

# 琉球大学学術リポジトリ

## 日系ブラジル人就労者の日本および日本人同僚への 態度調査 - 広島県D社の事例より -

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## **Japanese Brazilians' attitude toward Japan and Japanese co-workers: A case study of Company D in Hiroshima**

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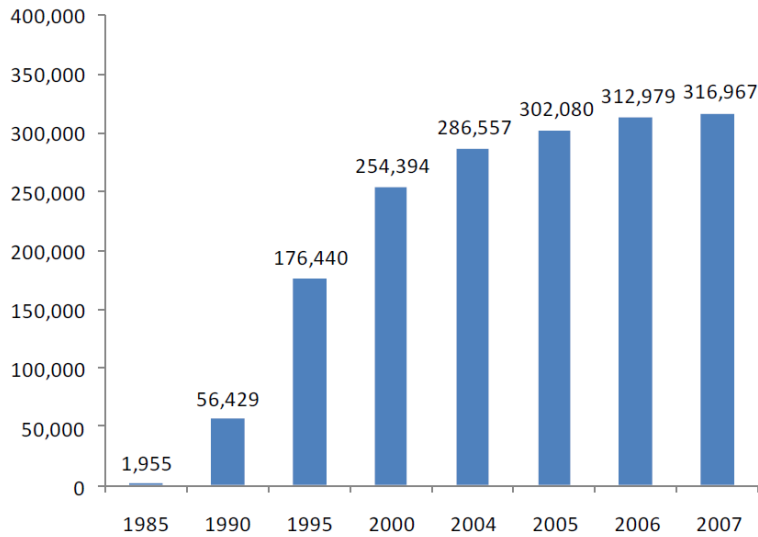
**Key Words** : Japanese Brazilian, intercultural communication, intercultural attitude, new-comers

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Historical overview of Japanese migration to and from Brazil**

Japan and Brazil have a shared migration history since the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time Brazil begun to attract Asian immigration for work on the coffee plantations. In 1907, the Brazilian and Japanese governments signed a treaty permitting Japanese migration to Brazil. From 1908, Japan and Brazil maintained a program to organize and support Japanese-Brazilian migration (Center for Japanese-Brazilian Studies, 2008). The first official emigration from Japan to Brazil was by 781 Japanese people, who left Kobe port by Kasato Maru and moved to Sao Paulo in search of better living conditions (Nishida, 2003; Koike, 2000). Since then the emigration continued for several decades, but as a consequence of economic progress in Japan, the number of applicants decreased after the 1950s. Nippon Maru was the last emigrant ship in 1973, and emigration to Brazil officially ended in 1994. The first generation of Japanese emigrants expected to eventually return, but most of them stayed in Brazil, married, and mixed with the indigenous population. Currently, around 1.5 million people of Japanese descent live in Brazil (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, 2009).

Radical changes happened as a consequence of the shrinking labor force in Japan and the recession in Brazil during the '80s. In 1990, the Japanese immigration control law was revised, making it possible for Japanese descendants (including descendants of the second and third generation and their families) to work in Japan with legal residence status. Since then, the direction of migration has reversed; many Japanese Brazilians have immigrated to Japan in search of job opportunities. Normally, long term immigration for work in Japan is not open to foreigners



**Fig. 1: Transition in the number of Brazilians registered in Japan**  
(Data are based on the Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2007).

except for some specialists. Japanese descendants have an advantage in immigration to Japan as they can settle down in Japan permanently, if they so wish. Consequently, the number of Japanese Brazilians in Japan has increased sharply, even though the influx appears to have slowed down a bit after the recession in 2008. Current data shows there are over 300,000 Japanese Brazilians working in Japan (Ministry of Justice, 2007; see Fig. 1). These immigrants are called “new-comers”, as opposed to “old-comers,” which indicates Korean residents in Japan.

### **Early studies of Japanese Brazilians living in Japan**

Initially, most Japanese Brazilians came to Japan for temporary employment (*dekasegi*); however, they settled in Japan partly because of the protracted recession and high rate of unemployment in Brazil (Onai, 2009). With the growth of the immigrant population from Brazil, many conflicts occurred on both the socio-cultural and the individual level. According to Nishida (2003), studies of Japanese Brazilians in Japan can be categorized into four groups: 1) Actual condition survey on the environment of work and life of Japanese Brazilians, 2) Survey research on Japanese Brazilians’ settlement in Japan, 3) Survey on identity of Japanese Brazilians, and 4) Survey on Japanese Brazilian children’s education and retention of their mother tongue.

With regard to actual condition surveys, for example, most of the pioneering studies were conducted in the Tokai area (e.g., Toyota and Toyohashi in Aichi, Hamamatsu in Shizuoka, and Ota and Oizumi-cho in Gunma), where much of the automobile and electronics industry is located.

The case of the Homi housing estate in Toyota is one of the well-known subjects of early studies. From the last half of 1980s, Japanese Brazilians started to live in Homi housing estate. Recent survey reported that 45.2% of the residents in Homi were foreigners, whereof the biggest group was Japanese Brazilians (Toyota City, 2007). Conflicts between Japanese Brazilians and Japanese residents were also reported, regarding illegal parking, proper garbage disposal, barbequing on balconies, noisy nightly parties, and so on (Koike, 2003). Japanese Brazilians' interpersonal relationships with Japanese people were longitudinally investigated by Kitagawa (1993, 1996, and 1997). His report in 1996 showed that 80.1 % of Japanese Brazilians in Hamamatsu and 79.3% in Oizumi experienced discrimination from Japanese people. In the workplace, most issues were related to language and communication. The first generation of Japanese Brazilians spoke Japanese, but the second and third generation had gradually shifted to speaking Portuguese and gave up speaking Japanese in Brazil. Moreover, they also internalized, to a considerable extent, Brazilian values rather than Japanese values, which often caused conflicts in the workplace (Kitagawa, 1996).

Focusing on the individual level, some researchers have tried to explore Japanese Brazilians' identity. In general, Japanese descendants in Brazil grew up in the Japanese community in Brazil, with a positive image of "Japan" and "Japanese people" (e.g., 'earnest', 'hardworking'). They are generally proud of their ethnicity (Koga & Ishikawa 1995). Nowadays, a vast majority of the migrants belong to the second and third generation and were born and raised in Brazil, do not speak Japanese well, and have become culturally Brazilianized to various degrees (Tsuda, 2000). Thus, despite their Japanese descent, they are ethnically marginalized and treated as foreigners in Japan. They are "Japanese" in Brazil, as well as being "foreigners" in Japan. Tsuda (1999) reported that Japanese Brazilians in Japan recognized cultural differences between Japan and Brazil, kept a distance between themselves and the Japanese, and strengthened their Brazilian national identity. Tusji, Miyasawa, Otsuka, Honda, Kato, and Abe (2001) explored panic disorder cases in Japanese Brazilians in Japan and pointed out that their ethnic/cultural identity may be confused with their mixed cultural heritage and their experience of living in both countries, which may cause feelings of anxiety.

As shown above, the early studies tend to take one of two points of view; what kinds of issues arise in local communities and workplaces with many Japanese Brazilians, and what happened on the Japanese Brazilians' side (e.g., identity crisis) on the other. More recently, Nishida (2003) pointed out the lack of studies about conflicts between Japanese people and Japanese descendants based on a social scientific, more objective, point of view. Her group undertook extensive survey research into companies in Hamamatsu, focusing on cultural differences between Japan and Brazil and the resulting conflicts. Overall, Japanese Brazilians feel differences and experience difficulties

more (often) than Japanese people. Sasaki (2003) longitudinally investigated the relationship between Japanese Brazilians' image of Japanese people and their Japanese language ability. It was suggested that individuals with low Japanese ability positively change their image of Japanese after arriving in Japan, whereas individuals with high Japanese ability change their image of Japan in a negative direction. Although the intercultural contact between Japanese people and Japanese Brazilians are often and increasingly problematic, there are not many social psychological investigations focusing on intercultural attitudes in their contact. Moreover, most studies were done only in the East of Japan. Recent remigration to Japan also affected other areas, so systematic and comparative research in other areas should be conducted.

### **Purpose of present study**

The purpose of this study was exploratory investigation of the factors that affect the attitudes of Japanese Brazilians toward Japanese co-workers. First, actual conditions in the workplace will be investigated, with a focus on both factors such as language fluency, length of stay in Japan, but also immigrants' attitudes toward Japanese people. In order to derive the factors, a survey was done using both qualitative and quantitative methods, focusing on the following questions:

- 1) *What are the problems in the workplace in communication with Japanese?*
- 2) *Does attitude toward Japanese change with the length of stay?*
- 3) *Does the language ability influence attitude toward Japanese?*

## **METHODS**

The survey<sup>1)</sup> was conducted among Japanese Brazilians working in Company D. Company D produces IT devices in Hiroshima, and is affiliated to one of the main Japanese industrial multinationals. After a revision to the immigration law, the company started to hire Japanese descendants. The company now has 2895 employees and over 35 percent of them are not native Japanese. Most of them (around 600) are Japanese descendants from Latin America (e.g., Japanese Brazilians, Japanese Peruvians), who were employed mainly as manual workers (as of 2003).

### **Participants**

Fourteen Japanese Brazilian employees (six males and eight females; mean age = 30.77 ( $SD = 7.31$ ); mean duration of stay in Japan = 10.29 years ( $SD = 3.59$ )) working at Company D participated in the survey. The participants were asked to fill a questionnaire, and they responded to the open questions during semi-structured interviews. All questions were in Portuguese<sup>2)</sup>.

## Measures

### *Japanese language fluency*

Participants assessed their Japanese speaking, reading, writing, and listening abilities on a 5-point scale (“1: I cannot do it at all.” ~ “5: I can do it very well.”)

### *Behavioral Intention toward Japanese co-workers*

Japanese Brazilians' attitude toward Japanese co-workers were measured by 13 items from Fujihara's (1987) behavioral differential scale<sup>3)</sup>, e.g., “I would like to trust them,” “I would like to act with them,” “I would like to have a date with them,” “I would like to speak to them.” They were measured by a five-point scale.

### *The Image of “Japanese” and “Brazilian”*

Semantic differential scales (Ohashi, Hayashi, & Hirooka, 1983) were used to measure the image of Japanese co-workers (5-point scale). Following Ohashi et al. (1983), this scale was interpreted into three factorial structures: “Social Desirability,” “Intimacy,” and “Activity<sup>4)</sup>.” Image of “Brazilian” was also measured for the purpose of comparison.

### *Open questions*

Participants answered the open questions below:

- 1) *Have you ever had difficulties communicating with Japanese? If yes, in what kind(s) of situation did it happen and how did you cope with it?*
- 2) *How would you describe your image of Japan before and after coming to Japan?*
- 3) *What is your impression of Japanese? How do you feel toward Japanese?*

## RESULTS

### **Language comprehension**

Table 1 shows the mean scores (*SD*) of participants' Japanese language ability in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. All participants were better at speaking and listening than reading or writing.

**Table 1: Mean scores (*SD*) of Japanese language ability (*n*=14)**

	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Listening	total
Mean	3.57	3.07	2.57	3.64	3.21
<i>SD</i>	(.94)	(1.14)	(1.28)	(1.39)	(.99)

### Mean scores of attitude toward Japanese people

The following two tables show the mean scores of behavioral intention toward Japanese coworkers and perceived images of Japanese and Brazilian people (Table 2). Results of perceived images showed Japanese people were interpreted as more favorable and proactive, and less hearty and friendly than Brazilian people (Table 3).

**Table 2: Mean scores (*SD*) of behavioral intention toward Japanese co-workers**

items	mean scores	<i>SD</i>
1) I would like them to join our leisure activities.	3.23	(1.30)
2) I would like to interact with them.	3.54	(1.13)
3) I would like to pair with them in games.	3.23	(1.36)
4) I would like to cooperate with them.	3.79	(1.19)
5) I would like to have a date with them.	3.93	(1.07)
6) I would like to chat with them.	3.79	(1.25)
7) I would like to trust them.	4.38	(0.77)
8) I would like to speak with them.	3.93	(1.27)
9) I would like to ask many things about their country.	4.38	(0.77)
10) I would like to become close friends with them.	3.14	(1.41)
11) I would like to respect their opinion.	3.93	(1.21)
12) I would like to marry one of them.	2.62	(1.33)
13) I would like to contact with them with kindness.	3.79	(1.05)
total	3.61	(0.92)

**Table 3: Mean scores (*SD*) of image of Japanese and Brazilians**

items	Japanese		Brazilians		<i>t</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
1) Favorable - Unfavorable	4.07	(1.21)	3.54	(1.13)	2.50*
2) Kind - Unkind	3.71	(1.14)	3.79	(.89)	-0.19
3) Proactive - Reactive	3.86	(.95)	3.50	(.76)	2.11*
4) Strong - Weak	3.17	(1.10)	3.62	(.96)	-1.04
5) Gentle - Aggressive	3.64	(1.15)	2.85	(1.35)	1.47
6) Warm - Cool	2.29	(1.38)	4.07	(.62)	-4.52***
7) Friendly - Unfriendly	3.21	(1.12)	4.43	(.94)	-2.72*
8) Active - Inactive	3.36	(1.34)	3.93	(1.21)	-1.67
9) Cheerful - Gloomy	3.54	(.97)	3.92	(.76)	-1.16
total	3.46	(.47)	3.70	(.64)	-1.19

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## Relationship between Japanese fluency and attitude toward Japanese people

The relationship between language ability and attitude toward Japanese people was analyzed. Japanese language ability was marginally correlated with the length of stay in Japan ( $r = .49, p < .10$ ), so the following correlation analysis was controlled for the length of stay in Japan.

## Japanese fluency and behavioral intention toward Japanese

There was a negative correlation between Japanese ability and “I would like to trust them” ( $r = -.67, p < .05$ ). Also, a negative correlation was shown between Japanese fluency and “I would like to speak to them” ( $r = -.67, p < .05$ ). In other items of behavioral intention, no significant correlations were found with Japanese fluency.

## Japanese fluency and held image of Japanese people

According to Ohashi et al.(1983), items of image were categorized into three sub-components; ‘Social desirability ( $M = 3.54; SD = .76$ ),’ ‘Intimacy ( $M = 3.69; SD = .50$ ),’ and ‘Activity ( $M = 3.19; SD = .73$ ).’ Japanese fluency marginally correlated with ‘Intimacy’ ( $r = -.49, p < .10$ ) and ‘Activity’ ( $r = -.56, p < .10$ ) in the negative direction. Japanese Brazilians with better Japanese tended to have a more negative image of Japanese people.

## Answers to open questions<sup>5)</sup>

### Difficulties at work

Fig. 2 shows the answers to question (1). Over 60 percent of participants experienced difficulties at work, most of which were related to “language.” Their coping strategies for language difficulties were interpreted as two types; “solved by themselves” and “solved with another person’s support.”

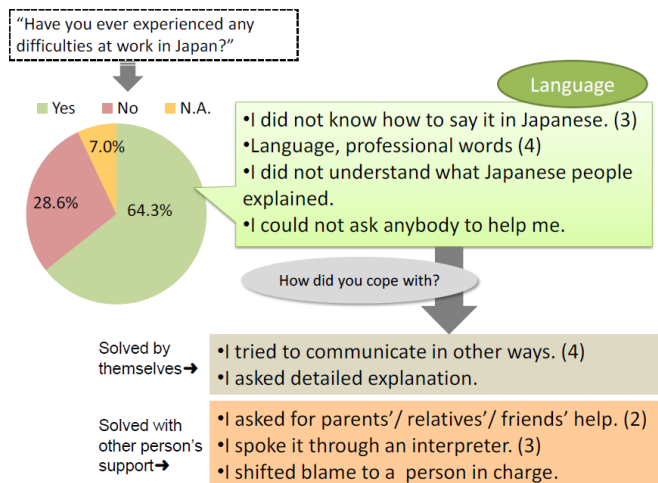


Fig. 2: Difficulties for Japanese Brazilians at work ( $n=14$ )<sup>6)</sup>



### *Image of Japan*

Answers for question (2) “How do you describe your image of Japan before and after coming to Japan?” were categorized into three patterns based on Sasaki’s (2003) categorization: positive, neutral, and negative. As shown in Table 4, 60% of respondents had a positive attitude before coming to Japan, 33.3 % neutral, and only 0.6% had a negative attitudes. After coming to Japan, positive images had dwindled to 25.4%, neutral ones were 41.7% and negative ones 33.3%. As a whole, the image of Japan changed toward the negative direction after coming to Japan.

**Table 4: Image of Japan (before and after coming to Japan) <sup>7)</sup>**

	Positive	Neutral	negative
Before coming to Japan	(60.0%) 4) Technically, socially advanced 5) They may accept us. 6) Absolutely an advanced country 8) Brazilian people said we could be rich. 9) (I thought) we could easily and quickly get money without so much effort. 10) Modern, advanced country 11) They have high technology. 12) Modern, fashionable, clean, people are polite and educated. 13) (I thought) Japan was a more rigid and balanced country than Brazil was.	(33.3%) 1) They have a different style. 2) Small, crowded, many robots. 5) It might be different from Brazilian culture. 11) (I thought) they wear kimono still now. 14) I did not have any idea because I was a child.	(0.6%) 13) I was afraid of staying in a foreign country because I did not know what would happen to me.
After coming to Japan	(25.0%) 1) I have a good impression of Japan. 2) Good impression, well-organized 7) Cheerful and bright	(41.7%) 8) We should work to earn money and we work to win. 9) Organized, disciplined country 11) It's different from my anticipation. They are advanced as well as keeping their tradition. 12) It is different from my anticipation in some points. 13) Everyone is equal in both good and bad meanings.	(33.3%) 4) I am anxious as to whether I can acculturate to the new environment. 6) They (Japanese) are too careful about production. 9) It is not easy to get money. 14) There exists “bullying” not only among children but also among adults.

## DISCUSSION

Japanese Brazilians came to Japan with ambitions to work, earn money, and have a more comfortable life when they go back to Brazil in the future. Quantitative data showed their image of ‘Japan’ was positive until they came to Japan. Unfortunately, their somewhat dreamy image changed negatively after coming to Japan, because of difficulties they experienced in Japan, especially in the workplace. The following three findings can be distilled from the above. First, the results suggest that language difficulty is the most common problem for Japanese Brazilians in the workplace. Second, Japanese Brazilians’ image of Japan changed in negative direction

after coming to Japan. Third, Japanese language ability and attitude toward Japanese people were correlated negatively; individuals with a better command of Japanese tended to have a more negative attitude toward Japanese people than those with less ability.

### **Negative change of attitude toward Japan**

As a whole, Japanese Brazilians' attitude toward Japan and Japanese co-workers tended to change negatively after coming to Japan. Generally speaking, Japanese Brazilians had a positive image of Japan and Japanese people before coming to Japan. This is because, in most cases, their parents or grandparents occasionally told them positive images of Japan and Japanese people, e.g., 'earnest' and 'hardworking' (Koga & Ishikawa, 1995). After coming to Japan, however, they noticed that the actual (or current) Japan was different from their idealized image. Their image changed negatively as a result. The results of this study supported the findings of earlier studies. Additionally, focusing on the coping strategy when Japanese Brazilians had difficulty with language, half of them solved it by themselves and the other half used someone's support (interpreters, family, relatives, and so on). In Company D, some Japanese Brazilians with excellent Japanese language skills were working as interpreters<sup>8)</sup>. Thus, when Japanese Brazilian employees encountered language difficulties, they received more support from their Japanese Brazilian co-workers than from Japanese co-workers. This might be another reason that the image of Japan is perceived negatively.

### **Image comparison of Japan and Brazil**

The respondents did not show a consistent evaluation of the difference between 'Brazilian' and 'Japanese.' Some items were more positively assessed for Japanese than Brazilian, and some were assessed in the opposite direction. This suggests in-group out-group bias (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988) does not exist. More data is needed for a detailed exploration, but it is predicted that Japanese Brazilians do not evaluate themselves as in the 'in-group' as either Japanese or as Brazilians. Although we did not focus on acculturation of Japanese Brazilians, their situation seems to be mostly separation or marginalization as in Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki (1989)'s model. The self image of Japanese Brazilians (or Nikkeijin) would have been measured in order to investigate whether they have developed a new identity as 'Nikkeijin.'

### **Drawbacks of language ability**

Immigrants with high (second) language ability are better able to communicate with local people than immigrants with less ability, and one may suppose that this contributes to a positive

image of the local culture and people. In this study, however, Japanese Brazilians with high Japanese ability tended to have a relatively negative image of Japan and the Japanese. But why? There seem to be several reasons. For example, it is possible that Japanese Brazilians with Japanese fluency might be highly educated, but their labor conditions are inferior to those of Japanese employees. Thus they would regard their status in Japan as unfair and develop a negative image of Japan and Japanese people. Overcoming the language barrier, allows Japanese Brazilian to understand the depth of cultural difference better. In the context of communication with immigrants in Japan, similar outcomes were reported in other studies. Kitagawa and Kitane (1997) pointed out Japanese ability of Japanese descendants did not provide interpersonal relationships with Japanese people, but that the language ability caused a negative affect toward communication with Japanese people and made their image of Japanese less positive. Japanese Brazilians with Japanese fluency could better understand Japanese people's evaluation of them, causing distress and dislike of Japan (Sasaki, 2003). At any rate, there should be factors other than language affecting immigrants' intercultural attitudes and further studies are necessary.

### **Acknowledgement**

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### **NOTES**

- 1) This survey was conducted as one of the research activities of Osaka University the 21st century COE program: Interface Humanities, 2002-2003.
- 2) The answers were translated to Japanese and English by translators.
- 3) The scale was originally developed by Triandis (1964) and Tanaka (1966).
- 4) "Social desirability"= 'Gentle-Aggressive,' 'Warm-Cool,' and 'Cheerful-Gloomy'; "Intimacy"= 'Favorite-Unfavorite,' 'Kind-Unkind,' and 'Friendly-Unfriendly'; "Activity"= 'Proactive-Reactive,' 'Strong-Weak,' and 'Active-Inactive.'
- 5) The answers were categorized by the author.
- 6) We randomly assigned numbers (1-14) to all participants, and comments with the same numbers were given by one participant.
- 7) Interpreters working at Company D were all Japanese Brazilians. Company D did not take a system that Japanese employees provide language-related help for Japanese Brazilians employees.

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## 日系ブラジル人従業者の日本および日本人同僚への態度調査 —広島県D社の事例より—

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本研究の目的は、日本の職場において日系ブラジル人従業員が日本および日本人の同僚に抱く態度の決定因を模索することであった。1990年の入管法改正以降、日系移民の子孫たちが職を求めて日本へやってくる、いわゆる「デカセギ」現象が急増している。日系移民も世代が進むと日本語を理解できない場合も多く、言語や文化の違いから、特に職場において様々なトラブルが報告されている。このような状況のもと、1990年代後半からは在日日系人従業者に関する研究も注目を集め、主に関東・東海地域で事例が蓄積されてきた。本研究では、近年、南米を中心とした日系人が増加しつつある広島県東部地域でフィールド調査を実施し、主に、1) 日系ブラジル人従業員が職場で抱える問題、2) 滞在期間による日本人への態度の変化、3) 日本語能力が日本人への態度に及ぼす影響について検討した。

D社に勤める日系ブラジル人従業員14名（平均年齢30.77歳、 $SD = 7.31$ /平均滞在期間10.29年、 $SD = 3.59$ ）に対して、日本語能力、日本人従業員への態度（イメージなど）について質問紙で評定を求めた。また、日本人とのトラブルやその対処方法、来日前後の日本(国)・日本人の印象の変化については、自由に記述させた。結果として、まず職場でのトラブルに関しては、日本人の上司の指示が理解できないといったような、コミュニケーションの不具合に関する回答が最も多くみられた。また、来日前の日本イメージはポジティブなものが多いが、来日後、職場で数々の困難を経験することにより、ネガティブに変化していく傾向がみられた。日系ブラジル人の日本語力と日本人への態度には負の関連性がみられ、日本語が流暢な人ほど日本人に対してネガティブなイメージを持ちやすかった。この結果は、一見矛盾しているように思える。なぜなら、日本語力の向上はコミュニケーション上のトラブルを減少させ、日本・日本人に対してむしろポジティブになると予想できたからである。そうならない理由としては、日本語力が高い＝教育暦が高い日系ブラジル人は、日本人との労働条件や待遇の違いに不満を抱きやすく、日本イメージを悪化させやすいためと考えられる。また、言葉の問題が少ない場合は文化や価値観の違いがより強調され、そのギャップがネガティブな影響を与えている可能性もある。あるいは、日本語をよく理解できる日系ブラジル人ほど、日本人がもつ彼らに対するネガティブな評価に敏感であり、日本嫌いを助長してしまうのかもしれない。「ことばの壁」を越えた問題について今後も引き続き検討する必要がある。

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