

Social Relationships of Japanese Seniors: Opportunity of Acquaintance and Subsequent Development

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Studied were social contexts in which seniors began and developed intimate social relationships.

Subjects were randomly selected 1,000 community residents, ranging in age from 60 to 79 years, living in a local city of Gifu Prefecture, Japan. The subjects were asked to name up to 7 persons having intimate relationship, other than co-resident family members, children, and children-in-law, and to explain initial opportunity of acquaintance and subsequent relationships with each of the others. Through this procedure, information on 1,961 dyadic relationships was obtained from 791 subjects (370 men and 421 women).

The most frequent opportunity of initial acquaintance was neighborhood, followed by school and workplace. Neighborhood and hobby were more frequently found for the others named by women, while school and workplace were more frequent for the others named by men. Subsequent relationships added after the initial acquaintance was observed for 74.5% of the others. The most frequent subsequent relationship was hobby, followed by neighborhood association and regular customer of the same pub, coffee shop, or restaurant; neighborhood was more frequently mentioned for the others named by women, while hobby and regular customer were for the others named by men.

The results seem to confirm the importance of neighborhood as the opportunity of initial acquaintance as well as the subsequent relationship added after initial acquaintance for Japanese seniors living in a local city, especially for women. The results also seem to indicate the importance of the multiple social contexts for the development of social relationships. Some social contexts, such as having same hobby or being regular customers of the same pub, coffee shop, or restaurant, seem to contribute to the development of social relationships rather than the opportunity of initial acquaintance.

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Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to scrutinize social contexts in which intimate social relationships of seniors began and developed.

Method

Survey was carried out in Nakatsugawa City, Gifu Prefecture, a Japanese local city with about 30,000 population, in 2001.

Location of Japan



Location of Nakatsugawa City



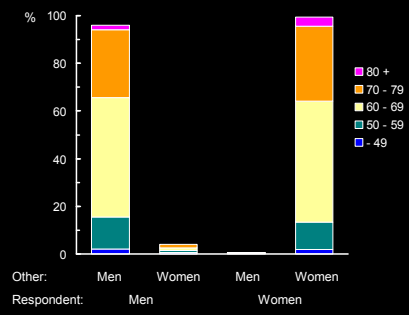
Home-visit interviews were conducted for randomly selected 1,000 community residents, ranging in age from 60 to 79 years, and completed for 791 persons.

Among the respondents, 46.8% (370) were men and 53.2% (421) were women. The average age of respondents was 68.7 years. The average years of education was 9.5 years.

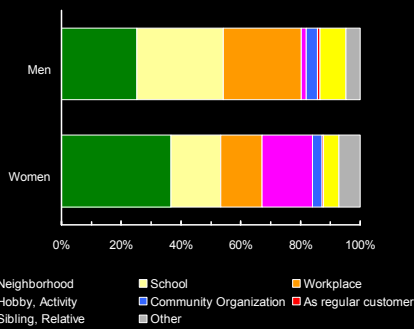
The subjects were asked to name up to 7 persons having intimate relations, other than co-resident family members, children, and children-in-law, and to explain initial opportunity of acquaintance and subsequent relationships with each of the others.

Through this procedure, information on 1,961 dyadic relationships was obtained from 791 respondents.

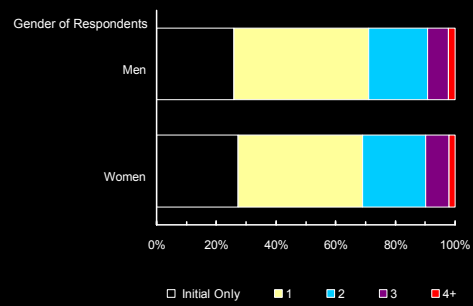
Age-Gender Composition of the Others by Respondents' Gender



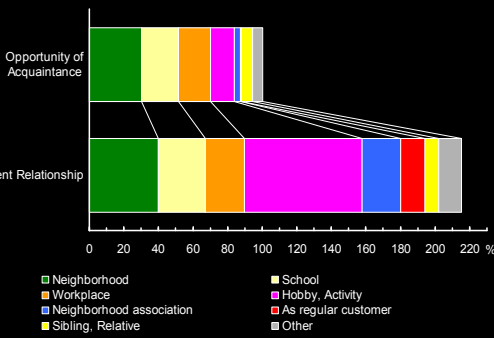
Opportunity of Initial Acquaintance by Respondents' Gender



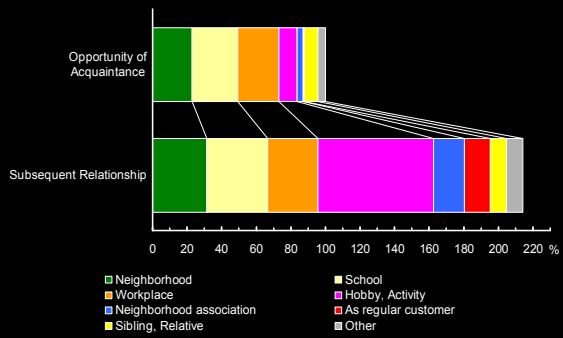
Number of Subsequent Relationships Added after Initial Acquaintance



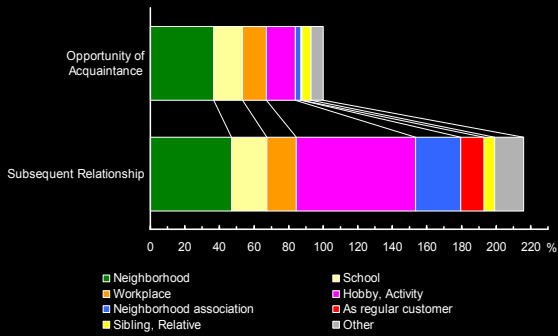
Opportunity of Initial Acquaintance vs. Subsequent Relationships



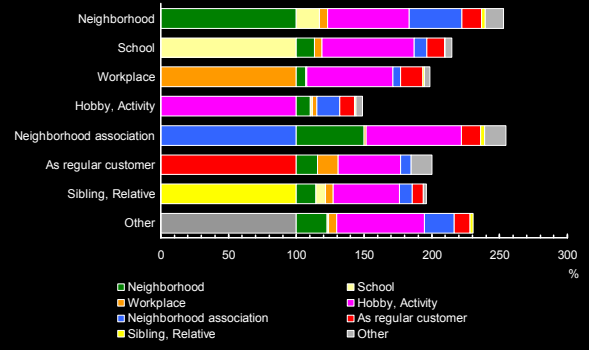
Opportunity of Initial Acquaintance vs. Subsequent Relationships (Men)



Opportunity of Initial Acquaintance vs. Subsequent Relationships (Women)



Subsequent Relationships by Initial Acquaintance



Summary

- Same-gender same-age relations are predominant in the social world of Japanese seniors living in a local city.
- Neighborhood relationships are important as the opportunity of initial acquaintance with others as well as the subsequent relation added after initial acquaintance.

- The multiple social contexts are important for the development of intimate social relationships of seniors.
- Some social contexts are likely to contribute to the development of social relationships rather than the opportunity of initial acquaintance.

Thank You for Patient Attention



W. Koyano

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