

Stress and Stress Management in Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer Teachers

by

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Abstract

Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) is a Japanese official volunteer program. Under this program, I was dispatched to a primary school in Mozambique for two years as a P.E. teacher. During the two years I faced many kinds of stress and tried to manage them. My experiences motivated me to conduct this research.

This study aimed to explore the causes and management of stress by JOCV teachers. Previous research found that the major causes of stress of JOCV members were lack of language skills, cultural differences, and health problems. However, that research did not specifically address JOCV members who work as teachers in schools.

In this research using a questionnaire, data was collected from twenty-one JOCV teachers, who were dispatched to developing countries for about two years. The items of the questionnaire are about the details of their activities, kinds of stress they faced, and the ways they managed stress.

This research found that the major causes of stress among JOCV teachers were lack of language skills. Furthermore, experienced teachers faced stress due to gap of teaching, and learning environment between Japan and their host countries, inexperienced teachers faced stress due to human relationships. Moreover, this research found that there were five main types of stress management used.

The findings of this research suggest that before being dispatched it is important for JOCV teachers to be aware of the stress that they may face in developing countries and to prepare for it.

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1 Introduction

I have one experience with JOCVs. It stands for Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. It is sent by one Japanese official organization which is called JICA, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA, n.d). Then I was dispatched to Mozambique, which is located in the south of Africa (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Location of Mozambique



Capital city, Maputo

I stayed there from 2012 on June 24 to 2014 on June 23. I worked as a JOCV teacher at an elementary school located in Maputo, capital city of Mozambique (Figure 1) and taught P.E. (Physical Education). There I had to speak Portuguese and local language a little bit to communicate with the teachers, the students and other local people. I had a good time because I could enjoy life in Mozambique with the students and the local teachers. However, it was not easy for me to do lessons because I had never experienced teaching that subject in Japan. Moreover, I took time to get used to living there.

During my stay in Mozambique, I faced various types of stressful events, for example lack of language skills, gaps between job description and actual work, and comparison with a previous volunteer.

I wanted to communicate with the local people, but I could not understand what they said, and it was really difficult to do lessons because of lack of language skills and never learning specific language of P.E., such as line up, stick your arms, sit down on the ground, and other words. The JOCVs have two months of pre-departure training, and had language lessons more than 200 hours. However, I could not understand even “Hello”, “What is your name?” and “How are you?” because leaning language in the training and actual language are not the same and different pronunciations. It took a long time to get used to speaking Portuguese in Mozambique.

The job description mentioned supporting local teachers to improve P.E., and organizing materials. In fact the actual work was not support because I had to do lessons by myself. As already mentioned I had never taught P.E. in Japan, and never seen P.E in Mozambique, so it gave me huge stress.

Moreover, the local teachers compared me and previous volunteer who taught music. She also had no experience of teaching in Japanese school, but she had enough skills to teach to the students in Mozambique. On the other hand, I had not enough teaching skills. Then the local teachers compared me and the previous volunteer about our skills. They often said “Why don’t you teach music like her. She taught well and students loved it. So you should teach Music rather than P.E.” to me. They also asked “Why do you not have enough teaching skills like her?”.

In addition, the local teachers and other people compared the end of her work, and beginning of my working. For example, they compared language skills. The local teachers said “She could speak Portuguese well, and used local language little bit in her lessons, but why can’t you speak like her?” The beginning of teaching at that school, could not explain well how differences between me and the previous volunteer. Such the events made me stress.

Then I wondered if teachers also have stress like me, and how do they manage stresses. Such experience motivated me to conduct this research.

Therefore, this research will discuss causes of stress for JOCV teachers, differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in the most stressful events, and how to deal with stress. Moreover, this study will mention suggestions for JICA and JOCVs to protect the volunteers from stresses. Findings of this research may be useful to plan pre-departure training for JOCVs, and the volunteers may prepare for stresses which seem to face in their host countries. The findings also are likely to support the JOCV teachers in how to deal with stress, when facing to stress in their dispatched countries.

This research is presented with six chapters. The first chapter has already mentioned about the author’s experiences in Mozambique as a JOCV teacher. Other chapters are literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion. The second chapter will show what are JOCVs and JOCV teachers, previous research which studies Japanese peoples’ stress in overseas’ situations, JOCVs’ stress and JOCV teachers’ stress. The chapter also includes the author’s three research questions.

The third chapter will examine instruments especially the contents of questionnaire. Attributes of research participants and ethical consideration are also included.

The fourth and the fifth chapters will show findings of this research in mainly three parts such as causes of stress for JOCV teachers, comparison between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in the most stressful events as a teachers, and approaches to manage stress.

The last chapter will summarize limitations, policy implication and further studies.

2 Literature Review

This chapter has five sections. The first section introduces what JOCVs are. The second introduces what are JOCV teachers. The third section shows definition of stress. The fourth section discusses previous research, and the final section presents research questions.

2.1 JOCVs

This section will explain JOCVs. It stands for Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, and it is operated by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). This program started in 1965, and about 40,000 volunteers have been dispatched to about 87 developing countries (JICA volunteers, 2015). Figure 2 shows the dispatched regions of JOCVs. The majority of the dispatched regions are Africa, America, and Latin America.

Figure 2: Dispatched Regions of JOCVs

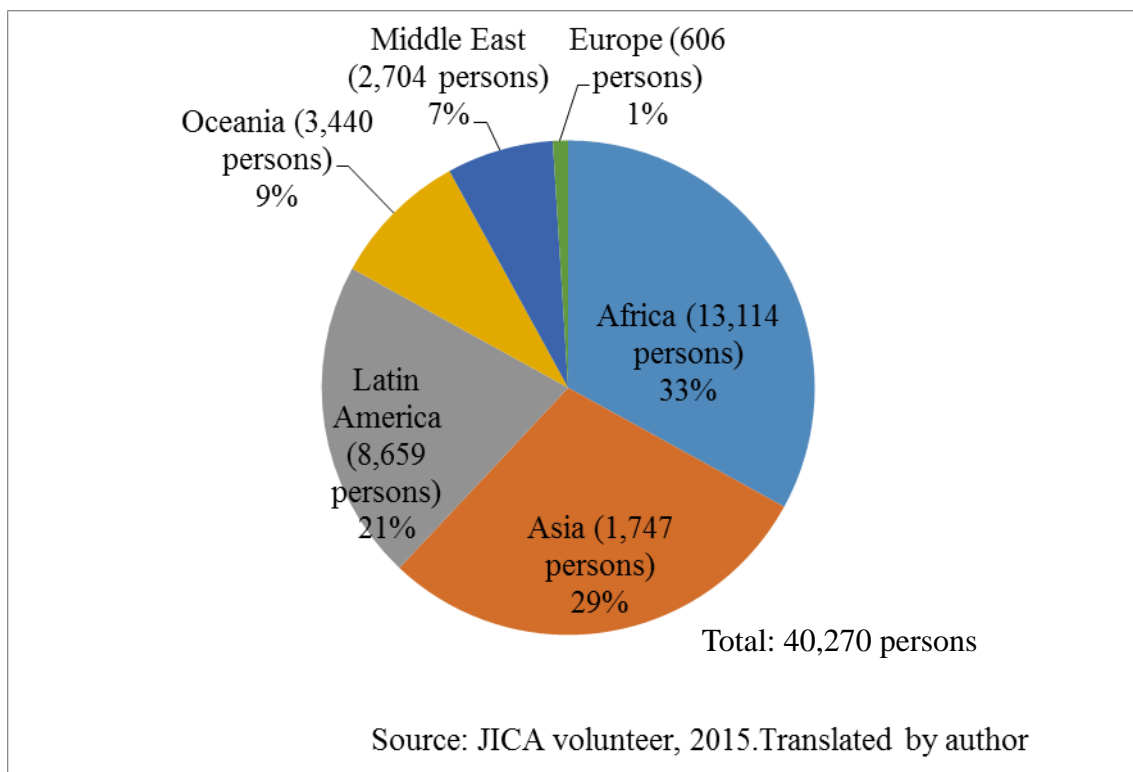
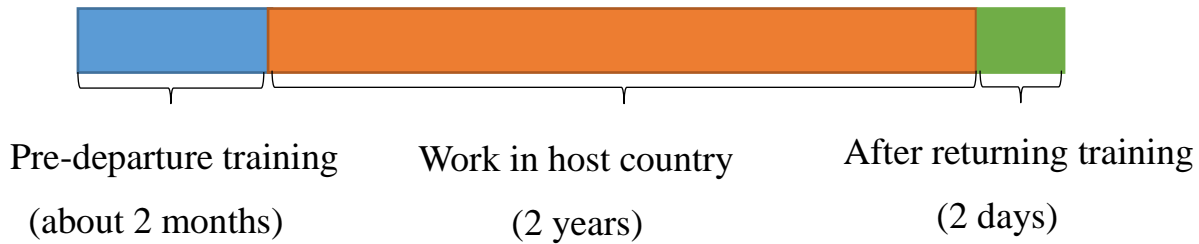


Figure 3 shows the schedule of JOCVs' program. They are dispatched to their host countries for two years. Before that, JOCVs have pre-departure training for about two months. After returning to Japan, they also have two days seminars.

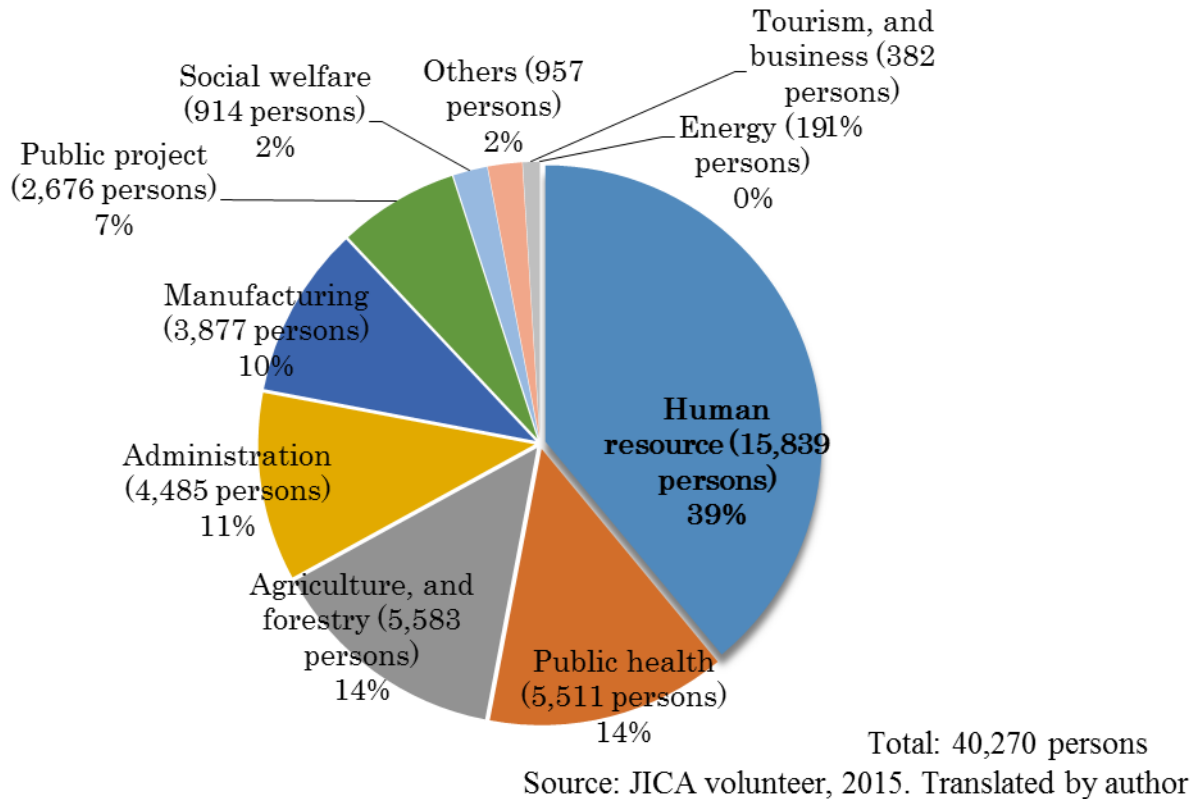
Figure 3: Schedule of JOCVs



During the pre-departure training they learn language, culture, and history of their dispatched countries; moreover, they have lectures on safety measures, principles of international cooperation, health management and so on (JICA, n.d).

The training includes one lecture on stress management, and depression (JICA Borantia Zigyouno Nagare, 2015).

JOVCs have various technical fields such as human resources, public health, agriculture and forestry, administration, manufacturing, public project, social welfare, tourism and business, and energy (See Figure 4) (JICA Volunteer, 2015). This research's participants are included in the field of human resources.

Figure 4: Technical Fields of JOCVs

2.2 JOCV Teachers

This research refers to two types of JOCV teachers: inexperienced teachers and experienced teachers. Inexperienced teachers do not have teaching experiences in Japanese schools like the author. They follow the JOCV program of two months pre-departure training and stay in their host countries for two years.

Meanwhile, experienced teachers have teaching experiences in Japanese schools. Most of them participate under the Special Participation Program for In-Service Teachers operated by Ministry of Education. The program has two objectives. Objective one is to contribute to education and social development in their dispatched countries, and objective two is for the teachers to make use of their experiences in Japanese schools after returning to Japan.

That program has started since 2002, and over 800 teachers have been dispatched to the developing countries for one year and nine months. Under the program the teachers can maintain their positions in Japan (Monbukagakusyo & JICA, 2013., Ministry of foreign affairs of Japan, 2013 & 2009., Ono, Maeda, & Nakamura, 2013., Ono, Maeda, & Nakaura, 2014., Saitou, 2007., Isoda, Ohara, & Miyagawa, 2004., & Safuji, & JICA, 2009).

2.3 Definition of Stress

There are many definitions of stress, but this research uses a definition, which is widely used in dictionaries. Stress is defined as “great worry caused by a difficult situation, or something which causes this condition (Procter, 1995).”

2.4 Previous Research

Here, mainly three kinds of studies are reviewed: studies on Japanese people’s stress in overseas’ situations, studies on JOCVs’ stress, and studies on JOCV teachers’ stress.

2.4.1 Studies on Japanese People’s Stress in Overseas’ Situations

There are many studies about Japanese people’s stress in overseas’ situation. However, this research will describe two examples, such as Japanese students in foreign countries and expatriates who work in other countries.

Muramatsu & Harmer (2005) researched 124 university students who participated in a one-year study abroad program in the USA. They studied only Japanese students, who were taught by native English speaking teachers. However, half of the students joined classes with local students’ classes.

The study used a questionnaire, asked for information about changes in characteristics such as weight, physical condition, sleep and exercise habit, and stress management. The results of the questionnaire by Muramatsu & Harmer (2005) found that the stress caused by food related to the

students' weight. For example most of the students recognized that the meals were larger there than is typical in Japan. Moreover, the study mentioned the students' physical conditions were related to too much homework or not enough time to sleep. They felt stress because of too many assignments or lack of sleeping time.

Moreover, other research found the Japanese students overseas have stress because of other causes. Nagoya University (2009) said they might face stress because of lack of language skills, lack of communication skills and culture differences. Therefore, they should know how to manage stress, and each of them has different ways of management. For example, some students reduce stress by listening to music, talking and sharing with other students, and enjoying sports.

From the previous studies, this paper found that the causes of stress for Japanese students in foreign countries are different food culture, lack of sleeping, too many assignments, lack of language skills, and lack of communication skills. Moreover, stress management was carried out by listening to music, talking with other students, and enjoying sports.

Next, this paper will show examples of the study on stress of expatriates who work in other countries. Kuribayashi, Saitou & Suzuki (2006) studied how Japanese expatriates were affected by stress. It asked 718 Japanese workers in three countries and found the causes of stress are overwork, public health, climate, relationships with other Japanese workers in dispatched countries, relationships with local workers, and lack of entertainment. It also found the causes of stress are different between beginning and end of the stay in the countries. At the beginning of the stay in the countries, they face stress because of the relationships with Japanese worker, and at the end of the stay they feel stress due to the relationships with local workers.

The expatriates face stress for many reasons. According to Kuribayashi (1995) they face stress because of working duties, relationships with local workers and other Japanese worker in dispatched countries, worrying about returning to Japan, and different culture.

The study also mentioned how to manage stress. The Japanese workers overseas should have good connection with their friends in Japan because they can consult with the friends to reduce their stress. Other way is that they should not think about their job deeply, and understand

that Japan and the dispatched countries are not the same (Kuribayashi, 1995).

This project found the expatriates face stress because of overwork, public health, relationships with local workers and Japanese workers, lack of entertainment, and worrying about returning to Japan from Kuribayashi, Saitou & Suzuki (2006) and Kuribayashi (1995). Moreover, it found it is important for them to understand that Japan and the dispatched countries are not the same.

2.4.2 Studies on JOCVs' Stress

While there are many studies on Japanese people's stress in overseas' situations, there are few studies on JOCV's stress. Katou, Doe, Tutui, & Makino (2004) researched job stress among JOCVs. The study asked all volunteers, 1084 people who stayed in 67 developing counties in 2003. This study used a questionnaire and found the JOCVs face various causes of stress. "The factors significantly associated with psychological stress were high job demand, poor human relationships at work, low job suitability, low social support from supervisors and colleagues, and being dissatisfied with their life" (Katou, Doi, Tutui, & Makino, 2004, p.200).

In another study on JOCVs' stress, Takahashi, Naruto, Matuoka & Seki (1999) defined major causes and minor causes (See Figure 5). The researchers asked 162 volunteers who were dispatched to developing countries and returned to Japan in 1989. It used a questionnaire and distributed to male JOCV teachers. The contents of the questionnaire were about life, health, stress and stress management in their host countries and after returning to Japan. Then the study found that the major causes and minor cause of stress.

Figure 5: Major Causes and Minor Causes of Stress

| Major causes | Minor causes |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of language skills • Relationships with local people • Relationships with Japanese in host countries <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Human relationships</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and weather • Life style • Worrying about health • Worrying about returning to Japan • Worrying about their family in Japan |

Figure 5 mentioned the lists of major causes and minor causes of stress defined by Takahashi and others (1999). The major causes are related to human relationships such as lack of language skills, relationships with local people and Japanese in host countries. Particularly, lack of language skills is main cause. The study also described that the causes which are related to human relationships are higher than other causes which are minor causes such as climate and weather, life style, and worrying about health and returning to Japan, and their family in Japan.

From the studies this research found the causes of stress are work duties, lack of support from colleagues, lack of language skills, climate and others. Moreover, the JOCVs have stress related to human relationships including lack of language skills, and relationships with local people. These were more stressful than other causes such as climate and weather, life style, worrying about health and others. The most important thing is that the study mentioned about lack of language skills as the major cause of stress for JOCVs.

2.4.3 Studies on JOCV Teachers' Stress

There are many studies about JOCV teachers (Monbukagakusyo & JICA, 2013; Ministry of foreign affairs of Japan, 2013 & 2009; Ono, Maeda, & Nakamura, 2013, 2014; Saitou, 2007; Isoda, Ohara, & Miyagawa, 2004; Safuji, & JICA, 2009).

As far as limited of researches, studies on JOCV teachers' stress unlikely conducted. However, there are relevant studies which concern problems faced by JOCV teachers. One of them is Takahashi & Nakamura (2006)' study. They examined monthly reports of JOCV teachers. They looked at 118 volunteers who worked as science or mathematics teachers, or as elementary school teachers. They were sent to their host countries in 1999 and 2000. The research was analyzed from the volunteers' monthly report. The researchers categorized four key words which related to various problems and then they categorized the problems into four categories such as language, forms of activities, targets of activities, and matching. Then this research indicated that most of the research participants faced problems because of lack of language skills, working duties, local teachers' attitudes toward work, and relationships with the local people.

Another study is how their teaching experiences in Japan affected their teaching in their dispatched countries, and how they felt stress (Isoda, Ohara & Miyagawa, 2004). The study collected questionnaires from 87 volunteers about the situation in their dispatched countries, how their teaching experiences affected their work in developing countries, and what their problems were when they taught there. Moreover, the questionnaire included a question about how to deal with the problems. Then the study mentioned that the lack of equipment was one of the problems the teachers tried to correct in their dispatched countries. It also described their skills. Fifty-nine percent of the research participants faced the problems because of lack of language skills. Then 45% of them tried to solve the problems by themselves.

Although these studies examine problems of JOCV teachers, they do not directly focus on stress of JOCV teachers. This research attends to fill in this missing point of these previous studies. This leads to three research questions below.

2.5 Research Questions

This research has three research questions:

- 1 What are the causes of stress for JOCV teachers?
- 2 What are the differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in the causes of stress?
- 3 How do JOCV teachers manage stress?

In sum, this chapter mentioned what are JOCVs. This research conducted two types of JOCV teachers which are experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers. In addition, this chapter mentioned the definition of stress, and three areas of previous studies were reviewed; studies on Japanese people's stress in overseas, JOCVs' stress and JOCV teachers' stress.

3 Methodology

This chapter has three sections. The first section discusses instrument of this research. The second section explains research participants, and the last section mentions about ethical considerations.

3.1 Instrument

This research used a questionnaire (See Appendix 1), and distributed by message of Facebook. The questionnaire has four sections. The first one is about attributes including participants' host countries, working requests and duties, language in pre-departure training and in the host counties, and teaching experiences in Japan.

The second one is about causes of stress. There are many causes, but the author chose 26 causes from the previous research and the author's experience. The questionnaire does not show categories, but the author put the 26 causes into six categories of culture, health, relationships with others, work in host countries, and worrying about work after returning to Japan. Then the respondents answered how much they felt stress from no stress, minor stress, and major stress.

The third section is about the most stressful event as a teacher in their dispatched countries and how to manage it. The responded answered with free comments. The last question is suggestions about stress management to JICA and individual JOCVs, and the respondents also answered with free comments.

3.2 Research Participants

This paper will describe the research participants. The author asked 53 JOCV teachers who were dispatched in the same group as the author. Then 21 of them responded. They are 10 inexperienced teachers, and 11 experienced teachers. Table 1 shows attribute of research participants. Inexperienced teachers do not have teaching experiences. Three experienced teachers have one to five years of teaching experiences in Japanese schools, five experienced teachers have six to ten years, and three teachers have over 10 years teaching experiences.

Table 1: Attributes of Research Participants

| Participants | Dispatched Region | Teaching Experience in Japanese Schools (years) | Types of Volunteer Work in Host Countries |
|--------------|-------------------|---|---|
| A | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| B | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| C | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| D | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| E | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| F | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| J | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| H | Africa | 0 | Elementary School Teacher |
| I | Africa | 0 | Youth Activity |
| J | Africa | 0 | Science and Math Teacher |
| K | Oceania | 8 | Elementary School Teacher |
| L | Asia | 6 | Elementary School Teacher |
| M | Asia | 6 | Elementary School Teacher |
| N | Asia | 8 | Elementary School Teacher |
| O | Asia | 5 | Science and Math Teacher |
| P | Africa | 7 | Science and Math Teacher |
| Q | Africa | 11 | Youth Activity |
| R | Africa | 14 | Elementary School Teacher |
| S | Africa | 4 | Science and Math Teacher |
| T | Africa | 4 | Science and Math Teacher |
| U | Africa | 11 | Science and Math Teacher |

The 21 JOCV teachers were dispatched to three regions. Figure 6 shows their dispatched regions. 16 teachers were dispatched to Africa, four teachers were dispatched to Asia, and one teacher was sent to Oceania.

Figure 6: Dispatched Regions of Research Participants



3.3 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration was made in this research. For example, the author cared about informed consent. The author informed the respondents about purpose of this research, and using data only for this research. Moreover, to keep their privacy, this research paper does not show participants' names, sex, dispatched countries, working duties in their host country, or teaching experience in Japan.

To conclusion conclude, this section included discussed about three sections. The first section explained the instrument of this research, and used the questionnaire. The second section described research participants, JOCV teachers who were dispatched with the author. Then 21 teachers participated with this research. Finally, this section showed ethnical consideration especially cared about informed consent.

4 Findings

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents the causes of stress for 21 JOCV teachers. The second shows a comparison of the causes between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in the causes of stress. The third section describes approaches to manage stress

4.1 Main causes

This research found that lack of language skills is the major causes of stress. Figure 7 shows how much the research participants felt. Blue shows no stress, orange shows minor stress, and gray shows major stress. When major stress is paid attention lack of language skills is the largest number among 26 causes of stresses then 13 teachers felt major stress due to lack of language skills. This is followed by home environment (6 respondents), food culture (4 respondents), and relationships with other JOCV members (4 respondents). Moreover, when minor stress is included, lack of language skills is the largest number (18 respondents). This is followed by attitude toward work of colleague (17 teachers), punctuality of time (15 people), and environment of house (14 teachers).

There are some causes of stresses. The relationships with their family in Japan are the smallest number. Twenty respondents did not feel stress due to relationships with their family in Japan. This is followed by transfer not accompanied by family (19 teachers), relationships with Japanese colleague or boss (18 teachers), and clothing (18 teachers).

Figure 7: Causes of Stress

(N=21)

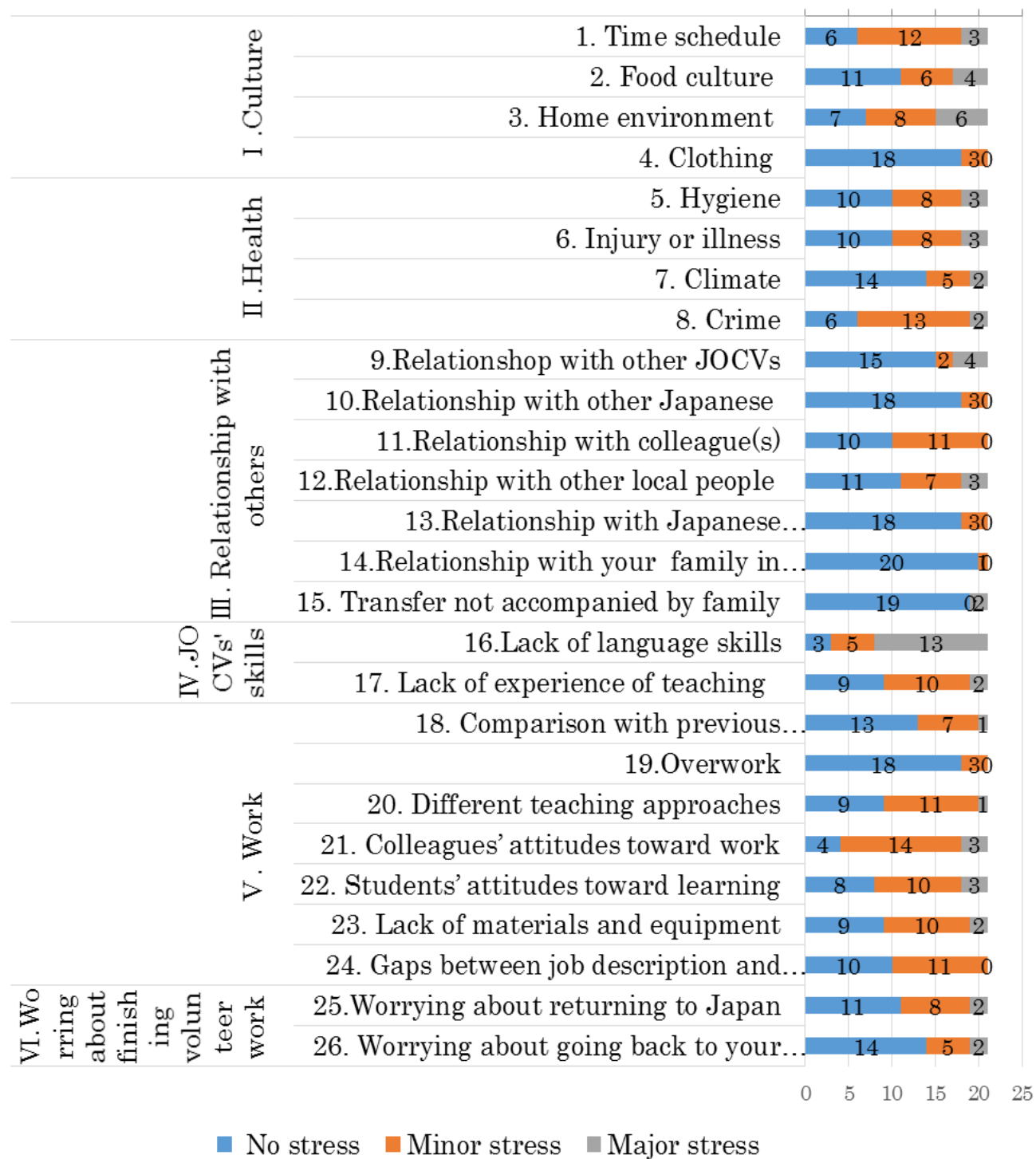


Figure 8: Comparison between Experienced Teachers and Inexperienced Teachers in Causes of Stress

(Upper bar indicates 11 experienced teachers, and lower bar indicates 10 inexperienced teachers.)

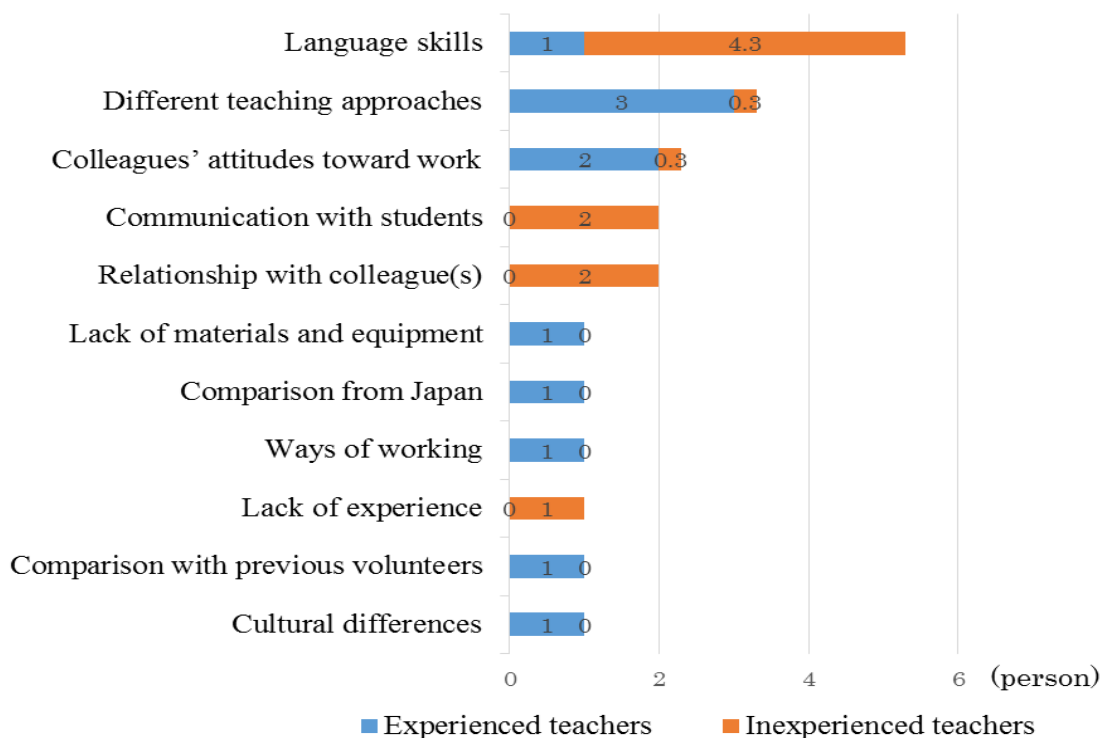


4.2 Differences between Experienced Teachers and Inexperienced Teachers in the Most Stressful Events

This research could not find big differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in the 26 causes of stress. Figure 8 shows comparison between 11 experienced teachers and 10 inexperienced teachers in the causes of stress, and there were not so big differences. However, this research could find there are some differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in the most stressful event as a teacher.

The author categorized the 21 teachers and their most stressful events. Figure 9 shows 11 categories of stressful events such as language skills, different teaching approaches, colleagues' attitudes toward work and others. Those categories evolved from research data. Blue lines show experienced teachers, and orange shows inexperienced teachers.

Figure 9: Comparison between Experienced Teachers and Inexperienced Teachers in Most Stressful Events as a Teacher



Note: When one respondent described 3 events, each event is counted as 0.3 person

Experienced teachers face stress because of the differences of teaching, and learning environment between their host countries and Japan such as different teaching approaches, colleagues' attitudes toward of work, lack of materials and equipment, comparison from Japan and so on. Different teaching approaches are the major cause, and three experienced teachers mentioned it.

“The local teachers did not use any materials in Math, but I used to teach Math with showing materials, so I did not have ideas how to teach Math without any materials.” (Teacher L)

“In the host school, the teachers used punishment when students did bad things, but I could not understand the punishment and ways of scolding.” (Teacher S)

“In my host school, it was more important to process than understanding. Therefore, the teachers and students did not understand the topics. It was important to copy from black board more than thinking.” (Teacher E)

While experienced teachers faced stress because of the differences of teaching, inexperienced teachers had stress because of human relationships including language skills, communication with students, and relationships with colleagues. The language skills is the major stress for inexperienced teachers; five people described it.

“I could not communicate well with the students because of poor language skills I could not teach my subject. (Teacher B)

“(this country) National examine is English, but I had to speak the local language in classes.” (Teacher D)

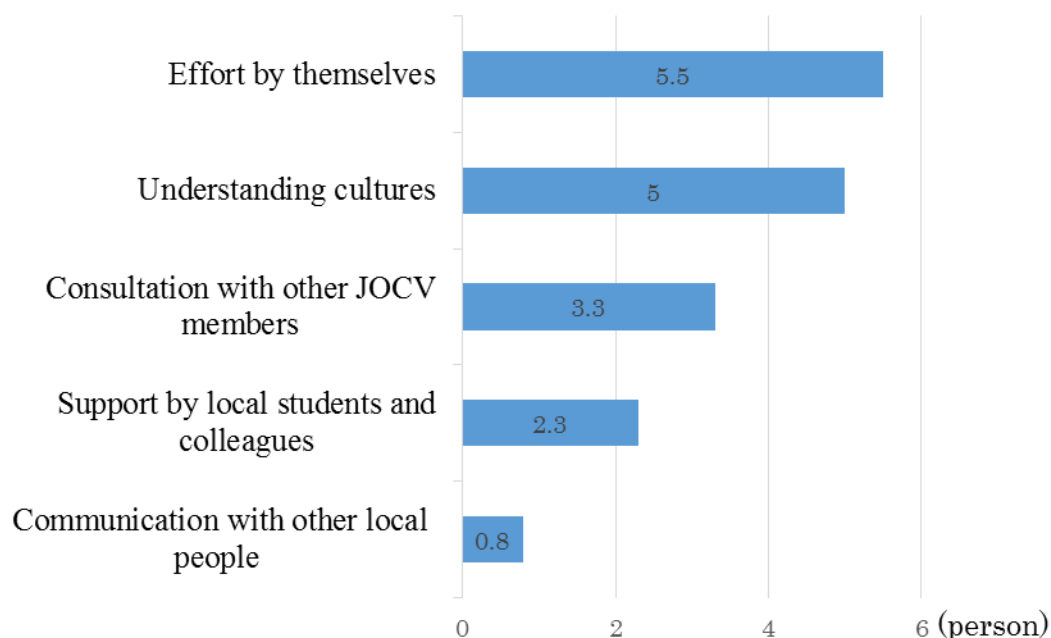
“I could not communicate with local people in English; therefore, I felt the languages skills were the biggest stress for me.” (Teacher F)

4.3 Five Types of Stress Management

This section shows how the 21 JOCV teachers managed their stress of the most stressful events as a teacher. The author divided their approaches into five categories: effort by themselves, understand cultures, consultation with other JOCV members, supported by local students and colleagues, and communication with other local people (See Figure 10).

Figure 10: How to Manage Stress

(N=17)



Note: When one respondent described 2 or 3 events, each event is counted as 0.5 or 0.3 person

Figure 10 shows five types of stress management: effort by themselves, understanding culture, consultation with other JOCV members, and other ways of managements. Six respondents described they deal with stress by effort by themselves. Here, they described about examples.

“(I could not speak local language very well) I studied the local language to communicate with my students.” (Teacher C)

“I spent most of time to improve language skills in my house; especially I studied speaking and listening. Also I made memos which I use in class, then practice a lot.”

(Teacher F)

“I did not have enough teaching skills, so I researched ways of teaching many times in my house and I tried to take actions to improve my teaching skills.”

(Teacher H)

The second type examined understanding culture of their host countries.

“I tried to understand my host country’s culture and habit. Then I could understand Japan and my host country are not the same.” (Teacher N)

“I could not understand why the local teachers punished the students, but I tried to understand it is the host country’s culture.” (Teacher R)

As seen in Figure 10, 3.3 respondents managed their stress by consultation with other JOCV members. In other word the other JOCV members supported well the JOCV teachers when they had stresses.

“I did not have any ideas what should I do in my host school, so I asked other JOCV members to give me some advice and examples.” (Teacher Q)

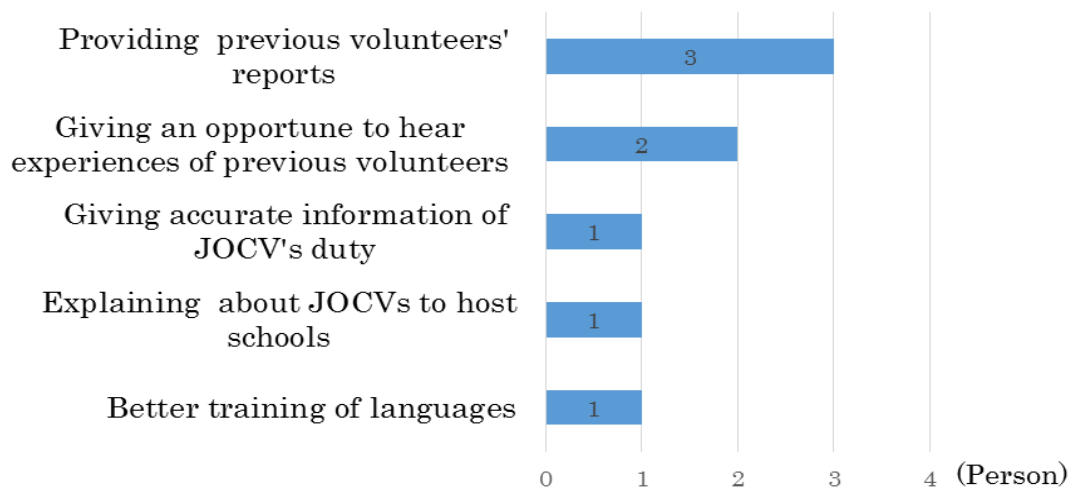
“I did not have enough teaching experience, so I asked other JOCV teachers who have many experiences of teaching.” (Teacher B)

Moreover, this research found the JOCV teachers do not depend on JICA. According Figure 10, nobody described about JICA. They only mentioned stress management which related to themselves or depend on other JOCV members or local people.

This research also found there are other ways to deal with stress. 20 JOCV teachers described some suggestions for JICA and JOCVs to protect from stresses. Figure 4 shows suggestions for JICA, and Figure 10 mentioned suggestions for JOCVs. The author categorized their suggestions to JICA (See Figure 11) and JOCVs (See Figure 12).

Figure 11: Suggestions to JICA

(N=8)



As seen in Figure 11, eight respondents described some suggestions to JICA. Three teachers recommend that JICA should show over reports of previous volunteers' reports to new volunteers. This is the biggest number among the suggestions for JICA followed by give opportunity to hear experiences of previous volunteers, give clear information of working in host school, and explain to host school about JOCVs, and better training of language.

“JICA should collect experiences of previous JOCV members, and show real situations of host countries to new volunteers in training before being dispatched in Japan.” (Teacher D)

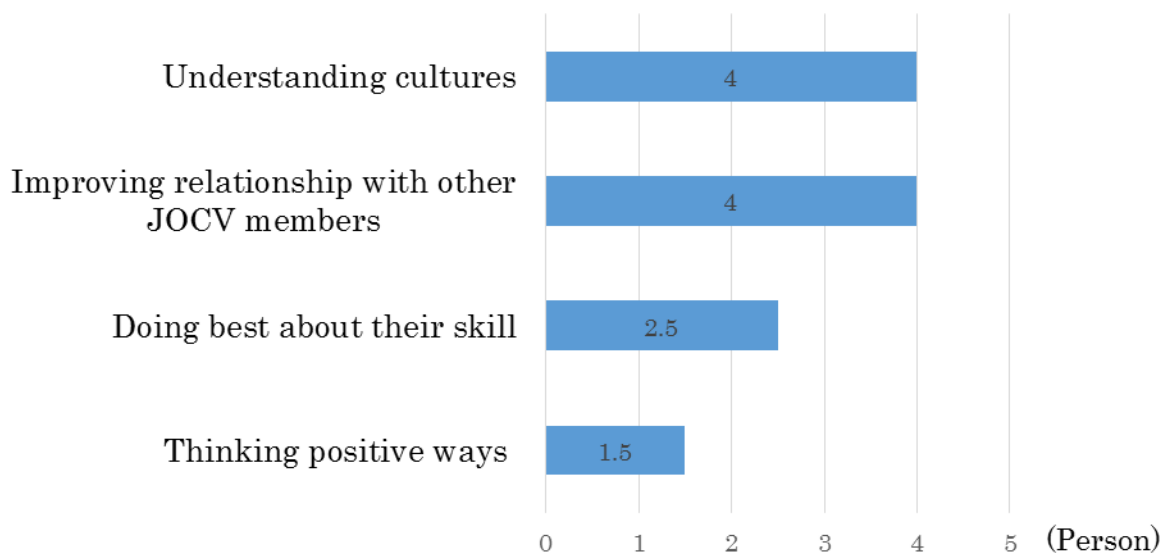
“JICA should contact again with host school before being dispatched to host countries, because sometime job description and real working are not the same.” (Teacher S)

“JOCVs should learn language which they will use in host school (more than national languages).” (Teacher P)

This research found there are five suggestions to JICA to protect from stress, and the suggestions may be useful before dispatching to dispatched countries especially the pre-departure training.

Figure 12: Suggestions to JOCVs

(N=12)



As seen in Figure 12, 12 JOCV teachers describe suggestions to JOCVs about how to protect from stresses. Four teachers mentioned JOCVs should understand culture in host country, and maintain relationships with other JOCV teachers. These suggestions are biggest number followed by do best about their skills, and think positive ways.

“JOCV teachers should understand the host country has different culture, and ways of teaching also are not same as Japan.” (Teacher M)

“Keep good relationships with other JOCV members to exchange their skills and knowledge, so JOCV teachers can get some advice from the other volunteers.”
(Teacher B)

“Each JOCV should speak with senior volunteers about successful stories and failure stories to get hints.” (Teacher N)

While the suggestions to JICA may be used for the pre-departure training to make better planning, the suggestions for JOCVs use for during staying in their host countries. Especially, this research found the JOCVs should keep good relationships with other JOCVs, and try to understand the culture of their host countries.

In sum, this chapter mentioned main causes of stress for JOCV teachers, differences of stress in their events as a teacher, and how approaches to stress. The author found main causes of stress is lack of language skills. Experienced teachers feel stress because of the differences the teaching, and learning environment between Japan and their host countries. There are five types of stress managements, and no dependence on JICA. Moreover, the 21 respondents have suggestions to JICA and JOCVs to reduce their stress. The suggestions to JOCVs are useful during staying in their host countries.

5 Discussion

This research has three findings. The first one was that the major cause of stress among 21 JOCV teachers was lack of language skills. The second finding was the comparison between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in their most stressful events. The last finding was approaches to manage stress.

5.1 Major Causes

This research found that lack of language skills was main cause of stress for JOCV teachers. Previous research described lack of language skills as the major cause of stress for JOCVs (Takahashi, Naruto, Matsuoka, Seki & Ishikawa, 1991). Therefore, this research supports Takahashi and others (1991). From this research and the previous research, JICA should have more practical language training for JOCVs and teachers.

5.2 Differences between Experienced Teachers and Inexperienced Teachers

Previous research could not find differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in their causes of stress. However, this research found some differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers. The differences were that experienced teachers felt stress because of the differences of teaching and learning environments between Japan and their host countries. Meanwhile, inexperienced teacher felt stress because of human relationships. Therefore, this research filled in missing points of the previous research.

5.3 Approaches to Manage Stress

This research examined five types of stress management including effort by themselves, understanding the culture, consultation with other JOCV members, getting support from local students and colleagues, and communication with other local people. In addition, this research found that the JOCV teachers do not depend on JICA.

As far as the author's limited research of previous research, the author could not find stress management for JOCVs. Therefore, this research fills in missing points. As well as this research found the suggestions to JICA and JOCVs. The suggestions to JICA may be useful for planning in the pre-departure training to prepare for stress which future JOCV teachers may face in their host countries. The advice for JOCVs may be useful while staying in their host countries.

In conclusion, this chapter showed the findings of main cause for JOCV teachers were the same as JOCVs. This paper also filled missing points: the differences between inexperienced teachers and experienced teachers, and how JOCV teachers manage stress.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has five sections. The first section is a summary of this research. The second examines limitations of the research. The third one discusses policy implications to JICA. The fourth section includes suggestions to individual JOCV members, and the last section shows further study suggested by this research.

6.1 Summary

This research addressed three research questions. The first research question was what the causes of stress are for JOCV teachers. In replying to this question, this research found that lack of language skills of JOCV teachers was the major cause of their stress followed by house environment, food culture, and relationships with other JOCV members. Including minor stress,

The second research question was about the differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers in the causes of stress. Experienced teachers felt stress because of the differences of teaching and learning environment between Japan and their host countries such as different teaching approaches, colleagues' attitudes toward work, and comparison with Japan. The different teaching approach seems to be a large cause of stress for experienced teachers.

Meanwhile, this research also found that inexperienced teachers faced stress due to poor relationships including lack of language skills, communication with local students, and relationships with colleagues.

The third research question was how JOCV teachers manage stress. There were five approaches to managing stress: making effort by themselves, training to understand cultures, consultation with other JOCV members, getting support from local students and colleagues, and communication with other local people. However, no research participants mentioned JICA in any of their approaches to managing stress, so this study also found that they did not depend on JICA.

6.2 Limitations

This section will discuss the three main limitations. The first one is that this research did not have enough research participants. The number of participants was only 21 JOCV teachers: 11 experienced teachers and 10 inexperienced teachers. Therefore, it cannot generalize. Moreover, this research could not compare by gender, country, and age.

The second main limitation is that this research accessed only my acquaintances. Since the author knew the participants, some of them might not describe their honest feelings, and may have hesitated to frankly explain their experiences in their host countries.

The third limitation of this research is that the data was collected by only questionnaire but not by interviewing. Therefore, the data might be limited. The participants could not explain the details of their experiences. This research might have collected more specific details of their experiences with interviews.

6.3 Policy Implication for JICA

The respondents made some suggestions to JICA, and these seem to be useful for planning the pre-departure and ongoing training. This research produced three main suggestions.

The first suggestion includes improving of language training before and during the volunteer experience. Because this study found that lack of language skills is the major causes of stress, JICA should have more practical language training on the pre-departure training, and keep supporting volunteers to learn the languages in their host countries as well. JOCVs only study the language before they leave. Language research indicates that this is not enough.

Connected to language is the actual language taught. For example, the JOCVs should learn the languages which they will use for working in their host countries rather than national language. They also should learn from native speakers of dispatched countries. In fact one teacher described about the language training.

“JOCVs should learn the language which they will use in the host schools (more than national language).” (Teacher P)

In addition to the pre-departure training, the volunteers should also keep learning the language in their dispatched countries. For example, they should continue language training from native speakers or other JOCV volunteers who were dispatched before. This could be an online course in which the participants can learn and use the language. Then stress due to lack of language skills may be decreased little by little.

The second suggestion to JICA is to provide opportunities to share experiences of previous volunteers during the pre-departure training. For example, the volunteers can share through reports and direct communications. Then they will be able to imagine the work in their dispatched countries more clearly.

6.4 Suggestions to Individual JOCV Members

This research also found three main suggestions to individual JOCV members. The first suggestion is to keep good relationships with other JOCV members. One teacher described about suggestions of relationships with other JOCV members.

“Keep good relationships with other JOCV members to exchange their skills and knowledge, so JOCV teachers can get some advice from other volunteers.” (Teacher B)

Sometimes it is difficult for the volunteers to get together because they live in other provinces. In fact some of them take over eight hours to meet other volunteers. However, they can keep in contact by internet or telephone. For example, they could organize weekly Skype meetings or some other way to maintain contact, and they could make plans to gather all volunteers once or twice a year to give them an opportunity to share their skills and situations of their work.

The second suggestion is that each volunteer should know that Japan and the dispatched countries are not the same. One teacher described as below.

“The JOCV teachers should understand the culture, and situations of teaching approaches in their host countries. They also need to respect the local teachers.”

(Teacher K)

From that, it is important for JOCV teachers to understand the host countries' cultures well, and respect the local people.

The third suggestion to individual volunteers is that, when they face stress, they should not hesitate to ask other people to get some support. If they do not find ways to get rid of stress, it could become unmanageable and get in the way of living in the country.

6.5 Further Study

This study found main causes of stress for JOCV teachers, differences between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers, and how they managed stress. Therefore, further study might be able to use these findings to research more details of stress and stress management of JOCV teachers. Moreover, analyzing this research can be useful to compare how differences between JOCV teachers and other types of volunteers in technical fields including public health, agriculture and forestry.

Appendix 1 Questionnaire

1. Please describe your volunteer situation.

| | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Dispatched Group | | |
| Host country | | |
| Type of volunteer work | | |
| Participated under Special Participation Program for In-Service Teachers | | 1 . YES 2 .NO (Answer:) |
| Contents of your activity | Job description | |
| | Duties | |
| Language used in training | | |
| Language used in activity | | |

2. What is your teaching experience?

| | Number of years of teaching | Subject taught |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Kindergarten or nursery school | | |
| Elementary school | | |
| Middle school | | |
| High school | | |
| Other () | | |

3 . What education level are you working in now?

- 1 . Kindergarten or nursery school 2 . Elementary school
 3 . Middle school 4 . High school 5 . Other ()

| |
|---------|
| Answer: |
|---------|

4 . Please describe the causes of your stress in your host country.

To what degree did you feel stress?

Fill in 1 to 3 for each kind of stress below.

Degree of your feeling : 1 . None 2 . A little bit 3 . Very much

(Example)

| Cause of stress | Degree of your feeling |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Time schedule | 3 |
| Food culture | 2 |
| Home environment | 1 |
| Clothing | 3 |

| Cause of stress | Degree of your feeling |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Time schedule | |
| Food culture | |
| Home environment | |
| Clothing | |
| Hygiene | |
| Injury or illness | |
| Climate | |

If you chose 2 or 3 regarding “Worrying about going back to your previous job”, please describe details about what you worried about.

5. Please describe about the events during which you felt the highest stress as a teacher, and describe how you managed the stress.

6. Do you have any suggestions for JICA or JOCVs to reduce or deal with your stress?

7. Please comment on this research project.

After analyzing the data, I may want to interview some participants. If you would be willing to be contacted for an interview, please fill in the box.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Email address | |
| School name of your working school | |

Thank you for your cooperation.

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