

研究班番号【 54 】
Quality of life in Japan
～Japan and the Nordic countries～

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1. Introduction

Japan's position as a developed country continues to have a low position every year in the World Happiness Ranking, which is compiled by the United Nations annually. A review of the characteristics of some countries on that ranking, was performed to find the differences between those countries and Japan. Nordic countries, all have higher positions on the World Happiness Ranking; the causes of each country's view of happiness was also investigated. Northern European countries were chosen because they are similar to Japan in economic development. "Education", "Welfare", and "Gender equality" were the main areas of comparison. It is hypothesized that these three areas are related to the World Happiness Ranking Index position for each country.

2. Method

An internet search was conducted to find information related to the following questions:

1. What education is offered in Nordic countries?
2. What are the welfare systems in Nordic countries?
3. What is the difference in gender disparities between Nordic countries and Japan?

3. Result

Table 1:<PISA ranking>

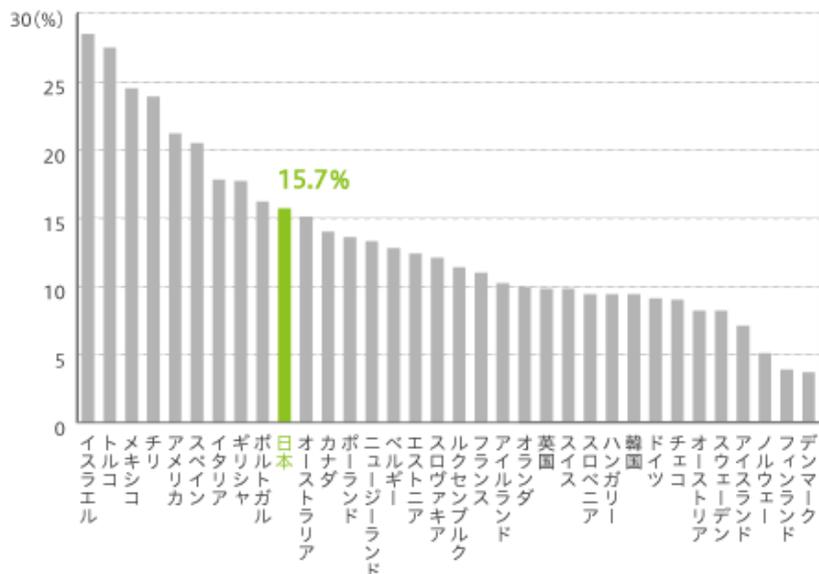
● 全参加国・地域(72か国・地域)における比較

	科学的リテラシー	平均 得点	読解力	平均 得点	数学的リテラシー	平均 得点
1	シンガポール	556	シンガポール	535	シンガポール	564
2	日本	538	香港	527	香港	548
3	エストニア	534	カナダ	527	マカオ	544
4	台湾	532	フィンランド	526	台湾	542
5	フィンランド	531	アイルランド	521	日本	532
6	マカオ	529	エストニア	519	北京・上海・江蘇・広東	531
7	カナダ	528	韓国	517	韓国	524
8	ベトナム※	525	日本	516	スイス	521
9	香港	523	ノルウェー	513	エストニア	520
10	北京・上海・江蘇・広東	518	ニュージーランド	509	カナダ	516
11	韓国	516	ドイツ	509	オランダ	512
12	ニュージーランド	513	マカオ	509	デンマーク	511
13	スロベニア	513	ポーランド	506	フィンランド	511
14	オーストラリア	510	スロベニア	505	スロベニア	510
15	イギリス	509	オランダ	503	ベルギー	507
	OECD平均	493	OECD平均	493	OECD平均	490
	信頼区間※(日本): 533-544		信頼区間(日本): 510-522		信頼区間(日本): 527-538	

To compare the education systems of Finland and Japan, the ranking of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015 was used. PISA measures how knowledge is applied to problem solving and the skills used when students face with problems. It measures comprehension, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy in various scenes of the real life. Comparing the results of Japan and Finland from this test shows both

countries rank in the top-level in the scholastic ability.

Table2: 〈Comparison of child poverty rates 〉



However, one in seven children in Japan lives in poverty. This economic disparity creates a disparity of scholastic ability for these children. To overcome this problem, the education system of Finland values equality. All students in Finland receive free education from a kindergarten through graduate school. Additionally, class sizes are fixed at 20 students and highly qualified instructors serve as a protective factor to prevent school dropout. This model of education fairness does not exist within the Japanese system.

The Danish welfare system is another area of comparison. First, in Denmark medical treatment is free. Each family has one doctor, and if medical care is needed, a doctor will make a home visit for diagnosis. Medical examination for childbirth is also free. Both mother and father can take paid vacation while they are raising their children. Education from kindergarten through graduate school is also free of cost for students. This service is available because the Danish sales tax is 25%, and welfare services are substantial because of the high social insurance costs.

Table3:<Gender Equality>

順位	国名	値
1	アイスランド	0.858
2	ノルウェー	0.835
3	スウェーデン	0.822
4	フィンランド	0.821
5	ニカラグア	0.809
6	ルワンダ	0.804
7	ニュージーランド	0.801
8	フィリピン	0.799
9	アイルランド	0.796
10	ナミビア	0.789
12	フランス	0.779
14	ドイツ	0.776
15	英国	0.774
16	カナダ	0.771
51	アメリカ	0.720
70	イタリア	0.706
75	ロシア	0.701
103	中国	0.673
110	日本	0.662
115	韓国	0.657

Table 3 shows overall gender equality in four areas: economics, education, politics, and health. A score of 0 is perfect inequality, while 1 is perfect equality. According to the rankings, Iceland was the highest level of equality, Norway is second, Sweden is the third, Finland is fourth. The top four countries are all Nordic, with figures exceeding 0.8. Japan, on the other hand, placed 110th at 0.662. Also, it turned out that quota system is widespread in Nordic countries. A political quota system in which a certain number of members, of the diet and cabinet members, are allocated to women helps to improve the equality score in the Nordic countries. Again, this is a system that Japan is lacking. The adoption of such a system would increase gender equality in Japan.

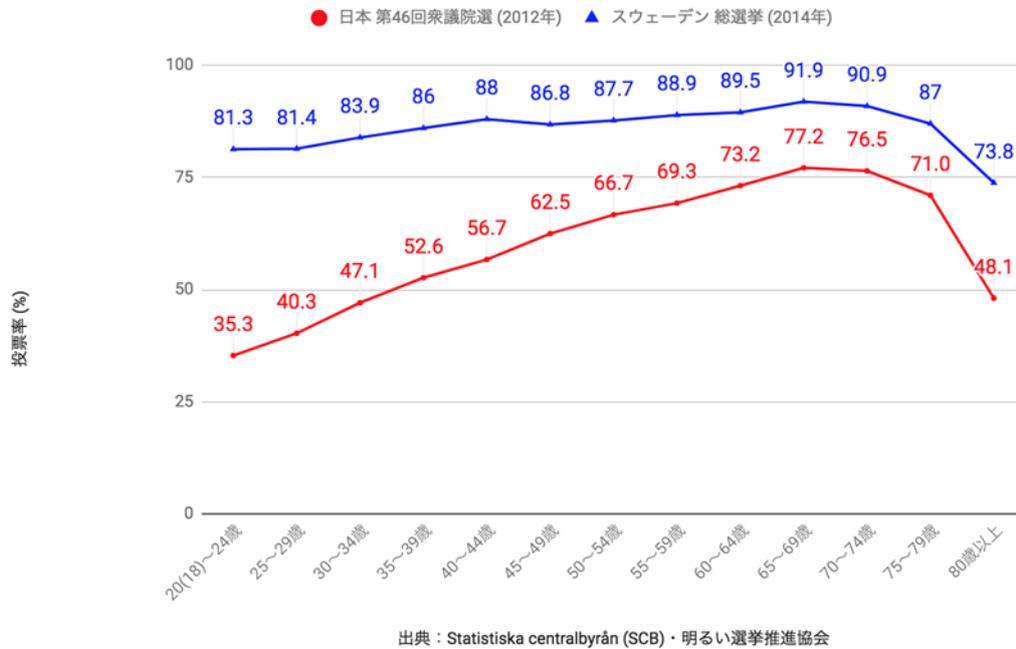
4. Discussion

From these three areas: education, welfare, and gender equality, it was found that equality was necessary for livability. Nordic nationals live on an equal footing with one another. It appears that a substantial system like those found in Northern Europe might be necessary to promote greater equality. Therefore, government action is necessary to achieve these goals.

In addition, in order to establish a system in which people of all generations can live equally, it is necessary to have greater youth participation in voting and political life. Currently in Japan, the voter turnout of the elderly is relatively high, so there is a tendency that many systems for the elderly are implemented. On the other hand, younger generations have a very low interest in politics, and the election turnout of younger voters is decreasing year by year. Therefore, the creation of systems for them is politically difficult to implement.

Figure1:<Voting rate comparison between young people in Northern Europe and Japan>

日本とスウェーデンの年齢別投票率の比較



In Japan, the voting rate for 18-24 year olds is 35.3%. In Northern Europe, it is about 81%. In Sweden, many schools promote debate and mock voting. The mock voting is held in the same style as actual voting. Students actively participate in those opportunities to learn about political participation in school.

Second, there is a youth group of political parties in Sweden. It is made up of young lawmakers. Its main role is to represent the voices of young people of the same generation and reflect their views in politics. There are also unique attempts in Northern Europe to get young people interested in politics. It may be necessary to introduce those activities in Japan if gender political participation and social change is desired. Though these experiences, children will feel closer to politics.

5. Conclusion

Nordic countries have a variety of social, political, and educational systems which work together to increase participation and equality. For Japan to catch up with these countries, it must create and support similar systems while considering the needs of individual citizens.

6. References

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