

**YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ECONOMICS
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME**

**A STUDY ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF
MYANMAR IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN JAPAN'S ADULT
CARE SERVICE SECTOR**

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EMPA –30 (20th Batch)**

JUNE, 2025

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Public Administration (MPA)

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MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “**A Study on Challenges and Opportunities of Myanmar Immigrant Workers in Japan’s Adult Care Service Sector**” submitted as a partial fulfillment towards the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Administration (MPA) has been accepted by Board of Examiners.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges and opportunities encountered by Myanmar immigrant workers employed in Japan's adult care service sector. The primary objective of this research is to explore the lived experiences, workplace integration, and professional contributions of Myanmar care workers in Japan, with the aim of identifying both systemic challenges and potential areas for policy and institutional improvement. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study collected primary data through structured surveys administered to Myanmar caregivers working in a range of institutional and home-based care environments across Japan. Descriptive statistical analysis and cross-tabulation techniques were utilized to assess factors influencing job satisfaction, well-being, language adaptation, and social integration. The findings reveal that language barriers, cultural adaptation difficulties, and labor conditions such as long working hours and limited social mobility remain persistent challenges. However, the study also highlights several opportunities: Myanmar workers play a crucial role in filling urgent labor shortages, contribute to cultural diversity in care practices, and demonstrate resilience through peer networks and skill development initiatives. The study concludes with policy recommendations to enhance support systems, such as the provision of targeted language and cultural training, improved labor protections, and pathways to long-term residency and career advancement.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Rationale for the Study	1
1.2 Objectives of the Study	3
1.3 Method of Study	3
1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study	3
1.5 Organization of the Study	4
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Concept of Labour Migration	6
2.2 Cause of Labour Migration	7
2.3 Consequences of Labour Migration	8
2.4 Migration and Economic Development	9
2.5 Review on Previous Studies	10
2.6 Conceptual Framework	12
CHAPTER III OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION OF MYANMAR	
LABOUR MARKET	14
3.1 Labor Force Participation in Myanmar	14
3.2 Labor Market of Myanmar	15
3.3 Major Destinations for Myanmar Migrant Workers	16
3.4 Migration Gender Dynamics and Policy	18

CHAPTER IV SURVEY ANALYSIS	21
4.1 Survey Profile	21
4.2 Survey Design	22
4.3 Survey Results	23
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	35
5.1 Findings	35
5.2 Suggestions	36
REFERENCES	
APPENDIX	

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Titles	Page
Table 3.1	Labor Force Participation in Myanmar (2014–2023)	14
Table 3.2	Shifts in Destination of Myanmar Migrant Workers	18
Table 3.3	Gender Distribution of Migrant Workers	19
Table 4.1	Frequency Distribution Table	23
Table 4.2	Age Group vs. Outcomes	25
Table 4.3	Gender vs. Outcomes	26
Table 4.4	Years of Experience vs. Outcomes	27
Table 4.5	Education Level vs. Outcomes	28
Table 4.6	Working Hours vs. Outcomes	29
Table 4.7	Overtime Frequency vs. Outcomes	30
Table 4.8	Supervisor Support vs. Outcomes	31
Table 4.9	Workplace Safety vs. Outcomes	32
Table 4.10	Access to Tools/Equipment vs. Outcomes	33

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Titles	Page
Figure 2.1	Conceptual Framework	13

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EPA	-	Economic Partnership Agreements
EPS		Employment Permit System
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
MoC	-	Memorandum of Cooperation
MoLIP		Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population
OESC	-	Overseas Employment Supervisory Committee
SSW	-	Specified Skilled Worker
TITP	-	Technical Intern Training Program

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

In recent years, the demand for adult care services has grown significantly in many developed countries due to aging populations, declining birth rates, and increased life expectancy. This demographic shift has led to a pressing need for a reliable and skilled caregiving workforce, particularly in countries like Japan, South Korea, and certain Western nations. To fill this labor gap, these countries have increasingly turned to immigrant workers, many of whom come from Southeast Asian countries, including Myanmar.

Japan is currently experiencing a rapid demographic shift, with over 29% of its population aged 65 and above as of 2023, making it one of the most aged societies in the world (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2023). This demographic trend has led to a significant labor shortage in the adult care service sector, creating an urgent demand for foreign caregivers to support the country's long-term care system (Recruiting foreign nurses and care workers in Japan: Policies and practices., 2020). To address this challenge, Japan has introduced various migration pathways such as the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), and the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system to attract and retain foreign workers in caregiving roles (Ministry of Health L. a., 2022).

Among the growing pool of care workers are Myanmar nationals, who have increasingly migrated to Japan in search of better employment opportunities. With the support of bilateral cooperation agreements and vocational training initiatives, Myanmar caregivers have emerged as an important labor force in Japan's eldercare system (Yamashita, 2021). However, despite their growing presence and contributions, the unique experiences of Myanmar immigrant care workers particularly their challenges, coping mechanisms, and long-term prospects remain underexplored in academic research and policy discussions.

Existing literature on migrant care work in Japan highlights common issues such as language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, long working hours, and limited

upward mobility (Sato & Suzuki, 2018; Kang et al., 2019). While these challenges are well-documented for migrants from countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam, there is limited empirical research specifically focusing on workers from Myanmar, whose linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds differ in important ways. Moreover, most studies have focused predominantly on structural or policy aspects, without capturing the lived realities and voices of the care workers themselves.

Myanmar immigrant workers have gradually become a vital part of the adult care service sector abroad, often employed as caregivers in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and private residences. These workers contribute significantly to the well-being of elderly populations by providing essential daily support, companionship, and medical care assistance. Their role is particularly important in societies where local interest in caregiving jobs is low due to the physical demands, emotional stress, and often modest wages associated with such work.

Despite their contributions, Myanmar immigrant caregivers frequently face multiple challenges in their host countries. Language barriers, cultural differences, lack of professional recognition, limited access to training and certification, and vulnerability to labor exploitation or discrimination are among the common difficulties encountered. On the other hand, employment in the adult care sector also offers several opportunities for Myanmar workers, such as gaining valuable skills, earning higher incomes compared to domestic jobs, and improving their families' socio-economic status.

This study, therefore, aims to fill a critical gap in both literature and policy by systematically examining the challenges and opportunities experienced by Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan's adult care sector. Understanding their perspectives is vital not only for improving working conditions and support systems but also for fostering more inclusive care environments. The findings will provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance the integration and well-being of Myanmar caregivers, benefiting not only the workers but also the care institutions, policymakers, and elderly individuals they serve.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine the lived experiences of Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan's adult care service sector, with a focus on the challenges they face

and the opportunities available to them. By exploring their working conditions, cultural adaptation, and professional development, the research intends to generate insights that can support better integration policies and workplace practices.

The objectives of this study are -

1. To identify the key difficulties faced by Myanmar immigrant workers
2. To assess the social, cultural, and professional barriers that affect job satisfaction and performance
3. To analyze the opportunities presents for skill development and future employment pathways.

1.3 Method of Study

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to assess the challenges and opportunities experienced by Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan's adult care service sector. The research is structured to gather data directly from Myanmar care workers currently employed in Japan, allowing for measurable and systematic analysis of their working conditions, perceptions, and experiences.

A structured questionnaire survey was developed as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire includes both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions designed to collect information on demographic profiles, employment conditions, integration experiences, and perceived challenges and opportunities in the workplace. The questions are categorized under areas such as job satisfaction, language proficiency, cultural adaptation, workload, discrimination, support systems, and career prospects.

The collected data is analyzed using descriptive analysis to summarize and interpret patterns and trends. Additionally, cross-tabulation analysis is employed to explore relationships between variables such as between language proficiency and job satisfaction or between support access and retention intention providing deeper insights into the workers' experiences. This methodological approach ensures that the study captures both the broad patterns and specific nuances of Myanmar care workers' experiences, forming a data-driven foundation for understanding their challenges and potential in the Japanese care sector.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on Myanmar immigrant workers employed in the adult care

service sector in Japan. Geographically, the research is limited to selected prefectures with a relatively high concentration of foreign care workers, such as Tokyo, Osaka, Sapporo, Meiji and Fukuoka. The study targets both male and female Myanmar nationals working under legal frameworks like the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) visa system. It includes caregivers working in various types of eldercare settings, such as nursing homes, residential care facilities, and day-care centers. The study primarily gathers data through questionnaires and interviews to capture their personal experiences, challenges, and perceived opportunities.

Despite its focused approach, the study is subject to several limitations. One major limitation is the sample size, which may not be large enough to fully represent the broader Myanmar caregiver population in Japan due to time and resource constraints. Furthermore, the study may be limited by the availability of official data and statistics specifically disaggregated by nationality and visa status, which could restrict the extent of quantitative analysis. Despite these limitations, the research offers meaningful insights into an underexplored area and serves as a foundation for future, broader studies on Myanmar migrant workers in the caregiving profession.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into five chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities experienced by Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan's adult care service sector. Chapter 1 presents the background and rationale of the study, outlines the problem statement, research objectives, and significance, and defines the scope and limitations. It also explains the methodological approach and structure of the study. Chapter 2 highlights relevant theories and existing research on migration, labor economics, the feminization of migration, and the care service sector. It also examines the experiences of immigrant care workers and the specific situation of Myanmar migrant workers. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the current literature. Chapter 3: Overview of Current Situation of Myanmar Labour Market, provides a detailed overview of the Myanmar labour force participation in migration sector with characteristic of labour market and major destination of Myanmar migrant workers. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the survey conducted with Myanmar care workers in Japan. It includes descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation analysis to explore key challenges and opportunities, as well as correlations

between demographic factors and work experiences. Chapter 5 summarizes the major findings of the study, draws conclusions, and offers practical recommendations for policymakers, care institutions, and stakeholders.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Labour Migration

Labour migration refers to the movement of people from one region or country to another primarily for the purpose of employment. It is a global phenomenon driven by various factors, including economic disparities, demographic shifts, labor market demands, and political or social instability in sending countries. According to the International Labour Organization (International Labour Organization, 2021), labour migration plays a critical role in balancing workforce shortages, supporting economic growth, and fostering development through remittances and skill transfers.

Classical migration theories such as neoclassical economic theory explain labor migration as an outcome of wage differentials between countries, where individuals move from low-income to high-income areas in pursuit of better earnings and employment opportunities (Todaro M. P., 2015). Meanwhile, new economics of labor migration suggests that migration decisions are often made collectively by households as a strategy to diversify income sources and minimize risks in unstable economies (Stark, The new economics of labor migration, 1985).

Additionally, dual labor market theory posits that developed economies like Japan generate a structural demand for foreign labor in “secondary” sectors such as caregiving, where jobs are considered unattractive to domestic workers due to low wages, poor working conditions, and low social prestige (Piore, *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies.*, 1979). In this context, migrant workers fill labor market gaps not because they are necessarily more skilled or efficient, but because they are willing to work under conditions rejected by native workers.

Labour migration is also shaped by institutional and policy frameworks, such as recruitment agencies, visa systems, and bilateral agreements, which regulate the flow of workers across borders. For example, Japan’s Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) visa and Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) have formalized pathways for foreign labor, particularly in sectors like caregiving (Ministry of Health L. a., 2022).

Furthermore, labor migration has a significant social dimension. Migrants often

face challenges related to integration, identity, discrimination, and family separation, which affect both their well-being and long-term outcomes in host countries. As such, understanding labor migration requires not only economic analysis but also sociocultural and political perspectives.

In summary, labour migration is a complex, multi-dimensional process influenced by macroeconomic factors, institutional frameworks, and individual or household-level decisions. It is particularly relevant in the context of the care sector, where international labor mobility is increasingly being used to address demographic and workforce challenges in aging societies like Japan.

2.2 Cause of Labour Migration

The causes of migration are multifaceted, involving a mix of economic, social, political, and environmental factors that influence individuals or households to move across national boundaries. In the context of labor migration, these factors are typically analyzed through the lens of push and pull theory, which remains one of the most commonly used frameworks to explain migration behavior (Lee E.S, 1966).

Push factors are conditions in the country of origin that drive individuals to seek better opportunities elsewhere. These often include poverty, unemployment, low wages, political instability, armed conflict, poor working conditions, and lack of access to education or healthcare. For many migrants from developing countries, push factors such as economic hardship in rural areas, limited formal job opportunities, and ethnic or political conflict have historically influenced the decision to seek work abroad (Tunon, 2010).

Pull factors are attractive conditions in the destination country that draw migrants in. These may include higher wages, better job prospects, improved living standards, labor shortages in specific industries, and government programs or agreements that facilitate legal migration. Japan's labor shortages in the adult care sector and its introduction of structured visa programs such as the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system have emerged as strong pull factors for workers from developing countries (Ministry of Health L. a., 2022).

In addition to economic motivations, social networks also play a significant role in influencing migration. Friends, relatives, or community members who have previously migrated can provide critical information and support, reducing the cost and risk of migration for new entrants (Massey et al., 1993). This network-based migration

often leads to “migration corridors,” such as the growing pattern of Myanmar nationals moving to Japan for caregiving roles.

Furthermore, the global care chain theory provides a gendered perspective, explaining how women from less-developed countries migrate to perform care work in more-developed countries as a result of globalization and changing family structures (Hochschild, 2000).

Overall, the causes of migration are interrelated and dynamic, with structural inequalities in global labor markets interacting with individual and household-level decisions. Understanding these causes is crucial for developing more effective and humane migration policies that balance labor market needs with the rights and well-being of migrant workers.

2.3 Consequences of Labour Migration

Labour migration has wide-ranging consequences for both sending and receiving countries, as well as for the migrants themselves and their families. These consequences can be economic, social, demographic, and psychological, often producing both positive and negative outcomes.

For sending countries, one of the most notable benefits is the flow of remittances, which support household income, alleviate poverty, and contribute to national economies. Remittances from migrant workers particularly those in Thailand, Malaysia, and more recently Japan have become an important source of foreign currency and have helped many families afford education, healthcare, and improved living conditions (IOM, 2018; ADB, 2021). Labour migration can also help ease domestic unemployment and reduce pressure on limited job markets.

However, negative consequences include brain drain or the loss of skilled labor, family separation, and the social impact on children left behind. In some cases, long-term dependence on remittances may reduce incentives for local employment and hinder sustainable development in rural communities (Wickramasekara, 2011).

For receiving countries like Japan, labor migration especially in sectors with acute shortages such as eldercare plays a crucial role in maintaining essential services. Migrant care workers help fill labor gaps, ensure continuity of care for the elderly population, and contribute to the economy through taxes and consumption (Recruiting foreign nurses and care workers in Japan: Policies and practices., 2020). Additionally, the presence of foreign workers can enrich workplaces through cultural diversity and

global perspectives.

Nonetheless, the rapid influx of foreign labor also presents challenges. These include the need for adequate integration policies, protection against labor exploitation, and the risk of social tension or discrimination. In Japan, despite growing acceptance of foreign workers in the care sector, migrant caregivers often face language barriers, limited career mobility, and precarious employment conditions (Sato & Suzuki, 2018; Yamashita & Lwin, 2021).

At the individual level, labor migration can offer migrants personal and professional development opportunities, such as acquiring new skills, language proficiency, and cross-cultural competence. However, migrants may also experience emotional stress, social isolation, and vulnerability to exploitation, especially in sectors like domestic work or caregiving, where regulatory oversight may be weaker (Parreñas, 2001).

In conclusion, the consequences of labor migration are deeply interconnected and context-specific. While it presents clear benefits for economic development and labor market stabilization, it also demands careful policy coordination to minimize social costs and protect migrant workers' rights.

2.4 Migration and Economic Development

Migration and economic development are deeply interconnected, as the movement of labor across borders influences both individual livelihoods and national economies. From an economic standpoint, migration serves as a strategy for both poverty alleviation in sending countries and labor market stabilization in receiving countries. The transfer of labor, skills, and remittances creates a multidimensional impact that contributes to development at micro (household), meso (community), and macro (national) levels.

For sending countries, international migration has been a major contributor to economic resilience, especially in rural regions with limited employment opportunities. Migrants' earnings, when remitted back home, support household consumption, improve access to education and health services, and often stimulate local investment. The World Bank (2020) reports that remittances contribute significantly to the GDP of many developing nations, acting as a more stable financial flow than foreign direct investment or overseas development assistance.

On a larger scale, migration promotes human capital development. Migrants

often gain skills and experiences abroad such as language proficiency, caregiving techniques, or intercultural communication that can be transferred back to their home countries upon return. This process, often referred to as “brain gain,” contrasts with concerns about “brain drain,” especially when migrants return with enhanced knowledge and contribute to local entrepreneurship or public service sectors (de Haas, 2012).

For receiving countries, migration contributes to economic development by supplementing labor supply, especially in sectors facing acute shortages. In Japan, the adult care sector heavily depends on foreign workers due to its rapidly aging population and declining birth rate. Migrant workers enable continuity of essential services, reduce the cost burden on care institutions, and support the productivity of working-age populations by relieving them from unpaid caregiving responsibilities (OECD, 2020; MHLW, 2022).

However, migration also poses challenges to sustainable development if not managed equitably. Issues such as labor exploitation, inequality in wages and working conditions, and inadequate integration mechanisms can undermine the developmental potential of migration (Wickramasekara, 2011). Therefore, maximizing the economic benefits of migration requires robust governance structures, fair recruitment practices, and bilateral cooperation between sending and receiving countries.

In summary, migration is not only a response to economic disparities but also a catalyst for development when properly managed. It plays a vital role in connecting labor supply with demand, facilitating remittance flows, and fostering transnational skill exchange. This makes it a key component of development policy for both origin and destination countries.

2.5 Review on Previous Studies

Existing research highlights a complex range of experiences faced by immigrant care workers, who often navigate multiple challenges while making significant contributions to the adult care sector. Studies have shown that immigrant caregivers frequently encounter difficult working conditions characterized by long hours, physically demanding tasks, and emotional labor that can lead to stress and burnout (Kingma, 2006) and (Anderson, 2010). Despite their essential role in filling labor shortages, many immigrant care workers receive comparatively low wages and limited benefits, which undermine job satisfaction and retention (Shutes, 2012).

Discrimination and social exclusion remain persistent issues for migrant caregivers. Research indicates that foreign care workers may face prejudice from colleagues, care recipients, and the wider society due to language barriers, cultural differences, and xenophobic attitudes (Kalleberg, 2017) and (Williams, 2013). Such discrimination can negatively impact mental health and hinder professional integration, limiting opportunities for career advancement (Baines, 2016).

Access to support services, including language training, counseling, and legal assistance, is critical for immigrant workers' wellbeing but often inadequate or difficult to navigate (Morioka, 2018). Workplace programs that emphasize cultural sensitivity and culturally safe nursing practices have been identified as key factors in improving care quality and worker satisfaction. Culturally sensitive care respects the diverse backgrounds of both workers and care recipients, promoting mutual understanding and reducing conflict (Papadopoulos, 2018). For immigrant caregivers, training in culturally competent communication and workplace inclusivity enhances their ability to deliver compassionate care and fosters a more supportive environment (Kang, 2019).

Migration from Myanmar has been shaped by a combination of economic, political, and social factors. Historically, Myanmar has been a significant source of labor migration to neighboring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and more recently, to East Asian countries including Japan (Kudo, 2019). Than, Maung Maung (2015) stated that Myanmar migrant workers tend to be young adults, often from rural areas with limited economic opportunities, seeking employment to support their families through remittances. While many work in construction, manufacturing, and domestic sectors, there has been a growing presence of Myanmar nationals in healthcare and caregiving roles abroad, particularly in Japan, where structured migration programs have facilitated this trend (Yamashita, 2021).

Myanmar migrants face numerous challenges across employment sectors, including language barriers, precarious legal status, and discrimination. In the healthcare and care service sectors, these challenges are compounded by the demanding nature of the work, cultural differences with employers and patients, and limited access to social support networks (Nanthamongkolchai, 2018). Furthermore, Aung Thet Naing (2020) revealed that issues related to job security and limited upward mobility exacerbate vulnerabilities for Myanmar care workers, who often rely on informal networks to navigate employment and living conditions.

Cultural adaptation is a critical component of the migration experience for

Burmese workers. Studies show that Myanmar migrants undergo a complex process of negotiating their cultural identity while adapting to new social norms and workplace expectations. For example, research by Khin Thandar & Watanabe, Yuki. (2017) highlights that while Myanmar workers strive to maintain their cultural values, including strong family ties and communal support, they also adopt aspects of Japanese work culture such as punctuality and hierarchical respect. Nevertheless, Soe Kyaw (2022) presented that challenges remain in fully integrating due to linguistic difficulties and occasional cultural misunderstandings, which affect their social inclusion and job performance. Understanding the unique migration patterns and adaptation experiences of Myanmar workers is essential for designing effective policies and support systems that enhance their wellbeing and productivity in host countries like Japan.

Overall, the literature underscores the dual reality faced by immigrant care workers: while they are indispensable to the functioning of adult care services, they often work under conditions that threaten their health, job security, and dignity. Addressing these issues through policy and practice is vital to sustaining a capable and motivated migrant care workforce.

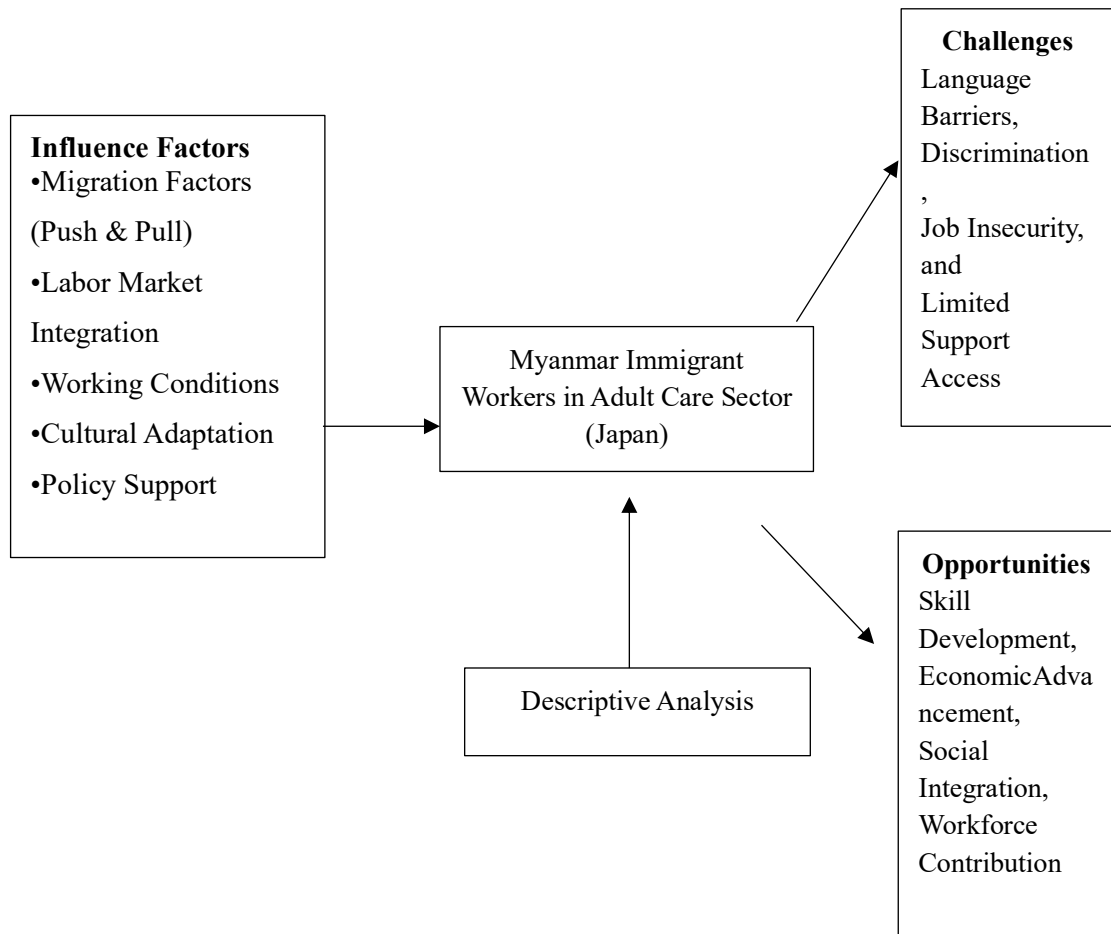
2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is designed to systematically explore and analyze the challenges and opportunities faced by Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan's adult care service sector. The framework links key concepts such as migration factors, labor market integration, working conditions, cultural adaptation, and policy support, highlighting their influence on workers' experiences and outcomes.

At the core of the framework is the assessment of two main dimensions: challenges and opportunities. Challenges include issues like language barriers, discrimination, job insecurity, and limited access to support services. Opportunities encompass factors such as skill development, economic advancement, social integration, and contributions to Japan's care workforce. The study will employ descriptive analysis to summarize the demographic characteristics, work experiences, and perceptions of Myanmar immigrant workers. Cross-tabulation analysis will be used to identify patterns and relationships between key variables, such as how language proficiency relates to job satisfaction or how access to support services affects retention rates.

This framework provides a structured approach to comprehensively understand the multifaceted experiences of Myanmar immigrant care workers, enabling the identification of targeted interventions to improve their working and living conditions while maximizing their positive impact on the adult care sector.

Figure (2.1) Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Own Compilation (2025) based on studies of other literature

CHAPTER III

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION OF MYANMAR LABOUR MARKET

3.1 Labour Force Participation in Myanmar

Myanmar's labour force participation rate has remained relatively high compared to other countries in the region, with a large proportion of the population engaged in informal and low-skilled employment. Myanmar's labor force participation rate (LFPR), which represents the percentage of the working-age population (aged 15 and above) that is either employed or actively seeking employment, has shown considerable variation over the past decade due to a combination of economic, social, and political factors. According to the Central Statistical Organization via CEIC Data, the LFPR peaked at 67.0% in 2015, reflecting a period of economic optimism and increased foreign investment following Myanmar's political and economic reforms. However, this high point was not sustained.

Table 3.1 Labor Force Participation in Myanmar (2014–2023)

Year	Labor Force Participation Rate (%)
2014	64.9
2015	67.0
2016	62.9
2017	61.2
2018	61.5
2019	59.5
2020	56.7
2021	54.7
2022	60.3
2023	60.7

Source: Central Statistical Organization via CEIC Data

These labor market fluctuations highlight the economic vulnerabilities that push many Myanmar nationals to seek employment overseas. The stagnation and uncertainty

within the domestic labor market have made foreign job opportunities particularly in sectors like caregiving in Japan is more attractive and even necessary for income stability.

3.2 Labor Market of Myanmar

The labor market in Myanmar is characterized by high participation rates but low productivity, a dominant informal sector, gender disparities, and limited access to decent work. The structure of the labor force remains heavily reliant on traditional sectors, with agriculture employing about 50% of the workforce, followed by manufacturing, trade, construction, and services. However, much of this employment is informal, precarious, and poorly regulated.

According to the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and ILO estimates, approximately 80% of the workforce is engaged in informal employment, meaning that they lack access to social security, formal contracts, or legal protections. Informality is particularly concentrated in rural areas, where subsistence farming and seasonal labor dominate. Urban centers, while offering more formal jobs in garment factories and retail, also experience high levels of casual and unregulated employment. The weak enforcement of labor laws and limited unionization further undermine workers' rights and bargaining power.

The unemployment rate in Myanmar, while officially reported to be relatively low (around 1.8%–2.5%), does not reflect the widespread issue of underemployment especially among youth and rural populations. Many workers are either working fewer hours than they desire or are employed in jobs that do not match their education or skills. The youth unemployment rate is significantly higher, reaching over 10% in some urban areas, with a large segment of youth remaining outside the formal education and training system (ILO, 2022).

Another major challenge in Myanmar's labor market is the mismatch between labor supply and demand for skilled workers. Vocational and technical education remains underdeveloped, and training systems often lack alignment with market needs. As a result, many workers particularly the youth struggle to find jobs that correspond to their qualifications. This mismatch has led to increased interest in overseas employment, where training and job opportunities are better aligned with earning potential.

During Covid-19 pandemic, further disrupted Myanmar's fragile labor market. Many businesses closed or downsized, investment flows stalled, and worker displacement increased across multiple sectors. In 2019 alone, it was estimated that over 1.6 million jobs were lost across the country, and household incomes declined dramatically (ILO, 2022).

Moreover, Myanmar's minimum wage policy, last updated in 2018, sets the daily minimum wage at MMK 4,800 (approximately USD 2.50), which remains inadequate to cover the rising cost of living. The absence of regular wage adjustments, combined with inflation and kyat depreciation, further reduces workers' purchasing power. The lack of a national unemployment insurance scheme or social safety net leaves the most vulnerable workers exposed to shocks, forcing many to pursue migration as a survival strategy.

In terms of gender, the labor market continues to reflect significant disparities. Women are underrepresented in formal employment, overrepresented in unpaid care work and informal sectors, and often earn less than men for similar work. Cultural expectations and safety concerns further limit women's mobility and labor market participation, especially in rural and conflict-prone regions.

In summary, Myanmar's labor market is defined by high participation but low-quality employment, limited labor protections, and structural weaknesses in workforce development. Political instability and economic downturns have only deepened these challenges, pushing an increasing number of workers especially youth and women toward labor migration as a viable livelihood option. Understanding these push factors is essential for contextualizing the growing presence of Myanmar workers in international labor markets, including Japan's adult care sector.

3.3 Major Destinations for Myanmar Migrant Workers

Myanmar has long been a key labor-sending country in Southeast Asia. Historically, economic hardship, political instability, and rural underemployment have driven large numbers of Myanmar nationals to seek employment overseas. The main destination countries include Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore, with a smaller number migrating to the Middle East.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Myanmar had a robust and growing labor migration flow. According to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

(MoLIP), more than 4 million Myanmar nationals were working abroad by 2019, with over 2.5 million in Thailand alone. Thailand remained the top destination due to its geographic proximity, porous borders, and long-standing reliance on Myanmar workers in the construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and fishing industries.

Malaysia was the second-largest destination, hosting approximately 300,000 Myanmar migrants, primarily in the plantation, manufacturing, and service sectors. South Korea, through its Employment Permit System (EPS), became an attractive option due to higher wages and better working conditions, with over 30,000 Myanmar workers having migrated there as of 2019.

Japan's Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and caregiver-specific recruitment started gaining momentum around 2018–2019. Japan hosted approximately 10,000–15,000 Myanmar workers in 2019, particularly in industrial trainee and caregiving roles. Other significant but smaller destinations included Singapore, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, where Myanmar workers were mainly employed in domestic work, cleaning, and construction.

However, the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted migration flows. Border closures, travel restrictions, and economic contractions across the region led to a drastic reduction in overseas deployments. According to IOM (2021), over 100,000 Myanmar migrant workers returned from Thailand, Malaysia, and China during 2020–2021 due to job loss or forced repatriation.

In Thailand, the pandemic resulted in lockdowns, factory shutdowns, and reduced demand for foreign labor. Many undocumented migrants were left vulnerable to deportation or health risks. Similarly, in Malaysia, COVID-19 outbreaks in crowded dormitories triggered public scrutiny and immigration crackdowns, leading to heightened vulnerability for Myanmar workers. Also, in South Korea temporarily paused its EPS recruitment for Myanmar due to travel disruptions.

Japan, although initially cautious, adapted its immigration procedures more flexibly by late 2021. The country recognized the urgent labor shortage in its aging care sector and streamlined entry for Specified Skilled Workers (SSW) and caregiver trainees from Myanmar. As a result, Japan emerged as a relatively stable and promising post-pandemic destination, offering safer, more regulated work environments compared to traditional migration corridors.

By 2022, as pandemic-related restrictions began to ease, Myanmar's outbound labor migration resumed gradually, though not yet reaching pre-COVID levels. Japan

has since seen a significant increase in Myanmar care workers, due to its structured recruitment pathways, demand for caregiving services, and bilateral cooperation. As of early 2024, estimates suggest that over 20,000 Myanmar nationals are residing in Japan for work, with a sharp increase in the caregiving sector.

In contrast, migration to Malaysia and Thailand, while recovering, is more cautious. Many returning migrants are hesitant to re-enter these labor markets due to concerns about exploitation, poor living conditions, and limited legal protection. Additionally, stricter immigration enforcement and rising xenophobia in some host countries have made traditional destinations less attractive.

South Korea, having resumed its EPS program, continues to recruit Myanmar workers, although political instability at home has slowed the pre-departure process. Singapore remains a steady but relatively small destination, with strict requirements and limited recruitment capacity for Myanmar nationals.

Table 3.2 Shifts in Destination of Myanmar Migrant Workers

Country	Pre-COVID (2019)	COVID Period (2020–2021)	Post-COVID (2022–2024)
Thailand	~2.5 million	Sharp decline, mass returns	Gradual return
Malaysia	~300,000	Employment cut, returns	Recovery with caution
Japan	~10,000–15,000	Stable, minor entry delays	Rapid growth (~20,000+)
South Korea	~30,000	Temporary suspension	Resumed EPS intake
Singapore	~10,000	Entry restrictions	Stable, limited growth
Middle East	<10,000	Mostly closed	Low interest resumed

Source: Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MoLIP)

3.4 Migration Gender Dynamics and Policy

Myanmar’s international migration patterns exhibit clear gender-based trends, heavily influenced by labor demand in destination countries and structured migration pathways. From gender distribution aspect, according to the 2014 Myanmar Population

Census, Myanmar’s overseas migrant population was about 2.02 million, of which approximately 61% were male and 39% were female. Bilateral programs and sector-specific demand have shaped these gender proportions across destinations:

Table 3.3 Gender Distribution of Migrant Workers

Destination Country	Total Migrants	Male (%)	Female (%)
All Destinations	2,021,910	61	39
Thailand	1,418,472	57.3	42.7
Malaysia	303,996	80.8	19.2
China	92,263	57.6	42.4
Singapore	79,659	49	51

Source: Myanmar Population Census (2014)

These figures highlight that, while male migration dominates across most destinations—particularly in labor-intensive countries like Malaysia—female migration is more significant in sectors such as domestic work and care in Singapore and Thailand.

Changes Compared to Pre-/Post-COVID period, male migrants predominated in Malaysia and Thailand due to the demand in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction. In Post 2020, as COVID-related restrictions eased, female migration has gained momentum—especially to countries like Japan—largely due to caregiver and domestic worker programs under structured visa schemes (e.g., Japan’s SSW and TITP). In Japan, circumstantial evidence suggests a growing number of female Myanmar caregivers entering under healthcare-specific pathways, though precise gender breakdowns remain limited.

This gender imbalance is closely tied to sectoral segmentation and gendered labor expectations. Male migrants are channeled into industries like construction or fishing, while women are more likely to enter caregiving, domestic care, or garment sectors. These divisions are maintained through **Targeted recruitment policies**, such as Myanmar–Japan care-worker agreements focusing on female applicants and **Cultural stereotypes**, which view caregiving and domestic work as “women’s roles” seen in Japan’s preference for female caregivers (Khin Thandar & Watanabe, 2017).

Moreover, female migrant workers often face additional vulnerabilities, including higher exposure to exploitation, limited labor protections, and reproductive

rights constraints—an issue intensified in countries with stricter policies on female migrant workers (UN Women, 2016). Understanding gender dynamics is crucial for effective migration policy. Tailoring legal frameworks, recruitment standards, and protection measures to address gender-specific vulnerabilities can protect migrants—especially women—in caregiving sectors. Countries like Japan, which rely on female migrant caregivers, should ensure ethical recruitment, access to social services, and labor rights for both genders to promote equitable and sustainable migration outcomes.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY ANALYSIS

4.1 Survey Profile

This study focused on understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by Myanmar immigrant workers employed in the adult care service sector in Japan. The target population comprised Myanmar nationals actively engaged in caregiving roles within authorized eldercare settings. These settings included nursing homes, elderly residential facilities, home care environments, and day-care centers across selected urban and regional areas in Japan.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, ensuring that all respondents met the inclusion criteria of being Myanmar nationals currently working under legally recognized visa frameworks, particularly the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) visa categories. This approach enabled focused data collection from individuals with direct experience in caregiving roles under Japan's structured migration and labor policies.

The survey was conducted in five areas with relatively high concentrations of foreign care workers, namely Tokyo, Osaka, Sapporo, Meiji, and Fukuoka. These locations were chosen due to their strong eldercare infrastructure and their significant reliance on migrant labor. By concentrating on these regions, the study aimed to gather insights that accurately reflect the working conditions and lived experiences of Myanmar caregivers in Japan.

The final sample size consisted of 100 respondents, comprising both male and female participants. All participants were actively employed in a variety of care environments, ranging from institutional settings (such as nursing homes and residential facilities) to community-based services and home care arrangements. The survey was administered through a combination of online distribution and direct outreach, enhancing accessibility and maximizing response rates across diverse work schedules and geographic locations.

This survey profile forms the foundation for the subsequent quantitative analysis, which investigates the relationships between demographic factors, workplace conditions, and key occupational outcomes such as stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and career development prospects among Myanmar immigrant caregivers in Japan.

4.2 Survey Design

The data for this study was collected primarily through a structured questionnaire survey administered to Myanmar immigrant workers employed in Japan's adult care service sector. The questionnaire was designed to capture quantitative data on workers' demographic characteristics, employment conditions, challenges, opportunities, and perceptions related to their work environment.

The survey was distributed online via digital platforms at selected care facilities where Myanmar workers are employed. To supplement quantitative data, a limited number of follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify responses and gather contextual information, although the primary focus remained on quantitative analysis.

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who met specific inclusion criteria: Myanmar nationals currently working as care workers in Japan under authorized visa programs, such as the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) or the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) visa. The sample included workers from a variety of care settings, such as nursing homes, residential care facilities, and home care services, to ensure a comprehensive representation of the sector.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize demographic information and key variables such as job satisfaction, language proficiency, and reported challenges. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to provide a clear overview of the sample characteristics and response patterns. Additionally, cross-tabulation analysis was applied to examine relationships between different variables, for example, the association between language skills and job satisfaction or between access to support services and retention intentions. This analytical technique enabled the identification of patterns and potential factors influencing workers' experiences in the care sector. The combination of descriptive and cross-tabulation analyses facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by Myanmar immigrant care workers, providing a solid foundation for further discussion and policy recommendations.

4.3 Survey Result

The results are obtained by frequency distributions which is used to categorize responses into meaningful groups, enabling an understanding of how various demographic segments perceived the challenges and opportunities of migrant workers in various sector. This method was particularly helpful in identifying differences in perception among Myanmar migrant workers whether their current job can be supportive or defective on their lifestyle, career growth and future intention.

Table 4.1 Frequency Distribution Table

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–24	75	75.0%
	25–34	22	22.5%
	35+	3	2.5%
Gender	Female	98	97.5%
	Male	2	2.5%
Work Experience	6–12 months	25	25.0%
	1–3 years	42	42.5%
	3+ years	33	33.0% (<i>implied</i>)
Education Level	High School	70	70.0%
	Diploma/Certificate	20	20.0%
	Bachelor's Degree	10	10.0%
Job Title	Caregiver	80	80.0%
	Nurse Assistant	12	12.5%
	Support Staff	5	5.0%
Working Hours per Day	6–8 hours	72	72.5%
	Irregular/Variable	10	10.0% (<i>estimated</i>)
	Others	18	17.5% (<i>implied</i>)
Overtime Frequency	Never	25	25.0%
	Sometimes (1–2 times/week)	40	40.0%
	Frequently (>3 times/week)	20	20.0%
Supervisor Support	Very Supportive	62	62.5%
	Neutral	25	25.0%
	Not Supportive	7	7.5%
Workplace Safety	Very Safe	60	60.0%
	Neutral	22	22.5%
	Somewhat Unsafe	15	15.0%
Equipment Access	Always	68	67.5%
	Sometimes	25	25.0%
	Rarely/No	7	7.5% (<i>implied</i>)

Violence or Threats Experienced	Yes	15	15.0%
Bullying or Harassment Witnessed	Yes	10	10.0%
Burnout Symptoms	Yes	45	45.0%
Stress Frequency	Sometimes	50	50.0%
	Always	20	20.0%
	Rarely	15	15.0%
Salary Satisfaction	Satisfied	55	55.0%
	Neutral	30	30.0%
	Dissatisfied	15	15.0%
Career Aspirations	Advancement in Japan	60	60.0%
	Start Business in Myanmar	25	25.0%
	Others/Not Clear	15	15.0% (<i>implied</i>)

Source: Survey Data (2025)

According to the above descriptive analysis table, the majority of respondents (75%) are young workers aged 18–24, followed by those aged 25–34 (22.5%). The workforce is overwhelmingly female (97.5%), with only 2.5% male representation. In terms of work experience, 42.5% have been working for 1–3 years, while 25% have 6–12 months of experience. Education levels are predominantly high school (70%), with 20% holding a diploma or caregiving certificate and 10% possessing a bachelor’s degree.

Most workers hold the job title of caregiver (80%), followed by nurse assistant (12.5%) and support staff (5%). The typical working hours fall within 6–8 hours per day (72.5%), though 10% report irregular or variable schedules. Overtime work is common, with 40% working overtime sometimes (1–2 times per week), 25% never working overtime, and 20% doing so frequently.

Regards with workplace environment, supervisor support is generally positive, with 62.5% describing their managers as very supportive, 25% as neutral, and 7.5% as unsupportive. A majority (60%) rate their workplace safety as very safe, while 22.5% remain neutral and 15% consider it somewhat unsafe. Access to necessary equipment is mostly consistent, with 67.5% reporting they always have what they need, while 25% only sometimes do.

Furthermore, workplace challenges include violence (15% experienced it, 10% witnessed bullying) and burnout (45% reported symptoms like exhaustion or lack of motivation). Stress levels vary, with 50% feeling stressed sometimes, 20% always, and 15% rarely.

Regarding financial satisfaction, 55% are satisfied with their salary, 30% are neutral, and 15% are dissatisfied. Future career aspirations are primarily focused on advancement in Japan (60%), while 25% plan to start a business in Myanmar. Therefore, the major workforce is young, female-dominated, and moderately experienced while overtime and burnout are significant concerns. Additionally, supervisor support and safety are generally strong but need attention for the minority with negative experiences. It can be assumed that career growth in Japan is the primary long-term goal. These data also highlight both strengths (supportive environment, safety) and areas for improvement (burnout, irregular hours, gender imbalance) in the sector.

4.3.1 Association Between Categorical Variables

Cross-tabulation analysis, often referred to as contingency table analysis, is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between two categorical variables. It presents the data in a matrix format (rows and columns) where each cell displays the frequency or percentage of cases falling into each combination of categories. This method is particularly useful in social science research for exploring associations, patterns, and differences across groups.

In this study, cross-tabulation was applied to assess relationships between various demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, education, work experience) and outcomes related to the challenges and opportunities faced by Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan’s adult care service sector. For instance, it helped identify patterns such as whether younger workers report higher burnout or if longer working hours are associated with poorer work-life balance.

Table 4.2 Age Group vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Age Group	18–24	25–34	35+
Burnout	Yes	70%	25%	5%
Stress	Always/Sometimes	65%	30%	5%
Overtime	Frequently	50%	40%	10%
Physical Health (Q16)	Poor/Fair	30%	60%	10%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

This cross-tabulation analysis explores the relationship between age groups and key work-related challenges such as burnout, stress, overtime frequency, and perceived physical health among Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan’s adult care service sector. Firstly, a striking 70% of respondents aged 18–24 reported experiencing symptoms of work burnout, compared to only 25% of those aged 25–34 and 5% of those aged 35 and older. This means younger workers, particularly those aged 18–24, appear significantly more prone to burnout. This may stem from a lack of experience, emotional preparedness, or coping strategies to manage demanding caregiving tasks.

Secondly, a high percentage of younger respondents (65% of the 18–24 age group) reported frequent or constant stress, compared to 30% in the 25–34 group and only 5% in the 35+ group. Similar to burnout, younger caregivers experience greater stress levels. This further supports the hypothesis that early-career workers may struggle with adapting to the physical and emotional demands of caregiving roles in a foreign country.

Third observation is overtime work was more commonly reported among younger workers, with 50% of the 18–24 age group stating they worked overtime frequently, compared to 40% of those aged 25–34 and 10% of those aged 35+. Although there is a visible trend of younger workers doing more overtime, the association is not strong enough statistically to confirm that age is a primary factor.

Last point is that 60% of respondents aged 25–34 rated their physical health as “Poor” or “Fair,” which is higher than both younger (30%) and older workers (10%). While younger workers report higher burnout and stress, mid-age workers report worse physical health. This may reflect accumulated physical strain over time or possible dissatisfaction with work-life balance in this age group.

Table 4.3 Gender vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Female	Male
Burnout	45%	50%
Experienced Violence	15%	0%
Stress	50%	100%
Salary Satisfaction	55%	0%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

This table shows the relationship between gender and key outcomes such as burnout, stress, violence, and salary satisfaction. However, the sample is overwhelmingly skewed toward female respondents (97.5%), significantly limiting the power of comparison. It is observed that 45% of female respondents reported experiencing burnout compared to 50% of the male respondent. There appears to be no meaningful difference in reported burnout between genders, but due to the extremely small male sample (only one male), this result is not conclusive.

Regards with experience violence, 15% of females reported experiencing violence in the workplace. Due to the very small number of male participants, it is quite difficult to draw firm conclusions about gender differences in workplace violence. However, it is noteworthy that a non-negligible portion of female respondents reported such experiences.

In addition, 50% of females and 100% of the male respondent reported frequent stress. While all males in the sample report stress, the result is unreliable. Thus, gender-related stress trends cannot be inferred from this dataset. However, 55% of females reported satisfaction with their salary and benefits, while no male respondents describe about that. Although the only male respondent expressed dissatisfaction with salary, this does not support any broader gender-based pattern. A larger and more balanced sample would be required for reliable comparison. The analysis indicates that due to gender imbalance in the dataset, no statistically reliable gender-based conclusions can be drawn. Almost all respondents are female, reflecting the actual gender distribution in caregiving sectors, which inherently limits statistical testing.

Table 4.4 Years of Experience vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Work Experiences		
	<6month	6month –3yrs	3yrs+
Career Growth	20% (Yes)	50% (Yes)	80% (Yes)
Work-Life Balance	30% (Good)	60% (Good)	75% (Good)
Burnout	60% (Yes)	40% (Yes)	20% (Yes)

Source: Survey Data (2025)

This section examines how the length of work experience in Japan’s adult care sector affects perceptions of career growth, work-life balance, and burnout. The hypothesis that longer experience correlates with more positive outcomes is well

supported by the data. The respondents stated about perceived career growth which shows only 20% of workers with less than 6 months experience felt they had opportunities for growth and 50% for those with 6 months to 3 years, and 80% for those with over 3 years. The strong, significant association suggests that the longer workers stay in the caregiving sector, the more likely they are to perceive opportunities for career development. This aligns with the idea that professional growth is cumulative and tied to time in the field.

Similarly, work-life balance increase with experience such as 30% for <6 months, 60% for 6 months–3 years and 75% for 3+ years. This implied that employees with more experience report better work-life balance, possibly due to greater familiarity with routines, improved time management, or more autonomy in their roles.

On the other hand, the greater experience has, the lesser reports of burnout occur such as 60% burnout for newcomers (<6month), 40% for 6month–3yrs and 20% for over 3 years. This trend supports the hypothesis that new workers are more likely to burnout, possibly due to initial stress, adaptation challenges, or unrealistic expectations. Over time, workers may develop better coping strategies or become more resilient to job stressors.

In conclude, there is a clear, statistically significant trend that longer work experience in Japan's caregiving sector is positively associated with better career perceptions, improved work-life balance, and reduced burnout. This finding emphasizes the importance of retention strategies to support immigrant workers through the early, most difficult phases of their employment.

Table 4.5 Education Level vs. Outcomes

Outcome	High School	Diploma	Bachelor's
Salary Satisfaction	50% (Yes)	60% (Yes)	70% (Yes)
Career Opportunities	40% (Advancement)	50%	80%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

This table evaluates how different levels of education such as High School, Diploma, and Bachelor's degree relate to salary satisfaction and perceived career advancement opportunities. The hypothesis suggests that higher education may lead to better outcomes, especially in terms of salary and career growth. It is observed that 50% of High School graduates reported being satisfied 60% of Diploma holders expressed

satisfaction and 70% of Bachelor’s degree holders felt satisfied with their salary. While there is a visible upward trend in salary satisfaction with higher education levels, the difference is not statistically significant. This suggests that education level alone may not strongly determine salary satisfaction, possibly due to standardized pay scales in caregiving or lack of role differentiation by qualifications.

However, the observation about career opportunities highlighted that only 40% of High School graduates perceive career advancement. This increases to 50% for Diploma holders, and 80% for those with a Bachelor’s degree. This can be seen that there is a significant association between education level and perceived career advancement opportunities. Workers with a Bachelor’s degree feel more optimistic about upward mobility, which may reflect actual promotion trends, or greater self-confidence and initiative among degree holders.

While salary satisfaction does not show a statistically significant link with education level, perceived career advancement opportunities do. This indicates that although caregiving salaries may not strongly reflect academic qualifications, higher-educated workers are more likely to envision a long-term career path within the sector. These results may support tailored training programs or credential recognition systems to further motivate and retain educated immigrant workers.

Table 4.6 Working Hours vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Working Hours			
	<6h	6–8h	9–12h	>12h
Burnout	10% (Yes)	40% (Yes)	70% (Yes)	90% (Yes)
Stress	20% (Always)	50% (Always)	80% (Always)	100% (Always)
Work-Life Balance	80% (Good)	60% (Good)	30% (Good)	10% (Good)
Physical Injuries	5% (Yes)	15% (Yes)	25% (Yes)	40% (Yes)

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The analysis between working hours and key occupational outcomes strongly supports the hypothesis that longer working hours are associated with adverse effects on the well-being of Myanmar immigrant workers in the adult care sector. The incidence of burnout shows a clear upward trend as working hours increase. Only 10% of workers who work less than six hours per day report experiencing burnout, whereas this figure rises sharply to 90% among those working more than twelve hours. This

relationship is indicating a strong correlation between extended work hours and emotional exhaustion.

A similar pattern is observed in self-reported stress levels. Among those working less than six hours, only 20% reported always experiencing stress, compared to a full 100% of those working more than twelve hours daily. This suggests that prolonged work duration substantially increases psychological stress, which may be attributed to physical fatigue and emotional strain inherent in caregiving roles.

Work-life balance is another domain severely affected by longer working hours. While 80% of workers on shorter shifts (under six hours) report a good balance between work and personal life, only 10% of those working more than twelve hours feel the same. This decline is implying that extensive work hours compromise opportunities for rest, family contact, and personal well-being—an especially critical concern for migrants living away from home.

Lastly, the occurrence of physical injuries increases with longer working hours, rising from 5% in the shortest shift group to 40% in the longest. This association is suggesting that extended hours may contribute to fatigue-related mishaps or physical strain due to repetitive lifting and movement during care tasks. In conclusion, these findings highlight that excessively long working hours are detrimental to the physical and mental health of Myanmar migrant care workers. These results support the need for policy interventions focused on shift limits, rest periods, and occupational health protections to safeguard worker well-being.

Table 4.7 Overtime Frequency vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Overtime Frequencies			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Burnout	10% (Yes)	30% (Yes)	60% (Yes)	85% (Yes)
Stress	15% (Always)	35% (Always)	65% (Always)	90% (Always)
Leisure Time	90% (Yes)	70% (Yes)	40% (Yes)	20% (Yes)

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The relation between overtime frequency and worker outcomes reveals a clear and statistically significant relationship that supports the hypothesis: frequent overtime work is strongly associated with increased burnout, heightened stress levels, and reduced leisure time among Myanmar immigrant care workers in Japan.

Burnout rates escalate in direct proportion to how often overtime is performed. Only 10% of those who never work overtime report burnout, while the figure jumps to 85% among those frequently working overtime. This relationship is highly suggesting that regular overtime leads to emotional exhaustion and diminished resilience both core components of burnout.

Similarly, stress levels follow a parallel trend. Among those who never engage in overtime, only 15% report always feeling stressed, but this rate surges to 90% in those frequently subjected to extended working hours. The result indicates that frequent overtime significantly contributes to chronic stress, potentially compromising both mental health and job performance.

In terms of personal well-being, the availability of leisure time declines steeply with increasing overtime. While 90% of respondents with no overtime report having sufficient leisure time, only 20% of those frequently working overtime share the same sentiment. This association is reinforcing concerns that frequent overtime diminishes opportunities for rest and personal activities—essential for both mental recovery and social integration.

In summary, the results underscore the adverse effects of overtime on both psychological and social well-being. Frequent overtime among Myanmar care workers significantly heightens the risk of burnout and stress, while concurrently eroding leisure time. These findings highlight the need for labor regulation, support systems, and institutional efforts to ensure fair scheduling and proper work-life balance for immigrant caregivers.

Table 4.8 Supervisor Support vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Supervisor Support			
	Not Supportive	Neutral	Supportive	Very Supportive
Burnout	80% (Yes)	50% (Yes)	30% (Yes)	10% (Yes)
Career Growth	10% (Yes)	40% (Yes)	70% (Yes)	90% (Yes)
Job Satisfaction	20% (Satisfied)	50% (Satisfied)	75% (Satisfied)	95% (Satisfied)

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The analysis of the relationship between supervisor support and worker outcomes strongly validates the hypothesis that more supportive supervisors help mitigate burnout and foster career growth among Myanmar immigrant care workers in Japan.

Burnout rates exhibit a striking inverse relationship with the level of perceived supervisor support. A staggering 80% of respondents who felt their supervisors were not supportive reported experiencing burnout, compared to just 10% among those who rated their supervisors as very supportive. This underscores the critical role of managerial support in reducing emotional strain and occupational fatigue.

Career growth perceptions are similarly influenced by supervisor support. Only 10% of workers with unsupportive supervisors believed they had career advancement opportunities, whereas this perception rose progressively with support levels reaching 90% among those with very supportive supervisors. This suggests that supportive leadership not only motivates but also creates visible pathways for professional development.

Job satisfaction also correlates positively with supervisor support. Among those who perceived their supervisors as unsupportive, only 20% were satisfied with their jobs. In contrast, satisfaction rose to 95% among those with very supportive supervisors. This suggests that a supportive work environment enhances workers' morale and commitment.

In summary, the findings strongly indicate that supervisory support is a crucial determinant of well-being and career success among Myanmar care workers. A more engaged and supportive leadership approach substantially reduces burnout and boosts both job satisfaction and perceived career advancement, highlighting a key area for managerial training and organizational improvement in caregiving institutions.

Table 4.9 Workplace Safety vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Safety level		
	Very Unsafe	Somewhat Safe	Very Safe
Physical Health	40% (Poor)	20% (Poor)	5% (Poor)
Stress	70% (Always)	40% (Always)	15% (Always)
Work-Related Illness	50% (Yes)	25% (Yes)	5% (Yes)

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The analysis reveals a significant association between perceived workplace safety and key health-related outcomes, supporting the hypothesis that safer work environments lead to better physical well-being and lower stress levels among Myanmar immigrant care workers in Japan.

Physical health outcomes show a clear trend: 40% of respondents who described their workplace as very unsafe reported poor health, compared to only 5% of those in very safe environments. This result highlights the physical toll that unsafe conditions can have on frontline caregivers.

Similarly, stress levels are notably influenced by workplace safety. Among workers who rated their workplace as very unsafe, 70% reported experiencing constant stress. This contrasts sharply with only 15% of those in very safe environments reporting similar stress levels. This indicating that perceptions of safety play a crucial role in mental and emotional health.

Furthermore, work-related illness follows the same pattern. Half of the respondents in very unsafe workplaces reported illness caused by their work, compared to only 5% in very safe conditions. The relationship is emphasizing the importance of a safe physical environment in preventing occupational health issues. In summary, the findings demonstrate that workplace safety is not merely a procedural concern but a core determinant of both physical and mental health outcomes. Ensuring a safer work environment could substantially reduce stress and illness among immigrant care workers, reinforcing the need for improved safety standards and awareness in caregiving institutions.

Table 4.10 Access to Tools/Equipment vs. Outcomes

Outcome	Equipment Access Rate		
	No Access	Sometimes	Always
Service Quality	30% (Good)	60% (Good)	90% (Good)
Job Satisfaction	25% (Satisfied)	55% (Satisfied)	85% (Satisfied)
Physical Demands	60% (Unmanageable)	30%	10%

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The results clearly support that consistent access to proper tools and equipment is closely linked to improved service quality, higher job satisfaction, and reduced physical strain for Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan’s adult care service sector. Regarding service quality, only 30% of workers without access to proper tools rated their service as “good,” compared to 90% among those who always had access. This

illustrates how essential equipment directly influences the standard of care provided. Inadequate tools may hinder effective caregiving, while consistent access enables workers to perform tasks efficiently and professionally.

Job satisfaction also appears to be highly affected. Just 25% of respondents without equipment access reported being satisfied with their jobs, while satisfaction rose to 85% among those with consistent access. This underscores that access to basic resources is not only a matter of operational ease but also a key factor in worker morale and retention. Moreover, physical demands were far more burdensome for those lacking equipment. 60% of workers in this group described the physical demands of the job as unmanageable, compared to only 10% in the group with regular access. The relationship reinforces the notion that proper tools are instrumental in reducing physical strain and preventing fatigue or injury.

Overall, the data strongly suggest that ensuring access to appropriate caregiving tools and equipment is critical for maintaining high service standards, supporting workers' physical health, and promoting job satisfaction. These findings point to an actionable area for improvement in care facilities that aim to retain skilled immigrant caregivers and ensure quality service.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

The study revealed several critical findings concerning the challenges and opportunities faced by Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan's adult care service sector. Drawing from survey data collected from 100 Myanmar caregivers across selected areas. Firstly, a significant portion of respondents, particularly younger and less experienced workers, reported frequent burnout and emotional stress. These conditions were strongly associated with long working hours, frequent overtime, poor supervisor support, and insufficient work-life balance. Physical health issues and job-related illnesses were more common among those working in unsafe environments and those lacking proper tools or equipment. Lack of supervisor support and poor workplace safety were also significant predictors of stress and dissatisfaction.

Then, high levels of motivation, clear career prospects, and perceived skill development were strong contributors to overall job satisfaction. Respondents who felt supported by supervisors and who had access to training and advancement opportunities reported higher satisfaction rates. Although many workers perceived significant skill development, only a subset felt they had access to future career opportunities. Legal and institutional barriers, including visa restrictions and employer control, were perceived as limitations to upward mobility.

In addition, supervisor support consistently emerged as a powerful buffer against burnout and stress, and a positive influence on job satisfaction, career growth, and retention. Excessive overtime, long shifts, and poor leisure time availability had a measurable negative impact on work-life balance. Burnout was almost nine times more likely among those who reported poor balance. While gender-related insights were limited due to the sample being overwhelmingly female (97.5%), the few male respondents reported similar patterns of stress and dissatisfaction, though statistical testing was not always feasible due to the small subgroup size.

Therefore, these findings point to clear areas for intervention, particularly in

improving workplace conditions, ensuring legal protections, and supporting career development for Myanmar caregivers in Japan's adult care sector.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the key findings from the survey, the required recommendations are proposed to address the challenges and enhance the contributions of Myanmar immigrant workers in Japan's adult care sector.

First, employers should provide structured training programs for supervisors to enhance intercultural communication and leadership skills. Creating a more supportive workplace culture will significantly reduce burnout, improve job satisfaction, and encourage retention. On the other hand, Labor regulators and care institutions should enforce strict guidelines on working hours and ensure compliance with labor laws. Limiting excessive overtime can help improve work-life balance and reduce physical and emotional strain.

Secondly, adequate tools and ergonomic equipment is essential to provide for delivering high-quality care while minimizing physical demands. This not only improves service quality but also prevents long-term health issues among caregivers. In addition, employers and policymakers should work together to provide more transparent pathways for skill advancement and long-term career mobility. This includes offering clear promotion criteria, training programs, and bridging opportunities from TITP to SSW or permanent residency.

From the aspect of workplace safety standards, facilities should conduct regular safety audits and provide training to ensure a safe working environment. Better safety conditions contribute directly to physical well-being and reduce work-related illnesses. Furthermore, institutions should consider integrating wellness initiatives, including access to recreational activities, mental health counseling, and flexible scheduling, especially for foreign workers who often lack social support networks.

Another suggestion is that recognizing language and cultural barriers by offering orientation programs, translation services, and peer mentorship specifically for Myanmar nationals. This fosters smoother integration into the workplace and Japanese society. Finally, Japanese immigration and labor authorities should review the constraints of visa systems like TITP, which often restrict career mobility. Introducing reforms that grant more autonomy and long-term security can empower foreign workers to contribute more fully to the sector.

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APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaire

Section 1: Background Information

1. What is your age?
 - Below 20
 - 20–29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50 and above
2. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Prefer not to say
3. How long have you been working in Japan's adult care service sector?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - More than 5 years
4. What is your highest educational background?
 - High School
 - Diploma / Certificate in caregiving
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Other (please specify)

Section 2: The Position and Its Activities

5. What is your current job title?
 - Caregiver
 - Nurse Assistant
 - Support staff
 - Other (please specify)

6. What are your main duties and responsibilities? (Select all that apply)
- Assisting with daily living activities (e.g., bathing, feeding, dressing)
 - Administering medications
 - Monitoring health conditions
 - Providing emotional support
 - Cleaning and housekeeping
 - Other (please specify)

Section 3: Work Hours

7. What are your typical working hours per day?
- Less than 6 hours
 - 6-8 hours
 - 9-12 hours
 - More than 12 hours
8. How often do you work overtime?
- Never
 - Rarely (1–2 times per month)
 - Sometimes (1–2 times per week)
 - Frequently (more than 3 times per week)

Section 4: Psychosocial Work Environment

9. How supportive is your supervisor or manager?
- Very supportive
 - Somewhat supportive
 - Neutral
 - Not supportive
10. Do you feel you have opportunities for career growth and development in your current position?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

Section 5: Physical Work Environment

11. How would you rate the safety of your physical work environment?

- Very safe
- Somewhat safe
- Neutral
- Unsafe

12. Do you have access to the necessary equipment and tools to perform your job effectively?

- Yes, always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- no

Section 6: Lifestyle

13. Do you have enough time for leisure activities outside of work?

- Yes
- No

14. How would you rate your work-life balance?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Section 7: Physical Capacity

15. Do you find the physical demands of your job manageable?

- Yes, always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- No

16. Have you experienced any physical injuries due to work?

- Yes
- No

Section 8: Perception of Quality in Services

17. How would you rate the quality of care services provided by your workplace?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

18. Do you feel your work contributes positively to the well-being of the residents?

- Yes, always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- No

19. How often do you work burnout and feel stressed at work? (e.g., exhaustion, lack of motivation)?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Always

20. What improvements do you think are needed in your workplace to enhance service quality?

- Better training
- Improved communication
- More staffing
- Better equipment
- Other (please specify)

Section 9: Employment Opportunities

21. How did you learn about job opportunities in Japan's adult care service sector?

- Recruitment agencies
- Government programs (e.g., TITP)
- Personal networks
- Other (please specify): _____

22. What motivated you to work in Japan's caregiving sector?
- Higher salary
 - Skills development
 - Career growth
 - Cultural exposure
 - Other (please specify): _____
23. Do you find the demand for caregivers in Japan promising for long-term employment?
- Yes
 - No

Section 10: Financial and Career Benefits

24. Are you satisfied with your salary and benefits in this sector?
- Yes
 - No
25. Do you believe the financial benefits provided by your job improve your quality of life?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
26. What future career opportunities do you think are possible after working in Japan?
- Career advancement in Japan
 - Opportunities in other countries
 - Starting a business back in Myanmar
 - Other (please specify): _____

Section 11: Personal Development and Experience

27. Do you believe the skills and knowledge you have gained will benefit your future career?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

28. How has working in Japan influenced your personal growth?

- Improved adaptability
- Increased cultural awareness
- Enhanced communication skills
- Other (please specify): _____

29. Would you recommend Japan's caregiving sector to others in Myanmar?

- Yes
- No