due to barriers such as age, lack of Japanese language knowledge and disabilities may benefit significantly from access to mutual aid projects. The use community fridges can also fall into the category of preventing waste and has existing affinity with existing Japanese traditions such as mottanai; repurposing these existing concepts in the Japanese zeitgeist could ensure significant adoption of these types of projects. The concept of mottainai encompasses

the idea of respecting resources and not wasting them, along with an inherent recognition of their value. Thereby addressing multiple social and environmental issues simultaneously.

Issues of relative poverty, child poverty and food insecurity are long standing consequences of the lost decades of 1990's whereby the economy shrunk or was stagnant. Although there has been some respite in recent years this research project shows that much of Japan's is still vulnerable to these issues. Future governments may recognise the instability of ever-increasing social security spending; at a time where Japan's debt to GDP ratio has surpassed global records. The mass adoption and use of community fridges and mutual aid could in theory significantly reduce Japan's welfare bill significantly; whilst also reducing relative poverty. Future research could investigate economic and environmental impacts of mutual aid projects such as Community Fridges, as well as tracking whether Kita-Nagase Community Fridge in Okayama has been a success.

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Main Factors Affecting the Decision of Foreigners to Migrate to Japan for Academic or Professional Purposes
外国人が学術的または専門的な目的で日本に移住する決定に影響を与える主な要因

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高齢化社会の問題に対する 1 つの可能な解決策は、高齢化した労働力を移民労働者に置き換えることです。しかし、高齢化の問題に直面しているのは日本だけではないため、外国人の日本への移住の決定に影響を与える要因について調査する必要があります。以前の調査で作成された概念に従って、調査が実施され、EPOK の学生とさまざまな国の人々に配布され、これら 2 つのグループに違いがあるかどうかが比較されました。

1. Background

According to the Aging Demographic Data Sheet 2018, Japan has the highest proportion of citizens older than 65 of any country globally (IIASA 2018) and is therefore affected by the problem of an aging population and declining fertility rates. One of the possible solutions that is being proposed internationally is the substitution of the aging workforce with immigrants (Muysken et al. 2008, pp.15-18). However, in the current globalized world, individuals from different countries usually have a variety of possible choices for their migration destination, especially if they are highly skilled and well-educated. Additionally, globalization has emphasized the international qualification of workers which can benefit both the worker and even the economy of a country in general. Omura (2011) shows that the increase in foreign population by 30% in Japan 'boosted Japan's GDP by 0.16% without capital accumulation, and by 0.24% with capital accumulation' (Omura 2011, p. 13). Thus, the competition among developed nations when it comes to the acquisition of an international workforce is unavoidable, which makes the research on factors affecting the choice of the migration destination justifiable and relevant for possible future governmental policies (Koikkalainen 2011 p.47).

2. Objectives and Literature Review

A notable amount of research has previously been conducted on the migration motives of people from different countries, but not specifically on the contemporary migration to Japan. The prior research mainly points out the existence of push and pull factors that lead to migration (Winter-Ebmer 1994 pp.269-284, Koikkalainen 2011 pp.44-91, Mihi-Ramirez et al. 2014 pp.522-526). Since push factors act as factors that make individuals want to migrate away from their home country (e.g.Winter-Ebmber 1994 p.271, Mihi-Ramirez et al. 2014 p.523), they can't be really targeted by any Japanese governmental policy. Therefore, this research will mainly focus on the identification of current or potential future pull factors enhancing the desire of non-Japanese individuals to migrate to Japan for academic or professional purposes. Furthermore, the article by Koikkalainen (2011, pp.46-61) suggests the existence of economic and non-economic motives which are both relevant for the migration, but in the case of the migration of well-educated Finns to other European countries, the latter seems to play a more important role. 'For these educated Finns moving abroad is possibility, not a matter of survival, as it may be for many of those who cross national borders to work in the Global North to send money back home, or a matter of career obligations, as it may be for corporate executives moving from one global city to the next.' (Koikkalainen 2011, p.57). Thus, Koikkalainen concludes that the decision to migrate is usually based on different factors like family and personal growth, rather than just the level of the projective income in the destination country, which is especially the case for high skilled migrants from wealthy countries like Finland, which allows the assumption that non-economic motives might play a more important role in the case of the migration desire of highly skilled individuals from developed countries. Additionally, Koikkalainen (2011, pp.47-48) points out, that migration within Europe is quite easy due to the absence of bureaucratic hurdles.   Thus, inconvenient immigration policies can lead to the decreasing desire to migrate to Japan. This assumption can also be supported by the articles of Komine (2014, pp.197-222) and Hollifield and Sharpe (2017, pp.371-400). Komine shows that despite the evolving of the Japanese immigration policies throughout the last decades to a de facto immigration country, de jure Japan still stays a non-immigrant country, which makes further immigration into the Japanese society challenging, especially in the cases of national pension, health insurance system, arrangement of medical facilities and schools for non-Japanese speakers, etc. (Komine 2014 pp.205-216). Additionally, Hollifield and Sharpe (2017, p.383) argue that the rights package for foreign workers requires certain changes and extensions, especially if Japan wants to attract high skilled workers in order to substitute the aging workforce. In that sense, this research aims to examine whether the same can be said about the migration from various developed, western countries to Japan or not. Besides, to further explore the non-economic motives, the frequency and point in time of first

interaction with Japanese popular culture are being considered, as possible additional factors that might affect the decision to migrate to Japan.

3. Methodology

Based on the existing research on the topic of migration, an online survey that focuses specifically on the desire of non-Japanese individuals to migrate to Japan has been designed and handed out to exchange students at Okayama University, along with students from different countries who have never studied or worked in Japan. The survey uses the Likert scale, therefore collecting quantitative interval data, and contains six categories, with five statements per category, which cover the general motivation to migrate, knowledge about and perception of Japan, economic and non-economic motives, as well as the perception of possible migration-related bureaucratic hurdles, and social problems after migrating to Japan. Participants have been asked to state their opinion on each statement on a scale of 1(strong disagreement) to 5(strong agreement), as well as their demographic data at the end of the survey. The analysis of the results has been conducted using a chi-squared test due to the small size of the sample, comparing the answers of the two groups of students – those who are currently doing an exchange semester at Okayama, and therefore can be seen as more likely to migrate to Japan, and those who have not studied or worked in Japan, and are not inclined to migrate to Japan in the near future. With the help of the chi-squared test, the statistical dependence between answer scores in each category and the presence of a desire to study or work in Japan or not has been analysed. The following null hypothesis has been applied to each category, that has been mentioned above and used in the survey.

H0: The desire of the participants to migrate to Japan isn't affected by [category].

Additionally, the results of the survey will be compared with the concepts elaborated by prior research on migration to check, whether those concepts are applicable to the case of the contemporary migration to Japan or not. Finally, possible implications for future governmental policies or actions aimed to increase Japan's attractiveness as a migration destination, as well as suggestions for further research, will be pointed out.

4. Analysis and Evaluation
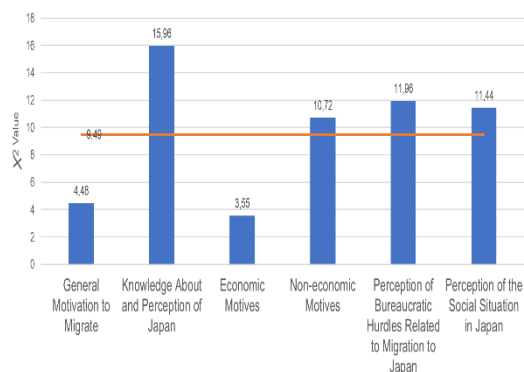
Ten individuals (n=10) have totally participated in the survey, with an equal distribution of both examined groups. 4 participants are female, and six are male. The age of the participants ranges from 19 to 24, meaning that the results may differ if the survey would have been handed out to participants of a different age group. Individuals from six different countries (Germany, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Malaysia, and the Netherlands) have participated, which reduces the probability of biased answers caused by the possible existence of some country-specific stereotypes about Japan. Due to the chosen significance level of 5% (a=0.05), the null hypothesis could not be rejected in the categories of the general motivation to migrate and the economic motives but has successfully been rejected in the remaining categories. Therefore, it can't be said that the exchange students at Okayama University are generally more likely to migrate or value economic motives more than the second group of participants. On the other hand, a correlation of the knowledge about and the perception of Japan, the importance of non-economic motives, as well as both the perception of bureaucratic hurdles related to migration to Japan and the perception of the social situation in Japan, to the desire to migrate or not to migrate to Japan can be assumed. Hence, the survey results support Koikkalainen's findings of non-economic motives being more important for immigrants from developed countries. Since the knowledge about and perception of Japan and desire to migrate to Japan are not independent, it can be assumed that those participants who are more likely to migrate to Japan either tend to know more about Japan, or have a better image of Japan, than the comparison group. However, all participants in both groups reacted to the statement 'I have a positive image of Japan' with either neutrality, agreement, or strong agreement, which strengthens the assumption that exchange students at Okayama University tend to know more about Japan, rather than simply having a positive image of Japan. This can also be supported by the differences in the perception of the bureaucratic hurdles related to migration to Japan among the two groups of participants. In this category, participants who are not inclined to migrate to Japan in the near future have stated their opinion with the neutral option noticeably more often than they did in other categories, as well as more often than the participants from the group of exchange students, indicating a lack of knowledge about Japanese immigration policies. Additionally, 80% of all participants disagreed with the statement 'It is easy to migrate to Japan', which shows a negative impression of foreigners of the immigration process to

Japan. The perception of the social situation in Japan also supports the results pointed out by prior research. For instance, as shown by prior research, there is a lack of medical, educational, and governmental facilities for non-Japanese speakers (Komine 2014 pp.205-216). Accordingly, 70% of all participants of the conducted survey disagreed with the statement 'I think that I wouldn't have language-related problems in Japan'. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents disagreed with the statement 'I would like to live in Japan with my current or future family', supporting Hollifield and Sharpe, who argue that Japan should expand the rights granted to foreign workers, especially in terms of family reunification, in order to become a more attractive destination for highly-skilled foreign workers (Hollifield, Sharpe 2017, p.383). Besides, Kawashima (2020, pp.1-19) examined the migration of Japanese people and pointed out the discontent with poor working conditions such as 'chronic unpaid overwork, extreme stress, poor physical and mental health, and insufficient prospects for career mobility' (Kawashima 2020, p.5) as one of the main reasons for Japanese people to migrate to China. The same image of the Japanese working culture as very stressful, demanding, with a few holidays and a tremendous amount of required overwork is quite often being portrayed in various international media (e.g., Demetriou 2020). Therefore, it is not surprising that 60% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement 'I have a positive image of the working conditions in Japan', with the other 40% choosing the neutral option. On the other hand, 90% of the participants agreed with the statement 'A healthy work-life balance is important for me', as well as 80% with 'Further personal growth is important for me', but 80% disagreed that 'Moving to Japan would be, or has been, beneficial for my career'. This shows that the working conditions in Japan as well as the career opportunities are being perceived negatively not only by Japanese nationals but also by foreigners. However, as shown by the chi-squared test, the perception of moving to Japan as not beneficial for the career doesn't have a significant effect on the desire to migrate to Japan as part of the economic motives. Regarding the importance of Japanese popular culture, all the participating exchange students have interacted with Japanese popular culture for the first time at the age of 13 and younger, but in the case of the second group, all participants except one had their first interaction at the age of 14 to 18. Additionally, among participants from both groups, 50% agreed that news, and 70% that Japanese animation, has a high influence on their perceived image of Japan. Therefore, the assumption can be made that an earlier interaction with Japanese popular culture has an influence on the desire to migrate to Japan, and both news and Japanese animation can be used as tools to affect the perception of Japan by non-Japanese individuals.

5. **Implications for Possible Future Governmental Policies or Actions**

As mentioned by prior research (Hollifield and Sharpe 2017 pp.371-400, Komine 2014 pp.197-222), there certainly are improvements in terms of the immigration policies in Japan, but problems and hurdles still remain, which is also shown by the survey conducted as part of this research. Possible changes could be granting family reunification rights to foreign workers, since 'Japan is the only liberal democracy that does not grant family reunification rights to foreign workers' (Hollifield and Sharpe 2017, p.383). The importance of family reunification rights is also underlined by Koikkalainen, who shows that for a significant number of respondents joining a foreign spouse was the main motivation to migrate (Koikkalainen 2011, p.54). Furthermore, in line with the research by Komine (2014, pp.197-222), and with 70% of participants disagreeing with the statement 'I think that I wouldn't have language-related problems in Japan', the support of medical, educational, and administrative facilities for non-Japanese speakers could also be enhanced. Additionally, as mentioned above, many of the participants who are not inclined to migrate to Japan in the near future know noticeably less about Japanese immigration policies, than those participants who are more likely to migrate to Japan. Thus, not only improvements in that field are needed, but also a general increase of awareness and understanding of the Japanese immigration policies which could, for example, be achieved by advertising the migration to Japan after the implementation of further positive changes to the current immigration policies. Such advertisement campaigns could be conducted through both the news, and Japanese animation since these mass media seem to be highly important for the emergence of an image of Japan for non-Japanese individuals. Even though according to the survey conducted as part of this research, platforms like YouTube and other social networks didn't seem to have a major influence on the image of Japan, with only 30% and 20% respectively agreeing that these mass media have had a high influence on their image of Japan, there are many relatively popular foreign content creators in Japan, who could also be part of the advertising campaign. In most cases, those content creators migrated to Japan themselves, and therefore will definitely acknowledge positive changes related to the immigration policy, the support of facilities for non-Japanese speakers, etc. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the lack of a sufficient work-life balance seems to be a major problem not only for Japanese nationals, but is also negatively perceived by foreigners, and therefore needs to be addressed by future governmental policies. As mentioned by Demetriou (2020), one possible reason for a missing work-life balance is the lack of communication within the company, which is directly connected with workers being afraid to leave earlier or to be absent more often than their colleagues or managers. In that sense, the stimulation of an open communication culture seems to be crucial to improve the work-life balance on the Japanese labour market.

However, governmental interventions that would make the use of the holidays granted by law mandatory can also be efficient.

6. **Conclusion**

This research showed that many of the concepts conducted by prior research about migration can successfully be applied in the case of Japan. Even though there certainly are many problems, that have been pointed out and that negatively affect the decision of foreigners to migrate to Japan, they all can be addressed and improved, and according to prior research, such improvements are indeed happening. In order to enhance those improvements, further research could focus on indicating more specific problems that need to be addressed by Japanese governmental policies, as well as whether similar problems have occurred in different countries, and how they have dealt with them. Were those solutions successful and could they be applied in Japan? Additionally, the influence of popular culture on the image of Japan and the desire of non-Japanese individuals to migrate to Japan has been touched in this research but needs to be further analysed since all of the participants from different parts of the world have interacted in some way with Japanese popular culture at a young age, which allows the assumption that the popularity of Japanese animation, music, films, novels, etc. could be further used to enhance the desire of foreigners to migrate to Japan, and therefore, help to substitute the aging Japanese workforce.

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Mental issues caused by the Covid-19 on Japanese university students, and possible repercussion on the society in the future

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要旨：Covid-19 による緊急事態のため、教育制度が変更になりました。 大学生のメンタルヘルスにどの問題を生じたのかわかることが目的です。

　オンラインで見つけた記事のデータを使えました。方法論はアンケートとインタビューです。イタリア人学生 59 名、日本人学生 90 名、その他の国籍の学生 14 名がアンケートに参加しました。インタビューにはイタリア人学生 2 名と日本人学生 2 名とオランダ学生 1 名が参加しました。

見つかった記事のデータと、アンケートとインタビューの結果を考慮すると、この現象はグローバルなものであると考えられます。学生の国籍は様々ですが、その悩みは似ています。何もしなかったら、将来社会の問題になるでしょう。

Introduction

　　　　The recent global pandemic of Covid-19, due to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has caused many problems for various aspects of society. One of these is the university environment. I personally have experienced anxiety and depression due to the lockdown state imposed by the Italian government, and because of this, my university career has been negatively affected.

Like me, I have seen many college students who have gone through a similar experience. So I began to wonder if this was more than just a local phenomenon confined to my university.

　　　　My initial hypothesis was that this phenomenon had been perceived similarly by all students around the world because no matter how different one's culture may be, human beings are very similar in nature to one another

in my opinion. So I thought I would start to see if Japanese university students had gone through similar experiences. After all, if my hypothesis is correct, comparing experiences can only help the parties involved to better understand what the best solutions are.

Because of this, I think it is important to address this topic partly because having experienced it first hand, I know how much it can weigh on someone's psyche and I would like to do what I can to help students in a similar situation and let them know that they are not alone.

Methodology

First, I checked the internet for articles discussing similar problems in Japan. Being a relatively recent phenomenon, it was not easy, but in the end, I managed to find some articles that I think are interesting and relevant to my research. Among these, the most interesting is the article "The mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on university students: A literature review and clinical experience" by KAJITANI Kosuke, TSUCHIMOTO Rikako and SATO Takeshi, from the Center for Health Science and Counseling, Kyushu University.

This article was very useful to me, as having limited resources and time, it was difficult for me to reach a large number of subjects. Thus, I thought I would focus this research more on personal experiences: I began by drafting a questionnaire with questions aimed at understanding participants' perceptions of their own mental health during the State of Emergency. This was followed by questions aimed at understanding participants' opinions of online classes and the universities' response to the emergency. Finally, the questionnaire concludes with some open-ended questions aimed at gathering participants' personal experiences and thoughts.

As a follow-up to the questionnaire, I thought it would be interesting to do some interviews with some students. So through the questionnaire, I gave the opportunity to those who wanted to volunteer for a personal interview with me through Zoom, so that they could freely share their experiences, opinions, and possible solutions to improve the current situation of students and universities.

This last part of the research proved to be incredibly informative and interesting, despite not having the time or opportunity to interview many students. I think that being able to share your experiences may be one of the

possible avenues you can take to improve the state of things.

Literature Review

I used research of pre-existing sources in order to better understand the general situation in Japan, and get a better idea of what direction to give my questionnaire and interviews. In addition, I was interested in knowing if and what solutions had been adopted by Japanese institutions.
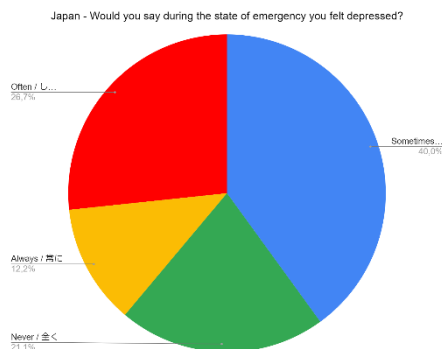
The first article I considered (The Psychological Impact of 'Mild Lockdown' in Japan during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Nationwide Survey under a Declared State of Emergency) shows how, compared to previous years, the numbers of psychological distress among the Japanese population nearly doubled during the mild lockdown period. From a 29.6% incidence of psychological distress in a 2019 survey, to a 48.1% incidence in 2020. The highest incidence is seen in the age range of 20-64 years.

The second article (The mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on university students: A literature review and clinical experience) I found much more consistent with my research. It discusses the psychological effects found on university students in Japan, presenting data of great value, since the limitation of means and time prevented me from reaching such a large number of subjects.

This last article was also the one that convinced me to continue with this research idea. I was very impressed to read how even in Japan many students have experienced problems such as depression, anxiety and a sense of loneliness that were all extensively documented in this article through the use of special psychological tests on a large base of students in Japan.

In this article, testimony given regarding why some students find themselves in this state are also discussed. For example, it is pointed out how the lack of extracurricular activities such as various clubs contributes to the sense of isolation. Another testimonial, on the other hand, tells of how some students feel a sense of inadequacy and guilt, as if by staying home they are failing their parents, and in some cases even society.

In the article, these discourses are expanded into a list of reasons why the emergency period has negative effects on students' mental health. Some I will address later when I analyze the personal interviews I did, for the others, I highly recommend reading the aforementioned article.

Japan - Would you say during the state of emergency you felt depressed?

Often / し...
28,7%

Sometimes...
40,0%
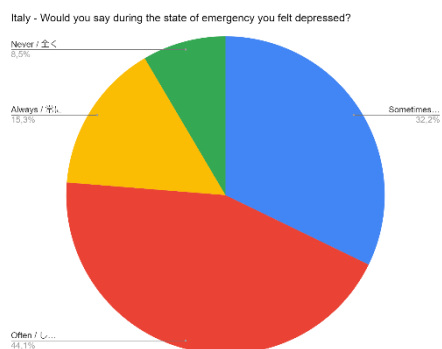
Always / 常に
12,2%

Never / 全く
21,1%

Questionnaire

59 Italian students, 90 Japanese students, and 14 international students from countries other than the two previously mentioned participated in my anonymous questionnaire.

First, I found it interesting that at the question where I asked participants where they spent the lockdown period, 10% of the Japanese students responded that they spent the period in a house by themselves, while among the Italian students there was no one who mentioned spending the period living on their own. Despite this, if we look at the graph with the participants' perception of a state of loneliness, Japanese students seem to have felt it much less, with 24.4% responding "often" as opposed to 42.4% of Italians and 12.2% "always" as opposed to 16.9% of Italians. furthermore, even on the positive side, we have 32.2% of Japanese responding "never" as opposed to 11.9% of Italians.

Regarding the data on participants' perception of a state of depression, as we can see from the graphs on the left, again Japanese students seem to have had a milder psychological impact than Italian students.

Very similar proportions can be found for data on the perception of anxiety states during the lockdown.

So in general, based on the simple data in the graphs, it can be assumed that Japanese students responded better to this phenomenon. However, I would like to emphasize that my questionnaire, unlike the data collected from the articles mentioned above, does not use methods questions designed to determine the actual depressive state of the participants. My intention is simply to outline the perception of one's mental state, so these data are not necessarily to be considered as "number of depressed students", but rather as "number of students who perceived a feeling of depression".

Italy - Would you say during the state of emergency you felt depressed?

Never / 全く
8,5%

Always / 常に
15,3%

Sometimes...
32,2%

Often / し...
44,1%

Despite this, I believe that the numbers are very significant since we have a remarkable percentage of students who have experienced a period of mental distress, which, even if it does not result in an actual clinical case, if ignored can lead to a worsening of the student's mental

health.

Moving on to the next topic, it can be seen from the data that the trend toward a more positive perception of Japanese students extends to the university setting as well: with 23.3% of participants satisfied with how online classes were conducted, and 26.7% of participants dissatisfied. Opposed to a similar 25.4% of Italian students satisfied with online classes, however, flanked by 40.7% of dissatisfied students.

From the image on the left, one can see the data regarding Japanese participants' satisfaction with the university's response to the state of emergency. One can immediately notice the fact that the percentage of satisfied students is much lower and the percentage of dissatisfied students
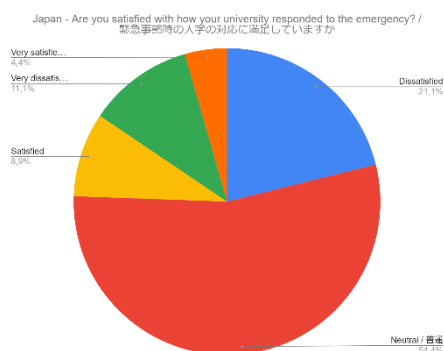
is slightly higher when compared to the perception of online classes.

The only difference with the Italian percentages lies in the lower number of neutral responses and almost double the number of "Very Dissatisfied" responses and a slightly higher percentage of "Dissatisfied" responses.

This in my opinion, after reading the responses to the open-ended personal questions in the questionnaire and information from the interviews, in both countries is due to the universities' lack of accurate and prompt communications with the students. In addition, there were several opinions that there was a perception of neglect towards students most in need of financial aid.

The last part of the questionnaire I think is also the most interesting. Participants were given the opportunity to answer three questions:

1. Is there anything you wish your university had handled differently? / あなたの大学に直してほしいと思うことはありますか

2. What is the worst thing caused by the state of emergency to you personally? / あなたにとって緊急事態によって引き起こされる最悪の事態は何ですか

3. Was there anything that helped you feel better? / 気分転換するために役立つものはありましたか？

As I had surmised the answers to these questions are very similar regardless

of the nationality of the respondent.

For the first question, as mentioned earlier, a fair number of participants complained about poor communication from their universities. Complaints about the lack of financial aid for students who found themselves in need were also common. Particularly for Japanese students, many said that they had to stop working part-time because of covid, and because of this they had many difficulties.

Regarding the second question, predictably the vast majority of responses were about being isolated and lacking contact with friends and family in some cases. There was no shortage of responses regarding a growing feeling of depression and uncertainty about one's future. Some Japanese participants even went so far as to respond "引き込もり" (hikikomori). To this last answer I can add a personal note: I having a past of social isolation, managed to overcome thanks to my entrance to the university, after finding myself in forced isolation due to the lockdown, my mental state took a hard hit. I was only able to stay afloat thanks to a dear friend I met inside the student housing I was stuck in.
In this question, however, I also noticed a very interesting detail that the professor who followed my research initially pointed out to me. Among the Japanese participants, there are sometimes mentions of "death", while in the responses of the Italian participants this topic is not mentioned even once.

With the last question, the responses once again were very similar and according to my predictions: most responded that contact with other people, especially with recent technology, helped a lot. Physical activity and taking care of one's health also seem to have beneficial effects in isolated situations. Finally, very common response also was support from loved ones.

Personal interviews

I was able to interview 2 Italian students, 2 Japanese students, and 1 Dutch student. Since the topic deals with personal aspects of one's self, I thought the best way to conduct the research was to set it up as a chat between friends, trying to put the interviewee at ease as I asked about their experience and personal opinions on various aspects regarding the lockdown period.

First, almost all respondents said that the biggest challenge was the

loss of a routine. Prior to the pandemic, college helped to pace out activities throughout the day, but with the sudden lockdown, the organization of a daily schedule became very difficult, resulting in various difficulties in following through with their studies. Moreover, the same interviewees stated that online classes offer little motivation to be followed. In this regard, I found it very interesting that the Italian and Dutch respondents said that online classes were a source of great stress, and therefore were difficult to follow. But this problem was no longer there once they started attending the online classes from Okayama University. When I asked why, I was told that when you are in the classroom, you are in an environment where the student is one of many, while during online classes when you have to interact with the lesson you find yourself at the center of attention of people who until recently you were used to interacting in person.

When it came to universities, all interviewees praised the speed with which their universities had adopted online teaching, allowing for continuity of classes. But they complained that communication with students was slow and erratic and that many times the needs of struggling students were ignored.
In this regard, I also asked what one thing they wished universities would do. The two Japanese respondents answered, "Keep clubs open" and "Offer better wi-fi in facilities used to take online classes."

I also asked the respondents, what advice they would give to students struggling with the lockdown. Four of them responded that staying in touch with friends through the internet is most important. One Japanese respondent, on the other hand, answered that for him exercise helped him.

Finally, there was one phrase repeated by almost every interviewee that really struck me. Obviously, everyone used different words, but it can be summed up with a quote from one of the interviewees, "University is not just about study and classes, it's about people. You can't expect to run a university without people contact."

Conclusions

As per my initial hypothesis, this research confirmed that this phenomenon is not limited to one university or one country, but that it breaks down socio/cultural barriers and afflicts students in similar ways regardless of their nationality. It was surprising to see how similar the

issues and thoughts of students from two countries so different and distant from each other are.

Regarding possible solutions to help students: it is difficult to come up with a plan of action without hearing both sides of the issue, in this case, the university representatives, but I think this is a really good place to start. For example, I think it would benefit both parties to open a dedicated channel of communication between the university and the students so that the latter can understand the motivations behind the decisions made by the university and at the same time the university can take into consideration the problems and needs of the students.

Another little help for students would be for universities to create special online clubs, which can be of any kind, but in my opinion, it would help a lot to have one dedicated to connecting students who are struggling in order to allow them to share their experiences.

In addition, many students expressed the idea that a combination of "in-person" and "online" teaching would be great as a new teaching standard.

It is not hard to think in my opinion that these problems may affect various aspects of society in the future, such as in the work and teaching environment. For example, many students expressed fear and uncertainty about their preparedness to face the future and the eventual search for a job. Others said they were so demoralized by the problems in coping with their studies that they were considering dropping out of college.

These thoughts, while not majority, when viewed through the lens of large numbers can have a huge impact on society in the long run. Not to mention the mental health repercussions of such individuals. It is possible that students who have faced depression and anxiety due to the online modes of instruction and fell behind with their studies, in the future when they find themselves abruptly returning to campus with "standard" teachings may experience a shock due to stress and the thought of not being prepared to return to face in-person classes and exams.

I hope that this research will be the first step in many more research efforts to address these issues. There are many aspects that I could not address due to lack of resources and time, such as the situation of university staff, or non-university school environments. In my opinion, these difficulties faced by students at this particular point in time can teach a lot about how to deal with similar situations in the future, and it is worth

investing time and resources to help those involved.

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The differences in behaviours and social views between Japan and The Netherlands towards Hikikomori
ひきこもりに対する日オランダの行動や社会的見解の違い

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Summary

This thesis aims to analyse and explain the differences between Japan and The Netherlands when it comes to Hikikomori and how it is viewed by the public. By surveying people in both The Netherlands and Japan, I will get a decent view of the general opinion and knowledge of the people. Therefore, my statement is as follows: Because Hikikomori is a recognized mental illness in Japan, it's has a different social view compared to The Netherlands, where it is not a recognized mental illness. And my goal is to answer the question of why Hikikomori is more common in Japan than in the Netherlands and why the opinions and conclusions are different from those in the Netherlands.

このレポートは、ひきこもりに関する日本とオランダの違いを分析し、説明することを目的としています。　両国の人々を調査することで、一般的な見解を理解することができます。調査によると、ひきこもりは日本で認知されている精神疾患であり、認知されていないオランダとは社会的な見方が異なります。私の目標は、なぜひきこもりがオランダよりも日本で一般的であるのか、そしてなぜ意見や結論が異なるのかを明らかにすることです。

Introduction

My name is Jacqueline Huijzer, and I am an exchange student in the EPOK program at Okayama University. For my exchange program, I will be writing a thesis regarding a social topic in Japan. My main topic will be Hikikomori. I came across this phenomenon during one of my other online classes I was following, foreign perspectives. During one of these classes, we were discussing the longevity in Japan, about the number of old people and the lack of younger people. From there on we dove into the discussion as to why there weren't as many babies nowadays, as there were in the past. One of the reasons was that woman prioritize their career, resulting in them having less time for a family. Even if they start a family, they receive less help during their childcare leave and have no choice but to look for a less demanding job. Another reason was Hikikomori, a phenomenon where people withdraw themselves from society and have no interest in any sort of interacting with other people, even less interest in relationships. From there

on my interest peaked and I wanted to know more about this phenomenon.

My interest came mainly from the fact that I had never heard of it, and I also didn't know it existed due to its absence in The Netherlands at all. This made me think about how it maybe is only a Japanese concept, or why it is only in Japan and not where I am from.

Methods

The following methods were used to conduct this research. Two surveys, one towards Dutch people regarding their views and thoughts on hikikomori, while the other was filled out by Japanese people regarding their views and thoughts on hikikomori, Next, several interviews with people who had dealt with hikikomori or are dealing with hikikomori, were analysed to understand their mindset and what could be done to help them get back into society.

What is Hikikomori and how is it viewed in Japan?

In chapter 1, the background information regarding hikikomori is included together with the explanation of the view on hikikomori from the perspectives of the Japanese people. This includes civilians, students and people who suffer or have suffered from hikikomori. After that I will be using the result of the survey to analyse and explain the view, the public (who filled in the survey) has on the matter.

The definition of Hikikomori and its origin

Hikikomori is a Japanese term that is defined by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare as someone who avoids personal or social contact and lives in self-imposed isolation for six months or longer. The overall population of hikikomori is unclear since not everyone is diagnosed and or reported as such due to them being homeless for example. As of now, the government estimated the population, aged from 15 to 64 to be around 1.15 million, but according to Saito Tamaki, a leading expert on this matter, that the population is 2 million (Tamaki, 2019). The number of cases is mainly based on the hotline calls and if it gets reported, so the actual number is guesswork.

The hikikomori phenomenon drew attention during the late 1990s in Japan. People with hikikomori usually suffered from mental ailments like depression, developmental disorder, or personality disorder. Although the factors varied, the main cases were of people who had suffered abuse, bullying or harassment at school/workplace. Another issue was (is) negligence caused by the family, where the affected people were not given enough love or given communication experience within their home (Kiyoshi, 2017). Several sources claim that people from families with above-average income are more likely to become hikikomori (due to too controlling parents or too much affection), rather than people from non-financially stable households.

In worst-case scenarios, the condition of a hikikomori may get so serious that they lose their moral compass. They lose the ability to understand the importance of human life and do not feel empathy for people who are suffering. In some cases, they cannot bear to see other people happy. Take for example the Kawasaki Incident, where an unemployed hikikomori, stabbed and injured 19 children and killed 3 of them.

Furthermore, there are no government supporter facilities in place for helping hikikomori people. There are only those who are owned by individuals or businesses. This shows that the government of Japan is not dealing with this issue or rather, is not taking its severity, seriously. This can become a very big problem according to Yoshida Masashi, a custodian and counsellor in a hikikomori rehab centre (Masashi, 2019).

According to psychiatrist Saitō Tamaki, since there is a lack of respect for individuals in Japan, it is very difficult for those with hikikomori. "People who aren't useful to society or their family are seen as having no value. When hikikomori hears the government's rhetoric about promoting 'the dynamic engagement of all citizens,' they're liable to take it to mean that their inability to be 'dynamically engaged' makes them worthless. This drives them into a mental corner'' (Tamaki, 2019).

Survey analysis with the perspective of Japanese students

The majority of people who filled in the survey are between the ages of 18-25 and live in Japan. All were familiar with the term hikikomori and were able to give me other terms that often relate to it, namely NEET, Hermitism or when the person is a student, it is called truant (不登校 Futoko).

When asked about their opinion (whether positive, neutral or negative) on hikikomori, all answers came back 'neutral' or 'negative' with an explanation as to why. Their 'negative' opinions did not all mean in terms of; behaving negatively towards the hikikomori people themselves, but more so towards the concept of it, and how the problem itself is very negative and has bad effects on the people and the economy. Explanations included reasons like: '' *I am fine with someone choosing to be socially distant from others but living off your parents and doing nothing even though you can be working/studying is living as a parasite*.'' And '*'I can understand why people suffer from Hikikomori and I think it should not be seen as a negative thing. There should be more organisations helping people to deal with these anxieties so that eventually people can live their lives again.*'' And '' *I think it something negative for the person who has it and the direct people involved for that person*.''

I also asked what they thought society's view was, which came back as follows: '' *I would say it is negative. Because society thinks they are useless and unable to contribute to themselves/their parents.*'' And '' *In Japan, people have the idea that it is normal to go to school and to work after graduation. Therefore, I think many people feel that being a recluse is spoiled and view it negatively.*'' This shows that it all points back to what is considered normal and what society

standards are.

All in all, the opinions differ in some way, but Japanese people are well aware of the existence of the phenomenon, but the survey also shows that they would rather not talk about this or mental health altogether, since only 7 people responded to the survey request.

And even though it is said by several psychiatrists and people working in that field, that it is a severe problem that will only get worse if there is no intervention, no actions by the government have been taken yet. For now, hikikomori people living in Japan can only depend on those rehabs' centres set up by entrepreneurs and individuals.

Why is this phenomenon not recognized as a mental illness in The Netherlands?

In chapter 2 the situation in the Netherlands regarding hikikomori will be examined. It will include research from stories, newspapers, or videos for mentions of this phenomenon (If it is, in fact, present, if it is hidden under a different name, if there are hidden cases). And if the fact that it is not recognized as a mental illness, is due to the lack of cases or if it is described as a different mental disorder according to psychologists. The survey result will be used to get a better picture of how much Hikikomori is present in the Netherlands and get their opinion on the matter.

Although hikikomori is an international issue, there are almost no mentions of it being in The Netherlands. According to Saitō Tamaki, this problem mostly emerged in family-centred societies, in which young adults continue to live with their parents after reaching legal age (Tamaki, 2019). Take for example South Korea, where there are reported to be over 300,000 Hikikomori cases.

When conducting the Dutch survey, the characteristics of hikikomori were described and the respondents were asked to answer what they thought, the mental illness was that those characteristics belonged to. Over 20 people responded, and these are the most frequent used answers; 1) 33% said depression, 2) 23% said social anxiety and 3) 28% said a combination of numbers 1 and 2. 60% of the respondents had heard of the term Hikikomori before, mainly through social media, like YouTube or documentaries/Netflix. When asked with what term people with hikikomori might be diagnosed with, they answered with 1) depression, 2) social anxiety 3) Kluizenaar (Hermit) or 4) culture-bound syndrome.

The Dutch term, '*kluizenaar*[1]' translates to 'hermit' in English and it originated in Egypt.

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[1] the hermit noun (m.) Pronunciation: [ˈklœyzənar] Inflections: hermit|s (plural) one who lives in isolation from others.

It is a term, used for people who, for religious reasons, close themselves of from society. This can also be described as a monk. In earlier times, choosing to become a *kluizenaar* was a decision for life and could not be changed (Encyclo, n.d.). This is, however, not a medical term nor does it convey the same characteristics as the term hikikomori. Nowadays, this term is rarely used, so for now it is not relevant to this research.

To conclude this chapter, Hikikomori is a mental health condition, without a doubt. So, it is safe to assume, if this phenomenon were to be actively present in the Netherlands, it would be seen for what it is, like in many other countries.   But due to the lack of cases and stories online, it is unclear to say if hikikomori is present in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is likely that, as said by the respondent to the survey, it may be conveyed and treated as a different kind of mental health problem, just not under the same name. Although there is a stigma surrounding mental health. But there is a mental health care system set in place that will help anyone dealing with any type of mental health problem. You can and will receive help, from diagnosis to treatment.

Why do people in Japan have different behaviours towards Hikikomori in comparison to The Netherlands?

This chapter will explain why there is a difference between the behaviours towards hikikomori, between Japan and the Netherlands. Cultural insight of both countries will be given at the beginning of the chapter for more understanding.

Starting with the term itself, the social condition was first discovered in Japan and the term hikikomori itself is also Japanese like mentioned in the first chapter. Meaning that Japanese people are familiar with the phenomenon and have their prejudices and opinions, whether they are positive or negative. Whereas this term is not yet actively present or not yet picked up in the Netherlands, meaning that they are unable to even have a full opinion on the matter due to the lack of knowledge.

Second, both Japan and the Netherlands are very different. There is cultural diversity. Japan is a high context culture where good communication is indirect, subtle, layered and a lot of 'reading between the lines' whereas the Netherlands is a low context culture where good communication can be very straightforward, simple, clear and messages are understood at face value (Bansal, 2021).

There are plenty of other reasons why Hikikomori might be more common in Japan, but for this report, only the following information will be discussed. Other reasons are not ruled out.

Cultural insights

The following information is taken from HOFSTEDE INSIGHTS, which provides

cultural insights.

Japan shows many characteristics of a collectivistic society. Meaning that people belong to groups and the harmony of a group is more important than the expression of individual opinions and loyalty is key. Next to this, Japan is a paternalistic society, where the family name and asset goes from father to eldest son. Japan is also one of the most Masculine societies in the world, which means that it is driven by achievement and success and success is defined by, *wanting to be the best*. And due to this, they often are, the best (Hofstede insights, n.d.). Lastly, Japan is one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries on earth. This may be because Japan is constantly threatened by natural disasters. They have learned to prepare themselves for any uncertain situation be it an emergency plan for natural disasters or mundane situations like weddings.

The Netherlands is a very individualistic society. Meaning that individuals are only expected to care for and take care of themselves and their families. It is also a Feminine society, in comparison to the Masculine society, it is more important to keep the life and work balance. It is a '*like what you do*' over '*be the best*' society (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).   Next, their need for avoiding uncertainty is lower than Japan. Meaning that there are certain etiquettes, that are followed, but there is less need. This may be because, among other reasons, the Netherlands does not deal with natural disasters as Japan does. Now, going back to hikikomori, with the above-mentioned information, it will be easier to understand the differences in views.

Expectations and effects

Starting with the expectations, that also takes a big part in the hikikomori matter.   Japan is a paternalistic society with established views on gender roles. The boys should go outside(外), become a salaryman, participate in the workforce, and the girls should stay inside (内), married, taking care of the household and raising a family. Both genders also have different expectations set by their parents. The boys have 'a set path', where they have to enter an elite university and ultimately work at a top corporation. If this path is not followed, the son is seen as a failure.

Due to these set roles and rules, it is cultural bound (uncertainty avoidance), or family bound (paternalistic), when one does not follow this path, they have deemed a failure. There are no second chances because when one has chosen to withdraw from society, they 'commit' academic suicide which also leads to longer seclusions periods. This is mainly due to the gap or blanks it would create in their resume due to their seclusions, they are less likely to be hired when there is a blank present because it is deemed 'problematic' (Dziesinski).

Whereas in the Netherlands, quality of life is the central point, and these expectations

are not present. *'Like what you do'* is the main point and it is nobody's business but your own, in what you decide to do with your life. The traditional gender roles have been changing over time and these roles show more overlap nowadays, gradually giving power to both sexes equally.

According to Mr Kanzaki, a hikikomori living in Japan, it is due to them having social disorders, or behaving differently than the norm, that they are perceived as strange and not easily accepted by society. Since Japan is a monoculture, it is too much of a risk to stand out. According to him, there is no way for him to live freely until different personalities are respected, and they **need** recognition of individuality. But due to the country's high need for Uncertainty Avoidance, it is why changes are so difficult to realize in Japan.

Conclusion

Hikikomori is a mental health condition that originates in Japan. It is an international issue; however, it is not present in The Netherlands due to a lack of cases and mentions. It may likely be conveyed and treated as a different kind of mental health disorder. Furthermore, opinions and views on the phenomenon differ due to the cultural differences and the roles and rules that are in place. Japanese people are well aware of the existence of the phenomenon Hikikomori, whereas the Dutch have only heard about it online if at all, so for them, it is a foreign concept. It is a severe problem that needs recognition to support those with hikikomori and help lead them back into society. For that to happen, like said by Mr Kanzaki, acknowledge the existence of hikikomori, recognize individuality and respect different personalities.

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Honne and *Tatemae*: Communication across Japanese Society

本音と建前：日本社会でのコミュニケーション

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要旨：本音と建前は日本の社会文化的価値の一つである。本研究では、この文
化を解明するため、日本在住者を対象にして本音と建前に関する意識を調べる
ためのオンラインアンケートと、マレーシアでの補完的文化を調査するためオ
ンラインインタビューを行った。日本人は本音と建前を意識し、見分けたり、
使い分けることができる。本音と建前は、最終的には調和を保つためのもので
あるが、定義は人により大きく異なっていた。マレーシアにも同様な文化が存
在するが、日本では明確に使用され、独特なもとなっている。

Introduction & Literature Review

Japan is no stranger to many unique sociocultural values, and one of it includes the culture of *honne* and *tatemae*. As preface, *honne* and *tatemae* can be defined as simply as "façade" and "true intentions" respectively, but what this culture exactly entails is not entirely as simply definable as two words. Thus, this research intends on studying the recognized cultural phenomena present in the Japanese society.

Personally, I have come to wanting to research this topic particularly after befriending Japanese peers. As a Buddy in my home university, I have made a fair share of Japanese friends and was able to see a 'pattern,' made visible from my multiple encounters and the process of getting to know them more than an inconsequential 'acquaintance.' For example, they would instinctively say 'yes' even though they did not seem to understand what I was speaking to them. Also, they would immediately say a food is tasty, even though they may not visibly seem to particularly enjoy it. After few times of similar occurrences and coming to learn about these two terms of *honne* and *tatemae*, it piqued my interest as to see how people living in Japan, both natives and foreigners alike, think about this culture. With the opportunity granted to me in joining EPOK, I was able to conduct research to elucidate the complex nature of this culture.

From the literatures, the definitions of *honne* and *tatemae* varied, although there seems to be a recurrent theme. *Tatemae* could be defined as things that are pronounced publicly, of

which coincide with group interests, wishes, or goal, or anything that is difficult to oppose in public, such as behaviour and thoughts admitted by the majority (Shibata, 1986; Prasol, 2010); "façade" or "front", referring to opinions and behaviours displayed in public, as well as the social expectations embedded in individuals' position in various contexts (Buzzy et.al, 2011); individual's explicitly stated principles (Nishimura et al, 2008); or of "any rule of conduct which Japanese accepted by unanimous agreement" (Doi, 1973), with the latter attaching to that definition the analogy of "license that secures Japanese membership in a coveted group". In contrast, definition of *honne* remains relatively similar throughout the articles: things kept inside one's heart, of personal thoughts and interest, (Shibata, 1986; Prasol, 2010) and what the individual wants to do. (Buzzy et.al, 2011)

Honne and *tatemae* is a part of the terminology umbrella of "double" or "paired" codes. (Bachnik, 2007) *Tatemae* is a part of *omote* (in-front) as the social, public, or official side, whilst *honne* is within the *ura* (behind) as a side of secrecy, personal, or something deemed publicly unacceptable. *Tatemae* is the side shown to the *soto* (outsiders), and *honne* is the side shown to *uchi* (insiders). The concept of *honne* and *tatemae* could be seen just like the "back-stage" and "front-stage" performances of actors from a dramaturgical perspective (Buzzy et.al, 2011), or as the two spheres of "self" and "social self" (Bachnik, 2007).

In relation to social convention, *tatemae* represents the tensions of conforming to societal norms, whilst giving leeway for expression of one's true desires *(honne)*. By withholding true intentions through the mask of *tatemae*, this sense of "self-sacrifice" can be seen as the sacrifice for the greater good, which in this case refers to the harmonious social life, (Bachnik, 2007) although the very meanings of *honne* and *tatemae* may have undergone a shift: of tatemae now conveying falsity; and *honne* considered 'true honesty'. (Bachnik, 2007; Doi, 1973)

It is without doubt that Japanese language is at the top one of the high-context communication style. (Nishimura et al, 2008) Context refers to the information that surrounds an event, and inextricably bound with the meaning. The duality of *honne* and *tatemae* is the testament to Japanese being a high-context communication styled language, whereby the actual meaning is often embedded within the listeners themselves – information internalized in the person – and listener is to understand the context of communication themselves. Not everything is explicitly stated or written, thus the need to "read between the lines." (Nishimura et al, 2008) The distinction between formal and informal Japanese languages through grammars parallels the "double code", whereby polite form of speech is used for *tatemae*, and plain form of speech is used to convey *honne*. (Bachnik, 2007)

Research Gap, Aims, Objectives

Unmistakably, this topic has been an interest of mine ever before the research for EPOK due to the polarizing image of Japanese people that this culture implies. However, through literature review of this topic, it was enticing to see the varying definitions of *tatemae* from articles to articles. Also, the lack of qualitative research involving the genuine take of Japanese opinions on this culture quickly became something that is noticed during the initial reading. I believe my research in this topic has the significance of providing evidence as to support some claims of the *honne* and *tatemae* through asking the opinions of Japanese themselves. In a way, it is to reinforce, or dismiss, certain claims made in the current literature.

Thus, the main aim of this research is to elucidate the culture of *honne* and *tatemae* of Japan by gauging the opinions of Japanese people themselves. Specifically, this research has three objectives: (1) to gauge the **awareness and perception** of people living in Japan (both native, and non-native) on *honne* and *tatemae* terminologies; (2) to investigate the **opinion on the possible benefits and implications** of the *honne* and *tatemae* culture; and (3) to cross-check whether a **complementary culture exists in Malaysia**, or in other words, the exclusivity of this culture (or the universality, thereof).

Methodology

To achieve the objectives, two methods were done: **(1)** online questionnaire and **(2)** online interview. The first method of online questionnaire was designed to answer first and second objectives. By using Google Form, the questionnaire links were spread to various groups, such as to EPOK Buddies, Okayama University classmates, Japanese friends, and acquaintances, through the help of mutual friends, teachers, and social media (LINE and Instagram). The online questionnaire was divided into three sections: **Section 1**, which was to gauge for demography (age range, and nativity); **Section 2**, which was to gauge for awareness and perception of people living in Japan regarding *honne* and *tatemae*; and **Section 3**, which was to gauge their opinions on the possible benefits and implication of *honne* and *tatemae*. For Section 2, it was further divided into **Section 2A**, intended for native Japanese, and **Section 2B** for non-native Japanese. Questions were a mix of close-ended, and scaled types, with only four questions being a semi open-ended type.

Second method of online interview was designed to answer the third objective. Through Google Meet, eight (8) Malaysians were interviewed, comprising of seven people in the age range of 20-25 years old, and 1 person in the age range of 60-65. Prior to the interview, a concise

introduction to the concepts of *honne* and *tatemae* was given for necessary context. Only two questions were asked: (1) does a similar culture exists in Malaysia; and (2) in what way is it similar (providing examples).

Results & Discussions

The results were as follows. For the first method of Google Form questionnaire, a total of 95 respondents were garnered. In **Section 1**, majority of the respondents (91%) were in the age range of 18 – 30, followed by 30 – 45 (5%), 45 – 60 (3%), 61 and above (1%), but no respondents below the age of 18. Majority of the respondents (86%) were native Japanese, while the remaining 14% were non-native Japanese, which constituted of Asian (92%) and South American (8%).

Next, **Section 2,** which, as mentioned before, was divided into **Sections 2A (Native Japanese,** abbreviated as **NJ** onwards**)** and **2B (Non-native Japanese,** abbreviated as **NN** onwards**)**. Five questions were similar between these two sections, and these were the findings: (1) in both sections, majority knew what *honne* and *tatemae* means (NJ:98%;NN:77%); (2) in both sections, majority agreed to a given definition of *honne* and *tatemae* (NJ:79%, NN:100%); (3) when talking to other parties, majority NJ (77%) could tell *honne* and *tatemae* apart, but majority NN could not (only 38% could); and (4) in both sections, majority were aware of switching between the two *honne* and *tatemae* while speaking themselves (NJ:89%;NN:85%). For the fifth question, two hypothetical situations were given to respondents of both sections to note of their "expected answers." Firstly, if they are invited to a dinner at an acquaintance's house, the "expected answer" would be to reject the invitation as taking the hint that the acquaintance is, in a roundabout way, asking you to return. In both sections, majority answered "depends" (NJ:67%; NN:85%). Secondly, if they were offered an acquaintance's favourite food, the "expected answer" would be to say, "It is tasty," even if they did not particularly like the food at all. In both sections, majority answered "yes" (NJ:65%; NN:46%).

Onwards to the differing questions of the two sections, in **Section 2A,** there were three questions: (1) and (2) gauging the circumstances to switch either to *honne* or *tatemae.* Firstly, most people would switch to *tatemae* with "people they just met" (72 votes), followed by "in working settings" (63 votes), and "in academic setting with teachers and supervisors" (61 votes); and secondly, most people would switch to *honne* with "friends you are close with" (74 votes), followed by "with families and significant others" (26 votes), and "social media" (25 votes). The third question was about personal definitions of *honne* and *tatemae*, whereby 77 varying definitions, and 17 disagreements with the given definition of *tatemae* were noted to be analysed

in Discussion. Next, in **Section 2B**, there were two questions: firstly, if they agree or disagree to a given statement of *tatemae* by Woronoff (1990): "For Japanese, dealing with *tatemae* is a standard… foreigners may see it as false and futile since they are used to 'receiving the truth'…", to which majority agreed (77%) to the statement. Subsequently, the second question, regarding the thoughts of NN to the statement, will be analysed in the Discussion.

Lastly, in **Section 3**, a total of 16 statements regarding the possible benefits and implications of *honne* and *tatemae* were given to the respondents. The questions were linear scaled, whereby 1 represent "strongly disagree", 2 represents "quite disagree", 3 represents "mixed response", 4 represents "agree", and "5" represents "strongly agree". Certain indiscernible questions will be omitted, partly due to word restrictions. Results were as follows:

1. Majority strongly agreed (78%) that *honne* and *tatemae* are present in every aspect of communications across Japanese society; and strongly agreed (45%) that the extensive use of *honne* and *tatemae* in communication is to uphold harmonious spirit in society.
2. Majority quite disagreed (39%) if *tatemae* could be considered lying; however, majority agreed (31%) that *tatemae* is needed to fit in the society, rather than stand out.
3. Majority agreed (41%) that there is a need for people to 'read between the lines'; and, in the same vein, majority agreed (42%) that 'not being able to read the atmosphere' is not a good trait.
4. Majority strongly agreed (61%) that voicing facts (*honne*) in certain circumstances would cause either party to be disgraced, or 'lose face'; and majority agreed (59%) that there have been times they wanted to tell the truth (*honne*) but suppressed it. This goes well with how majority strongly agreed (58%) that *tatemae* is important to avoid unnecessary conflicts.
5. Majority agreed (41%) that there are sets of words they should, or are expected to use, whenever interacting with other parties.
6. Majority agreed (38%) that people who are not used to communication in Japanese society would see *tatemae* as offensive.

For the second method of online interview, the results were as follows: (1) all eight Malaysians interviewed agreed that there is a complementary culture of *honne* and *tatemae* in Malaysia; and (2) in Malaysia, *bahasa berlapik,* which translates into 'layered language', bearing a similar concept to 'white lies', is used to convey your true intentions albeit indirectly. A particularly interesting example given was to say a food is tasty, but it would be even tastier if more salt is added. With this, harmony between the two would be hold.

Onwards to Discussion, firstly, it is imperative to discuss how the definitions of *tatemae* retrieved from the opinions of Japanese were different from one to another. As mentioned briefly in Results, as much as 77 different responses of Japanese people were garnered on what they believed and understood was *tatemae*, on top of 17 responses that disagreed to the given definitions of *tatemae*. For context, the definition of *tatemae* used is of that stated by Prasol and Shibata in the Literature Review. To generalize the finding in just one phrase would be, simply put, difficult. However, there seemed to be similar themes of: 'matching opinions with listeners;' 'conveying matters with consideration;' 'lies to maintain good relationship;' 'not necessarily adjusting to majority, but also to superiors;' 'behaviours and speech that is accepted by society;' or, in a poor effort to sum it up in one sentence, 'what you are expected to say publicly.' Perhaps, owing to no official recognized definition, Japanese has internalized different meanings of *tatemae*, even if they are aware of and could perceive what is and what is not *tatemae*. In contrast, definition of *honne* was remarkably similar across the board: 'a person's true intention;' or 'what you feel/think in heart.'

Secondly, on **Section 2**, the hypothetical situation of an invitation to a dinner at an acquaintance's house was something argued, by Davies and Ikeno in 2002, that Japanese deemed it was not an invitation but, rather, a subtle hint to go home. (Trinidad, 2014) According to the result, majority answered "depends". The communication in Japan well depends on the degree of closeness between two speakers. (Nishimura et al, 2008) It can be assumed here the answer would have been a "yes" if the person is not as close, and a "no" if a person is close in relationship.

Thirdly, the duality of communication through *honne* and *tatemae* has both benefits and implications. Due to Japanese being a country of collectivism, where the society takes precedence before the individual, and societal harmony is paramount, it could offer an explanation to the prevalent and distinctive uses of *tatemae* and *honne*. (Nishimura et al, 2008) Sometimes, individual needs are supressed to give way for the ultimate needs of the society. As seen throughout the Results of Section 3, *honne* is often hidden to maintain the harmonious atmosphere, covered with the use of *tatemae* to prevent unwanted conflicts. In sense, Japanese society is distinctive, because it was deemed as virtuous to avoid communicating problems directly, by slipping in the "uncomfortable truths" within *tatemae*. (Bachnik, 2007) Both *honne* and *tatemae* is needed, and one exists for the sake of other.

Fourth, it was reported that a similar culture exists even in Malaysia. Malaysians believe in the principles stated in the Five Pillars, with the 5th being 'Courtesy and Propriety'. Every Malaysian vowed to be courteous in any situations to maintain harmony, which strikes a

resemblance to *honne* and *tatemae*. This also implies that *honne* and *tatemae* is not entirely exclusive in Japan, although it is in Japan where this culture is most evidently used and is an inextricably part of Japanese sociocultural value.

Fifth, the concept of '*uso mo houben*' could be related to justify *tatemae* in Japan. It means 'lying as means to an end,' whereby the speaker says things of what they thought the listener would like to hear, as opposed to the speaker's true intention. (Trinidad, 2014) This concept, alongside the "double codes" of Japan, and citing the Result of Section 3, could offer insights to the question of **Section 2B** (statement regarding *tatemae*). As lying could be seen as a method to secure a convenient position for the speaker, foreigners who just found out the concept of *tatemae* but not yet used to it may feel 'betrayed.' However, *tatemae* is seen as a cultural norm that is personal towards the Japanese society, thus it is unfair to put a label on something that is based on their biasness. A certain degree of respect should be kept ubiquitous, especially when it comes to unfamiliar cultural value systems, as we should not immediately judge a culture solely through a single standpoint.

Lastly, even though *honne* and *tatemae* is an integral part of Japanese culture, there seemed to be regional differences. Certain regions, such as Osaka and Kyoto (especially), were deemed to be using *tatemae* more frequently in terms of more euphemistic expressions, which could be seen as 'sarcastic' from the lens of non-natives, or even natives of other regions. In Kyoto, the usage of euphemistic expressions, such as praising the clock, or asking if visitors want *ochadzuke*, would means the indirect asking for the visitors to return. In contrast, it was reported that Kansai natives does not seem to favour the usage of *tatemae,* and rather speak out their opinions publicly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *honne* and *tatemae* is, indeed, a complex sociocultural value of Japan. Even though many Japanese people have their own beliefs and understandings of *honne* and *tatemae*, they all shared a common theme of 'consideration for others.' The unique part of this culture is that *honne* and *tatemae* is a communicative concept with deep roots, deemed acceptable, and have always been used explicitly and distinctively throughout aspects of Japanese society. *Honne* and *tatemae* are both equally as important. It is not always good to dichotomize the culture as either black-or-white and leaving things as ambiguous as it is will not deteriorate human relationship. In a way, *tatemae* is good to set up an appropriate distance between one another but, in contrast, it is also important to speak in earnest (*honne*) sometimes too, as only then can we deepen our relationships. Just like the two sides of a coin, *honne* and *tatemae* is

interdependent -- *honne* exists precisely due to *tatemae*, and *tatemae* allows the room for the expression of *honne* with less repercussions – and, truly, one cannot exist without the other.

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There are more things to do in Japan, apart from eating sushi

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日本語のまとめ

　　　　このレポトーはオランダと日本についって。オランダ人と日本人のかんけいはぶんかのちがいがぎゃくであるからむずかしいばあいがあります。日本がそとのせかいでどのようにしょうしょぞうされている。とくに日本人にとってこのほうこくしょをつかって。オランダ人のみかたがげんじつにちかづいているのがそれともかんぜんにまちがっているかおみるができます。

Background

In the past, around the 17th century, Japan and the Netherlands were trade partners. In that period the first image of one another is created. In the earlier period, people did not have a lot of written information about others.　Most of the information and knowledge about others come from mouth-to-mouth stories. The images created can differ from the real world as some people already experienced. They were not aware of the possible cultural differences and the differences in religion. But what some navigators and important persons of religions, especially the Dutch with the WIC, knew that they wanted to expand their own religion and culture in other countries. This was the main reason beside trading to go on long excursions over the sea.

During one of the excursions, the Dutch people accidentally met with the Japanese people. This is the first encounter between the Dutch persons and Japanese persons. They traded with mostly spices, textiles, porcelain, and silk. During the start of the trade partnership of Holland and Japan, the Christian Japanese started a rebellion against the feudal military government. The Dutch helped this government to crush the Christian Japanese rebellion. As a result, all the other Christian countries who helped the rebels were expelled, except the Dutch. This started a long-term relationship between Holland and Japan. This relationship was strong until World War II happened.

Unfortunately, the post war Japanese-Dutch relation has been very complicated. The invasion and occupation of the Netherlands East Indies during the second world war, brought about the

destruction of the colonial state in Indonesia. The Japanese removed as much of the Dutch government as possible, to weaken the grip of the Netherlands in this territory.

As a more recent note, in 2009, the Netherlands released a 5 € coin to celebrate the 400 years relationship between Japan and the Netherlands. I started wondering if the view on Japan from the Dutch is rather negative or positive at this time. In this research the current view of Dutch will be established, and the reason of this view will hopefully give more insight on the thoughts of why we have this view.

Methods

The methods used for gathering all the information are a survey, literature review and case studies. The field work, the survey, is done via Google Docs Survey. This is a platform which is easy to use, automatically creates an overview of the answers and can be used to ask different types of questions. The answers can be exported to excel for more specific research, as well the answers can be shown per induvial which has completed the survey. The statistical tests are taken online, the target group of the survey were 16–35-year-olds and 45+ years people. The places where the survey is distributed are High Schools, Universities, friends & family and Reddit, a place where Dutch people are with (a bit of) knowledge about Japan (they can be Weebs). This would be around 15% of the total amount of participants. These people with a bit more knowledge can influence the view of the average Dutch person.

The results are influenced by the following topics, this is nor positive nor negative influence:
- Level of education (to see if a different educated people have different views)
- Age
- Thoughts about visiting Japan (indication of interest)
- Have been to Japan (difference between experience and education)
- Their opinion before and after visiting.
- The reason for not visiting Japan.
- How they got the information about Japan (types of marketing used)
- Which places they know in Japan?

Results

For this research, there are 124 useful surveys conducted. In those questionnaires, 100 people are between the age of 17 and 30 and the others are 45 or older. These two groups are established before hand to see if there is a noticeable difference between the older generation and the newer generation and their view on Japan. 45% of the participants studied or are studying at the Higher Vocational Education (HBO), 24% studied or are studying at the High school. 22% of the people are going to university or did go to university. The other 9% is

following or followed post-Secondary Vocational Education (MBO). This is above the average level of education in the Netherlands which is finished MBO or High School (Maslowski, 2020).

Most of the participants would love to visit Japan once. Whereby only 13% really visited Japan. For these people who have visited Japan, there were some extra questions about their opinion of Japan. What their opinion of Japan was before hand and if it has changed after their visit.   The view about Japan changed for 58% of the people who visited Japan, for 34 % the visit to Japan opened some eyes. The biggest changes for these people are

that Japan has a more Western feeling and that the Japanese people strongly hold on to their own values instead of changing their values for people from other countries. Most of the people who visited Japan have been in Tokyo, the amount of people who spoke English was really a positive experience.

Even while the Netherlands can be expensive in terms of restaurants and food in general, the Dutch people who visited Japan, do think Japan is expensive.

The Dutchies have a rot of reasons not to visit Japan (yet). Most of the people do want to visit Japan, but the past year they always found an excuse not to go. Mostly the reasons of not visiting Japan, are combinations between the different factors. Therefore, the most common reason is Money. This is mentioned in 34% of the answers. In this special year with Covid-19 a lot has happened. For example, some students who needed to go to Japan for their

Figure 2 Reasons to not go to Japan

University did not go, due to Covid-19, unfortunately. Maybe this pandemic has an influence on the financial situation of people.

  As we can see in Figure 2 Reasons to not go to Japan, the biggest reason for not going to Japan (yet) is the money reason. A less positive note for Japan, it is not a country that has a high interest rate to visit as tourist. Somewhat more than a quart of the people prefers other countries, or they are not interested in Japan.
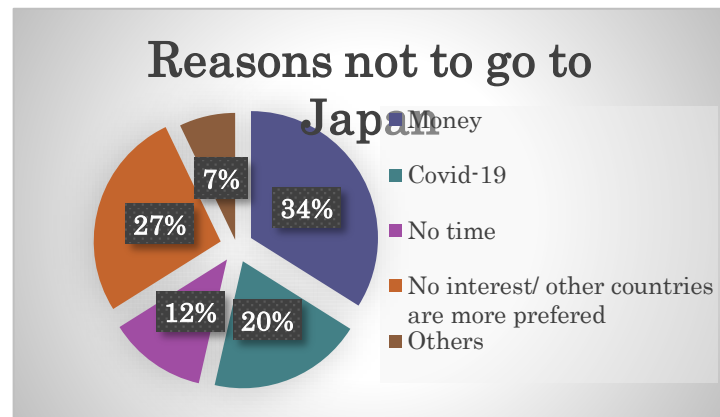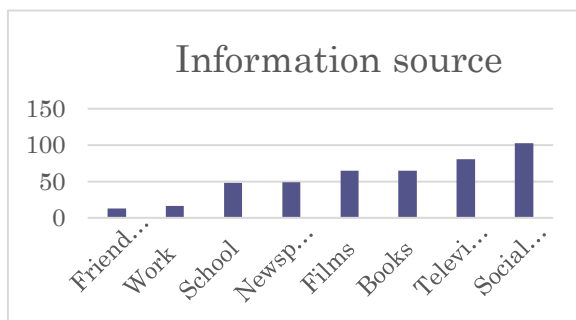
Information source

150
100
50
0

Friend... Work School Newsp... Films Books Televi... Social...

This survey would not been complete, if Covid-19 wouldn't play a part. One fifth of the people planned on going to Japan last year or this year. For those people, who have saved money, were/are interested in Japan, Japan is still something to visit in the future.

To understand some people why they want to visit Japan, or why they don't want to visit Japan, the information source can be useful. The main source of gathering information is

Figure 3 Information sources   social media. That is not a real surprise, as it is the number one source of entertainment nowadays. The second most used channel to receive information about Japan is television. As can be seen in Figure 3 Information sources.

As the other mentionable sources, especially in the time of social media and doing everything online, books are still popular to gather information about Japan. This are mostly novels from Japanese people who describe the life they are living there.

The other information channels are mostly used every day, whereby the information shared about Japan is happening right now. The political situation for example, can be seen from a different perspective for outsiders than for the Japanese people. Daily life situations can be seen from a different perspective, which can cause an opinion about those situations which can be differ from the actual situation.

To get more insight about the view on the culture of Japan, the question "how do you see the Japanese culture?" has been asked. The Dutch don't see Japan as a simple country with a simple culture. The common thought is mostly positive, with the traditions and working ethics as mostly mentioned. This information is coming from the conducted survey, which mentioned earlier. Those Dutch people see the Japanese culture as something very different from their culture. The Japanese are mostly hard working, and they have a very strict hierarchy inside the company and society. The Japanese people combine their traditional way of living, with the advanced used of technology. Japan is also advanced in infrastructure, like the (bullet) trains and metros. The Japanese people are in first thought very closed. They don't show any type of opinion about others or some other positive feelings to the outside world. To translate an answer of on of the participants; "As hardworking he is very disciplined and slightly steadfast to hierarchy. For example, during the second world war, some people were performing kamikaze actions for the emperor at that time. Would we do the same for our royal family? I don't think so." This shows how the Japanese people are displayed as loyal and

hardworking for their boss. Not always as extreme as doing kamikaze actions, but they are willing to go far.

What a common thought is, the Dutch are less positive about the Japanese working culture in comparison with the Dutch working culture. Especially the social acceptancy about being yourself in the working culture and social equality between co-workers and bosses, less hierarchy in the working culture.

In addition, the working hours of the Japanese are more dedicated towards the company and less to personal health. But the respect to one each other is far more appreciated in the Japanese culture than in the Netherlands. Especially the respect for knowledge and experience others. The last point that was heavily mentioned, is that the Japanese people are really clean, with no bins on the streets.

To see what kind of topics were discussed in the books, the television and social media, the question of what cultural highlights do you know? The main options listed were Sumo wrestling, the traditional food, the hierarchy in society, mount Fuji, Sapporo's snow festival and Japanese gardens. The most chosen option is Sumo wrestling, with 67% of the people clicking it. Fortunately, the Dutch people know they would not see a lot of Sumo wrestlers if they were going to visit Japan right at the start. As the second most chosen topic, is of course the food. Sushi, Udon Noodles, and rice bowls are becoming more and more integrated in the Dutch repertoire of order food. According to (Le Clercq, 2021), the Dutch people like ordering food, and spending more on "better" food instead of a regular pizza. Therefore, the Sushi and other Asian cuisines orders are rising around 34%.

The third most chosen option is the hierarchy in society. The Dutch people have not encountered this topic themselves in Japan, but it is a highly used topic for comparison in the Dutch working culture and on the news, it is discussed at least once a month.

The people who know about the Japanese gardens, also recognize Mount Fuji as part of the Japanese culture. The Japanese gardens are in the Netherlands a concept of wealth and tranquillity. Mount fuji is famous of the form in the Netherlands and especially as it is the Japanese sacred symbol. In addition, there once was a television program that visited the temples and shrines around the top of the volcano. The Japanese art of Manga, Anime and Hentai are mentioned by people who know somethings about a different part of the culture of Japan. This is more specific about Japan, which is completely in Japan and in the Netherlands, it is seen as different. What the Dutch integrated a bit more in their culture from the Japanese one, are martial arts, like Karate, Judo and Jujitsu. As it mostly covered in the news when and if the Dutch national sports team has participated in a big tournament for those sports.

The things Dutch people want to visit in Japan are, Tokyo, real Japanese gardens and eating sushi from Japan. These things are specific, which shows Japan is interesting for a big part of

the Dutch people, as they know a lot about Japan already. The way sports influenced the view about the culture of Japan, is positive as the Martial Arts are seen as a positive note for individuals. Whereby this is more like a Dutch way of looking towards society. As some participants stated, the Dutch society is more individualistic, and the Japanese society is more like a collectivistic group.

Conclusion

This survey has given a lot of information about the Dutch view on Japan. The main conclusion of this report and survey is mostly positive. Dutch people think Japan is very special, as the culture is focussed on collectivism and dedication to one's work is important. The overall thought on why this collectivism is happening in Japan, comes from the past. The tradition of emperors ruling over Japan with not a lot of influences from other countries can have caused this tradition. The difference of the importance of man and women in Japan is discussed as well. The traditional thought that the woman needs to stay at home and man goes out working can identify Japan's culture, according to the survey. This idea showcases that the information spread about the culture of Japan, in the Netherlands is not up to date, as that topic is changing in the Japanese current working culture.

On the other side, the Japanese people are portraited as friendly and polite. But the Dutch people argue, it is just to outsiders and to please them. In addition, they think Japanese people do not show a lot of character themselves. Which makes them mysterious, and some Dutch people are intrigued by this culture. Japanese soccer supporters were very positive in the news and all-over social media a few years ago with their actions. They cleaned up their own mess after the game has finished. Which probably is the cause that the Japanese people seem very clean, in addition, the people who have visited Japan pointed out that there are no bins outside. Something that did not influence the people's opinion as much as predicted is the age. The Dutch people mostly think the same about the Japanese people. This shows that old school information tools and more modern information tools display the same kind of information. The relationship between Dutch people and Japanese people can be hard as the differences between the cultures are the opposites.

So, to work in a proper way, one of the two parties need to make some concessions towards another. According to the survey, Dutch people think the collective culture of Japan, will make these concessions, if needed.

All the results combines that a lot of people indicated that they do not know enough in-depth information about Japan to conclude a final opinion. Most of the people want to get more information about Japan. What kind of information is not really discussed in this report, but

the main thought is about the culture itself. This type of research is not yet done in this way. Therefore, there are not a lot of similar studies to compare the results of this study with. Most of this type of research are done in working environments.

This report is important for people who want to know about the Dutch view on Japan. How Japan is portraited in the outside world, especially for Japanese people, they can use this report to see if the view of the Dutch people coming close to reality or is it completely wrong. Another important part can be about the relation of Japanese people the Dutch people, or even the relation between the governments. But this is a topic for a completely other report.

The purpose of this report is to find the general opinion about Japanese people and their culture with the view from Dutch people. Since the Dutch people are really good at stereotyping and they do not showcase that they understand and see the Japanese society and culture as it is right now. This research shows that Dutch people have a bit of knowledge about Japan, but not a very deep understanding. Is this something that needs change? Can it be changed? Does it even need change? This are some questions for a future study about the other side of this topic. This report can be used as a starter for other research, so they can start more specific and direct to make a more specified report for another purpose.

Dutch people see Japan as a polite, clean, and interesting country where traditions are worth more in society than modern influences. With the example of woman and man in society treated differently. In addition, the closed collective society is seen as different from the Dutch open individualistic society.

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An insight on the Western and Japanese view of Japanese Culture through the analysis of the public's opinion on movies

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国際的な映画において、日本人自身が日本の日常生活や日本文化を真に表現していると考えているものは何ですか。一方、西洋やアジアの映画監督が持っている日本人や日本に対するステレオタイプは何ですか。この調査では、日本人と外国人の両方が回答したアンケートで収集されたデータを通じて分析しました。この研究は、表面的なアプローチや一般化を避けてアジア文化についての知識を深めたい人々にガイドラインを提供するために、アジア関連のステレオタイプの主題に取り組んでいるという点でユニークだと思います。

Introduction

What in international cinema culture is considered a true representation of Japanese culture by Japanese people? What instead is a stereotype carried on by Western or Asian film directors?

I decided to tackle the topic because I really enjoy watching movies both Western and Asian: I am convinced that cinema used to be and still is a powerful mean of communication. Especially in the past it was mainly through cinema that people could come into contact with geographically distant cultures. Nowadays there are a lot of different medias but cinema keeps having an extremely unique and leading role because of its ability of getting viewers emotionally involved with what is narrated on the big screen. This gives cinema some kind of authority regardless of the truthfulness of the contents.

I realized that in media culture there are several materials at our disposal which represent Japan but this representation is not necessarily made with a critical eye. The industry is full of reductionistic approaches to Japanese culture.

I want to make a research that will help those who are interested in Japanese culture to watch movies critically avoiding the development of a superficial view on said culture. I am convinced this research is also very interesting and unique since you cannot find

similar studies tackling this specific topic (an insight on the Western and Japanese view of Japanese Culture through the analysis of the public's opinion on movies) in the academic world.

Existing discussions and studies on the topic

Several articles deal with the topic of the representation of Japan and the Japanese in movies.

On "JapanToday" there is an interesting article titled "Japan's 70-year struggle against Hollywood film stereotypes", in which is analyzed the image of Japanese people in Hollywood films. In the article is stated that "Looking back at the 70 years since the end of World War II, it would certainly be no exaggeration to say that Hollywood's portrayals of Japanese males have been less than flattering" and then is given the example of Mickey Rooney as "Mr. Yunioshi", the klutzy photographer in Breakfast at Tiffany's. As regards Japanese females, it is claimed that they are represented as "feminine, subservient, eager and willing to please males" and that this image is based on stories brought back to the U.S. by soldiers returning home from the military occupation of Japan. Following are examples of stereotypes taken from various films and, finally, there is the consideration that fortunately today's cinema is changing towards a more accurate representation of Japan and Asia in general.

Another article titled "Portrayals of Asians in Film and Television" on "Ithaca College Library" is divided into several paragraphs that group movies containing stereotypes on Asia divided by decade of belonging. Interestingly, there are great titles on the list such as "The Aristocats", "Breakfast at Tiffany's", "The Deer Hunter", "Murder By Death" or "Blade Runner". This article is important as it gives an idea of how difficult it is to pay attention to stereotypes. Without reading this article, I would not have noticed the presence of some stereotypes in some Hollywood and non-Hollywood films.

In the end the article "Can 'Parasite' break Asian film's last US barrier?" on "Asia Times" analyzes the role of the Korean black comedy "Parasite" (2019) in the acceptance of the East by the United States. In fact, by awarding to "Parasite" the Oscar for best film, according to the article, America would finally recognize Asia as an economic power as well as recognize the quality of its film industry.

Each of these aforementioned articles is relevant for my research but I did not find any article that tackles the subject of Asia-related stereotypes in order to provide a guideline for those who want to deepen their knowledge on Asian cultures without a superficial approach and avoiding generalizations.

Questionnaire

I will share a questionnaire I wrote about this topic with both Japanese and non-Japanese

people asking various questions with the goal to investigate:

- Which films depicting Japanese culture are the most popular
- Which films are considered representative of some kind of aspect of Japanese culture (art, society, traditions, history...)
- Which stereotypes regarding Japan are widespread
- Which stereotypes regarding Japan are carried on by movies

I chose to conduct this research using a questionnaire since, because of Covid-19, I could not directly ask Japanese people about the topic and questionnaire is the form of analysis most similar to a direct discussion. A questionnaire is also the most efficient way of collecting data anonymously to reach reliable conclusions on the topic.

I structured the questionnaire with the following 11 questions:

1) How old are you?

2) What is your nationality?

3) What is your occupation?

4) Which movies from this list do you know? Mark them.

5) Could you add any Asia related movie to the list?

6) Could you think of some films representing a particular aspect of Japan?

7) In your opinion, which films and animation movies better represent a particular aspect of Japan (art, culture, society, traditions, history,…)?

8) Why did you choose these films? Write about the particular aspect of Japan they represent in your opinion.

9) Is there any stereotype linked to Japan and Japanese people in your country?

10) Could you think of any stereotype linked to Japan and Japanese people? Can you please write them in the space below?

11) Are there any stereotypes about Japan that you have seen in films or animation movies? If so, can you give some examples?

1) How old are you? 2) What is your nationality?

I start by asking what is the age and nationality of the participants in order to determine if there are particular stereotypes related to individuals of a certain age group or nationality. I also want to understand which films are well-known among young and older people.

3) What is your occupation?

I then ask the occupation of the participants merely to make sure I am investigating a heterogeneous group of people, not only related to the academic environment.

4) Which movies from this list do you know? Mark them 5) Could you add any Asia

related movie to the list?

Then I investigate the participant's movie culture. In the list there are 76 films by Japanese and non-Japanese directors, some of which are sadly famous as promoters of stereotypes about Japan or Asia in general.

6) Could you think of some films representing a particular aspect of Japan? 7) In your opinion, which films and animation movies better represent a particular aspect of Japan (art, culture, society, traditions, history,…)? 8) Why did you choose these films? Write about the particular aspect of Japan they represent in your opinion.

I ask this question to understand which films are truly representative of Japanese culture and why according to Japanese themselves. This also to investigate if some of those that are anything but stereotypes are considered to be elements actually representative of Japan by non-Japanese people.

9) Is there any stereotype linked to Japan and Japanese people in your country? 10) Could you think of any stereotype linked to Japan and Japanese people? Can you please write them in the space below?

I asked these questions to understand what are actually considered stereotypes about which are actually considered stereotypes of Japan and therefore which are recognised. Since the questionnaire is addressed to both Japanese and non-Japanese people with these questions I intend to identify both stereotypes spread abroad about Japan and stereotypes that the Japanese themselves think there are about them.

11) Are there any stereotypes about Japan that you have seen in films or animation movies? If so, can you give some examples?
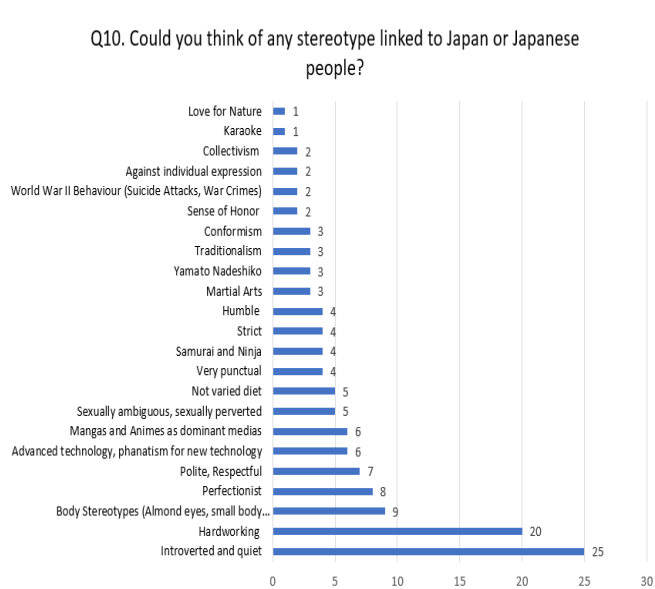
With this question I aim to understand if the participant has memory of films containing the aforementioned stereotypes. This question also serves to assess the critical spirit of the participant to see if he noticed the stereotypes in the films he marked on the list.

Analysis of the collected data- Stereotypes

"A stereotype is a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a lot of people believe represent a particular type of person or thing" (Collins Dictionary)

"A set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong" (Cambridge Dictionary)

Below are two tables containing the widespread stereotypes that emerged from the questionnaire and the number of participants who mentioned them.

Q10. Could you think of any stereotype linked to Japan or Japanese people?

Stereotype	Value
Love for Nature	1
Karaoke	1
Collectivism	2
Against individual expression	2
World War II Behaviour (Suicide Attacks, War Crimes)	2
Sense of Honor	2
Conformism	3
Traditionalism	3
Yamato Nadeshiko	3
Martial Arts	3
Humble	4
Strict	4
Samurai and Ninja	4
Very punctual	4
Not varied diet	5
Sexually ambiguous, sexually perverted	5
Mangas and Animes as dominant medias	6
Advanced technology, phanatism for new technology	6
Polite, Respectful	7
Perfectionist	8
Body Stereotypes (Almond eyes, small body...	9
Hardworking	20
Introverted and quiet	25

Q11. Are there any stereotypes about Japan that you have seen in films or animation movies?

Stereotype	Value
Spirituality	1
Mix between reality and fantasy	2
Hierarchy	2
Traditionalism	2
Strict	2
Martial Arts	2
Post World War II Stereotypes	3
Family and school environment depiction	4
Discipline and honor	6

The most mentioned movie regarding stereotypes about Japan it is probably the Last Samurai (2003), directed by Edward Zwick. Several people both Japanese and non-Japanese wrote that this film contains numerous generalizations about honor, discipline and traditionalism. In addition, the samurai in the movie show a deep respect for nature, a constant seek for perfection, associated with peace, and a deep spirit of self-denial in favor of the community. The character of Katsumoto, commander of the rebel samurai, then demonstrates a total devotion to the emperor and a very strong sense of humility. The samurai village is associated with peace and harmony as the dwellers there respect ancient values and lead a rural life, this in contrast to the modern world in continuous progression with new technologies and new weapons, as if to indicate that the real Japan

resides in samurai lifestyle. Another important stereotype is represented by Taka, a perfect representation of "Yamato Nadeshiko", who is too kind and obedient considering that she is forced to take care of her husband's killer. The samurai are then dedicated to fighting with the cold weapon and martial arts, another somewhat recurring stereotype according to the participants in the questionnaire that also directly links it to other famous titles such as "Kill Bill" and "Karate Kid".

The most popular stereotype seems to be that Japanese people are introverted and tend to isolate themselves. An example of this is the film "Mean Girls" in which the protagonist explains which groups of students there are at school, among the many she remembers the "Asian Nerds" and "Cool Asian". The former is males obsessed with study and technology, the latter is girls who speak Vietnamese and never English for the entire duration of the film. This fact highlights the tendency of Asians to isolate themselves. Besides, both groups are generally defined as "Asian" when in reality we know for sure by hearing them talk that the girls of the "Cool Asians" group are Vietnamese.

Even the figure of the shy and intelligent nerd boy, dedicated to work or study is also recurrent in other films, anime and TV series. Such as in the series "How to get away with a Murderer" where the only Asian guy perfectly corresponds to this stereotype or in the film "School of Rock", where the introverted Asian child describes himself as not cool enough to be part of the band.

Analysis of the collected data- Movies

Q7. In your opinion, which films and animation movies better represent a particular aspect of Japan?
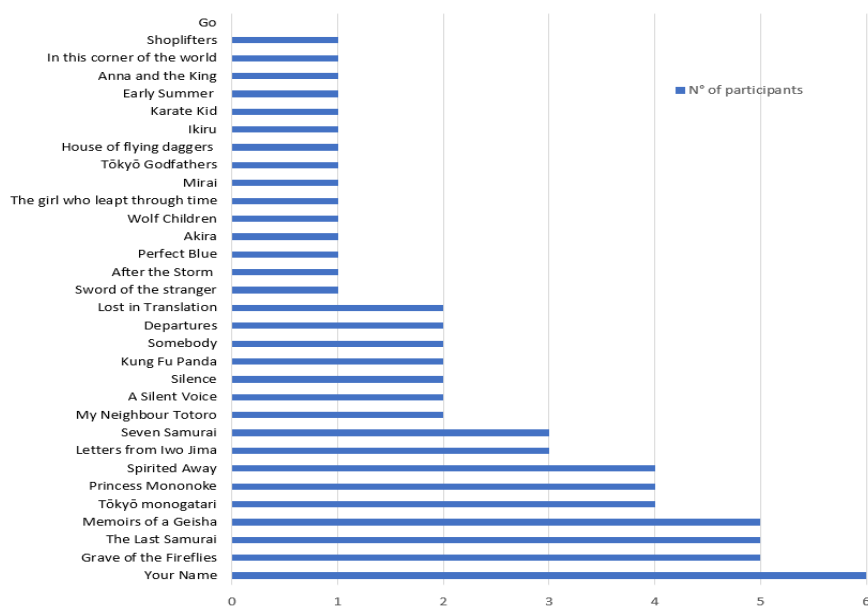
Observing the answers, it is evident how some non-Japanese people view certain films that now we know are full of stereotypes as representative of some aspect of Japan. A clear example is "The Last Samurai", a demonstration of how "positive" stereotypes are easily regarded as truthful since they pass under the radar of public indignation. Because such stereotypes do not directly attack or offend people, they easily survive and spread into mass culture as truthful.

This principle also applies to the "martial arts" stereotypes such as in "Karate Kid".

Certain non-Japanese people even mentioned "Kung Fu Panda" as representative of Japan. This is a double stereotype because not only Japan and martial arts are being automatically linked but entirely different cultures are being grouped together as "Asian". In this specific case Kung Fu, the martial art practiced in the movie, is of Chinese origin but is considered Japanese. The thought process here is: martial arts - > Asia -> Japan.

Japanese people as well expressed their opinion pointing out Makoto Shinkai's "Your Name" as truly representative of Japan's rural and urban lifestyle. In the movie Japanese local festivals ("matsuri" 祭り) are also regarded as well-represented by the Japanese.

Another of Makoto Shinkai's productions "A Silent Voice" is also regarded as illustrative of Japanese school environment and of the social issue of bullying in Japan.

A movie that Japanese people also found exemplary of a particular aspect of Japan is "Somebody" ("Nanimono" 何者) by Daisuke Miura. The Japanese agree on the truthfulness of the representation of job hunting in Japan in this film.

A work praised by Japanese themselves for the accuracy of the representation of Edo-era and of Christian persecutions which took place during this period is "Silence" by Martin Scorsese.

Conclusions

The media are something that concerns us every day and in a world like today's where it is easy to access all kinds of information, true or false, it is important to form a critical and considered opinion on things. What I hope to obtain by sharing this article is to raise awareness against misrepresentations and generalizations and grant people a critical eye when facing depictions of Japan.

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The End