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## Studies of Side-by-Side and Lively Salons

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### Abstract

This paper explores previous studies of side-by-side and lively salons, which the councils of social welfare foster across Japan. After viewing these contributions, viable research questions are formulated.

### I. Introduction

Communities in Japan have experienced familial and relational changes among their residents. Increases in nuclear families and in personal and household relocations have resulted in fewer family members taking care of the elderly and children and in weak relations among residents. These changes explain the growing demand for public welfare programs for the elderly and children. People cannot anticipate that their families and neighbors will sufficiently cooperate in taking care of these more vulnerable persons. However, central and local governments do not necessarily supply sufficient public welfare programs because of too few financial resources.

The reconstruction of residents' mutual assistance in communities is one way to compensate the insufficiency of public welfare programs. Today, people may have few opportunities to enjoy pleasant relations with neighbors. These relations spontaneously occurred some decades ago and were functional in supporting the elderly and parents rearing young children. Now, genial relations among neighbors must be artificially constructed, since they are less likely to emerge on their own.

Side-by-side and lively salons (*fureai ikiiki saron*) are methods of assisting the elderly and parents with young children and of promoting mutual aid among community residents. This paper discusses previous studies of side-by-side and lively salons and thus arrives at research questions that may produce novel findings on mutual assistance among residents in communities.

## II. Side-by-side and lively salons

Side-by-side and lively salons are furthered by the Japan National Council of Social Welfare (*Zenkoku shakai fukushi kyōgikai*), which has branches (councils) on the level of prefecture, municipality, and ward of a government ordinance designated city (*seirei shitei toshi*). Such councils are private and the leading welfare organizations of Japan. However, the Social Welfare Act stipulates their functions, giving them semi-public social welfare functions in society.

The formation of side-by-side and lively salons marks an advancement in community welfare and provides pleasant relations among residents. Volunteer residents have established salons in their homes or in public facilities. Managers of salons, staff members, and visitors are residents in communities. They cooperatively plan and hold meetings and entertainments, such as tea parties, lunches, exercise classes, and lectures (Higaki and Fukuda 2005; Miyamoto and Niwa 2010; Mori 2008; Nakamura 2008; Toyoda 2008; Zenkoku shakai fukushi kyōgikai 2006).

The salons can be divided in terms of their visitors. There are salons for the elderly, families with young children, the handicapped, and so on. As of April 1, 2012, those for the elderly accounted for 84.5 percent of all salons. In comparison, salons for families with young children and the handicapped equaled 6.8 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively (Zenkoku shakai fukushi kyōgikai 2014).

## III. Previous studies on side-by-side and lively salons

Since, side-by-side and lively salons are suitable research objects, how should they be examined? What is an appropriate focal point of a study of salons?

There are several kinds of reports and studies on side-by-side and lively salons. One type explains a particular salon, including the reasons for its founding, its activities, the views of its members, and its problems (Kajiri 2002; Matsumura 2003; Zenkoku shakai fukushi kyōgikai 2000).

Other investigations discuss two or several salons. Kamijō (2007) explains the results of research on salon managers with a questionnaire.

These respondents run salons located in Kunitomi Town, which is situated in an agricultural region of the Miyazaki Prefecture, and Yachiyo City, a bedroom community within an urban area of the Chiba Prefecture. The managers provided information on fifteen salons in Kunitomi Town and six salons in Yachiyo City. Kamijō indicates the disparities in the establishment of salons in Kunitomi Town and Yachiyo City. One of the differences is that while a local council of social welfare was influential in establishing them in Kunitomi Town, a nonprofit organization (NPO) contributed to their openings in Yachiyo City.

Takano, Sakamoto, and Ōkura (2007) indicate that the continued existence and activities of side-by-side and lively salons require the strengthening of relations with other organizations. Neighborhood associations (*jichikai* or *chōnaikai*) and NPOs are regarded as organizations with which salons should cooperate. These scholars explain that neighborhood associations tend to satisfy the varied desires of visitors to salons, while NPOs are inclined to provide them with specialized activities that conform to specific visitor demands. While neighborhood associations are traditional local organizations, NPOs specialize in contemporary problems. The attributes of side-by-side and lively salons may differ according to areas in which salons are located. Those in rural areas may be assisted by neighborhood associations, and those in urban areas can obtain the cooperation of many NPOs.

Yamamura (2013) uncovers the conditions of visitor participation in management of side-by-side and lively salons by noting their social capital, that is, the resources that foster cooperative relations among people. Yamamura calculated the magnitude of the social capital of the visitors to salons based on their responses to a questionnaire. The questions were concerned with neighborhood social contacts, sports activities, hobbies, entertainment, and community activities, among other matters. Managers were interviewed about their methods in running salons. One of Yamamura's findings is that management of salons and visitor social capital are connected. A salon tends to have a policy that all its visitors participate in management consultations if they possess abundant social capital. His study also indicates the significance of salon locations in producing plentiful

social capital.

The Kagoshima Prefecture Council of Social Welfare conducted research on the side-by-side and lively salons situated in municipalities of the Kagoshima Prefecture, except for Kagoshima City. The results reveal that the managers of many salons are elderly. Specifically, 72.1 percent of all salons have managers aged 65 years or older and 60.0 percent with volunteer staff members of the same range of ages. If those with managers and voluntary staff from 60–64 years of age are added, the figure rise to 88.0 percent and 82.7 percent, respectively (Kagoshima ken shakai fukushi kyōgikai 2011).

The research also shows the positions of salon managers in communities. One manager can have two or more positions. The percentages of managers, all residents of communities, that are members of elderly clubs (*rōjin kurabu*), commissioned welfare or commissioned child welfare volunteers (*minsei iin* or *jidō iin*), and leaders of neighborhood associations are 27.7 percent, 26.5 percent, and 19.8 percent, respectively.

The Yamaguchi Prefecture Council of Social Welfare conducted a questionnaire survey of side-by-side and lively salons in the Yamaguchi Prefecture and also found that elderly individuals contribute to the operation of many salons. Managers and staff members in their sixties, in their seventies, and of eighty more years equal 43.6 percent, 35.0 percent, and 4.3 percent, respectively. The managers and staff members of salons are members of elderly clubs (37.4 percent), *fukushi in* (27.3 percent), members of women's societies (*fujin kai*) (16.5 percent), and commissioned welfare volunteers or commissioned child welfare volunteers (15.1 percent) (Yamaguchi ken shakai fukushi kyōgikai 2006). (A *fukushi in* is commissioned by the president of a municipal social welfare council to promote community welfare.)

#### IV. Discussion

The findings and suggestions of previous studies provide clues for new research designs.

Previous studies indicate that the disparate attributes of salons depend on whether these organizations cooperate with neighborhood associations or

with NPOs. The features of salon areas may be determined by whether the latter organizations are active in communities. This presumption leads to following research questions: What attributes of areas are influential in determining salon operations? To what extent does each area's features determine salon functions?

Yamamura shows that if visitors enjoy abundant social capital, they tend to be involved in the management of their salons. This finding prompts speculation on the influence of residents' social capital and social networks on the establishment and management of salons: "To what extent do residents' social capital and social networks influence the establishment and management of salons?"

Two prefectural social welfare councils' surveys reveal that many managers and staff members are aged individuals and residents involved in community activities. These findings make it viable to propose a hypothesis that communities containing many elderly and active people have ready pools of managers and staff members for salons and are more likely to open such establishments.

## V. Conclusion

This paper, which investigates previous studies on side-by-side and lively salons, develops new research questions based on their results. These questions are the following: "What attributes of areas are influential in determining salon establishment and operation?" "To what extent do the features of residents' social capital and social networks influence the establishment and management of salons?"

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