



SURVEY REPORT ON FOREIGN RESIDENTS –THEIR LIFE AND WORK IN JAPAN

Research Project on Social Hierarchy in a
Multicultural Society

0. Introduction

The purpose of this survey is to understand the living conditions of foreign residents in Japan and their opinions about Japanese society. This will allow us to find out if there are any disadvantages to being a foreigner in Japan and if there are, what measures could be taken to help them. We appreciate the cooperation of all parties participating in the survey. This report is made to provide you with the results of the main survey questions. Going forward, more detailed analysis will be performed on the data.

1. About this Survey

The subjects of this survey are all foreign nationals 20 to 79 years of age throughout Japan, except for areas with none or a very limited number of them. The survey was sent to a random sampling of 5,000 people in 60 municipalities, and responses were received from 1,123 people. The response rate was 23.8% (excluding those whom couldn't be reached after moving). The 'n' value in the text indicates the number of respondents for each question and 'Birthplace' is defined based on their nationality.

The actual percentage of men and women among all of the survey subjects were as follows: Male: 42.5%, Female: 52.8% and No answer: 4.7%. The rate of males was rather low. People in their 20s and 30s accounted for a large portion of the total, and it was relatively high in 30s and low in 20s compared to the rate of foreign residents in Japan in the same age group (2015 census). Please See Fig.1-1

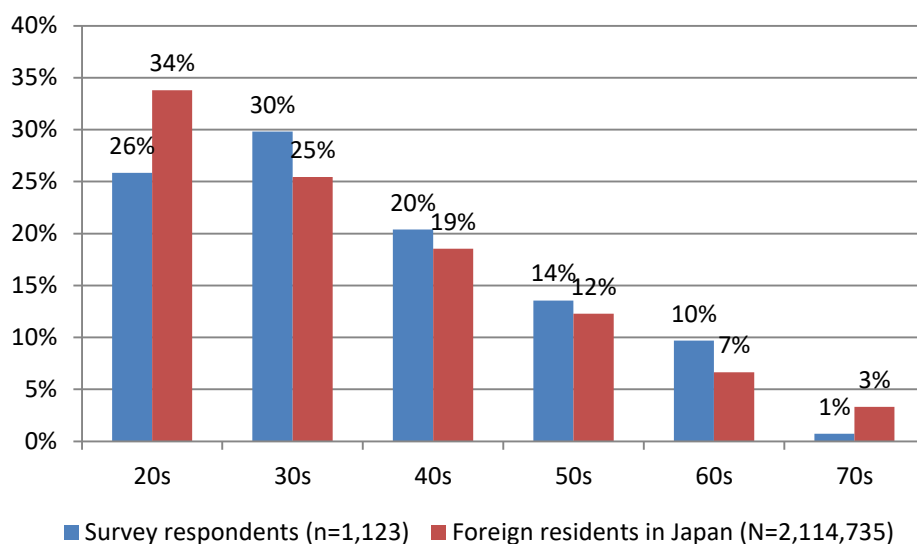


Fig.1-1 Comparison of age distribution patterns in the respondents and foreign residents in Japan

The average number of years living in Japan was 11.1 (excluding those who were born in Japan). The distribution figures indicate the following: while 30% of the total answered 5 years or less (11% for 1 year or less, and 19% for 2 to 5 years) , 15 % had lived in Japan for 21 years or more. Also, those who were born in Japan accounted for 14% of the total.

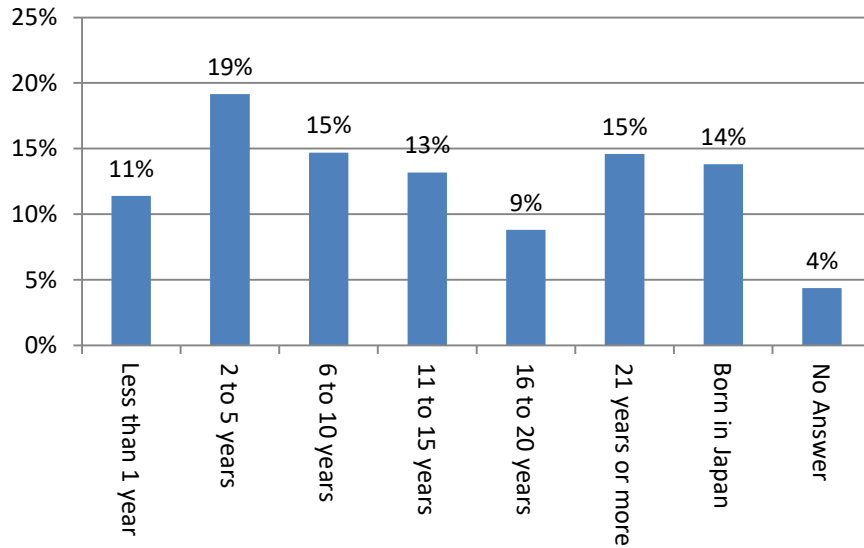


Fig.1-2 Distribution patterns of their length of stay in Japan

The nationality distribution among the respondents is as follows: a majority of them were from China (34%), followed by Korea (18%), Brazil (11%) and the Philippines (11%). Respondents from other countries were less than 5% each. In comparison among the foreign residents in Japan (2017 Counts of foreign national residents), China and Brazil had higher response rates and it was relatively low in Vietnam and countries other than those stated above. The survey was completed by foreign nationals from a total of 52 countries.

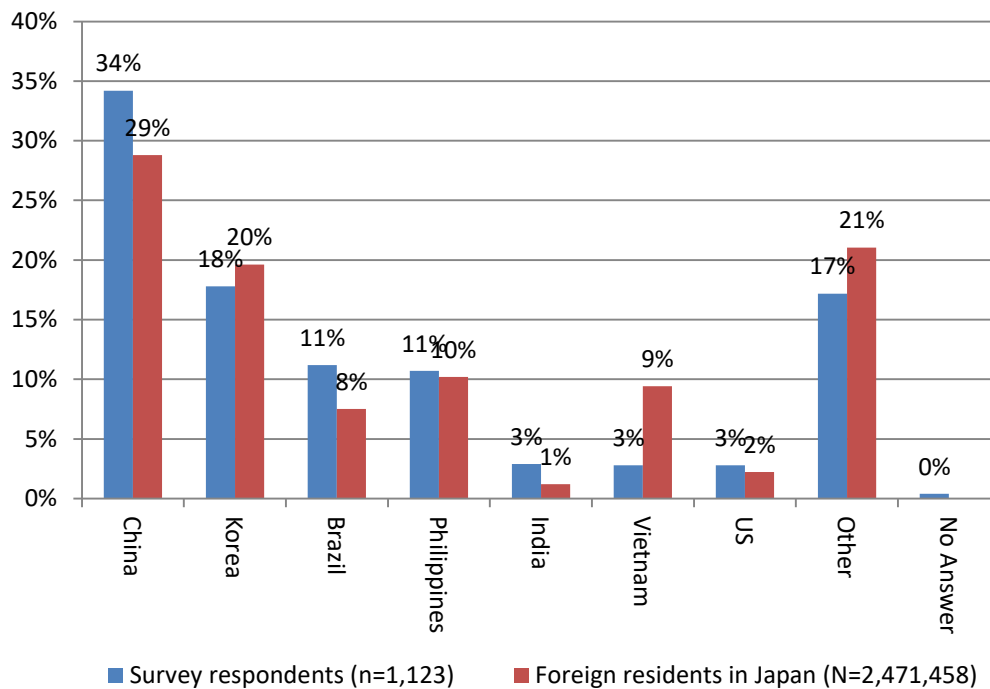


Fig.1-3 Comparison of nationality distribution patterns in the respondents and foreign residents in Japan

2. Health Insurance and Public Pension

In the survey, we asked about their enrollment status in health insurance and public pension. Fig. 2-1 indicates as follows: while most of the respondents were covered by health insurance, 20% of them chose 'not enrolled' and as many as 9% answered 'I don't know' about public pension. Approaching the figures by residential status, the percentage of the respondents not enrolled in public pension was still high in special permanent residents and permanent residents (approx. 10%) and those with Japanese partners (approx. 20%). One fact was highlighted by the survey: the payment period for eligibility for the Japanese pension allowance has always been viewed as a problem and there are still a large number of people not enrolled in the system.

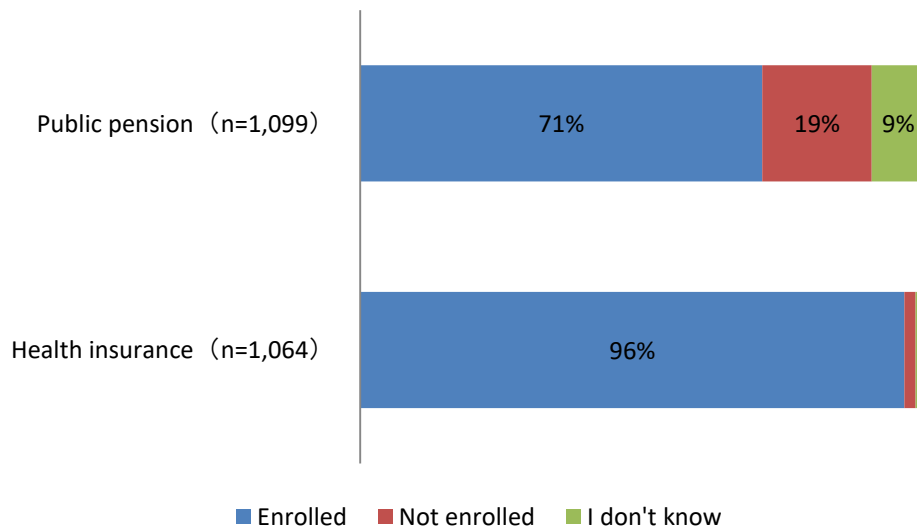


Fig.2-1 Health insurance and Public pension enrollment status

3. Current Work

Answers to the question (what's your current employment status?) were classified by country of origin. Among the respondents of the survey, 785 (69.9%) had a job, while 65 (5.8%) were between jobs, 87 (7.7) were not in the labor force, and 174 (15.5%) answered they were students. Please also refer to fig.3-1 for employment status by country of origin. At least 80% of the respondents from Europe, the US and Vietnam indicated that they had a job, and the rate increased to 90% or more among those from Brazil/Peru. On the other hand, 29% of the Chinese respondents were students. The rate of the respondents ticking 'between jobs' was relatively high among those from the Philippines.

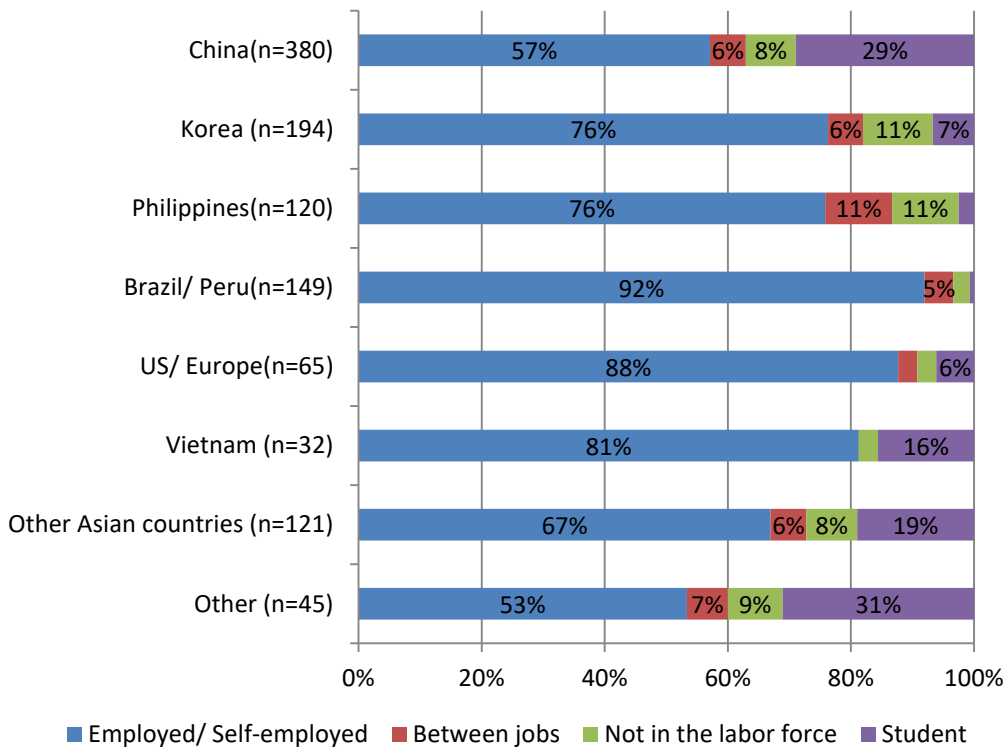


Fig.3-1 Employment Situation (by country of origin)

Please refer to fig.3-2 for their employment positions

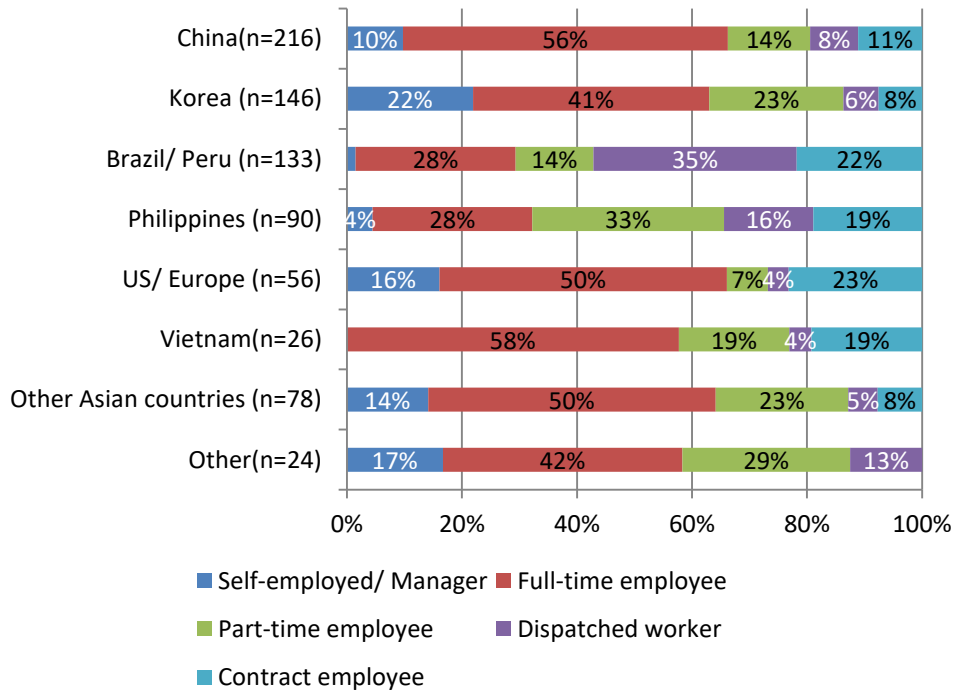


Fig.3-2 Current Employment Positions (by country of origin)

In regards to the rate of full-time employees, it was highest among the respondents from Vietnam (58%), followed by China (57%) and the US/Europe (50%). It was lowest among those from Brazil/Peru (28%). In a brief overview, the following nationality characteristics were highlighted by the survey; the rate of managers/the self-employed was relatively high among those from Korea. ‘Contract worker’, and ‘Dispatched worker’ were ticked most by Brazilians and Peruvians, and a large proportion of those from the US/Europe worked as contract workers.

Next, we asked whether they were on fixed-term contracts (employed individuals only). Please refer to the figure below for tendencies classified by country of origin. The rates of people on fixed-term contracts and contract periods were clearly seen to differ by country of origin. In regards to the proportion of employees with no term limit, it was highest at 84% in the respondents from Korea. The percentage decreased to 67% for those from other Asian countries and to 60% for those from countries outside Asia. On the other hand, the figures indicated a relatively high rate of fixed-term contract workers in respondents from Brazil, Peru, the Philippines and Vietnam. Another characteristic feature was the contract term of those fixed-term workers from Brazil/Peru; as many as 37% indicated that they work on a short contract basis of ‘less than 6 months’. Although there was also a high rate of fixed-term workers in those from the US/Europe, none ticked ‘less than 6 months.’ The majority of them worked with a contract basis of ‘6 months or more but less than 1 year’ or ‘1 year or more but less than 3 years’.

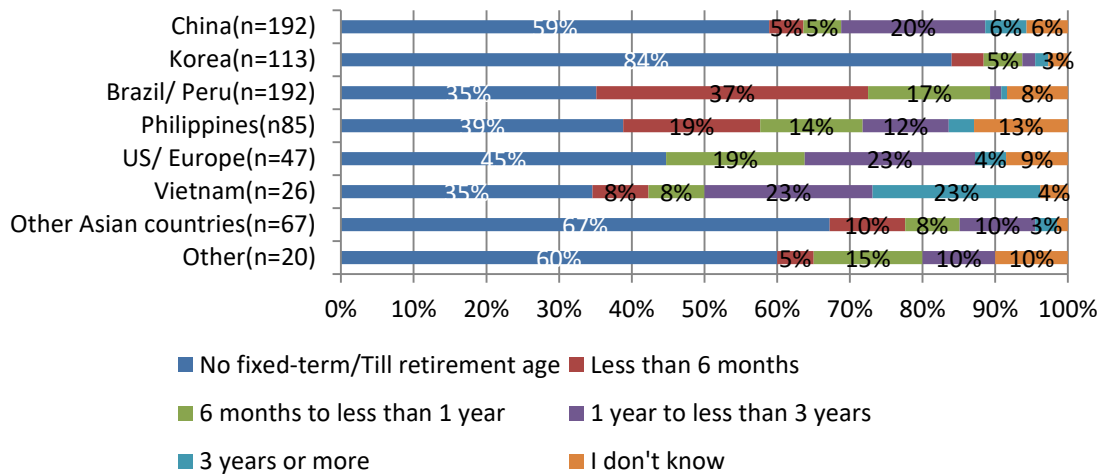


Fig.3-3 Rates of fixed-term workers (employed workers only, by country of origin)

In the survey, we asked about job characteristics from various perspectives. The graph below sums up answers to the question ‘Are your abilities and skills utilized enough at work?’ (Fig.3-4) We asked the respondents to rate on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). A large proportion of respondents from Korea and other Asian countries gave affirmative answers. On the other hand, the percentage decreased to a relatively low level in those from Brazil, Peru and the

US/Europe.

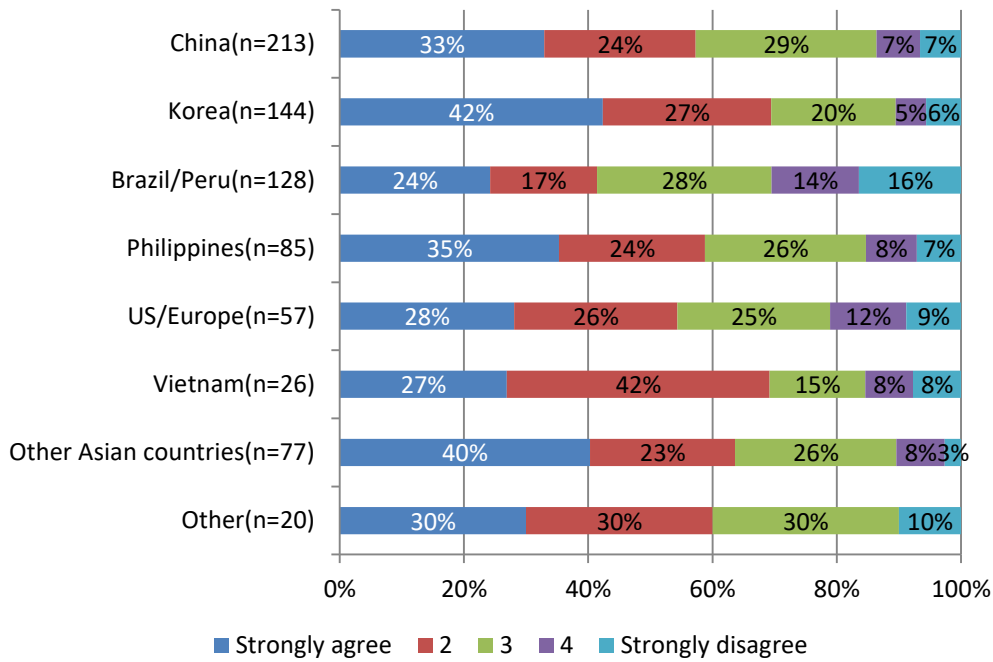


Fig.3-4 Ratio of affirmative/negative answers to the question 'Are your abilities and skills utilized enough at work?' (by country of origin)

4. First Job in Japan

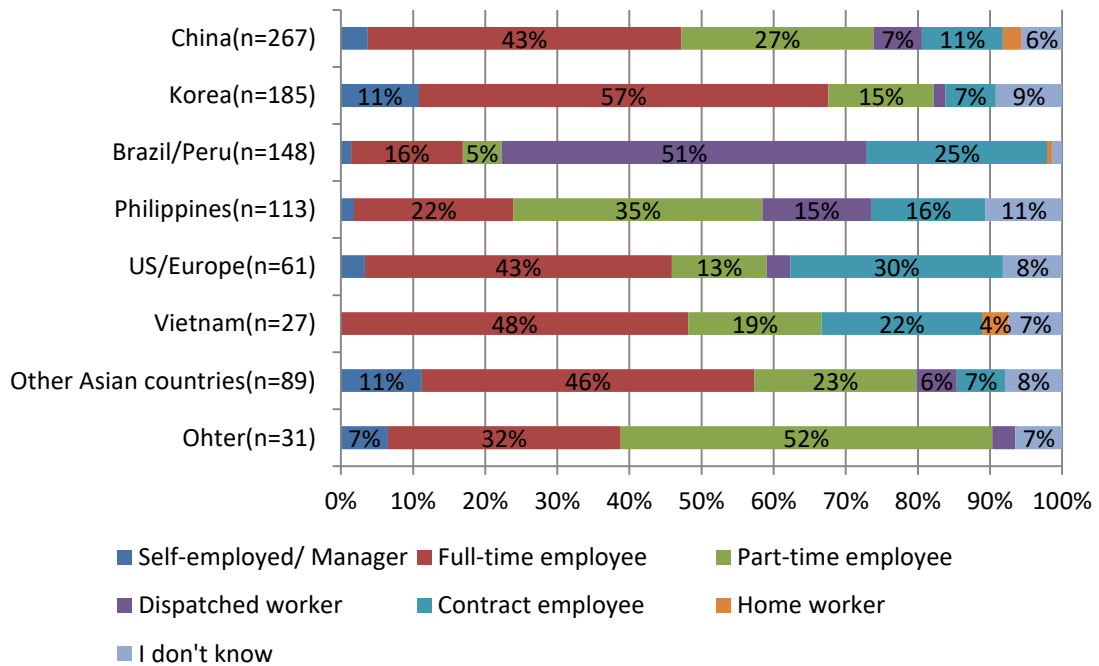


Fig.4-1 First Employment Positions in Japan (by country of origin)

We sampled data from some questions about their first job in Japan and aggregated by country of origin. First, we'd like to show you the survey result. Their first employment positions were as follows: attending to the rate for full-time employee, it was highest at 57% among the respondents from Korea followed by those from Vietnam (48%). The percentage decreased to 40% (approx.) among those from China, other Asian countries, the US and Europe, and it showed a further decline in the following nationalities: Philippines (22%) and Brazil/Peru (16%).

Next, the rate of non-regular positions was highest among the respondents from the Philippines (35%), followed by those from China (27%) and other Asian countries (23%). (The proportion of part-time employees was highest among those from the Philippines) As for the rate of contract employees, it was highest among the respondents from Brazil/Peru (51%), followed by those from the Philippines (15%), and the percentage decreased to less than 10% among those from all other countries. 'Contract worker' and 'dispatched worker' were ticked most among the respondents from the US/Europe (30%), followed by those from Brazil/Peru (25%). Overall, the rate of full-time employees was low and the majority of the respondents were working in non-regular positions. However, the proportion of non-regular employment types varied greatly by country of origin.

Next, we aggregated details of their first job in Japan by country of origin. The rate of professionals and management positions was highest among the respondents from the US/Europe (39%), followed by those from other Asian countries (38%). For those from China, Korea and Vietnam, the percentage was about 20% each. Attending to the rate of professionals and management positions, a great majority ticked 'professionals,' and those at management positions were very few. The percentage showed a significant decline in the following nationalities: Philippines (5%) and Brazil/Peru (3%).

On the other hand, in regards to the rate of manual workers (e.g., factory production workers, security workers and agricultural workers), it was highest among the respondents from Brazil/Peru (57%), followed by those from the Philippines (45%) and Vietnam (30%). The percentage decreased to 10% (approx.) among those from China, Korea and other Asian countries.

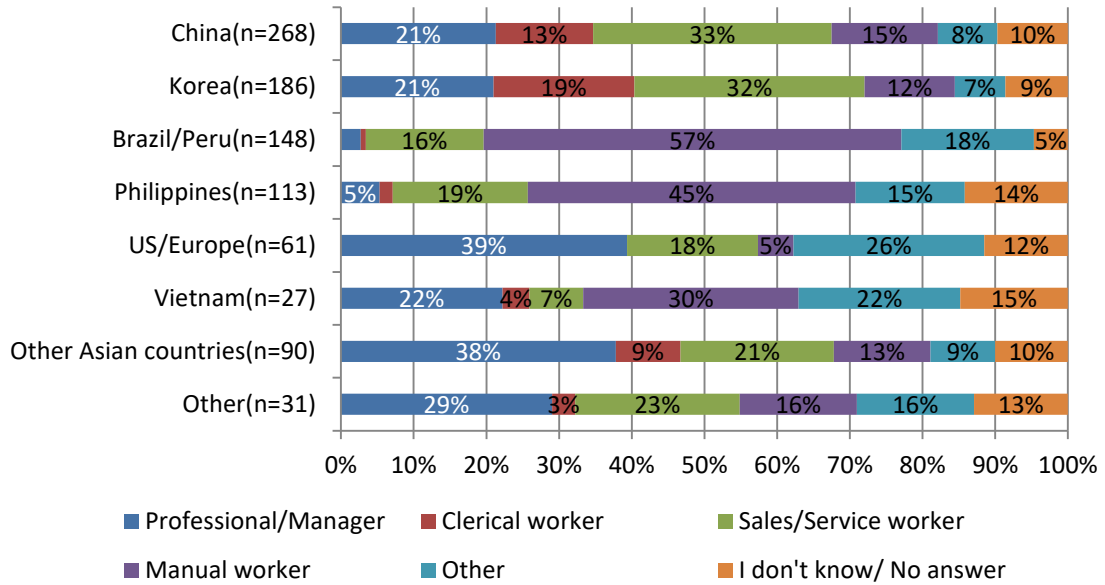


Fig.4-2 Types of Respondents' First Occupation in Japan (by country of origin)

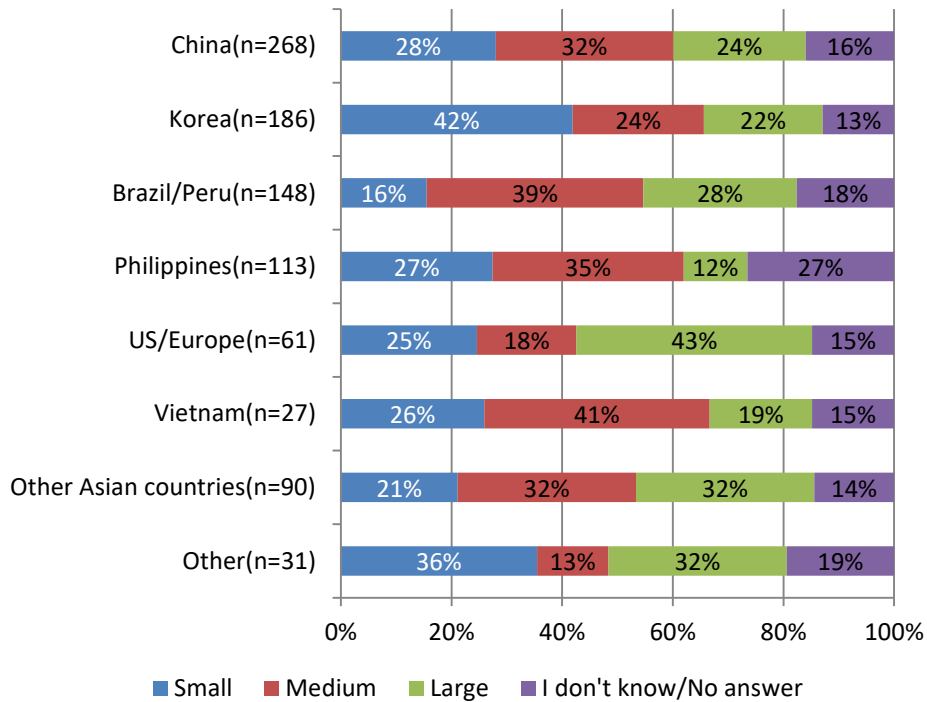


Fig.4-3 Size of the Company to First Hire Respondents in Japan (by country of origin)

Finally, we analyzed data on the size of the companies that first hired the respondents in Japan. Regarding data by country of origin, the respondents from the US/Europe had a relatively high rate

of working for large-scale companies. On the other hand, it tended to be relatively low among those from the Philippines and Vietnam.

5. Educational Backgrounds

In the survey, we asked about their educational backgrounds (in Japan or outside of Japan). As many as 50% (approx.) of the total said they had been to school in Japan. Most of the rest attended some school outside of Japan such as in their home country. As for the types of schools attended, we aggregated data regardless of school location (Japan or otherwise). It highlighted a fact that more than one half of the respondents had a junior college degree or higher. The breakdown is as follows: college degree (39%) and graduate degree (20%).

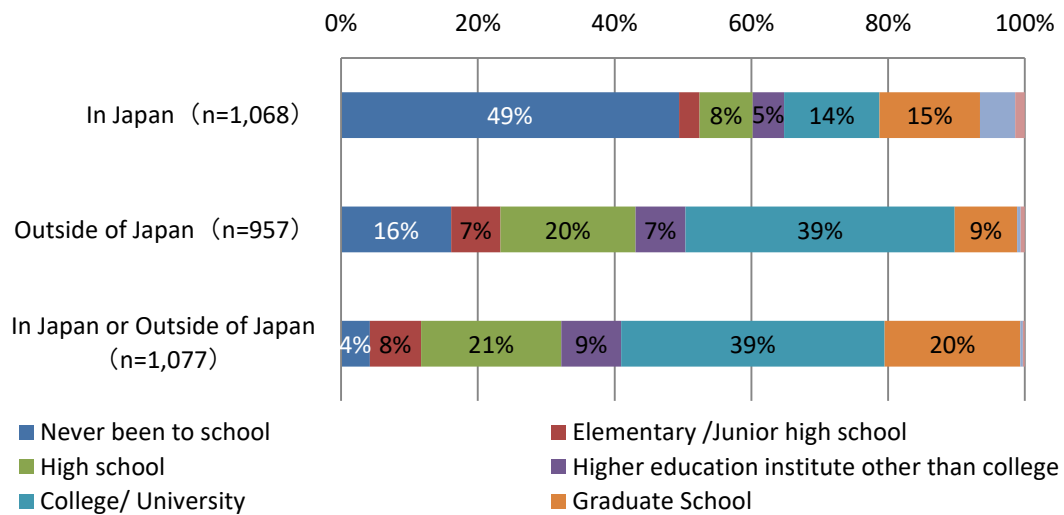


Fig.5-1 Highest degree obtained

However, the survey did identify that their educational backgrounds differ depending on the nationality. The proportion of 'higher education' was highest among the respondents from the US, Europe and China, and decreased to a relatively low level among those from Korea, South America and Southeast Asian countries. Educational backgrounds are assumed to have an influence on various aspects of our lives including our career after school. There are still a number of facts to be identified such as disadvantages of not having a higher education degree and possibilities of not being able to benefit from the higher education they received.

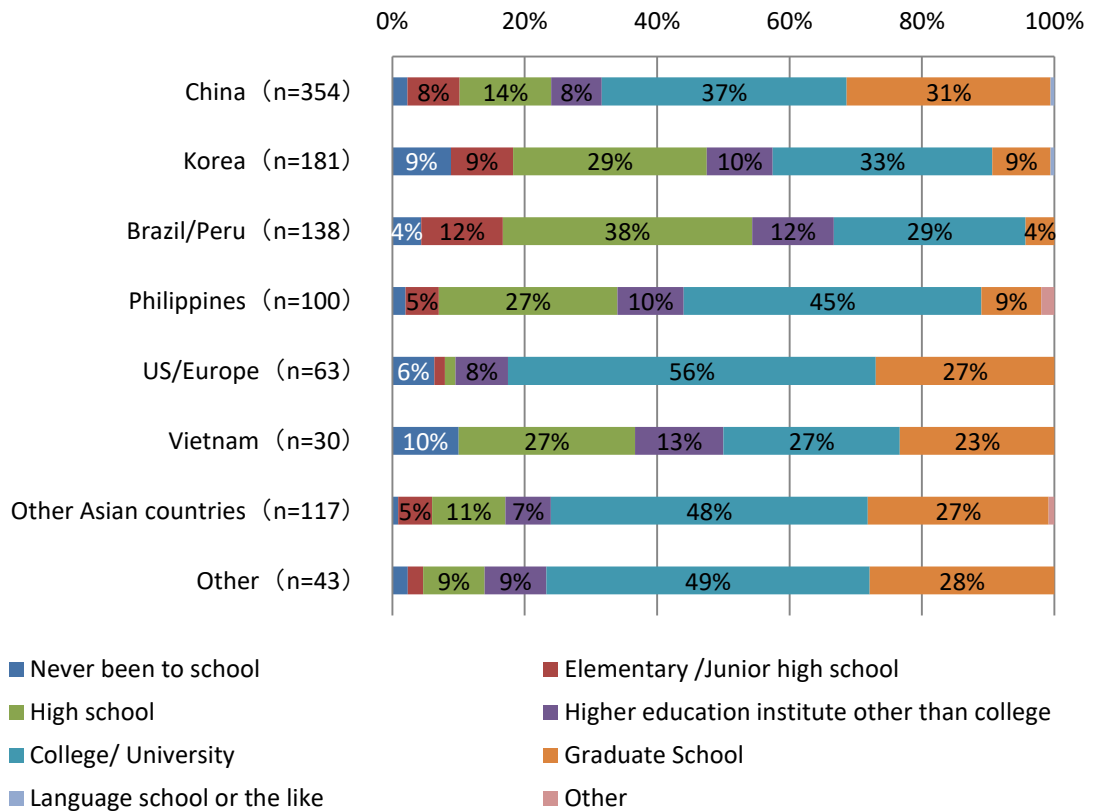


Fig.5-2 Highest degree obtained (by country of origin)

6. Familiarity with Japanese Culture

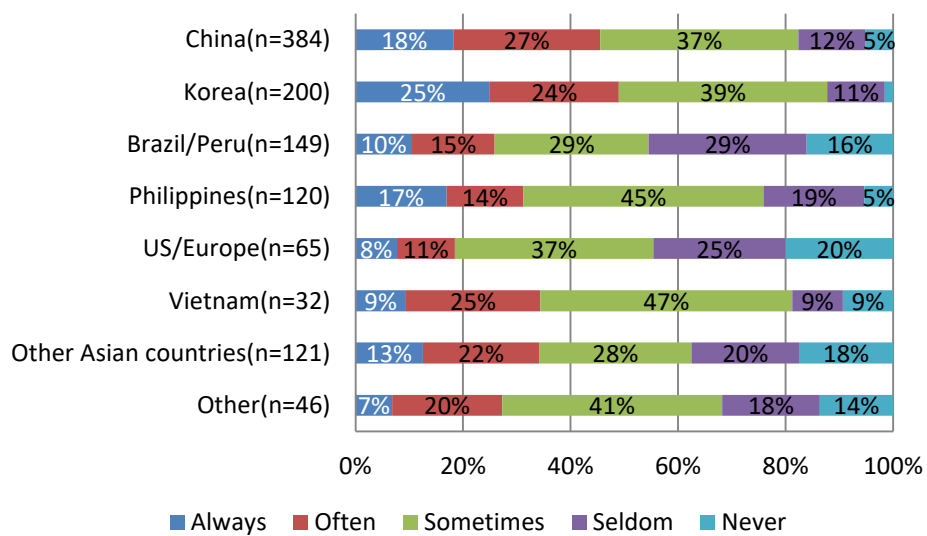


Fig.6-1 Frequency of watching Japanese movies and TV programs (by country of origin)

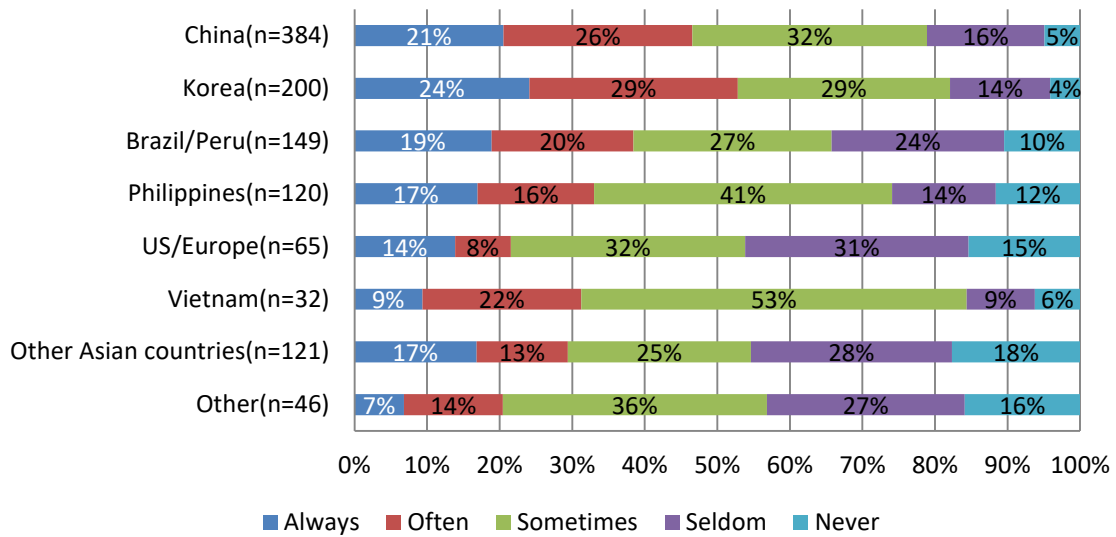


Fig.6-2 Frequency of listening to Japanese music (by country of origin)

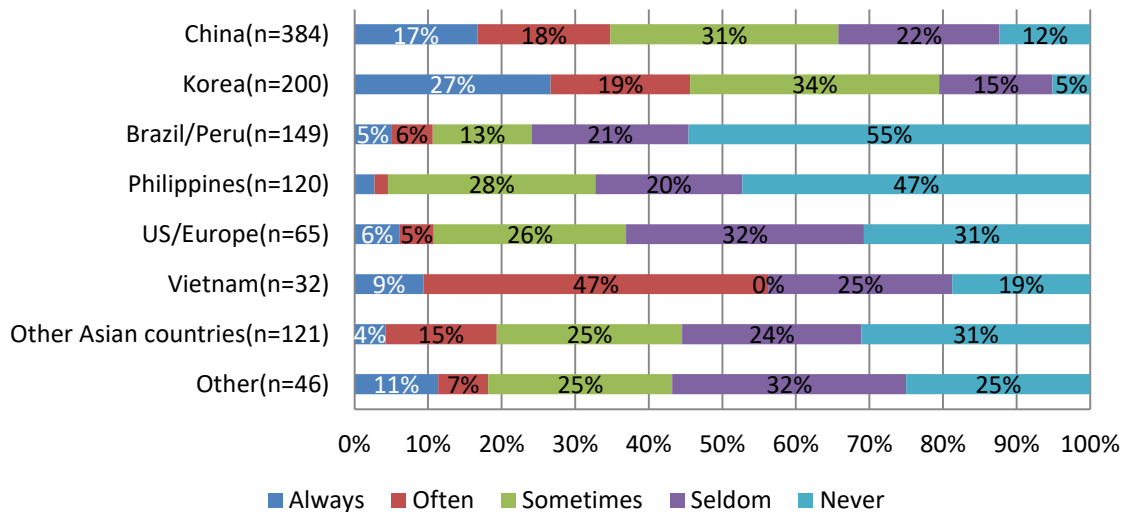


Fig.6-3 Frequency of reading Japanese books (by country of origin)

In the survey, we asked about how often the respondents were involved in Japanese culture through movies, TV programs, music and books, and we summarized the results by country of origin (Fig.6-1 through 6-3). The respondents from China, Korea and Vietnam were most actively engaged in Japanese culture.

The rate of those who had never watched a Japanese film or TV program or who answered 'rarely' were 17% among the respondents from the China, 13% from Korea and 18% from Vietnam. The percentage increased to 24% among those from the Philippines and to 45% among those from Brazil/Peru and the US/Europe.

Also, 38% of the respondents from other Asian countries and 32% from countries other than above ticked 'rarely' or 'never.' A similar tendency was found in music. As for the frequency of reading Japanese books, there were substantial differences between the respondents from China and Korea and those from the other countries.

7. Life Satisfaction in Japan and Health Condition

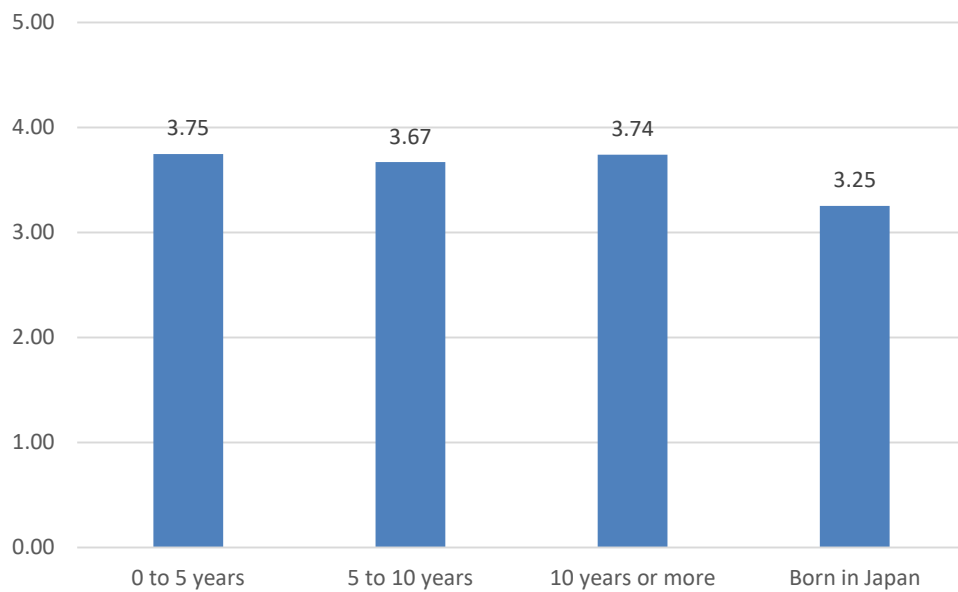


Fig.7-1 Average scores of life satisfaction (by years of stay)

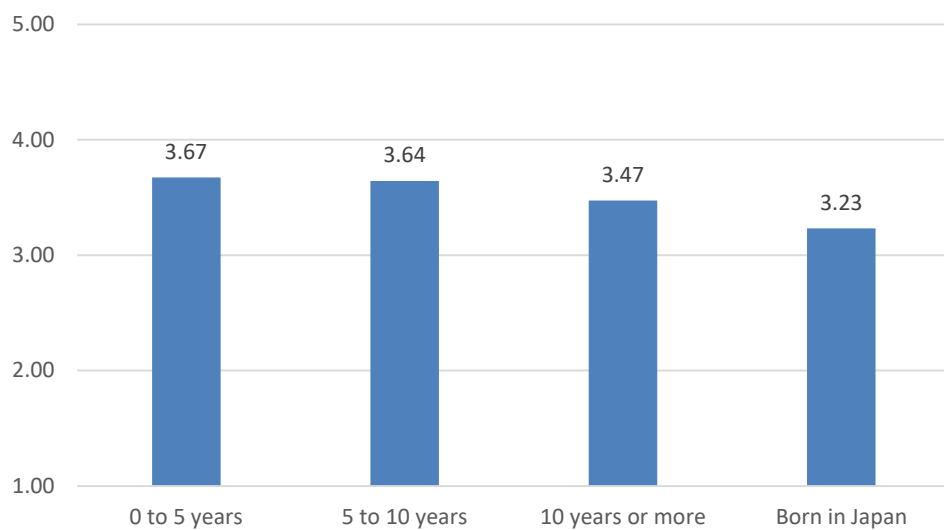


Fig.7-2 Average scores of health condition (by years of stay)

In the survey, we asked about the respondents' health condition and overall satisfaction with their life in Japan. Fig.7-1 and 7-2 show the average scores of their health condition and overall satisfaction by years of stay (indicated by the 1-5 Scale with 5 being the positive end and 1 being the negative end). The overall average score was close to '3' (the middle of the scale). However, those born in Japan scored relatively low in both satisfaction and health condition.

8. Experience with Discrimination

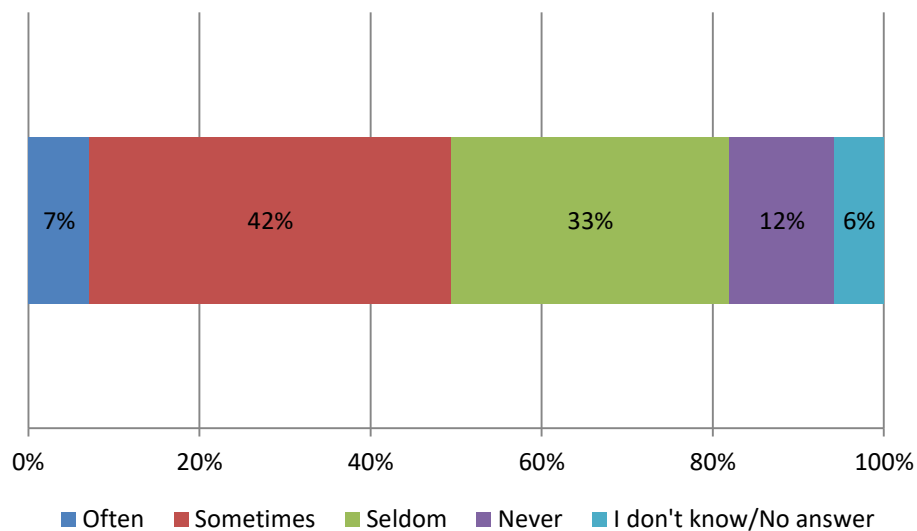


Fig.8-1 Unpleasant experiences in Japan

In the survey, we asked about whether the respondents' had felt unpleasant or tough being a foreigner in Japan. As shown in Fig. 8-1, those who answered 'Often' or 'Sometimes' accounted for approximately half of the total and the rest of them said they had never or rarely felt that way. To those ticked 'Often' or 'Sometimes,' we asked a follow-up question: 'When did it happen?' The results are found in Fig.8-2.

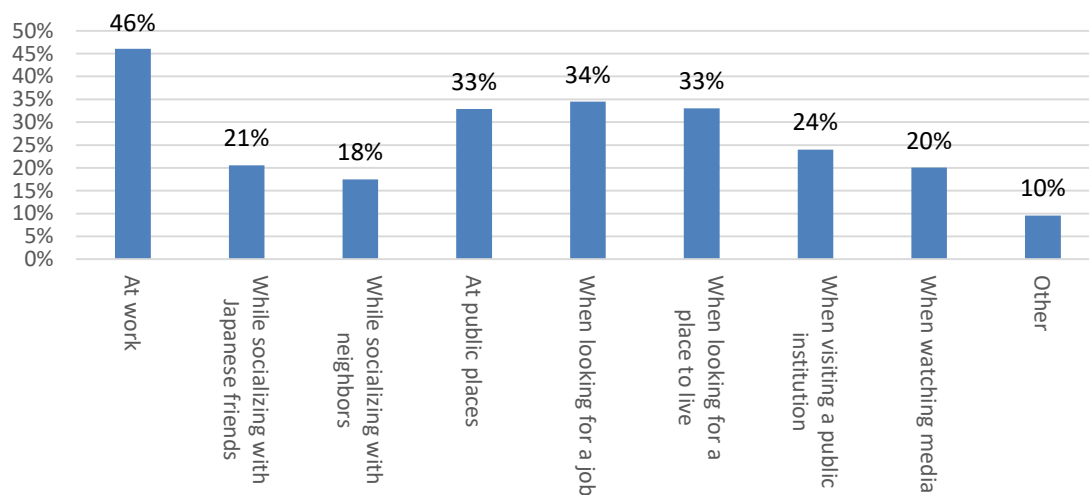


Fig.8-2 When/where they felt unpleasant being a foreigner (by situation, multiple choice)

*The subjects of this survey are those who answered 'Often' or 'Sometimes' to the previous question.

Fig.8-2 indicates that the majority of them faced unpleasant moments while at work. Such difficulties were also reported to be experienced when looking for a job and housing. These results highlighted a possibility that being a foreigner is a disadvantage in situations where they are in a position to be selected. Also, many of them face unpleasant moments in public places such as on the train and whilst shopping. The result indicated a possibility that they are being subject to discrimination in everyday life.

Next, we summed up the results of the survey 'Do you agree that Japanese people recognize you as a part of Japanese society?' by country of origin. Fig.7-3 shows that as many as 50% and more of respondents from Korea ticked either 'Agree' or 'Somewhat agree.' On the other hand, the percentage decreases to 25% (approx.) among those from Brazil/Peru and China. Both marked the lowest in all subjects, but their opinions varied greatly between each other; while nearly half of the respondents from China said 'Neither agree nor disagree,' close to half of those from Brazil/Peru ticked either 'Somewhat disagree' or 'Disagree.'

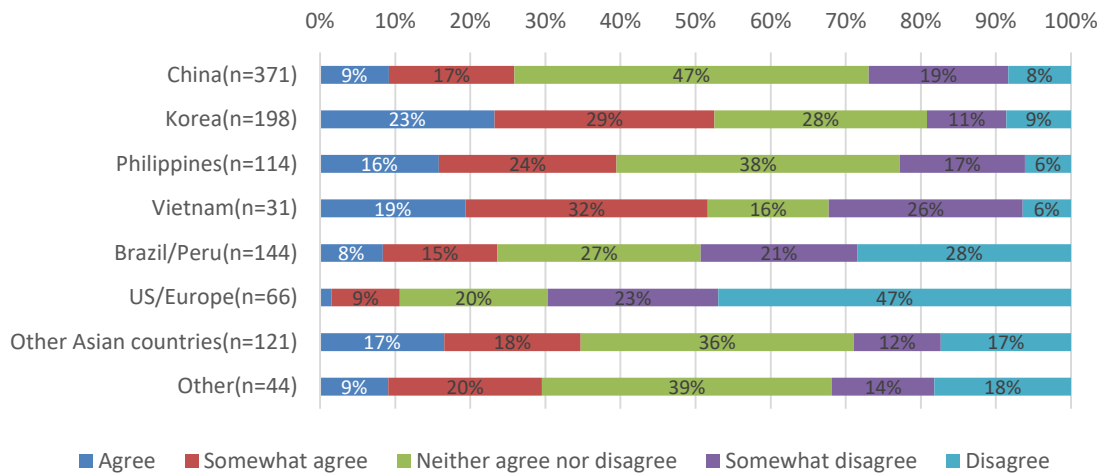


Fig.8-3 ‘Do you agree that Japanese people recognize you as a part of Japanese society?’ (by country of origin)

9. Intended Period of Stay in Japan

The sampled data on the respondents’ intended period of stay in Japan (excluding those who didn’t respond) were aggregated by country of origin. As many as 46.4% of the total ticked ‘I would like to live permanently in Japan’ and 20% said either ‘I would like to leave Japan in a few years/ as soon as possible’ or ‘I would like to leave Japan in the future.’ ‘I have not decided’ and ‘Other’ were selected by 33.6% of the subjects. By country, ‘I would like to live permanently in Japan’ was significantly high in the respondents from Korea. This seems to have a close link to the fact that the majority of them were born in Japan as a permanent resident or special permanent resident and they had already lived in Japan for many years.

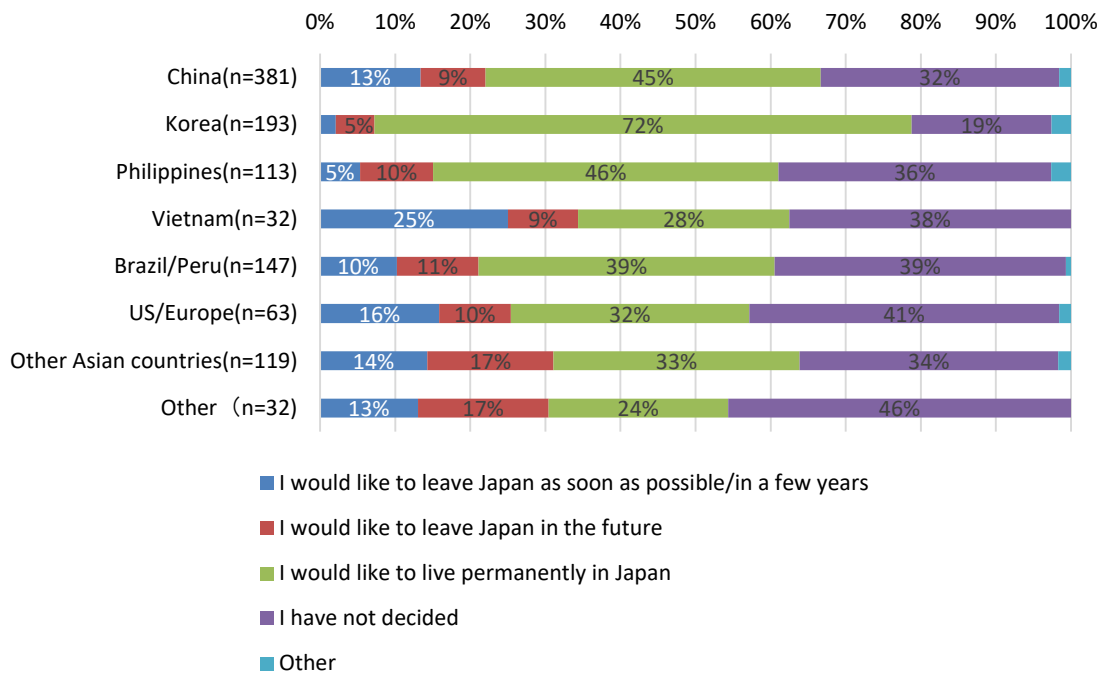


Fig.9-1 Intended period of stay in Japan (by country of origin)

10. Obtaining Japanese Nationality

We sampled data from answers to the question “Do you want to obtain Japanese citizenship?” and aggregated them (excluding those who didn’t respond). As many as 21.2% of the total ticked ‘I think so’ and 20.8% said ‘I somewhat think so,’ while ‘I don’t really think so’ or ‘I don’t think so’ were found in 33.4% and 24.5% of the subjects, respectively. By country of origin, ‘I think so’ and ‘I somewhat think so’ were selected by 62% of the respondents from the Philippines, accounting for slightly higher rates than those from other countries. On the other hand, the proportion of ‘I think so’ and ‘I somewhat think so’ was relatively low at 14.3% among those from the US/ Europe.

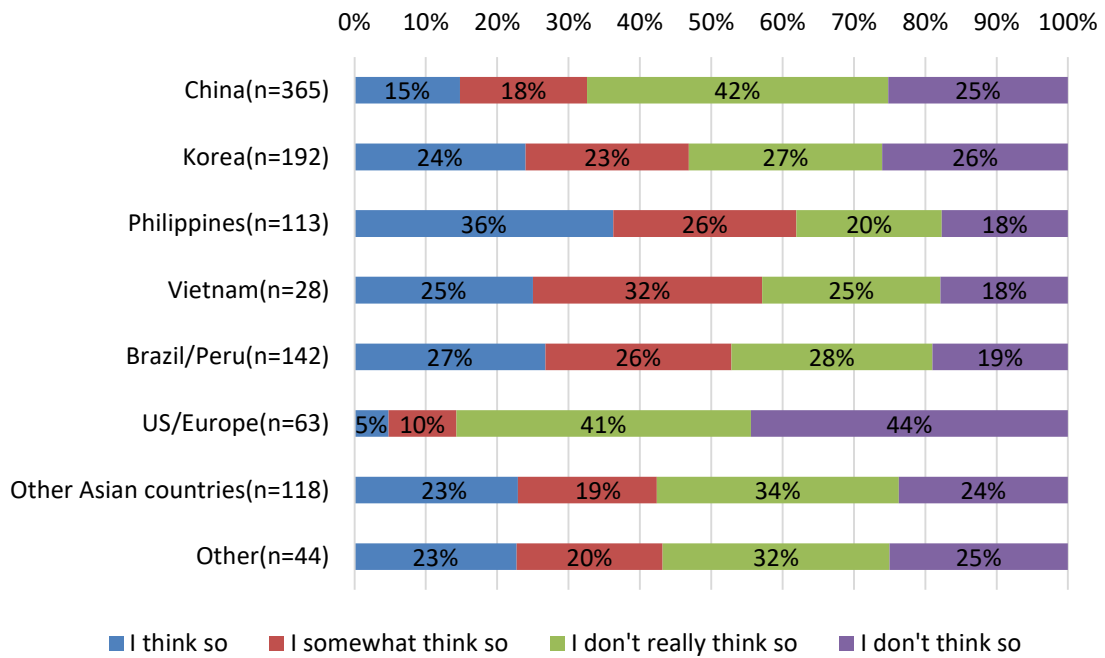


Fig.10-1 Do you want to obtain Japanese nationality? (by country of origin)

10. Concluding remarks

We hope that a variety of factors influencing the lives of foreign residents will be revealed by more detailed analysis on the matters included in the results of this survey. We will continue our efforts into the future. If we find any difficulties imposed on them for being foreign nationals in Japan as we proceed, we will do our best to achieve satisfactory solutions for them.

The survey results will be shared through our press release, academic articles and books.

Before closing our report, we'd like to express our gratitude for your cooperation in completing this important survey. We appreciate all participants' corporation despite their busy schedule.