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研究課題名(和文) The Future of Mandatory Retirement: Exploring Workers' Attitudes in Japan, Korea and Canada

研究課題名(英文) The Future of Mandatory Retirement: Exploring Workers' Attitudes in Japan, Korea and Canada

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研究成果の概要(和文)：本研究プロジェクトにより、主に下記の4つのエリアにおける研究成果を生み出すことができた。3本の査読論文(国際共著論文)を関連する国際学会誌(The Journal of Aging & Social Policy、など)へ掲載した。2冊の国際共著学術書を、世界的に評価の高い学術出版社であるRoutledgeから刊行した。国内および海外で計4つの国際シンポジウムを企画および開催し、研究成果の世界発信と国際的な関連研究者間でのネットワークの更なる拡大を行った。計6回の研究成果発表を北米を含む海外の国際学会にて実施し、今後の継続的な研究活動に向けて有意義な学術的フィードバック等を獲得した。

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

学術的意義：本プロジェクトの成果は、関連仮題(定年退職制度の行方)に関する従来の文献に対して、斬新とアプローチと見解を提示するに至った。従来の文献の殆どは、政策側および雇用主側の観点に立った議論がその主流であったが、本プロジェクトでは高齢就労者(政策及び雇用の対象者)の見解と動向に主眼を当てた斬新な研究として、その学術的意義は高いと言える。

社会的意義：本研究プロジェクトの成果は、学術論文や学会での発表のみならず、政策側や雇用主側の間でもパブリシティの高い出版社からの書籍の発行や、同様の性質を持ったシンポジウム等での発表を通じて、積極的に実践的な政策提言を行ってきた。

研究成果の概要(英文)：This research project has generated its outcomes in the following four areas of research dissemination: First, the project has led to publishing a total of three peer-reviewed article in internationally recognized journals including the Journal of Aging & Social Policy. Second, it has also resulted in compiling and publishing its research findings as two academic volumes/books with Routledge, a NY-based internationally reputable academic publisher. Third, as part of this project a total of four international symposia, both domestic and overseas, were organized and conducted, both domestic and overseas, which enabled the Principal Investigator and his overseas collaborators to further expand their professional networks. Finally, but not necessarily the least of importance, the findings of this research projects were presented at a total of six international academic conferences, including ones held in North America.

研究分野：社会学 社会政策学 老齡学

キーワード：Retirement Older Worker Aging Policy Japan South Korea

## 1. 研究開始当初の背景

Against the backdrop of the rapid population aging and its resultant projected labor force shortages, an increasing number of developed countries around the world have abolished *contractual mandatory retirement policies* in their labor market. This employer practice (permitted by the government) has in recent years been recognized as one of the key institutional barrier to older workers' continued employment. The primary objective of such policy reforms is to delay the timing of workers' retirement (full withdrawal from the labor force) so as to prolong their working live beyond the conventional retirement age.

Prior to this research, the relevant literature in social sciences, those in gerontology in particular, reflected this trend; most existing research focused almost exclusively on the experience of developed countries – particularly those in North American and Western Europe – in reforming retirement-related public policies including abolishing the mandatory retirement policies. Arguably, therefore, little attention had been paid to the case of the current and future prospect of retirement reforms in Asian countries including Japan.

## 2. 研究の目的

This research project was designed and conducted in order to help fill in the persistent gap in the aforementioned existing research by shedding the light in the case of Japan; Japan is not only a country outside North American or Western Europe but is also the country with the world' highest rate of population aging today. This project also uniquely focused on the perspectives and attitudes held among older workers (aged 50 and older) – as opposed to those of policymakers or employers – in the country with respect to the current policy framework surrounding their prospective retirement, including the mandatory retirement policies. As a cross-national comparative research project, this project also included the case of South Korea and Canada. The former stands as the country that has in recent years been experiencing the world's speed of the aging of the population and the workforce, while still permitting employers' practice of mandatory retirement across the country's labor market. The latter is where mandatory retirement has most recently been abolished altogether (since 2009).

The primary purposes of this research project are two-fold:

- (1) First, this project aimed to explore the perspectives and attitudes of older workers in the three countries – Japan, South Korea and Canada – towards the role (and justifiability) of mandatory retirement policies at workplaces. This way, this project aimed to uncover similarities and differences in their attitudes as a source of knowledge helping to explain why mandatory retirement is still widely prevalent in Japan and South Korea, despite its apparent needs, but has recently been abolished in Canada.
- (2) Second, as its overarching goal, this project aimed to generate a source of knowledge that may be useful for future policy reforms not only for these two countries but also for other countries around the world that are projected to contend with sheer needs to reform their retirement policies under the increasing demographic pressure of rapid population aging.

## 3. 研究の方法

As an international, interdisciplinary and cross-national comparative study, this research project involved five researchers as listed below, including the Principal Investigator, who have possessed distinct areas of specializations and extensive accomplishments in international collaborations in the field of gerontology.

This research project employed a mixed-method approach for data collection: a series of focus group interviews to gather qualitative data and employee survey questionnaires for quantitative data. The focus group was conducted both as an initial exploratory scheme and as a follow-up case study after the completion of the employee survey questionnaires. Most of the focus group interviews were conducted in Tokyo, Seoul and Toronto, representative cities in respective national contexts. The employee survey

questionnaires were developed based on the theme-coded findings of the focus group interview data and were used roughly during the second half of the period of this project. The survey was conducted to gather quantitative data in order to uncover more generalizable findings, and it was implemented in the same cities in the respective countries as mentioned above. In addition, this project benefited significantly by conducting extensive reading of relevant literature – including academic articles, policy briefs and government/administrative survey reports, etc. – at the preparatory stage of the entire project.

#### 4. 研究成果

The main findings of this research project can be summarized as follows:

- (1) In both Japan and South Korea, unlike those in the developed countries where contractual mandatory retirement has already been abolished, older workers (age 50+) tend to justify and accept the mandatory retirement workplace rules at their work organizations.
- (2) The chief rationale underlying their justification and acceptance rest in their view that the mandatory retirement rules play a key role at their work organization in structurally facilitating the generational inflow and outflow of the workforce, which is necessary to keep their organization vital in our ever competitive economy. Overall, these older workers consider it as part of their obligation to leave their workplace upon reaching the mandatory retirement age on behalf of the future prosperity (and survival) of their work organizations.
- (3) By sharp contrast, older workers in Canada tend to agree with the abolishment of this policy that has taken place across their country and thus in general support their current policy arrangement surrounding their working lives in later life (individual workers' decide when to retirement from work, rather than forced to retirement due to contractual mandatory retirement workplace rules at their workplaces).
- (4) Overall, this project's core policy suggestion is that given the national and cultural contexts, abrupt abolishment of contractual mandatory retirement may not work at least in Japan and South Korea. Policymakers and employers may need to find another way to help contribute to delaying workers' retirement.

This research project has generated its outcomes in the following four areas of research dissemination:

- (1) First, the project has led to publishing a total of three peer-reviewed article in internationally recognized journals including the *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*.
- (2) Second, it has also resulted in compiling and publishing its research findings as two academic volumes/books with Routledge, a NY-based internationally reputable academic publisher. For instance, one of them is *Ageing in Asia-Pacific: Interdisciplinary and Comparative Perspectives* (Routledge, 2018).
- (3) Third, as part of this project a total of four international symposia, both domestic and overseas, were organized and conducted, both domestic and overseas, which enabled the Principal Investigator and his overseas collaborators to further expand their professional networks.
- (4) Finally, but not necessarily the least of importance, the findings of this research projects were presented at a total of six international academic conferences, including ones held in North America.

#### 5. 主な発表論文等

〔雑誌論文〕 (計 5 件)

〔学会発表〕 (計 10 件)

〔図書〕 (計 2 件)

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ホームページ等

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