

# แรงจูงใจของเยาวชนไทยที่มีความต้องการประกอบอาชีพผู้ดูแลผู้สูงอายุในประเทศญี่ปุ่น

## บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาแรงจูงใจของเยาวชนไทยที่ต้องการประกอบอาชีพผู้ดูแลผู้สูงอายุในประเทศญี่ปุ่น กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยผู้สมัครที่ต้องการไปทำงานผู้ดูแลผู้สูงอายุที่ประเทศญี่ปุ่น จำนวน 10 คน เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลผ่านแบบสอบถามและการสัมภาษณ์ติดตามผล ข้อมูลของผู้สมัครถูกแบ่งออกเป็นหัวข้อต่างๆ และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการวิจัยครั้งนี้พบว่าผู้สมัครมองว่าการเดินทางไปทำงานในประเทศญี่ปุ่นเป็นโอกาสในการพัฒนาอาชีพและการเรียนรู้ภาษาญี่ปุ่น บางคนที่มีประสบการณ์ในการดูแลผู้สูงอายุมาก่อนมีความต้องการที่จะเรียนรู้เพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับการพยาบาล นอกจากนี้ความสนใจในการเดินทางไปทำงานในประเทศญี่ปุ่นนั้น ยังได้รับแรงบันดาลใจมาจากความซาบซึ้งต่อสังคมและวัฒนธรรมป๊อปปูล่าญี่ปุ่นอีกด้วย ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นถึงความคล้ายคลึงกันกับแรงจูงใจของกลุ่มผู้เข้าสมัครชาวอินโดนีเซียรุ่นแรกๆ ที่มุ่งทำงานด้านการพยาบาลในประเทศญี่ปุ่น อย่างไรก็ตาม ความสนใจของผู้สมัครชาวไทยนั้นค่อนข้างแตกต่างจากความสนใจของผู้สมัครชาวฟิลิปปินส์ซึ่งเหตุผลหลักในการไปประเทศญี่ปุ่นคือด้านการเงิน จากการนำข้อมูลที่ได้มาศึกษาร่วมกับผลวิจัยก่อนหน้านี้ ทำให้ตระหนักถึงผลกระทบต่อสังคมบางส่วนผ่านความเคลื่อนไหวของผู้ปฏิบัติงานด้านดูแลสุขภาพระหว่างประเทศได้

## คำ

### สำคัญ

เยาวชนไทย แรงจูงใจ อาชีพผู้ดูแลผู้สูงอายุในประเทศญี่ปุ่น ชาวอินโดนีเซีย และ ชาวฟิลิปปินส์

# Thai Young Adults' Motivations for Pursuing a Care Worker Career in Japan

## Abstract

The objective of this study was to clarify the motivations of Thai young adults pursuing a care worker career in Japan. The sample group consisted of ten candidates aspiring to go to Japan to work in long-term care. Data were collected through questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Participants' answers were categorized into themes, and analyzed using content analysis. The results revealed that the participants of this study perceived going to and working in Japan as an opportunity for career development and learning Japanese language. Some who had previous experience caring for elders wished to learn more about nursing care. They were also motivated by their appreciation for Japanese society and pop culture. The results show similarities with the motivations of early groups of Indonesian candidates aiming to work in nursing care in Japan. However, they differ somewhat from the interests of Filipino candidates whose primary reasons for going to Japan were financial. By juxtaposing the results with other studies, some reflections on the social implications of the transnational movement of health care workers are presented.

## Key words

Thai young adults, motivations, care worker career in Japan, Indonesians, Filipinos

## 1. Introduction

Since the early 21st century, labor shortage in Japan, particularly in the long-term care industry, has become a problematic issue for the Japanese government. It is estimated that in the year 2025, the supply-demand gap for care workers will be about 377,000 (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2015, p.1). Therefore, the government has developed several policies that welcome foreigners to supply workers in this field. The most recent is the new status of residence called “specified skilled worker I (*Tokutei Ginō 1 Gō*)” (SSW 1). It was implemented in April 2019 to receive workers in 14 industry fields, including long-term care, hereafter, “nursing care” (official term used by policymakers). Candidates must be over 18 years old, healthy, have the necessary occupational skills and Japanese language ability to work in

one of the specified industry fields. They need to pass the skill exam, and the Japanese language test offered in Japan or abroad. The maximum stay in Japan is five years (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, n.d.).

Some statistical data are provided to understand better the influx of foreign migrant workers in recent years. In October 2019, 1,658,804 foreigners were working in Japan under different visa statuses. China and Vietnam ranked top, accounting for more than 800,000 workers (Nippon Communications Foundation, 2020).

In March 2020, 3,987 foreign workers were holding the SSW 1 status of residence. One year later, this number jumped to 22,567 (table 1), which shows a massive increase of 566% (Sugimura, 2021). Thailand ranks 6<sup>th</sup>, with 572 Thais working in Japan, among which six are engaged in nursing care (table 2).

Table 1: Foreign workers in Japan with the SSW 1 status of residence

Country	March 2020		March 2021	
Vietnam	2,316	58.1%	14,147	62.7%
China	331	8.3%	2,050	9.1%
Indonesia	456	11.4%	1,921	8.5%
Philippines	235	5.9%	1,731	7.7%
Myanmar	216	5.4%	959	4.2%
Thailand	125	3.1%	572	2.5%
Cambodia	198	5.0%	569	2.5%
Others	110	2.8%	618	2.7%
Total	3,987	100%	22,567	100%

(Summarized by Nishikito & Suksamana based on the data by Sugimura, 2021)

Table 2. Distribution of Thai workers across the 14 industries

Industry Fields	Number of Thais
(1) Nursing care	6
(2) Building cleaning management	2
(3) Machine parts & tooling industries	125
(4) Industrial machinery industry	59
(5) Electric, electronic & information industries	59
(6) Construction industry	43
(7) Shipbuilding and ship machinery industry	19
(8) Automobile repair and maintenance	0
(9) Aviation industry	0
(10) Accommodation industry	0
(11) Agriculture	117
(12) Fishery & aquaculture industries	0
(13) Manufacture of food and beverages	131
(14) Food service industry	11
Total	572

(Summarized by Nishikito & Suksamana based on the data of Sugimura, 2021)

Although the current number of Thais in nursing care is small, it is expected to increase in the future. In alignment with the developments in Japan, Thailand has also witnessed the emergence of recruitment agencies that select, train, and dispatch working-age Thais to Japan. In addition, the Japan Foundation Bangkok implemented the Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic) for the first time in November 2019. Hence, Thailand became part of the few Asian countries that serve as test venues. The JFT-Basic, which

measures the language proficiency of foreigners who wish to live and work in Japan, can be used to obtain the SSW 1 status of residence alongside the traditional JLPT.

In Chiang Mai, this policy also attracted the attention of a few educational and private health institutions interested in sending Thais to Japan to work as care workers. One nursing school that established a partnership with a hospital group in Japan invited the department of Japanese Language, Payap University, to teach

basic Japanese to prospective candidates. Thus, the researchers became involved in organizing and conducting a 150-hour intensive online course for this group from March to June 2021.

Twelve students enrolled in the course. According to the partnership between the nursing school and the accepting hospital group in Japan, candidates do not need to have a background in health care. However, they should hold a bachelor's degree and be no older than 27 years old. Students' background information revealed that about half had full-time jobs, including working for multinational companies. This fact intrigued the researchers. Why would this group be interested in going to Japan, where nursing care is included in the type of jobs referred to as 3 K (*kitsui*=demanding, *kitanai*=dirty, *kiken*=dangerous) (Yu, 2020, p.5)? It is also known for unattractive working conditions such as "low wages, long working hours, lack of time-off, difficulty balancing work and family, and physical and mental stress" (Peng, 2017, p.6). Therefore, the researchers decided to look further into this question.

Previous studies have addressed different aspects surrounding foreign migrant workers in nursing care. Some have provided extensive discussions regarding Japan's policy for receiving and securing human resources in this field (Hirano, 2010; Ohno, 2012; Kamibayashi, 2015; Takenaka, 2017; Yu, 2020; Enomoto, 2019). Others have focused on the acceptance of foreign care workers from the perspective of Japanese nursing staff (Akaba et al., 2015)

and foreign care workers' perception of working in Japan (Arai, 2019). However, most of them have examined Japan's bilateral cooperation with the Philippines, and Indonesia called Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), through which Japan has received foreign health care workers. Thailand does not have an EPA agreement with Japan. Still, there are two schemes available for Thais: the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), created in 1993 to receive foreign workers in the manufacturing field, which came to include nursing care in 2017 (Chonlaworn, 2021), and the SSW 1 mentioned above, created in 2019. Both are recent additions to Japan's efforts in filling the workforce in this field, and as such, have not yet been entirely explored. Therefore, this paper proposes to bring some insights into this new movement.

## 2. Objectives

To clarify the motivations of Thai young adults wishing to work in Japan as care workers.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Sample Group

The sample group consisted of 10 students (out of 12) who completed the 150 hours intensive Japanese language course offered by the department of Japanese language and culture, Payap University, and consented to participate in this study. All participants were female college graduates aged between 22 and 27 years old.

### 3.2. Data Collection

Data were collected from March to June 2021 using a questionnaire with open-ended questions and follow-up interviews. The questionnaire included some personal information of the participants such as age, educational and professional background, previous knowledge of the Japanese language, and questions regarding their motivations to work in Japan, particularly in the field of nursing care. Interviews were subsequently carried out to ask for more details regarding the participants' answers. Data collection was carried out upon

explanation of the research objective and consent by the participants.

### 3.3. Method of Analysis

The participants' answers were categorized into themes, and content analysis was carried out. Results are presented descriptively.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Background of the participants

An overview of the participants' background is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Participants' educational and professional background

	Age	Educational background (Universities from which the participants graduated)	Current Job	Previous knowledge of the Japanese language	Place of residence
P1	26	Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University	Employee of a private hospital	15 hours of an online course	Chiang Mai
P2	24	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University	-	-	Chiang Mai
P3	24	Faculty of Physical Therapy and Sport Medicine, Rangsit University	Physical therapist in a hospital	-	Samut Prakan
P4	27	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Rajabhat Pranakorn University	Employee of a private company	-	Samut Prakan
P5	23	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University	-	-	Lamphun

P6	27	Faculty of Business Administration, North-Chiang Mai University	Employee at the city hall	-	Sukhothai
P7	26	Faculty of Arts, Walailak University	Employee of a British company	10 hours of an online course	Sukhothai
P8	22	College of Logistics and Supply Chain, Sripatum University	-	-	Nakhon Sawan
P9	25	Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Suranaree University of Technology	Employee of a Japanese company	-	Pathum Thani
P10	24	School of Health Science, Mae Fah Luang University	-	-	Chiang Rai

(Summarized by Nishikito & Suksamana)

Some observations can be made from table 3:

- (1) Students' educational background is quite diverse. Four participants came from Humanities (P2, P4, P5, P7), two (P3 and P10) majored in health care, and the remaining graduated from other fields.
- (2) Students who enrolled in the course reside in different parts of Thailand, revealing that the interest of young Thai adults in this program is not limited to a specific region.
- (3) Six participants had a full-time job, while four were not working when the data were collected.

(4) Eight out of ten participants had never studied Japanese before registering for the course.

(5) Except for P3, P6, and P8, who graduated from private universities, the remaining participants graduated from public universities.

#### 4.2. Working as Care Workers in Japan

To answer the research question, the researchers focused on two main topics to ask the participants: (a) why the interest in going to Japan; (b) why working as care workers in Japan.

##### 4.2.1. Why the interest in going to Japan?

The participants' reasons for going to Japan are summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Participants' reasons for going to Japan

Reasons for going to Japan	Number of participants who mentioned this reason	Percentage
(1) Interest in gaining new experiences by working in the Japanese “system”	8 out of 10 participants	80%
(2) Interest in Japanese culture	7 out of 10 participants	70%
(3) Learning the Japanese language	5 out of 10 participants	50%
(4) Financial reasons	3 out of 10 participants	30%

(Summarized by Nishikito & Suksamanao)

**(1) Interest in gaining new experiences by working in the Japanese “system”**

80% of the participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P10) explained that they wished to go to Japan to gain new experience. They want to challenge themselves and try new things. They also believe that the knowledge and occupational skills acquired in Japan may be helpful in the future.

P3: I want to challenge myself and learn new occupational skills.

P7: I want to gain new experience, get out of my comfort zone.

P10: I want to gain more experience and work skills that can be useful for the future.

Participants also believe that they can learn from the Japanese way of working, such as being dedicated, respecting rules, and taking work seriously.

P1: I want to know the work system in Japan.

P4: Japanese are serious and dedicated to work.

P2: Japan is a country where people follow a code of conduct and have discipline at work.

**(2) Interest in Japanese culture**

70% of the participants (P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10) expressed their admiration and affection for the Japanese pop culture. Japanese mangas and animes, which are very popular among all age groups, inspire people to go to Japan.

P5: I have always been fascinated by books and animes from Japan. I want to read the books in the original language, not the Thai translation. Japan is different from Thai: the life, the weather, the architecture. The opportunity came, so I want to go work there.

Thais are also attracted to several other aspects of Japan, such as nature, the different



seasons, traditions, food, and technology.

P4: I feel attracted to Japan: the different seasons, the food. The country is attractive to live, work and sightseeing. Since I was a child, I've always wanted to visit Japan.

P6: I'm interested in Japanese culture, traditions, food, nature, technology, animes, etc. I've traveled to Japan before, I liked the country very much, and want to know more.

Participant P2 feels attracted to the minimalist concept in Japanese architecture.

P2: I feel attracted to Japanese architecture and the concept of minimalism; the houses look clean and attractive to live in.

### (3) Learning the Japanese language

50% of the participants (P1, P6, P8, P9, P10) expressed their wish to go to Japan to learn the Japanese language. They consider learning

Japanese as an additional asset for future career opportunities.

P1: I want to learn and practice Japanese to communicate in a 3rd language.

P8: I like the Japanese language and want to practice it to expand my career possibilities in the future.

P9: I want to learn the Japanese language as an additional skill.

### (4) Financial reasons

30% of the participants (P4, P6, P9) mentioned the financial aspect as their motivation to work in Japan.

P4: I want to save money to give to my parents so that they don't need to work hard in the future.

P6: I want to save money by working in Japan.

P9: The income is higher than in Thailand.

### 4.2.2. Why working as care workers?

The participants' reasons for working as care workers in Japan are presented next.

Table 5: Participants' reasons for working as care workers in Japan

Reasons for working as care workers in Japan	Number of participants who mentioned this reason	Percentage
(1) Future career opportunities	6 out of 10 participants	60%
(2) Having previous experience with elders	4 out of 10 participants	40%
(3) Other personal reasons	2 out of 10 participants	20%

(Summarized by Nishikito & Suksamana)

### **(1) Future career opportunities**

60% of the participants (P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P10) are aware of Thailand being an aging society. They believe that having skills in nursing care may come in handy for job demands in the future, and it will be easier for them to get into this market.

P1: Thailand is an aging society, and Japan has experience and expertise in caring for the elderly. The knowledge and experience gained in Japan may be helpful in the future, in Thailand.

P4: Caregiving is a profession with high demand all over the world. Having knowledge and experience may be helpful in the future to avoid being jobless.

P5: Thailand is an aging society, and everywhere some elders need support. By gaining knowledge and experience in this field, we can be part of this support. Since the demand will be high, it is likely to provide job stability.

P7: Caregiving is a career that will be in high demand in the future.

Two participants, who majored in health care (P3: physical therapy and P10: public health), believe that working as care workers will add to their knowledge and skills to become better health professionals.

P3: Thailand is an aging society, and I still want to work in the field I majored in, which is health care.

P10: I want to improve in my field, which is health care. Taking care of elders requires

special skills because getting old brings changes to the body, mind, including emotional and psychological changes.

### **(2) Having previous experience with elders**

40% of the participants (P2, P4, P7, P8) mentioned having some experience in caring for elders in the family, which triggered their interest in working in this field. P2 and P7 grew up with elders in the family, while P8 is currently taking care of her grandmother, who is sick. All of them believe that the experience gained in Japan may be helpful to take care of their own families when they get old.

P2: I grew up in a family surrounded by elders and felt the warmth of being together. I want to use the knowledge gained in Japan to take care of my family in the future.

P4: My parents are getting old. The knowledge I will gain in Japan may be helpful to take care of them in the future.

P7: Since childhood, I have lived with elders in the family and have done activities with them: preparing food, taking them for a walk, talking to them, exchanging opinions, and listening to them. I learned to be calmer and gentler. Seeing them smile, made me happy. I have also taken care of an elderly Japanese (doing activities together, preparing food, talking, etc.). Seeing them smiling gives me satisfaction.

P8: Currently, I'm taking care of my grandmother, who is sick. Going to Japan will be a chance

to learn more and be more efficient if I need to take care of my elders one day.

### (3) Other personal reasons

Other reasons given by two participants (20%) were inclination for the job (P6) and challenging oneself to do something that the participant feels is rewarding (P8).

P6: It is a job that I think I can do well.

P8: Taking care of elderly people requires lots of soft skills, so it is a new challenge. I think that taking care of others is something rewarding.

## 5. Discussions

### 5.1. Working as Care Workers in Japan: Comparisons with Indonesians and Filipinos

The results above reveal that Thai young adults in this study are aware of the aging of the Thai population and are looking for career development in nursing care, which they believe will be in high demand in the future. In this context, going to Japan and consequently acquiring the Japanese language is also seen as an asset for work opportunities in the future. For many, their interest in Japanese culture and society triggered the intention to go to Japan. Financial reasons were not a priority for most of the participants. Overall, they expressed a positive attitude towards the idea of going to Japan and working as a care worker.

The results show similarities with studies

that focused on early candidates from Indonesia and the Philippines (Hirano et al., 2010; Ohno, 2012; Yu, 2020). These two countries were the first to sign a bilateral economic agreement with Japan, the Economic Partnership Agreement (*Keizai Renkei Kyōtei*) (EPA), which allowed them to deploy health professionals to Japan.

It came into effect in 2008, when Japan received Indonesians, followed by Filipinos in 2009.<sup>5</sup> This program has stricter requirements than the SSW 1 scheme. Candidates must be university or vocational college graduates in nursing or caregiving; should take Japanese language courses both prior and after entering Japan; receive on-the-job training in accepting institutions and take the Japanese national certification exam within four years. If approved, they become certified health professionals and can work and live long-term in Japan, but if they fail, they need to return to their home country (Yu, 2020, p.6).

Hirano et al. (2010) surveyed early groups of candidates from Indonesia and the Philippines to study these groups' socioeconomic characteristics and motivations to work in Japan. The sample group consisted of the second batch of Indonesian nurse candidates (144 respondents) and the first batch of Filipino nurse candidates (100 respondents). There were no care worker candidates included in the two groups. However, Hirano's survey will be used as a reference for comparisons with the results of this study because Indonesia and the Philippines were

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to Indonesia and the Philippines, Japan signed the EPA agreement with Vietnam, which began in 2014.

the first Southeast Asian countries allowed to send health care professionals to work in nursing care.

The results of Hirano et al.'s study (2010, p.157) revealed that while almost 66.7% of Indonesians cited "career development" as the primary reason to go to Japan, Filipinos cited "economic conditions" (42.7%) and career development (36.5%).

Ohno's study (2012, p.559) complements Hirano's findings. She explains that Indonesians expressed a positive attitude towards the EPA program. Government officials perceived the program as an opportunity for the candidates to upgrade their nursing skills and consequently upgrade the nursing practice in the country upon their return. In addition, the popularity of Japanese culture in Indonesia, such as anime and manga, and the promise of high salaries influenced Indonesian nurses to go to Japan. To support her reasoning, Ohno cites Hapsari's work (2009), whose survey revealed that 59.5% of 251 nursing students expressed strong interest in working in Japan because of their interest in Japanese culture and the attractive remuneration.

As for the Filipinos candidates, working in Japan coincided with a surplus of nurses in the domestic market. The Philippines has been training nurses for the global market since 1960, and higher salaries abroad had long been a strong incentive for them to work outside the country. The United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and the Middle East had traditionally

welcomed Filipino nurses. However, in the 2000s, American strict immigration laws, increased domestic employment in the UK, the economic recession in Canada, and political instability in the Middle East led to downsizing in the labor market for nurses abroad. During this period, Japan's EPA came into the scenario (Ohno, 2012, p.551-553).

For the Filipino candidates, financial difficulty, such as the need to support the family, was a significant factor influencing their decision to go to Japan. However, the government of the Philippines expressed a somewhat critical view towards the program as they perceived it as a 'cheap labor trap' for nurses (Ohno, 2012, p.549). Having to work as nursing assistants until they passed the Japanese certification test meant that in addition to "lowering their professional skills," their salaries would be lower than Japanese certified nurses.

When looking at the Thai candidates in this study, the results show similarities with Indonesian respondents because both groups revealed high interest in career development. They also shared their appreciation for Japanese pop culture and expressed a positive attitude towards going to Japan. The table below summarizes the motivations of Indonesian, Filipino, and Thai candidates based on the data by Hirano et al. (2010) and Ohno (2012) described above in comparison with the results of this study.

Table 6: Indonesian, Filipino and Thai candidates' motivations to work in nursing care in Japan

	Primary reasons	Attitude towards going to Japan
Indonesian candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Career development (66.7%)</li> <li>● Appreciation for Japanese pop culture (59.5%) *</li> </ul> <p>* Hapsari (2009) as cited in Ohno (2012, p.559)</p>	Positive attitude
Filipino candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial situation: support the family (42.7%)</li> <li>● Career development (36.5%)</li> </ul>	Government showing a critical view towards the program.
Thai candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Career development                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning the Japanese work system (80%)</li> <li>- Future career opportunities (60%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Appreciation for Japanese pop culture (70%)</li> </ul>	Positive attitude

(Summarized by Nishikito & Suksamana)

Despite the similarities in the motivations to go to Japan, the socioeconomic context reveals the particularities of each group. For Thais, career development is associated with future work opportunities because Thailand is advancing rapidly towards an aging society. In addition, the financial situation was not a primary reason to go to Japan as it was for Filipino candidates. Furthermore, most Thais in this study are not from the health care field because, in the SSW 1 scheme, specialization in nursing or caregiving is not a requirement. Therefore, they are unlikely to face the situations encountered by Filipino nurses, such as having to “lower” their professional skills and status.

## 5.2. Future Implications

### (1) Possible challenges in Japan

Previous research focusing on foreign migrant workers in nursing care (Ohno, 2012;

Akaba et al., 2015; Peng, 2017; Lan, 2018; Arai, 2019; Yu, 2020) have pointed out several challenges that newcomers face in accepting institutions: the language barrier, cultural understanding, differences in religious beliefs, interpersonal relationship with Japanese co-workers, and difficulties in feeling included.

Hirano (2010, p.18) describes both the cultural and the shocking reality they may face when going to Japan - for example, being disconcerted that nursing care considerably relies on institutionalized care. In southeast Asia, care is primarily family-centered. In addition, foreign care workers have expectations towards high income. However, Japan’s high cost of living and the salary they receive (after the pension and insurance fees have been deducted) make it difficult for them to save money or make remittances to their families back in their home country.

In this context, Thais may equally struggle with the harsh reality that may affect their enthusiasm and views about Japan and the Japanese people.

## **(2) Creation of a multicultural society for coexistence and inclusion of foreigners**

Despite controversies surrounding the acceptance of foreign migrant workers, there have been advancements in the overall system to improve and facilitate the life of foreigners in Japan. Support centers that provide services in different languages, including consultations and guidance, have been created (The Japan Foundation Bangkok, 2020).

In addition to enhancing the employment environment, training, and remuneration adequate for the profession, Yu (2020, p.13) suggests the creation of a multicultural society for the coexistence and inclusion of foreigners. The influx of foreigners should benefit Japan, which needs foreigners to fill the labor shortage and allow foreign migrant workers to become part of the local community. Facilitating cross-cultural understanding and further exchange is encouraged. Suppose foreigners like Thais, who have a positive perception of Japan, can work in an environment where they feel included and appreciate what they do. In that case, Japanese institutions and Japanese patients under their care can benefit from contented workers.

## **(3) Future career possibilities in Thailand**

Nursing care in Thailand is in its infancy. Therefore, it is an excellent opportunity for Thais

who receive training in Japan to bring back their knowledge and experience in this field. It can certainly be adapted and applied to several services that are likely to increase in the future.

Chiang Mai Province is quite popular among foreigners who live long-term after retirement, especially the Japanese. It has recently witnessed the construction of different types of residences for this clientele. There are resort-style residences that target affluent foreign retirees and service apartments for those who can live independently (Nishikito, 2020, p.29). In the Japanese community, there have been attempts to offer home services to those in need of assistance (Nishikito, 2020, p.90). Providing nursing care in the Japanese language may increase the interest and the number of Japanese retirees who wish to live in Chiang Mai until the end of their lives. Consequently, it may contribute to Japan's efforts to provide transnational nursing care and ease the domestic burden.

## **6. Summary and Further Considerations**

The participants in this study comprised a small group of candidates whose ages ranged from 22 to 27 years old. Therefore, the results reflect the motivations and aspirations of this group. Additional data with different age groups may provide new insights into Thais' motivations to work as care workers in Japan. Furthermore, research with Thais currently living and working in Japan can help understand their situation, the challenges they face, and the strengths and weaknesses of the SSW 1 scheme.

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