

## COMPLETION REPORT

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This research study, titled “**Problems and Solutions on Language and Interculture of Foreign Care Workers for Elderly Japanese**”. The researcher made two visits to Japan from 10-20 November 2022 and 1-10 June 2023. During the first fieldwork in Japan, the researcher visited numerous elderly care facilities and observed Thai care workers who are working at the elderly facilities in Nara, Saitama, and Tokyo. After that, the researcher introduced the research project to them. Books and Japanese for caregiver materials were collected. The second visit was dedicated to collecting data through both in-depth interviews and questionnaires from Thai care workers and also Japanese workers (leader, Japanese teacher, and organization’s representatives), with a total of 21 interviewees and 13 questionnaires from Thai care workers.

The research project focused on foreign care workers, especially those working in Japan. The study revealed the process through which Thai women enter the eldercare workforce in Japan through human capital development within the global care chain. The year 2019 marked a change in Japanese immigration policy, aiming to address labor shortages by introducing a Specified Skilled Worker visa specifically for eldercare workers from Southeast Asia. This policy change presents increased opportunities for female Thai caregivers. The study involved in-depth interviews with sixteen participants from Thailand and Japan, including representatives from the public and private sectors.

The findings reveal that the Thai government facilitates information dissemination about employment opportunities in Japan, administers Japanese language proficiency tests (minimum N4 level required for arrival), and offers approval for overseas work. Notably, the public sector lacks a direct channel for care workers to migrate to Japan, with the private sector fulfilling this role. Private eldercare institutions play a crucial role by providing training programs, Japanese language instruction, and facilitating worker placement in Japanese facilities.

Many Thai workers choose to work in Japan, particularly in the caregiving sector. Their reliance on representatives, such as Japanese language schools, and/or caregiving schools, two highlights the limitations faced by these workers. The first one is the limitation of Japanese Language Skills: Japanese language proficiency is crucial for working in Japan. Many Thai workers lack sufficient fluency. Utilizing representatives helps bridge the language barrier, enabling them to communicate, understand job details, and complete necessary paperwork. The second one is the lack of Knowledge Regarding Japanese Law: Japanese labor laws and related regulations are complex. Thai workers may not fully understand these legalities. Representatives or brokers with knowledge, experience, and expertise can help them understand their rights and responsibilities, employment conditions, and employment contracts and ensure they receive legal protection.

This project's results also showed the phenomenon of Thai graduates with bachelor's degrees seeking employment in Japan, even in fields outside their academic specialization. This trend is driven by the allure of higher wages and perceived job security in Japan, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in widespread unemployment. These graduates actively seek information and training opportunities online and through institutions like nursing and language schools that advertise job placement programs in Japan.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

<p>Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)</p> <p>1) Oral presentation on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023, at Kantary Hills Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand, the name of the Conference is “The 8th Japanese Studies Association-ASEAN (JSA-ASEAN)” in the title “Thai Caregivers in Japan: Bridging the Care Chain and Enriching Human Capital”</p>
<p>Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)</p> <p>1) Plan to submit and public academic paper within 2024-2025</p>
<p>Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)</p> <p>-</p>