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The Effects of Moving on Children: Implications for Social Support and Adaptation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of family social support on adaptation after a residential move using a qualitative approach. The participants were 22 university students (Age $M = 20.82$, $SD = 1.30$) who had experienced a residential move during their compulsory education period. Additionally, this study considered both domestic and overseas moves. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, with the recordings being transcribed verbatim and the scripts being organized using the KJ Method. The relationships between categories and subcategories created with the KJ Method were arranged into a diagram. As a result, three family factors that hampered adaptation after a residential move were explicated, such as being bullied, having a dual-career, and parental condition. Furthermore, the results of this study suggested that family coherence did not necessarily support adaptation to a new residence, especially in cases where an overseas mover returned to Japan. In contrast, for domestic movers, not just the individual but also their family members were less likely to take the situation as an experience of loss. Since domestic moves had a low sense of loss, one was less likely to ask for support, yet obtained support from their surroundings.

Keywords: residential mobility, social support, family, adaptation, university student

Introduction

Nowadays, residential mobility in Japanese society is growing (Tsukamoto, 1990). According to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2013), compared to research done in 2006, in 2007, the rate of people moving to different prefectures and across the country increased.

Most adults move based on their own free will,

while many children have no choice other than to accompany adults (Kawakami, 2010). People do not have any acquaintances other than their family in their new homes. Under such circumstances, the presence of household will become a significant influence on child's mental health (Tsukamoto, 1987). However, little research has been done on how moving relates to family processes (Anderson, Leventhal, & Dupéré, 2014). Thus, the present study will focus on the effect of family social support on adaptations after residential moves.

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Defining Residential Move

This study is concerned with childhood residen-

tial moves, which are initiated by parents, and the move when the individual adapts to an entirely new neighborhood or town, in comparison to the former place where they lived for an extended period. The study only examined residential moves in which children were forced to follow their family's decision. Since children from single parent families and stepfamilies are more likely to be influenced by living conditions and economic status than residential mobility itself (Astone & McLanahan, 1994), the present study ruled out such circumstances.

Residential Mobility

Psychological studies often discuss residential moves as residential mobility, especially in social psychology. Investigations addressing residential mobility often deal with an entire experience of changes in the environment, instead of a person's present characteristics (Takemura & Sato, 2012). Consequently, studies conducted from the perspective of clinical psychology are important for exploring the points of intervention for individuals suffering from difficulties. However, most of these studies focus on the outcomes of residential mobility. For example, childhood residential mobility puts adolescents at higher risk for smoking, consuming alcohol, and attempting suicide (Dong, Anda, Feliti, Williamson, Dube, Brown and Giles, 2005). Although various outcomes has been clarified in the prior study, in order to interfere and prevent the outcome, clarification of process of recovery to residential move out of context is necessary. Owing to this, the present study will focus on the process of recovery to residential move. Moreover, many of these investigations use the number of residential moves during childhood as their measurement (Oishi, Lun, & Sherman, 2007; Oishi & Schimmack, 2010), which indicates

the need for another measurement in future research (Takemura & Sato, 2012). Therefore, this study will exploratory obtain information on the changes in the vicinity of residential moves in order to consider them from different measurement other than number of moves.

In Japan, no studies deal with the psychological aspects of residential mobility (Maemura, 2011). Since the United States is a country comprised of many immigrants, there might be a difference in flexibility to the correspondence of people who change homes. Owing to this, we expect that Japanese culture is a factor; thus, the qualitative study should be conducted from the perspective of Japanese people. Consequently, it is critical to explore the psychological aspects of residential mobility in Japan.

Social Support: A Factor in Promoting Adaptation

The present study also considered residential moves from the perspective of objective loss in clinical psychology. According to Okonogi (1979), the objective loss is when someone experiences a loss of affection, yet depends on object by either through separation or death. Moreover, it can be classified into three classes such as 1) death of or separation from the object of affection and dependence, 2) separation from a comfortable environment, position, role, or hometown 3) loss of pride, ideas or possessions (Okonogi, 1979). Number 2 includes residential moves and was studied by Okonogi (1979), who indicated that changes in the environment due to the loss of a person with whom one has closely identified, the loss of an environment in which a person has unified itself and the loss of a person's role and style are necessary for adapting to the new environment. Furthermore, scholars have shown that social support positively affects the recovery of loss

(Lyons & Sullivan, 1998).

In Japan, the most accepted definition of social support is when a specific individual obtains various types of tangible/intangible support from another person that he or she had a relationship with at a particular moment in time (Minami, Inaba, & Ura, 1988). Wada (1987) classified the types of social support referring to the definition by Minami et al. (1988) (Katauke & Ohnuki, 2014). The categories were 1) emotional support (offering empathy, love, and trust), 2) companionship support (a sense of social belonging), 3) information support (understanding the problem and providing advice), 4) appraisal support (offering information that shows one feeling accepted and respected), 5) instrumental support (providing maternal goods, services, and financial assistance). Several studies have been conducted to examine objective loss, however, little few have investigated the effects of social support during the experience of loss caused by residential move (Ikeuchi & Fujiwara, 2009). Additionally, Ikeuchi & Fujiwara (2009) indicated that the number of stages in the recovery process and the recovery length depended on the type of loss. Therefore, the recovery processes of residential move vary from other objective loss and social support as it relates residential moves needs to be further examined.

Family Functions and Residential Moves

Finally, when children feel unease, their families will usually provide support. If not, their neighborhood and friends will. However, when people move to a different, unfamiliar place, they only have the chance to gain support from family members. They have not yet established a social network in their new environment, so they cannot obtain mental support outside the home. Under such circumstances, supporting system

within their family will activate more than usual (Tokyo Gakugei University Center for Research in International Education, 1990). Additionally, Tsukamoto (1987) indicates that family support will influence children's ability to adapt.

The Present Study

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of the family social support on adaptation after residential moves. Although various researches have been done, residential mobility is still new in Japan in the fields of psychology. This study will exploratory obtain information on the changes in the vicinity of residential moves in order to consider them from various angles. Consequently, an approach that could identify the essence of a little studied phenomenon in open-ended questions is the most suitable approach to his study such as qualitative approaches.

Method

Participants

Participants were 22 university students (Age $M=20.82$, $SD=1.30$). Seventeen (two men and fifteen women) had moved overseas and five (two men and three women) had moved within Japan. This study only focused on individuals who experienced residential move during their compulsory education. They all agreed to have their voices recorded during the interviews.

Fact Sheet

Used to elicit data on the participant's age, gender, family structure, age during the move, and location of the new home (see Table 1).

Procedure

The study was performed in the laboratory of the university in Tokyo and conducted from December 4, 2014 to December 23, 2014. Qualitative semi-

Table 1
Fact Sheet Data

ID	Age	Gender	Family Structure	Birth Region	Translation													
					1st Time		2nd Time		3rd Time		4th Time		5th Time		6th Time		7th Time	
					Destination	Age	Destination	Age	Destination	Age	Destination	Age	Destination	Age	Destination	Age		
A	21	F	P+YS	Japan	Japan	8												
B	22	F	P+YS	Japan	The West	3	Asia	5	The West	9	Japan	14						
C	22	F	P+OB	Japan	The West	10	Japan	14										
D	18	F	P	Japan	The West	10	The West	12	Japan	13								
E	22	F	P	Japan	Japan	0	Japan	4	Japan	8	Japan	8	Asia	13	Asia	16	Japan	19
F	21	F	P+YB	The West	Japan	5	Japan	9	Japan	11	Japan	13						
G	22	F	P+OB	Japan	The West	8	The West	11	Japan	14								
H	21	F	P+YB	Japan	Japan	3	Japan	6										
I	20	M	P+OB+OS	Japan	Japan	7	Japan	9										
J	21	F	P	Japan	Asia	14	Japan	15										
K	18	F	P+OB	Japan	Japan	5	Asia	8	Japan	14	Japan	18						
L	21	M	P+YS	Japan	Japan	7	Japan	18										
M	19	F	P+YS	Japan	Japan	0	Asia	1	Asia	6	The West	9	Japan	13	Japan	19		
N	19	F	P+YB	Japan	Japan	4	Japan	7	Japan	8	Japan	18						
O	21	F	P+OS	Japan	The West	6	The West	7	Japan	10								
P	21	F	P+YS	Japan	The West	9	Japan	11	The West	15	Japan	19						
Q	21	M	P	Japan	Japan	10	Japan	13	Japan	18								
R	22	M	P+2YS	Japan	The West	3	Japan	6	The West	8	Japan	9	The West	10	Japan	15		
S	22	F	P+YS	Japan	Japan	5	The West	9	Japan	12								
T	22	M	P+OS	Japan	Japan	4	Japan	6	Asia	8	Japan	11	Japan	13				
U	22	F	P+2YB	Japan	Japan	5	The West	7	Japan	10	Japan	11						
V	20	F	P+OB+OS	The West	Japan	3	Japan	4	Asia	8	Asia	10	Japan	11	Japan	18		

Note. P=Parents, OB=Older Brother, OS=Older Sister, YB=Younger Brother, YS=Younger Sister.

structured interview was conducted, and the primary question was about the changes that occurred due to having moved. Participants were also asked about their experience of moving, including their reasons, opinions, reactions, changes, difficulties, and correspondence with family (see Table 2). The questions were based on the work of Tsukamoto (1987) and Kusada & Okado (1993). Participants' consent to take part in the study and the permission

of recording was obtained before each interview, which lasted from 30 to 55 minutes. Participants were asked to answer the Fact sheet before the interviews began. Afterward, the recording was transcribed verbatim, and the script was organized using the KJ Method, which we did using four raters.

Ethical Consideration

The interviews (including the fact sheet) began after the participants signed the consent form, including the following information. Participants were notified that their participation was voluntary and they had the rights to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. They were informed that coding would protect the information obtained in the interview and nobody would be able to specify the individual.

Analysis

The KJ method (Kawakita, 1967) was used to organize the data. In order to systematize the

Table 2
Interview Questions

1	Tell me about your experience, including specific information such as how old you were and where you moved.
2	Why did you move?
3	When were you notified that you would move?
4	How long did it take you to adjust to the new place?
5	How was your new place compared to where you lived before?
6	Do you think your relationship with your family changed after you moved?
7	Did you develop new impressions of your family after you moved?
8	Did the number of activities your family does increase after you moved?
9	Did you gain more opportunities to ask for help from your family?
10	How did you cope when you felt stress and anxiety in the new place? Did your strategy change after you moved?
11	What kinds of emotional and personality changes did you experience after moving?
12	(If you have moved more than twice.) What kinds of emotional and personality changes did you experience after moving multiple times?
13	How would you be different if you had not moved?

enormous amount of information, the study viewed it from various angles, and organized it based on the participants' experiences using the KJ method. First, four raters extracted the phrases that seemed to indicate changes, and discussed whether the phrases indeed did so. After negotiating the data, 247 changes were identified, and we arranged them in a summary as small headlines. Then, those changes were organized into 10 categories and 57 subcategories with related meanings. The present study did not discriminate between moving overseas and within Japan for categorization.

Results

Ten categories were created such as “Emotions surrounding residential move,” “Emotional and personality changes,” “Effects on performance due to changes in the surroundings,” “Being an outsider” “Culture shock,” “Conditional changes in family members,” “The family’s impression of the changes,” “Conscious support,” “Friendship,” and “Improved relationships.” The definitions of each category are below.

Emotions surrounding residential move

The category signifies the emotions participants felt when they were notified that they would move. The subcategory “No realization before the move,” contains two classes. Some respondents could not understand that they would be moving since they were young; others could not imagine moving abroad due to lacking information. Participants who had moved more than once experienced similar emotions such as “Unsentimental feelings” and “Recognition change to moving.”

Emotional and personality changes

This category signifies the changes in one’s characteristics, depending on the residential move.

Note that seven out of fifteen subcategories were based on interviews with participants who had moved overseas. This category can be organized into two similar concepts. The first concept dealt with changes in personality. Ten subcategories under “emotional and personality changes” share such similar notions. Respondents’ personalities tended to change after they received support from their family members. For instance, one participant mentioned that her mother’s support helped her feel confident to live in the new environment. The second concept contained ideas such as diversity. Stereotypes respondents had were dispelled, and they became more open-minded.

Effects on performances due to the changes in surroundings

This category signifies the changes in participants’ ability and performance due to the change in environment. Moreover, there were particular aspects that only referred to moving overseas such as “Negative changes in schoolwork,” “Difficulty with English,” and “Achieve English skills.” Despite the language difficulties, participants tended to believe that moving overseas led to significant technical changes in themselves. Due to the aforementioned situation, some also felt anxiety upon returning to Japan. In contrast, the standardization of their language skills made sense in the context of moving within Japan.

Being an outsider

This category signifies participants’ self-perceptions as outsiders in their new environments, and contains two subcategories: “Being bullied” and “Seeming like one stood out” which resulted from participants moving overseas. Two participants had experienced bullying when they returned to Japan after having lived abroad, which seemed to occur since they seemed like they did not belong in

Japanese society. Consequently, both participants felt more confident living abroad more than in Japan, their native country.

Culture shock

This category refers to an experience of personal disorientation caused by differences between the old and new homes. Participants felt confident in their former homes and were adverse to their new ones. Despite feeling that the difference was similar, participants who felt a culture shock seemed to consider that they lived an alien existence in their new environment, instead of feeling odd in their new surroundings.

Conditional changes to family member

This category signifies the conditional changes of family members in the vicinity of the residential move. Notably, four out of six subcategories were extracted from interviews with respondents who had moved overseas. In addition, it seemed that respondents gained conscious support due to influence from a family member's condition.

The family's impressions of the changes

This category signifies the participant's impression of the family changed and contains two subcategories: "Sharing problems" and "Found new characteristics of my family," which were extracted from interviews with respondents who had moved overseas. Furthermore, there were both negative to positive and positive to negative changes in impressions under the subcategory "The family's impression increased."

Conscious support

This category signifies the perception that participants gained assistance from others when they felt frustration and anger caused either by dealing with a new environment or the reality of moving. The support contained in this category does not necessarily refer to support given intentionally.

Instead, it focuses on the perception that participants received assistance. Although both participants who had moved within Japan and overseas expressed their concerns to their parents, only those who had moved overseas had discussions with their families.

There were a few cases of others refusing or neglecting to support participants, which especially occurred when respondents were bullied. The present study detected two cases of bullying; in both cases, the respondents did not ask for support. Both cases occurred when the participants returned to Japan. One felt that sharing ideas with her family could exacerbate her current situation. The other respondent felt she could only speak out if her stay in the new area were temporary. If she knew that she would be moving eventually, then she said she would not have to worry about bothering her parents by causing trouble.

Friendship

This category signifies changes in friendship. The subcategory "Desire a friend who knows my life history" only applied to respondents who had lived overseas. Accordingly, those who had moved abroad tended to feel desolate about not having lifelong friends that knew almost everything about them. Several expressed the desire for an *osananajimi* (childhood friend). At the same time, conscious support from others seemed reciprocally related to the quality of friendship. For example, making friends with others who had similar experiences made them feel happy.

Improved relationships

This category refers to whether the participants' relationship with their families improved, depending on the residential move. The study found that the respondents' reciprocal relationships with their families changed. In particular, the more that the emotional distance between participants and

their family members lessened, the more their impressions of their family members changed. On the contrary, improved relationships were closely related to conscious support. When the emotional distance between respondents and their family members become closer, they could also gain greater support.

The relationship between categories and sub-categories were organized in the diagram (see Figure 1). As it was explained in the method section, the data was arranged based on the respondents' experiences in order to consider it from various angles. Therefore, the diagram and categories display data that does not individually signify both adaptation and social support. The features of adaptation and social support are included in each category. Figure 1 was organized based on the criteria of the relationships.

Discussion

The present study uses the qualitative method to investigate the effect of family social support on the participants' ability to adapt after moving. The changes due to moving were extracted in order to view the situation from various angles. The results supported the notion of association between childhood residential mobility, adaptation, and family social support. In order to observe the associations in detail among childhood residential mobility, adaptation, and family social support from various perspectives, this study begins by comparing the various types of support that participants gained with the classification by Wada (1989).

Comparing types of support

There are five functions of social support. This study compares the support that participants received from their family and others, including

neighbors and friends. To begin, this study compares support from the family with Wada (1989). Regarding emotional support, the subcategory "Received active support from family members" under the category "Conscious support" seems to apply to support involving empathy, love, and trust. For example, one participant was relieved that she was not just one suffering from language differences but also her mother. Participant felt closeness and reliability toward their families. For the category of companionship support, subcategories "Increased family travel" and "Family time" correspond. This changes mainly occurred due to the change in working hours. Although the amount of time spent with family might not be a direct source of support, increasing this factor may have relieved the respondents' uneasiness in an unfamiliar environment. An increase of family time had been used to break off the uneasiness. For informational support, the subcategory of "Received passive support from family members" seems to apply. This category refers to providing advice when respondents are experiencing difficulties. Gaining more opportunities to ask for help was one of the informational supports to participants. For appraisal support, "Conscious support" from the family members and "Improved relationship" seem to share a similar concept. For instance, the improvement of family relationship provided some information that one is an important member of the family. Lastly, for instrumental support, "Received passive support from family members" seems to share a similar idea. For example, support for assisting respondents with their homework in a foreign language signifies that support is being provided. Consequently, all five types of social support were found based on the support from family members.

Next, this study compares the support given

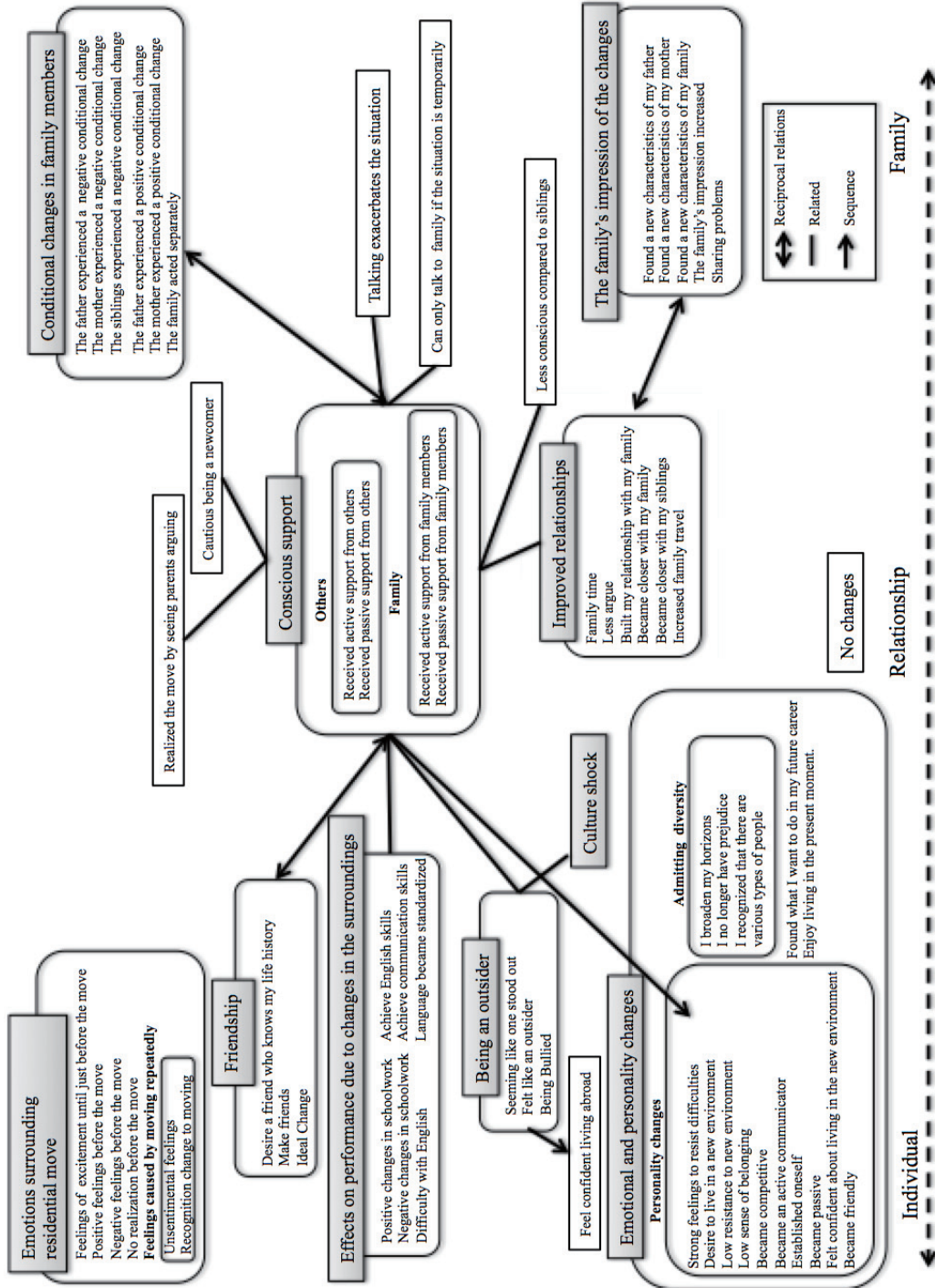


Figure 1 . Changes Occurred by Residential Mobility

non-family members. Emotional support seems to share common features with “Ideal change” in the category of “Friendship.” This study suggests that living far away from friends (due to moving) strengthened respondents’ feeling of connectedness. Moreover, “Conscious support from others” is supposed to relate to emotional support. In this category, respondents’ speech indicated that they felt comfortable around other Asians in their new environments. Accordingly, the participants felt comfortable living around others with a similar physical appearance.

The respondents did not indicate that they had companionship support. Since the present study restricted the definition of a residential move as a move to a completely new environment, family might have been the only kind of support to whom participants could reveal their unpleasant feelings. As reflected in “Desire for friend who knows my life history,” participants tended to not have any friends or others from whom they could gain companionship support. Informational support corresponds to “Received passive support from others.” The data for this category came from participants who had moved overseas; support from a classmate when participants were worried about schoolwork could be applied in this case. For appraisal support, it seems to share common features with “Received active support from others.” The fact that others accepted participants’ Japanese identity indicated appraisal support. Respect from others caused participants to feel proud, and this treatment became a type of support. Lastly, “Received passive support from others” corresponds to instrumental support.

Consequently, the data suggested that social support from one’s family plays a more significant role in protecting individuals from the stress caused by moving.

Family factors that delay adaptation after moving

The present study examined three family factors that delay adaptation after moving: being bullied, a dual career, and the parents’ condition.

Being bullied. Family was significant for the respondents, and support relieved their difficulties. However, as shown in the results, there was one exception. Two participants did not receive support when they were bullied. Moving from a foreign country back to Japan carries the risk of being bullied. In spite of the fact that both participants who were bullied had a great relationship with their families when they lived abroad, they did not ask for support in Japan when they had difficulties. The time they spent with their families decreased, yet according to them, there were reasons they could not ask for help. One did not want to trouble her parents, and the other could not ask for help since the situation was not temporary. Generally, most children who live abroad do so for a limited period; therefore, this idea might have led the participants to ask for more help. Moreover, since they did not move overseas of their volition, the situation might have caused them to become stressed.

Dual-career family. Two participants stated that their desire to return to Japan had never disappeared. Both participants had moved overseas and were members of dual-career families, meaning that both participants may not have received enough support from their parents. Since both parents were working, they might have had less time to spend with family members. This reveals the importance of social support for adapting to a new destination.

The parents’ conditions. Three participants stated the particular negative impression of their family. Two out of the three respondents said their mothers were unreliable; one participant expressed this feeling when his mother forgot to pick him up. The

other one felt this way when her mother became depressed due to her father's absence. Throughout such an experience, these two participants had to admit their mother's weakness. The last of the three participants also had an experience related to her mother. When she was informed that she would be moving, she experienced a difference in how she and her sibling were treated. Her mother was caring for her brother consciously; on the other hand, her mother did not worry about her at all. Consequently, when the mother's cognitive impression became negative, the mother's impression of moving may have also tended to change negatively. In other words, due to the participant's impression of her mother becoming negative, she might have felt she had to support her mother, instead of being supported. This may lead to a lack of social support.

Implication for clinical practice

As discussed above, the participants who had moved overseas experienced more difficulties. Since such children have no acquaintances other than their families in their new homes, the family's presence will greatly influence their mental health. In order to overcome difficulties, social support from family becomes critical. Due to moving, the family's coherence mostly intensified when the respondents moved abroad. In order to consider crisis interventions, it is important to consider how the participants' family functions either developed or contracted. If the children are having difficulties receiving support from their family, it is also important for schools to offer appropriate counseling.

When someone moves back to Japan, such as in a situation when the living environment becomes stable, there is the possibility of feeling trapped. Stability promotes a feeling of the need to settle down in the environment. Simultaneously, the

family's coherence generates feelings of stress. Aversively, such situations lead to hesitation. For example, a participant who was bullied could not ask for help because the situation was not temporary. Therefore, depending on the circumstances, there is a possibility that family coherence could lessen the participants' comfort level when they express themselves. This could be suggested as a pitfall of adaptation.

In contrast, there are fewer differences in those who moved within Japan. As mentioned above, moving overseas causes various kinds of stress; for instance, negative changes within the family, changes in impressions, dual careers, and a difference in the parents' reactions to siblings. Despite the lack of support in some cases, since the stress is enormous, family members tend to feel a greater need to work together. However, unlike moving overseas, when moving within the country, people might feel more hesitation to ask for support. Not only is the person less likely to see the situation as an experience of loss, but the family members might not either. Since moving within the country produces a low sense of loss, people are less likely to ask for support, yet obtain support from their surroundings. This low sense of loss might be overlooked as a possible cause of problems adapting. When considering the difficulties of adapting when moving within the country, such possibilities should be considered. Counseling may compensate for the damage caused moving. For future research, it is important to independently observe moves within Japan versus overseas. Furthermore, it will also be important to consider the degree of loss.

Limitations

The study had several limitations. The present study emphasized capturing the features of moving within a larger context, and did not separate moving

within the country from moving abroad. Since the study mainly focused on the effect of family social support on adaptation using a bottom-up perspective, it was difficult to categorize the evidence in detail. Moreover, information on some demographic characteristics that were associated with residential mobility, such as parents' occupations language, and the type of school were not measured. For future research, it will be important to conduct the study considering such backgrounds. Lastly, the present study did not clarify the concrete period when the interviewer asked about the changes after moving. Instead of using a specific time period, the study used "at that time" as an expression. Therefore, the explanation was ambiguous for participants.

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引越しが子どもに与える影響 —ソーシャル・サポートと適応の関連—

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要約

本研究の目的は、家族のソーシャル・サポートが引越し後の適応に与える影響の質的検討である。親の都合による随伴移動を余儀なくされた引越し経験を義務教育期間に経験した大学生 22 名 (Age $M=20.82$, $SD=1.30$) を対象に半構造化面接を行った。また、本研究では国内移動と国外移動の両方を検討した。面接対象者の了承を得て録音した後、逐語から得た語りを KJ 法により 1 枚の図解に整理した。その結果、適応を阻害する家族に関する要因としていじめ、共働き、親の状態が示唆された。加えて、特に国外引越しを経験したものにとって家族の凝集性が必ずしも適応を促進する要因にはならないことが見受けられた。一方、国内移動者は本人だけでなく家族構成員も引越しを喪失と捉えている程度が低く、サポートを求めることも与えられることも低くなることが示唆された。

キーワード：居住地流動性、ソーシャル・サポート、家族、適応、大学生

