

論文の要旨

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論文題目

Three Essays on Behavioral Responses to Shifting Social and Health Dynamics in Japan

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The 21st century has not just brought upon a great deal of revolution, but also subsequent impeding challenges to the world. Japan has not been an exception to that. In fact, Japan is one of the major countries that has been at a receiving end to these transitions. In particular, the information age, coupled with the presence of pandemic such as COVID-19 has reshaped the landscape of society, health, and social behavior in Japan. Furthermore, the role of deeply rooted tradition also plays a role in influencing various behavioral dynamics of a Japanese individual. Thus, the ontology of impulsive or irrational behavior depends on the phenomenon of what constitutes society, that is, the problem of the forces in which the phenomenon of human society takes form.

Against the backdrops of changing social dynamics and the influence of culture in this prolonged pandemic era, a deeper look at the complex interactions between human behavior, societal development, and public health consequences is required considering the important dynamics that emerged as this age developed. In particular, the three important topics that require careful analysis to understand and respond to the complex issues and possibilities that arise in this dynamic situation are long term care, hand sanitization and pandemic fatigue in Japan. Therefore, from the perspective of impulsivity and declining COVID-19 preventive measures respectively, this dissertation will investigate the factors associated with hand washing behavior, and pandemic fatigue in Japan. In addition, from the perspective of evolving tradition and society, this dissertation investigates the role of changing socioeconomic and demographic conditions on family caregiving norms in Japan. Overall, these research tries to capture how people in Japan adapt their behaviors to the changing social and health circumstances.

The title of the first paper is "Time Discounting and Hand-Sanitization Behavior: Evidence from Japan." This paper was published in Sustainability journal in 2023

(Lal et al.,2023). This study assesses the role of two aspects of time discounting—hyperbolic discounting and impatience—in influencing hand-sanitizing behavior in Japan in a pandemic-free environment. The study utilized two waves of 2021 and 2018 datasets derived from the Japanese population-based survey of the Preference Parameters Study (PPS) of Osaka University. The results from the probit regression provide partial support for deviation from hand sanitization as an impulsive decision because the phenomenon is evident only in females. There were no notable impacts of the impatience variable in any of the models or specifications. The findings suggest that one-size-fits-all policies may not solve the impulsivity associated with hand-sanitization behavior in Japan because the impulsivity problem is not commonly found among all respondents. Therefore, it signals the policymakers to consider underlying gender differences when designing future health-promoting measures.

The title of the second paper is “Pandemic Fatigue in Japan: Factors Affecting the Declining COVID-19 Preventive Measures.” The paper was published in Sustainability journal in 2023 (Sulemana et al., 2023). This study examines the socioeconomic factors affecting Japan’s decline in COVID-19 prevention measures (pandemic fatigue). The study used the Preference Parameters Study of the Osaka University Institute of Social and Economic Research data of the 2021 and 2022 waves. The results detected a 10%, 4%, and 13% decline in hand hygiene practice, mask-wearing, and social distancing, respectively, between January 2021 and January 2022. Specifically, men were more likely to dislike the hand hygiene practice and mask-wearing and were also more reluctant to maintain social distancing. Moreover, financially satisfied individuals were positively associated with a decrease in the hand hygiene practice, while those with greater assets were more likely to dislike maintaining social distancing. People who exercised regularly were less likely to abandon the hand hygiene practices. The result of the study highlights the significance of selective prevention programs targeting specific groups to promote compliance and lead to more effective pandemic management and less fatigue or discontent.

The title of the third paper is “Impact of Changing Socioeconomic Conditions on Family Caregiving Norms: Evidence from Japan”. The paper was published in Behavioral Sciences in 2022 (Fukuda et al., 2022). This study examined how demographic and socioeconomic factors influence the perception of family caregiving norms in Japan considering ever-growing elderly population and the growing influence of global diffusion and changing socioeconomic and demographic conditions. The study utilized two waves of 2011 and 2013 datasets derived from the Japanese population-based survey of the Preference Parameters Study (PPS) of Osaka University. The results from the probit regression show that age, education,

full-time employment, marital status, the number of sons and daughters, interactions between females and age and females and full-time employment, and parents' education are negatively related to the participants' perceptions of family caregiving norms. The results implicate that people traditionally perceived as caregivers are less likely to have a positive attitude towards family caregiving, despite the government's efforts through Universal Long-Term Care Insurance, implemented in 2000. Therefore, authorities must reassess the role of families, explore alternative forms of community-based care, and provide more assistance to caregivers.

This dissertation provides partial support that deviation from hand sanitization is an impulsive decision because the phenomenon is mostly skewed towards the female demographics. In addition, the pandemic fatigue study confirms that people from specific genders and financial background are more likely to be the subject of pandemic fatigue, due to specific COVID-19 preventative measures. The results of the long-term care paper reveal interesting findings that those people traditionally perceived as caregivers are less likely to have a positive attitude towards family caregiving. These results can serve as supporting evidence for policy makers to devise effective policy for each of these results, for example being cautious of not generalizing that just one policy could be used to solve the issues of non-hand sanitization or pandemic fatigue, but rather devising selective programs aiming at specific genders or groups of people. As for the filial caregiving norms, while it is sad to see the fading tradition of caregiving, the declining birth rate coupled with the ever-increasing elderly age population must lead the government to seriously consider solving these issues using a multi-dimensional measure and embarking more towards holistic approach to eldercare.

References

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