

Precarious Work: Women in Germany, Japan, and Korea

The Actual Situation of Labor and Organization of the Female Irregular Workers in the Service Industries in Japan as the Process of Globalization Continues

Japanese home care workers'  
characteristics:  
Special focus on strategies to improve  
their employment status

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# Objective of the Study

- This study ascertains the potential **strategies** for **improving the low-wage employment status of home care workers in Japan**, through findings from previous studies and a research survey of **Japanese cooperatives** that have had relative success in improving their low-wage employment status.
- The study's methodology uses **interviews**.

# 1. Background of the Study

## (1) Shortage of Long-Term Care Workers in Aging Society

	2013	2025 (estimated)
ratio of elderly persons aged 75 or older	one-tenth	one-fifth
Care workers needed	1,710,000	2,530,000

- shortage of care workers partly because of their low-wage employment status
- I focus on home care workers because their status is relatively low.

# 1. Background of the Study

## (2) the State of Home Care Workers

- 80% of home care workers are part time
- 95% of part time home care workers are women
- Their hourly wage is approximately 1,200 yen or 10 dollars an hour
- Their monthly salary is approximately 80,000 yen or 667 dollars.
- Only 6.9% in the healthcare sector are unionized.
- the job opening-to-application ratio for care workers was 2.19 points in 2014.

## 2. Previous Studies

### (1) Previous Studies

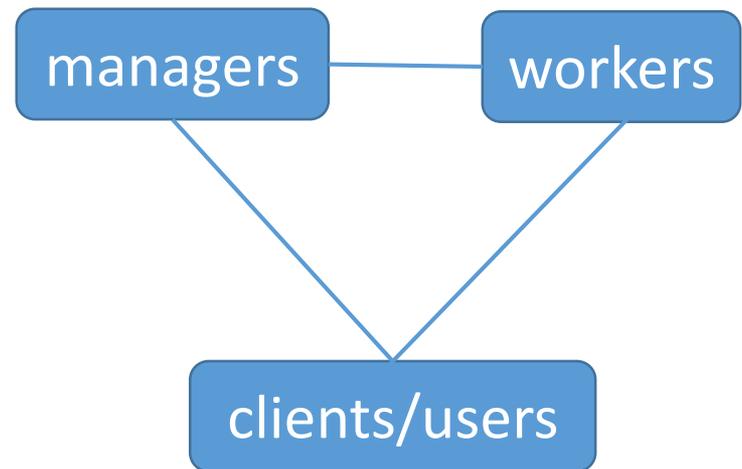
- three main findings of fact
  - 1) this work was originally performed voluntarily by **housewives**.
  - 2) an **increase in long-term care expenses** because of the progress of aging that affects offerings of long-term care
    - daily life support is marginalized.
  - 3) home care workers experience the greatest **emotional and mental burden** than workers in other care related occupations

## 2. Previous Studies

### (2) Labor Process of Service Work

- I aim to **develop strategies to improve their status** in this study.
- I particularly focus on a framework that explains **the labor process of service work**
- Based on this framework, unions and worker centers related to care workers in the United States have already conducted a campaign and are organizing

<Triangle dyad in the labor process of service work>



# 3. Survey Methodology and Research Methods

## (1) Survey methodology

five important strategies for improving care workers' poor working conditions.

1) **building coalitions with high-road agents or employers** or otherwise running high-road home care service providers, such as NGOs and cooperatives.

2) meeting the needs of the community where the home care clients live their everyday lives, **organizing clients of home care services, and building coalitions with them**

3) **training** to be better caregivers

4) **campaigning** for beneficial legislation

5) help for home care workers who feel **fragmented and alienated**

# 3. Survey Methodology and Research Methods

## (2) Research methods

To thoroughly ascertain the potential for these strategies, I have been conducting research on cooperatives in Japan.

### The Japan Workers Co-operative Union (JWCU)

- founded in 1979
- has 59 member co-ops
- 12,894 worker members
- Annual sales are 31.2 billion yen (fiscal year 2014)

# 3. Survey Methodology and Research Methods

In this presentation, I particularly focus on one member co-op, **Aichi prefecture Older Person's Cooperative**, which has relatively succeeded in improving care workers' low-wage employment status.

<**Aichi prefecture Older Person's Cooperative**> Aichi Co-op

Members	2,412
Workers	Full Time: 23 Part Time: 113
Offices	Main office and four brunches
Annual sales	295,448,363 yen

# 4. Results

1. **cooperatives that run a high-road home care system gain profits** because not only managers but also workers participate in the process of administration. Workers feel motivated and valued because of their role in administrative work and their membership in the cooperative, which results in earning **relatively high wages** (approximately 1,500 yen or 12.5 dollars an hour).
2. the cooperative has not yet organized clients, but it **meets the community's needs**.

# Meet the Needs of Residents in Local Community

- When the Lehman shock occurred in 2008, the economy declined in Japan as well as in the United States, and a subcontracting company for Toyota Motors laid off many immigrant factory workers.
- Most of them live in a local community where 40% of residents are Latino. Due to their language barrier and work experience, they could not find new jobs.



# Latino Local Community



# Meet the Needs of Residents in Local Community

- In response to consultation from an NGO that helps such immigrant workers, the Aichi co-op conducted training courses for level-2 home helpers and trained over 100 caregivers in three years. Some trained caregivers established a branch, including a home-visit care station in 2011.



# after-school daycare center for disabled students

- Aichi coop started an after-school daycare center for disabled students in 2015, in response to the needs of residents in local communities.

- Seven users



# 4. Results

3. if the Aichi co-op decides to conduct a new activity, it first **initiates a training course** and launches a new branch or service.
  
4. presented a request to the City
  - **built a coalition** with other small, local, home care service providers
  - have not conducted a campaign for legislation

# 4. Results

5. have created some professional support for workers.

- case conferences

- For example, when independence support care in cooperation with the user is attempted to be practiced, there are cases where this is understood and accepted and cases where it is persistently not understood and they can do nothing but treat the caregiver as a visitor etc. When forced to correspond with difficult demands such as feelings of stress, not getting the same understanding from the family, not having the system understood, being treated like a housekeeper, or even when the person suffering from some mental disorder or physical impediment cannot accept their condition, workers are exposed to many contradictions.
- At such times, people concerned with case meetings gather and discuss the issues, decide the best way of coping with them and request the decided action from the user in a resolute manner. Although the user doesn't always agree, it is necessary to protect the workers. Problems also arise from the characteristics of the disorders, in these cases, training sessions and revision meetings are held. I realize that it is important for those concerned to have somewhere to vent their feelings.

# 5. Conclusion

- In conclusion, in the case of Japan, cooperatives run high-road administration in response to community needs and train their staff to meet those needs.
- Therefore, they succeed in improving the low-wage employment status of home care workers.
- However, they have not yet effectively conducted a political campaign for beneficial legislation.
- To thoroughly ascertain the potential for these five strategies, more specific research on cooperatives as well as on labor unions and labor NGOs is needed in Japan.

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