

Overseas-Born Careworker Policies in New Zealand and Japan: Implications on Job Satisfaction and Future Plans

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日本とニュージーランドにおける 海外生まれ介護士の受け入れ政策 ——介護職に対する満足度と定着へのインプリケーションに注目して——

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While the shortage of careworkers arising from population ageing is recognized as a common serious problem among OECD countries, policies to address it have been varied. In this paper, we look at the cases of Japan and New Zealand. In the first part, we examine the policies of these two countries and discuss how they dealt with the issue differently. Currently, Japan relies on the formal recruitment schemes for foreign careworkers on a non-immigrant visa with limitation on period of stay and work in the country. Currently, in order to continue working in the country, they should obtain carework skills qualification in Japan, via either a two-year education or passing the national licensure examination. On the other hand, New Zealand increasingly depends on the overseas-born who hold either an immigrant visa (the permanent settlers) or students of nursing as important sources of overseas-born careworkers. In the second part of this paper, we present the results of a small-sample survey of overseas-born careworkers in NZ (n=54) and Japan (n=80) regarding their migration pathways, level of job satisfaction and future plans. Based on the results, it was found out that the level of job satisfaction of those who work in NZ tends to be higher than those in Japan except in terms of salaries. Moreover, while many of those working in NZ tend to stay in this country but take up other jobs in the future, in Japan, many have expressed their intention to leave this country to work in other destinations, the most preferred of which are Canada, USA and Australia. While there are differences in these careworkers' behavior arising from difference in policies, retaining these careworkers in the elderly care sector remains to be a common policy issue which needs to be immediately addressed by both countries.

社会の高齢化は OECD 加盟国の共通の問題だが、その対処・対応は国によって異なっている。本論文では、日本とニュージーランドの事例を取り上げ、前半では、それぞれの国の介護士受け入れ政策を考察する。後半では、これらの対策の違いをもとに彼ら・彼女らの職に対する満足度や将来の計画の傾向を説明する。日本では、海外生まれ介護士の多くは滞在期間や就労に制限のある在留資格を持って来日し、滞在と就労の延長をするためには日本の介護資格の取得が条件となっている。一方、ニュージーランドでは看護師を目指す留学生や滞在期間や就労に制限のない在留資格を

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持つ移民が外国人介護士人材の大きな割合を占めつつある。

アンケート調査の結果を見る限り、ニュージーランドの海外生まれ介護士たち（ $n=54$ ）が日本のそれ（ $n=80$ ）に比べて、給料以外の項目において満足度は高い。また、彼ら・彼女らの将来の計画に関しては、ニュージーランドの場合は、国内での転職が好まれる一方、日本ではこの国での定住を考える人が少なく、他の国（特にカナダやオーストラリア、アメリカ）への移動を考えている介護士が多い。ホスト国の政策によって、調査対象者の行動は異なるが、どの国においても、現在導入されている政策のもとでは彼らが介護分野に定着する可能性は少ないことがわかり、定着に向けての政策づくりは両国にとって緊急かつ重要な課題となっている。

1. Introduction

Population ageing in many OECD countries has led to the commercialization of elderly care and strong demand for healthcare workers such as doctors, registered nurses, nurse aides as well as careworkers¹⁾ to take care of elderly people (OECD, 2013). The two countries in this study, Japan and New Zealand (NZ), are interesting cases which differ in the policy directions that they took to address the increasing demand for workers. While NZ has turned to overseas-born long-term (permanent) residents and nursing students as important sources of careworkers, Japan has focused on short- and mid-term residents (candidates under bilateral government agreements, students, technical trainees), with Japan's professional skills qualification as a pre-requisite for long-term employment and residency.

In Japan, it was only in 2008 when it began accepting foreign workers as “candidate careworkers” under bilateral economic partnership agreements with Indonesia, followed by the Philippines (2009) and Vietnam (2015). With the worsening of the shortage, the current Abe administration has finally decided last year (2017) to implement two formal entry schemes that could potentially dramatically increase the proportion of foreign workers in the elderly care sector. One of these is the inclusion of carework in the sectors that can accept technical trainees from designated foreign countries. The other one is the recruitment of foreign students to enroll in a two-year vocational course that will enable him/her to qualify to take the national certified careworker's licensure examination. The administration has added a new category, “carework” in its list of “status of residence” (working visas) which will be granted to these graduates.

While the Japanese government has just recently taken a more active stance in allowing the employment of foreign careworkers (albeit in the short to mid-term), NZ seems to be less enthusiastic in directly recruiting careworkers from overseas. Overseas-born careworkers make up over 30% of the entire elderly careworker force and this percentage has been increasing since 1991 (Callister, Didham and Badkar, 2014). However, a large proportion of these foreign careworkers are family dependents (foreign residents married to New Zealand nationals and dependents of foreign workers), foreign students, and migrant nurses who are working towards obtaining (or unable to obtain) New Zealand nurse registration.

Evidently, foreigners have contributed in the alleviation of labor shortage despite the absence of formal schemes. In this paper, we explore how these two countries' contrasting policy directions have influenced the labor market and the perceptions of careworkers towards the job

and also their future plans, particularly on whether they prefer to stay or leave the profession within the next 5-10 years.

The specific objectives of this paper are as follows: In the first part, we describe the several pathways for overseas-born careworkers under the current immigration policies in each country and analyze their impact on the labor market. Keeping in mind the policy differences, in the second part, we examine how overseas-born careworkers behave, particularly in terms of their job satisfaction and job retention. We address the following policy-related concerns: Are these pathways reliable, stable and feasible? How do careworkers taking up these alternative pathways behave in the labor market? Will they provide sustainable, long-term solution to the labor shortage? Are there any lessons that these two countries can learn from each other's experiences of hiring foreign careworkers? We will look at the issues and problems mainly from the point of view of the overseas-born careworkers (supplemented by those of their employers, local colleagues and the elderly patients) and from the perspectives of economics and cultural studies.

This paper is organized as follows: In the next section, we discuss Japan's foreign careworker policies, focusing on the recruitment schemes the country has implemented in the last ten years. Section 3 will look at the case of NZ, particularly how this country's policies have resulted in its growing reliance on overseas-born settlers and new entrants aspiring to be professional nurses as careworkers. The methodology and a brief description of the surveys will be explained in Section 4. Section 5 will present the results of the small-sample survey and analyze the job satisfaction and job retention trends of the respondents. This paper ends with summary and conclusion in Section 6.

2. Pathways for overseas-born to work in the elderly care sector in Japan

Under Japan's current foreign worker policies, there are four pathways in which an overseas-born can enter its elderly care labor market, namely, (1) permanent and long-term residents, (2) holders of visa for designated activities (candidate careworkers under economic partnership agreements); (3) students; and (4) technical trainees. In this section, after briefly introducing each scheme, we will evaluate them based on their potential as a long-term response to the shortage problem. In this paper, we focus on Filipino careworkers who make up the largest group of potential careworkers in the country.

Among the Filipinos, the permanent residents comprise the largest group of potential careworkers, reaching 260,553 (about 80% of all Filipinos) as of December 2017 (Table 1).²⁾ Furthermore, the majority of these permanent residents (48.9% or almost half of Philippine nationals in Japan) comprised of those who currently hold permanent residency visa, and many of them are women currently or formerly married to Japanese nationals. The long-term residents, the second largest group (19.1%), consists of those who have Japanese descent; further classified into the "old" descendants (*Kyu-Nikkeijin*) and "new" descendants (*Shin-Nikkeijin*) (see Table 1).³⁾

Table 1 Composition of Filipino Nationals in Japan (as of December, 2017)

Filipino Nationals in Japan	Number	% of Total
Total (All Filipino nationals)	260,553	100.0
Total (Visa status with no restriction on type of work and working hours)	209,057	80.2
Permanent residents	127,396	48.9
Spouse and children of Japanese nationals	26,401	10.1
Spouse and children of permanent residents	5,440	2.1
Long-term residents	49,773	19.1
Special permanent residents	47	0.02
Others	51,496	19.76

Source: Website of Immigration Bureau of Japan (Date accessed October 2, 2018)

While they are large in number, not many choose to become careworkers. In a survey by Takahata, Nakai, Suzuki, Goto and Carlos (in Japanese, 2008), it was learned that of those who have taken the short-term training course in carework (Homehelper 2 or Beginners' Training), only a small percentage actually work in elderly care institutions. This is because they are not bound by their visa status, both in terms of the type of job and number of working hours so that they are free to work in other sectors which are likely to either pay more or have lighter work load, like, for example, in the lunchbox packaging (*obento*) or manufacturing sector. In the study, the respondents pointed out low salary, need for high level of Japanese language writing and reading proficiencies, physically and mentally demanding nature of the job, and inflexible working hours in the elderly care sector as the reasons why they were not keen to work in the elderly care sector. Some also cited the need to take care of their elderly husband or husband's parents as the main motivation to take up the course.

The Japanese government has to turn to other ways to attract overseas-born careworkers – in the last 10 years, it implemented policies that paved the last three pathways identified above. In 2008, it allowed the entry of Indonesians as candidate careworkers under the Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement (JIEPA). In the following year (2009), Filipino nursing graduates or 4-year college degree holders who finished the careworker training course in the Philippines (Careworker NCII) were also able to come under the Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA). A similar scheme was implemented in the case of Vietnamese careworkers beginning in 2015. Until 2017, it is estimated that a total of 3,492 careworkers (of which about 1,400 are from the Philippines) have been deployed via this pathway (MHLW, 2018). It must be noted, however, that this number is less than the allowed admission quota of 600 per country per year.

Under the scheme, the overseas-born careworker candidate is granted a “designated activities” visa, initially for four years, during which period he/she must study for the national certified careworker licensure examination and work in an elderly care home at the same time. Passing the national licensure examination on the fourth year of his/her stay in Japan will entitle

him/her to stay and work in the country, otherwise, he/she must return to the home country.⁴⁾ Passing the examination is a great challenge, given that it is conducted in the Japanese language. As a result, the general passing rate in the beginning was only about 10%, but it has improved to around 50% as a result of some considerations such as extending the examination time to 1.5 times longer than for the Japanese examinees, affixing *furigana* beside or on top of Chinese characters and writing the names of diseases in Roman alphabets. Of those deployed under the bilateral agreements, about 600 passed the licensure examination. However, of this number, one-third has already either returned home or left for another destination. We further explore the reasons for this in section 5.

The assumption of Prime Minister Abe into office in December, 2012 ushered a new stage in the country's foreign worker policies, although he has officially declared that his administration will not adopt an "immigration policy" to make up for the continuing acute labor shortage (Japan Times, 2018). In the case of the elderly care sector, his administration created a new working visa category "careworker" which is granted to foreign students who had completed a two-year vocational course in carework in Japan and passed the licensure examination.^{5, 6)}

As a result, the number of foreign students enrolled in vocational schools for careworkers has been increasing dramatically in the past four years. In academic year 2018, the total number of enrollees in carework vocational schools jumped to 1,142 (from 659 in AY 2017, see figure 1), of which 47.46% are from Vietnam, 14.62% from China and only about 6% from the Philippines, while Nepal appears to be an emerging source of students of carework (Table 2). There is also a notable increase in the number of Japanese language schools and foreign students enrolled in these Japanese language schools, since many carework vocational schools require its foreign students to have N2 Japanese language proficiency level.

There are several ways in which the scheme is implemented; the most common of these is through scholarship subsidy by the elderly care institutions. Specifically, a potential careworker,

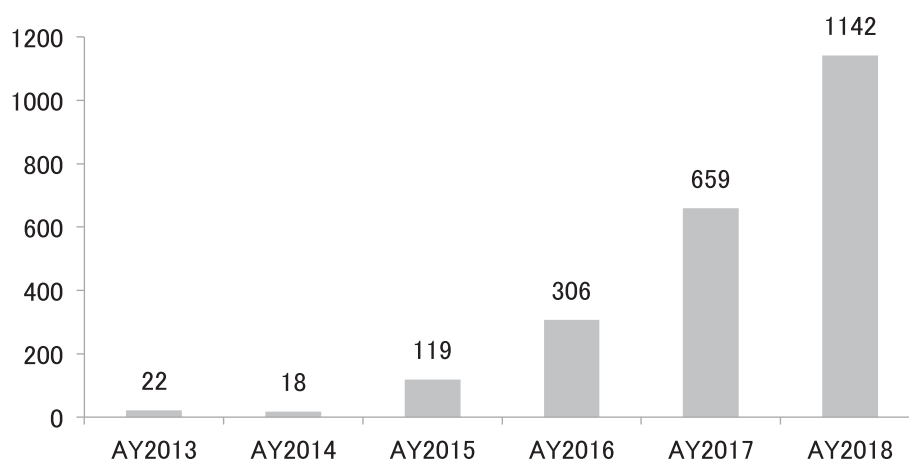


Figure 1 Number of Foreign Students enrolled in Vocational Carework Course (Academic years 2013-2018)
Source: Association of Japanese Careworker Training Schools (in Japanese)

most likely already a graduate of nursing (bachelor's or diploma degree) in his/her home country with some knowledge of the Japanese language, is recruited directly by the elderly care home or through a student recruitment company. He/she is sent to a Japanese language school (depending on language proficiency) and then to a careworker vocational school while working a maximum of 28 hours a week (except during school holidays when they are allowed to work more) in the said elderly care home. Tuition fees are partly subsidized and partly loaned from the elderly care home. Housing and transportation are usually also subsidized, and the income as a part-time worker would support his/her daily needs. Upon completion of the course (usually two years), and passing the national examination, he is employed as a fulltime certified careworker. Some elderly care institutions require its graduates to work for at least three years from course completion.

From the Japanese stakeholders' perspective, the student pathway is considered to be a better alternative to the EPA scheme. In the model mentioned in the preceding paragraph, elderly care homes can employ foreign certified workers who are knowledgeable of Japanese carework skills, knowledge, and language on a fulltime basis, after two years (and perhaps an additional one year for language school) from arrival. Until that time, they can also fill in the shortage by working parttime for 28 hours a week (Osaka Prefecture website, 2018).⁷⁾ Unlike the EPA scheme, there is no quota in the number of students that can be recruited to Japan. Careworker vocational schools can also gain from the scheme as it will increase the number of enrollment. According to the Association of Japan Careworker Training Schools (2018, in Japanese), the general fill-in rate of these schools is only 45.7% as the number of Japanese students decreased by half compared to the number five years ago (Nikkei newspaper online edition, 2018, in Japanese). The overseas-born students are therefore expected to fill in these slots, which is crucial in sustaining these schools. Based on the above, we can infer that while this scheme fails to alleviate the current shortage, it will potentially have greater impact in the medium, and hopefully, in the long-run.

The most recent pathway that the Japanese government has endorsed is the technical

Table 2 Number of Overseas-born Students enrolled in Vocational Schools for Carework (as of April, 2018)

Sending Countries	No. of Students	(%)
Vietnam	542	47.5
China	167	14.6
Nepal	95	8.3
Indonesia	70	6.1
Philippines	68	5.95
Others	200	17.5
TOTAL	1,142	100.0

Source: Nikkei Newspaper Morning edition (Sept. 18, 2018) (in Japanese)

trainee scheme which, unlike the other pathways, is expected to accommodate more foreign born careworkers into Japanese elderly care institutions, albeit temporarily. The technical trainee scheme, which was established in 1990, has been implemented in the agricultural, fishing, construction and manufacturing sectors, and in 2017, it was revamped to also cover the carework sector. It is aimed at technology transfer to home country and not to fill the shortage of labor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). The trainees come from selected developing countries such as China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines and Nepal, and they are required to return to their home country after three, at most five years (under certain conditions). The language ability requirement is only N4 (lower than those required of students) but they cannot bring their families to Japan. In April 2018, however, the government has announced that it is looking for ways to extend their stay beyond five years, like for example, creating a new residency status or if they obtain the certified careworker's license. They can convert their status to "highly skilled professional" which will entitle them to bring their family to Japan and renew their visas. After ten years, they will be qualified to apply for permanent residency.

There are concerns, however, as to how the hiring of technical trainees will affect the labor market and the quality of elderly care services in the country. In the case of other sectors, it has been observed that trainees are regarded as "cheap" labor that have become an indispensable part of the labor force. As such, there are some resistance from the local careworkers who think that the hiring of technical trainees will keep or even lower their already low wages, which is one of the most serious problems why not many Japanese are keen to take on the job. Moreover, the lack of Japanese language proficiency could compromise the quality of elderly care services due to communication problems not only with fellow careworkers but also with the elderly residents. Since the trainees have minimal knowledge also of Japanese style of carework, they will most probably be allowed to do mainly tasks not requiring specialized care skills, which will in turn promote division of labor, with those who can speak Japanese or with more training in Japanese care skills at the top. While such arrangement may be a more effective way to manage elderly care institutions, it may not contribute sufficiently in the transfer of skills to the sending country.

Evidently, Japan is exerting so much effort to meet the country's needs for careworkers by adopting formal overseas recruitment schemes, on the condition that they obtain skills and qualifications in Japan in order to stay and work in the country for long. To what extent these schemes can contribute in sustaining the labor force depends on whether the current administration can implement additional policies that can provide strong motivations for the skilled careworkers to stay in the country, such as opportunities for family integration, opportunities for career advancement and granting an easier and quicker pathway to permanent residency.

3. Policies affecting the recruitment and employment pathways of overseas-born careworkers in NZ

Based on NZ 2013 census data, the number of people aged 65 years and over doubled between 1988 and 2016 in NZ, and is expected to double again by 2046, with the largest increase occurring in the 2020s and 2030s (See Table 3). Of these 65 years and over population, approximately 27.5% were born overseas, mainly from Australia, Other European countries (e.g. the Netherlands), the United Kingdom and Ireland, Pacific Islands, North America and Asia, Middle East, or Africa. As the older population becomes more ethnically diverse, their needs are also becoming more diverse. Differences in family structure/values, living arrangements, religious affiliations, language, culture and diet will have important implications in ensuring provision of care and support.

A large proportion (94.3%) of the older population live in some kind of residential care facility: 88.8% are in residential care, 3.1% live in hospitals and 2.4% live in residential and community care facilities (Statistics NZ, Census 2013). As New Zealand's population grows, ages, live longer and become more ethnically diverse, the demands for health care in general, and specifically for the elderly will amplify. Various stakeholders in elderly care have raised concerns about ensuring adequate staffing and skills in the elderly care sector, and undeniably, overseas-born careworkers play an integral part in alleviating some of these concerns.

On the other hand, characterizing the elderly care workforce in NZ, we find that they are predominantly female aged over 45 years, and a significant and increasing proportion were also born overseas (31.6%), mainly in the United Kingdom/Ireland and the Pacific Islands (See Table 4), although, more recently, there has been a growing proportion born in Asia mainly from the Philippines, India and China (Callister, Didham and Badkar, 2014). Although the elderly care sector is increasingly becoming dependent on foreign labor, recruiting and retaining these workers remain problematic.

Unlike Japan, New Zealand neither has a formal nor specific category for careworker migration. Hence, if the number of overseas-born careworkers are simply based on those who

Table 3 Top Six Overseas birthplaces for people aged 65 years and over who have lived in NZ for more than 40 years.

Country of Birth	% to total population
Australia	76.4%
Other European countries	73.5%
United Kingdom or Ireland	70.3%
Pacific Islands	47.7%
North America	46.1%
Asia, Middle East or Africa	19.7%

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2013 Census

Table 4 Number of workers in the elderly care sector by birthplace.

Year	NZ-born (% female)	Overseas-born (% female)	Total (% female)	% of Overseas-born
1991	12,417 (96.0%)	2,844 (95.2%)	15,261 (96.0%)	18.6%
1996	19,485 (95.2%)	4,155 (93.9%)	23,640 (95.0%)	17.6%
2001	27,686 (93.5%)	6,361 (91.1%)	34,047 (93.1%)	18.7%
2006	27,825 (92.8%)	9,126 (89.9%)	36,951 (92.1%)	24.7%
2013	27,849 (91.0%)	12,882 (87.1%)	40,731 (89.8%)	31.6%

Source: Statistics NZ, Census of Population and Dwellings.

were actually issued work permits specifically for carework, then this figure will grossly underestimate the overseas-born workers because a large proportion have come into New Zealand through other categories like student visas, working holiday visas or visas for partners/children of New Zealand residents/citizens or holders of student/work visas. Note further that current data on careworkers are also based on census data, and as Callister, Didham and Badkar (2014) point out, “resident” based on immigration data is different from “usually resident in New Zealand” based on census data. “Usually resident” does not mean that the individual has legal permanent residency; they could be in New Zealand on student or working holiday visa or extended work permit but with a specified limited stay in NZ.⁸⁾

How long careworkers can work and live in New Zealand varies according to the visa category. On a student visa, he/she may be allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during the term and full-time during school holidays. Under the working holiday visa, depending on country of origin, he/she can work up to three months for one employer. For partners/children of New Zealand residents/citizens, they can work indefinitely.

In more recent years, an increasing source of migrant workforce in the elderly care sector has been the foreign-trained nurses, especially from India and the Philippines. Many of these nurses come to New Zealand on a student visa that enable them to study for the Competency Assessment Programme (CAP) and/or English language requirements for overseas registered nurses so they can practice nursing in NZ. The CAP runs for about eight to 12 weeks, full-time. While studying, they can work up to 20 hours per week, and many of them tend to work in elderly care facilities. The foreign-trained nurses’ relatively higher qualifications and experience make them a highly desirable workforce in the elderly care sector.

Another category that make up the overseas-born workforce in the elderly care sector are the partners/dependents of NZ citizens/residents or of migrant holders of a NZ work visa (that is valid for more than six months) or student work visa (and must be studying towards a qualification on NZ’s Long Term Skill Shortage List, or a postgraduate qualification). As partners of work and student visa holders they can stay and work in NZ as long as their partners. However, under new immigrations rules as of 2017, if the primary visa holder is engaged in lower-skilled employment, their partner and/or dependent children will not be eligible for a visa based on

their relationship to them unless:

- they held a visa on 28 August 2017, granted based on their relationship with them; or
- the primary migrant previously held a student visa that made him/her eligible to support a partner/child for a student visa and migrant subsequently held a post-study work visa based on that student visa, and he/she supported his/her partner or dependent child's application for a work visa while holding a post-study work visa.

Generally speaking, it is very difficult for overseas workers to come to NZ as careworkers because as mentioned earlier, NZ does not have a formal scheme or category specific for careworkers. To be able to work in NZ, there are two basic categories of work visa that one can apply for: skilled migrant or essential skills visas, potential careworkers from overseas can only apply under the essential skills visa category, as carework (aged or disabled carer) is not classified as highly skilled work, and in fact only has an ANZSCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) skill level 4 classification – the second lowest skill level classification. Further, essential skills visas are designed to help fill temporary skill gaps in the labor market, and as such does not automatically entitle holders of this kind of visa to apply directly for NZ residence. To be eligible for an essential skills work visa, one must have a job offer for which they are suitably qualified and experienced, and that employers must be able to demonstrate that they have made genuine efforts to recruit New Zealanders first. Immigration instructions also assign a skill band based on the level of remuneration and ANZSCO skill level in determining the duration of the work visa granted.

Under the 2017 immigration regulations, carework is classified as lower-skilled. While it is classified as ANZSCO skill level 4, remuneration in this job is typically less than NZ\$20.65 per hour; and part-time work, i.e. less than 30 hours week, in this sector is also common. This means that if granted a work visa, this will have a maximum duration of 12 months, renewable each year up to a maximum of three years. After three years, there is a required stand down period of one year before an individual can re-apply for another essentials skills work visa.

Despite the pay increase for careworkers implemented in June 2017 (minimum pay of NZ \$19 (about 1400 yen) per hour, compared to the national minimum wage in 2017 of \$15.75 (about 1200 yen) per hour, the elderly care facilities have struggled to recruit careworkers. Rest home managers say that while there are more applicants because of the appeal of the pay increase, finding and hiring someone with the rights skills, attitude and fit to the job is a lot more difficult. Hence it is also imperative that elderly care facilities are able to retain the workers they already have. However, with the current immigrations rules, overseas-born careworkers, many of whom may have worked in the sector for over 10 years, will be forced to leave by 2020 – just when it is expected that the elderly population in NZ will start experiencing its largest increase.

4. Methods of analysis and data description

The data for this study were derived from a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Focus group discussions and individual interviews with Filipino careworkers, elderly care home managers and other stakeholders were conducted in Dunedin, New Zealand in November, 2016 and February, 2018. Separate lists of guide questions were drafted for each of the stakeholder respondents. The qualitative data gathering in Japan was held in Kyoto, Osaka, Aichi, Fukuoka, Kanagawa, Shiga and Tokyo prefectures) in May 2016 and November 2017. The interviews were complemented by guided tours of nursing facilities and a vocational school for caregivers and also interactions with residents and workers to give us more concrete observations about the nature of carework and human relationships among the residents as well as with foreign and local careworkers.

In NZ, seven focus group discussions were conducted with elderly care residential home managers and careworkers who work in Dunedin City, in November 2016 and January 2018. The cultural diversity within Dunedin is not notably different from the cultural make-up of New Zealand: Europeans make up the largest ethnic group, followed by Māori, Asian and Pacific peoples (Statistics NZ, 2013), and thus make a suitable NZ case study. During these focus group discussions personal narratives of careworker experiences were explored to gain a deeper understanding of individual attitudes and views about carework in general and migrant worker experiences in particular.

On the other hand, quantitative data were gathered through the implementation of a survey among careworkers in both countries in late 2017 until early 2018. In its broadest conceptualisation, the surveys intended to capture the migration decisions and settlement patterns of careworkers, and factors affecting the mobility or job-turnover in this sector; hence a survey of overseas-born careworkers that would provide insights into their migration behaviour and intentions is imperative. However, attempting a population survey would make for a vast and costly undertaking. In the New Zealand study, the area from where the sample was derived was limited to overseas-born careworkers: current and former careworkers in the different elderly care facilities in Dunedin City ($n = 54$). On the other hand, in Japan, the sample comprised of those born in the Philippines actually working in elderly care institutions ($n = 80$). The surveys in both countries took the form of respondent-driven sampling (RDS), a variation of snowball sampling. They were made available on two platforms: online and paper. Demographic data were collected along with information about the workers' skills, qualifications, migration status, current conditions and future career plans.⁹⁾ While we compare the statistical data, we do not perform statistical testing comparing the two samples due to statistical sampling limitations of our study. The descriptive statistics are presented in Appendix A.

5. Job Satisfaction and Retention of Overseas-born Careworkers in New Zealand and Japan

Evidently, the employment and migration policies of the host governments have strong influences on the job satisfaction and retention of overseas-born careworkers. Keeping these in mind, in this section, we discuss these two important issues.

5.1 Job Satisfaction

We evaluated the two sample sets (NZ and Japan), in terms of their over-all job satisfaction as well as in several aspects of the job, namely (1) serving the elderly; (2) social status of careworkers; (3) degree of self-worth; (4) salaries and benefits; (5) relationship with supervisors and managers; (6) relationship with co-workers; and (7) career development. Based on the results presented in Figure 2 and Table 5, the respondents are quite satisfied with their work, with a general average of around 2 points on a scale of 4, with 1 representing very satisfied to 4, very dissatisfied. Over-all, overseas-born respondents in NZ are generally more satisfied than their Japanese counterparts (1.79 vs. 2.15). Our results also revealed that the NZ group are more satisfied in all aspects of their job compared to the Japan group, except in the aspect “salaries and benefits.”

Looking closely at the results for Japan, we can see that of the several aspects of job satisfaction, the Filipino careworkers are most satisfied with being able to serve the elderly, followed by feeling of self-worth. During the interview, the careworkers emphasized that they were happy because they felt that the elderly residents and their families were *appreciative* of what they were doing for them. During a casual talk with the elderly residents, they expressed their fondness of the “Filipino way of care - personal, warm and always with a smile.” The Filipino respondents were well aware of the dire need for careworkers in the country, and felt that by working in this sector, they are an “important part” of the Japanese society. In terms of salary, the respondents seemed to be happy because, for those who came under the EPA scheme, they are entitled the same salary as the Japanese. Based on a survey by Japan’s Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labor (2017), the average monthly basic salary for a careworker is 180,000 yen (excluding allowances for night shift, transportation, housing, etc.), which, compared to the salary that Filipino careworkers get in other destinations, is relatively high. Overseas-born careworkers in Israel earn minimum wage amounting to 5,300 Israel New Shekels (INS), equivalent to around 160,000 yen gross per month (prior to deductions like housing, food and medical insurance) or 4,000 INS (about 130,000 yen) after deductions (Ynet News, 2017). A nursing aide in Singapore earns a net monthly salary of around 800-1,000 Singapore dollars or 65,000 to 80,000 yen per month.¹⁰⁾

The respondents in Japan are least satisfied in terms of career advancement and this can be explained by the following reasons. First, Japan is a country that traditionally relies on age and

licensing more than performance as bases for promotion. As such, even if the respondents felt they perform better in terms of skills compared to their Japanese counterparts, they could only perform basic tasks until the time they pass the very difficult licensure examination. One respondent said that even if she already had a license, she was not assigned to do night shift alone and she thought it was because her supervisor did not feel she was capable of performing the task all by herself. The license entitles them to get 5,000-10,000 yen as merit allowance, which some think is not enough to compensate for their hard work to pass the examination. Second, unlike in New Zealand, there is no career path/bridge between nursing and carework in Japan. Many of the care workers who came under EPA scheme are graduates of nursing and/or registered (licensed) nurses in the Philippines who would like to return to this profession. However, based on the current regulations for nursing licensure, a foreign-born worker who arrives as an EPA careworker candidate or a student of carework cannot take the nursing licensure examination because they are unable to meet certain requirements (for example, number of years of schooling, on-the-job training or credits).

In the case of NZ, if we rank the aspects based on their mean values, we can see that like the respondents from Japan, their mean level of satisfaction is high in the aspects “serving the elderly” and “degree of self-worth” (see Table 5), for the same reasons as the Japan group. On the other hand, they feel least satisfied in the aspects “salaries and benefits” and “career development.” As mentioned previously, although the minimum pay in the care sector increased to NZ\$19 per hour (about 1,400 yen), an increase of about 21% from July 2017, this still falls short of the average wage of NZ\$31 per hour (about 2,300 yen).

Aside from the policies governing the recruitment of overseas-born careworkers, language is a possible reason for the gaps in the level of job satisfaction between the two samples. First, while respondents in both countries experienced difficulty in understanding their co-workers and the residents, the situation tended to be more serious for the Japan respondents because they needed to know how to write, read, speak and listen to the Japanese language in which they had very limited exposure prior to coming to Japan. It has been often cited in the literature and

Table 5 Job Satisfaction of Overseas-born Careworkers in Japan and NZ

Aspects of Satisfaction	NZ (n = 54)	Japan (n = 80)
Serving the elderly	1.34	1.96
Social status of caregivers	2.02	2.11
Degree of self worth	1.79	2.06
Salaries and benefits	2.45	2.20
Relationship with supervisors/managers	2.05	2.29
Relationship with co-workers	1.75	2.20
Career development	2.27	2.45
General satisfaction	1.79	2.15

Source: Authors' computation from survey data.

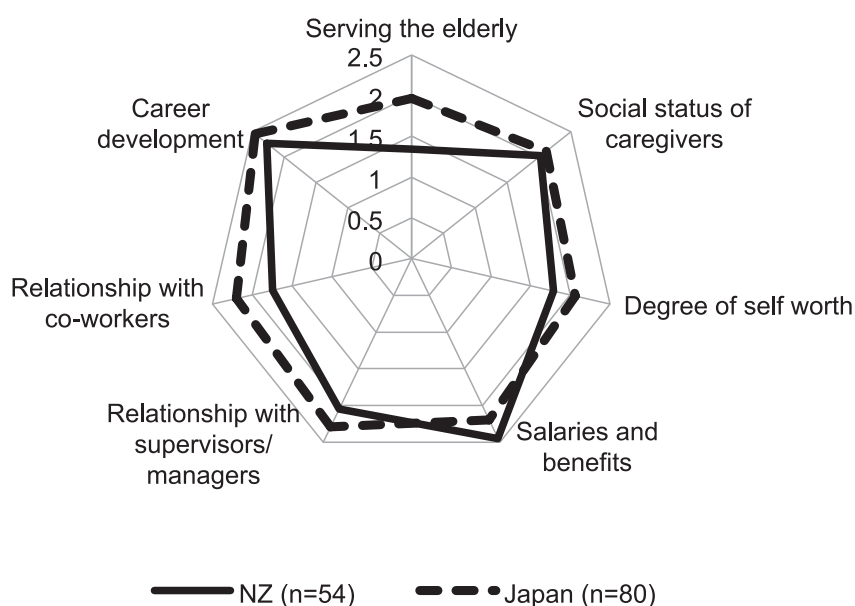


Figure 2 Job Satisfaction of Overseas-born Careworkers in Japan and NZ

Source: Authors' computation from survey data.

survey results in Japan that the most difficult problem faced by overseas-born careworkers is the lack of language proficiency (see for example, Ozeki, Okumura and Kamiyoshi, 2015; Takenaka, 2017).

In the case of those who came under EPA scheme, there are three levels of Japanese language proficiency that are required based on their use, namely, for everyday living, at work and in obtaining the national license. Prior to arrival, they usually take six months of language studies that cover basic Japanese for everyday living and at work; and upon arrival in Japan, they learn the technical terms used in writing reports at work and that appear in the national licensure examination. Lacking command of the Japanese language cause unease among the overseas-born because carework, as a form of service, require communicating with the elderly and the other workers in their care team.

On the other hand, in New Zealand, the challenge is to understand their co-workers and residents whose English pronunciation is quite different from them. Similar to what Ngoch-Chaderopa and Boon (2016) found in their survey of elderly care facilities managers, communication between residents who are unfamiliar with the accents of overseas-born careworkers remain a challenging task. Nonetheless, given their knowledge of English even prior to coming to New Zealand, they experience less problems in writing and reading reports compared to the respondents in Japan.

5.2 Future plans and job retention

In order to determine whether and until when foreign careworkers in NZ would want to

work in this sector, the question “Where do you see yourself after ____ years from now?” was asked and the answers are found in Table 6. The first four options refer to their choices in terms of job contents, while options 5-7 ask about their preference in terms of the place they want to live. Out of the 54 total number of respondents, 23 (43%) foresee themselves still working in elderly care, of which 10 (19% of total) of them are eyeing another position within the next five years, most probably in the direction of career development. These numbers also see a decreasing trend (to only 30%), with less respondents seeing themselves still working in this sector within ten years. This reveals that this group of migrants cannot be a stable source of careworkers in the long term. However, only 6 (11%) have expressed their intention to live in another country or retire within 5 years; and even after 10 years, only 14 (26%) see themselves living outside New Zealand, 11 plan to live in another country and 3 want to return to their country of birth. That even after 10 years, 74% of the respondents plan to stay in New Zealand suggests that for these respondents, this country is considered as a final destination rather than a transit one; partly because they feel comfortable living in this country, with English as the main common language in the community and the workplace. The main hurdle to this however, especially for those on essential skills visas, is being granted a work visa that would entitle them to apply for permanent residency (see below).

For the respondents who came as nursing students, shifting to a nursing job once they complete their NZ registration requirements is a common practice. As students, they are valued by elderly care institutions for their nursing skills, but the managers are also aware that they are at risk of losing these nurses to hospitals. Hence, while the foreign-trained nurses are an important source of migrant careworkers, the turnover rate from these nurses are quite high and should not be expected to fill the shortage in careworkers on a long-term basis.

Another reason why there is low retention rate for careworkers in NZ is the implementation of immigration instructions in 2017 that makes it difficult for migrant workers to remain in this sector. Carework is classified as a lower-skilled and thus working in this sector would unlikely make them eligible to apply for NZ residency. Many of the overseas-born careworkers on

Table 6 Future Plans of Respondents in NZ (Multiple responses)

Future plans	5 years later	10 years later
1. Still working in this sector	13 (24%)	8 (15%)
2. Still working in this sector, but in higher position	10 (19%)	8 (15%)
3. Working in a related health-care industry	16 (30%)	14 (26%)
4. Working in a completely different industry	11 (20%)	15 (28%)
5. Returned/living in the country of my irth	0 (0%)	3 (6%)
6. Living in another country (other than NZ and country of birth)	6 (11%)	11 (20%)
7. Retired	1 (2%)	5 (9%)
8. Others	3 (6%)	1 (2%)

Source: Authors' computation from survey data.

essential skills visas will have to leave New Zealand in 2020, three years from when these instructions came into effect, and stakeholders in the elderly care sector are increasingly getting worried that there will not be adequate skilled staff to provide the care and service the sector requires as the local labor force alone cannot meet the workforce demand in this sector.

On the other hand, in the case of Japan with regards to the answers to the question “Do you have plan to quit carework and take up job in other sectors within Japan in the next 5 years,” 34 (41.46%) respondents answered positively. For these 34 respondents, carework is considered more of a “transition” job that will enable them to stay in Japan; with many of them already thinking of quitting carework for other jobs such as English teacher, office staff, translator, factory worker, hotel housekeeping or reception, Japanese language interpreter and care manager. This again implies the difficulty in keeping the current group of careworkers, especially those who came as EPA candidates, in this sector unless the working conditions and salaries are comparable with the other sectors in this country.

In order to determine if Filipino careworkers in Japan consider this country as a destination (transit or final), they were also asked about where they plan to work in the future. Out of the 80 respondents, 58 (70.73%) replied that they have plans to work in another country. This is mainly because of the current immigration policy, which is relatively stricter for foreign careworkers compared to those in other destinations. In Japan, currently, even if he/she obtains the license, the visa is still restricted to “designated activities,” implying that he/she cannot take up any other job in the country. Furthermore, in general, a working visa can be converted into permanent residency only after ten years (with exceptions such as marriage to Japanese). Without the permanent residency status, it will be difficult to bring and raise the family in Japan because of limitation in the number of hours the spouse and other dependents can work in a week.¹¹⁾ For those who cannot wait for ten years, or are eager to practice the nursing profession, moving to Canada, UK, Australia or any other country with more favorable foreign careworker policy, is deemed to be a better option.

Furthermore, when they were asked about their planned next destination in order of preference, Canada turns to be the top choice, followed by US and New Zealand, as shown in Table 7. Canada is the most popular destination for Filipino careworkers because of its “live-in care giver” program in which, while the entry-level job is also as a careworker, they are qualified to apply for a permanent residency status after two years, after which they can petition their family members and also be able to pursue other jobs (career development). This is short compared to Japan’s continuous residency requirement of ten years, which should include five years of residence under a work visa.¹²⁾ The naturalization process may even take longer.

The US is also a top choice, although in reality, there is no official pathway for careworkers to migrate to this country, many of those who are able to leave are petitioned by their family. Even for respondents who hold a nursing license in the Philippines, it is also difficult to migrate to the US due to its current retrogression policy. For these Filipino careworkers, Japan is

Table 7 Choice of next destination (top 3 choices)

Choice of next destination (n = 80)	First choice	Second choice	Third choice	Weighed Total*	Rank
Canada	16	14	5	81	1
USA	17	10	6	77	2
Australia	3	11	4	35	3
New Zealand	8	2	5	33	4
UK	3	4	6	23	5
Europe	2	4	6	20	6
Philippines	2	0	8	14	7
Any English-speaking country	0	1	0	2	8
UAE	0	0	1	1	9

Notes: Europe includes Germany (3), France (1), Norway (1), and Switzerland (1).

“Total” is computed as weighted average; with first choice given 3 points, second choice, 2 points and third choice, 1 point.

Source: Authors’ computation from survey data.

considered as a temporary destination while waiting for the chance to go to the US.

The results above suggest that even with different policy directions, overseas-born careworkers in both countries (NZ and Japan) have weak retention tendency so that the current policies are not sufficient to provide long-term solution to the labor shortage problem. The shortage may not be felt in the next five years. Later on, however, as more choose to retire or leave for other countries, NZ and Japan may not be able to sustain its labor needs, particularly for skilled careworkers. Our findings also emphasize the need for longer-term workforce planning and policies that can provide motivations for foreign workers to stay, such as by providing family integration schemes and quicker pathways to obtain permanent residency.

6. Summary and Conclusion

In this paper, we closely looked at how two countries, NZ and Japan, are addressing the common issue of current and growing needs for care of their elderly population in different directions. New Zealand neither has a formal nor specific category for careworker migration. As such, it relies heavily on those who come into the country through other categories like nursing student visas, working holiday visas or dependent visas for partners/children of New Zealand residents/citizens. However, they do not stay long in the elderly care sector. For example, nursing students tend to leave carework once they complete their NZ registration requirements. For working holiday visa holders, they are allowed to stay in NZ only for a limited period of time. The visa as dependents does not require the holder to work in this sector to be able to settle in the country so many of them decide to leave it once they find better employment options in other sectors. These policies contribute to the low retention of overseas-born in the elderly care sector, although not necessarily their settlement in this country. In fact, our survey results reveal that the preference is job switching to another sector, and not to leave the country for another

destination. Another feature of this country's careworker policy under the essential skills visa rules is that the issuance of a labor visa is based on labor market test, which is conducted annually. As such, the availability, duration and remuneration given to a potential careworker from overseas depend on the current conditions in the labor market. Filling in the gaps left by those who voluntarily or involuntarily leave is indeed a challenge to elderly care institutions.

In Japan, on the other hand, while there is a large pool of overseas-born permanent residents (those married to Japanese or those who are descendants of Japanese), not many are willing to take up carework. Therefore, under a bilateral agreement with Indonesia in 2008, it began allowing foreigners to come as candidate careworkers, followed by similar arrangements with the Philippines and Vietnam. The extension of their stay beyond four years depends on passing the national licensure examination, which is conducted in the Japanese language. Marred by many challenges (such as the Japanese language difficulty, high costs of training, low retention, etc.) and despite the great efforts by the Japanese government and other stakeholders, the scheme has failed to produce a substantial number of foreign certified careworkers.

Recently, the overseas-born are permitted to come to Japan, initially to study Japanese language and later, carework in a vocational school. Under this scheme, a "careworker" visa will only be granted if they complete the two-year course and pass the licensure examination. Another recent development is the expansion of the technical trainee program to also cover carework. The program taps young workers from developing countries to come and work for three to five years in elderly care institutions, after which they have to return home. Currently, there is a bill under deliberation in which they will be allowed to extend their stay provided they are able to show that they have gained satisfactory necessary skills (not necessarily the certified careworker license). In all these schemes, we can sense that the policy direction of this country leans toward reliance on formal recruitment schemes for foreign careworkers on a non-immigrant visa with limitation on period of stay and work in the country; and it is only in obtaining skills qualification that the careworkers are allowed to renew their work contracts. Moreover, under the current immigration policy, unless they live and work in Japan for ten years, they are not qualified to apply for permanent residency - until such time, it will be difficult to bring the family as dependents. As a result, many of the respondents in the survey express their intention to work in other destinations, like Canada and Australia, which are preferred because of quicker path to permanent residency, better family integration programs and easier adaptation due to the use of the English language and a more multicultural environment.

We also looked at how satisfied the respondents in our sample are, given the policy regime in the host countries. It was found that the level of job satisfaction (except salaries) of those who work in NZ tends to be higher than those in Japan. If we rank their levels of satisfaction based on the various aspects, we found that those in Japan and NZ both express highest levels of satisfaction in aspects that are related to "self-fulfillment," such as ability to serve the sick and feeling of self-worth. On the other hand, the satisfaction felt by NZ respondents towards

“salaries and benefits” is lowest; while for the Japan respondents, they are most unhappy with their career development. Unless the conditions in these aspects improve, chances are high that many of these careworkers will not stay in this sector for long.

Our results reveal that job retention in the elderly care sector is a very serious problem in both countries. The current policies of the two countries, while in different directions, both seem to be insufficient to keep the careworkers currently engaged in elderly care. In order to maintain a stable pool of careworkers in Japan, easier and clearer pathways to permanent residency and citizenship as well as programs for family integration, like for example those implemented in NZ, may be created to encourage the current group of skilled careworkers to remain in this country. On the other hand, for New Zealand, to complement the permanent residents and nursing students, it can learn from Japan by introducing labor migration schemes of skilled careworkers and promote circular migration – both can potentially contribute in labor stability. Admittedly, however, whether these policy suggestions are implemented or not largely depend on the political will and economic conditions of these host countries.

Note

- 1) In this paper, we use the word “careworker” to refer to a laborer who is paid to look after elderly people. In other literatures, the word “caregiver” is used alternatively.
- 2) This number excludes those born in the Philippines who already hold Japanese citizenship through naturalization.
- 3) The *Kyu-nikkeijin* are descendants of Japanese and Filipino parents, who are born before the 1980s (especially before WWII), while the *Shin-nikkeijin* are the children of Filipino and Japanese parents, born around 1980s.
- 4) Those who fail the examination on the fourth year are given special consideration to stay for one more year and retake it. There are also some former EPA candidates who return to Japan on a student visa to study and review for the examination. If they pass, they are allowed to work under a “designated activities” visa.
- 5) This second criteria is relaxed for those who complete the vocational course until March, 2021.
- 6) As of writing, there are discussions on expanding the visa qualification to those who have passed the examination, regardless of whether the foreign worker has taken formal education in carework in Japan or not.
- 7) One elderly care home manager in Osaka, however, points out that for the elderly care home, the student scheme is not a cheaper way to recruit foreign workers compared to EPA.
- 8) Another issue that we need to be mindful about analyzing the impact of overseas-born careworkers in NZ is that some of them may have actually come to NZ as young children in the 1950s and 1960s, and for the specific purposes of this study, may well be considered “local” workers.
- 9) The questionnaires are available upon request from the authors.
- 10) Based on internet-published exchange rate as of October 20, 2018.
- 11) Dependents of holders of “designated activities” visa are allowed to work for only 28 hours a week.
- 12) Based on Japan’s Ministry of Justice, Immigration Bureau guidelines, the ten-year rule can be waived in special cases, including if the applicant “has been recognized to have made a contribution to Japan in diplomatic, social, economic, cultural or other fields and has stayed in Japan for more than five years.”

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Appendix 1 Profile of Respondents (Age, Gender, Educational Attainment and Marital Status)

Age	NZ	(%)	JP	(%)
20-24	2	3.70	2	2.50
25-29	17	31.48	38	47.50
30-34	12	22.22	34	42.50
35-39	6	11.11	2	2.50
40-44	4	7.41	2	2.50
45-49	4	7.41	0	0.00
50-54	4	7.41	0	0.00
55-59	4	7.41	1	1.25
No answer	1	1.85	1	1.25
Total	54	100.00	80	100.00
Gender	NZ	(%)	JP	(%)
Female	43	79.63	60	75.00
Male	11	20.37	20	25.00
Total	54	100.00	80	100.00

Educational Attainment	NZ	(%)	JP	(%)
Secondary	0	0.00	1	1.25
Some college schooling	15	27.78	0	0.00
University	32	59.26	76	95.00
Postgraduate	2	3.70	2	2.50
Others	0	0.00	1	1.25
Some secondary school	5	9.26	0	0.00
Total	54	100.00	80	100.00
Marital Status	NZ	(%)	JP	(%)
Never married	16	29.63	61	76.25
Married	34	62.96	18	22.50
Separated	2	3.70	0	0.00
Widowed	1	1.85	1	1.25
Divorced	1	1.85	0	0.00
Total	54	100.00	80	100.00