

Problems Encountered by Chinese Students at Japanese Language Schools

by

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Abstract

This study explores the problems Chinese students face in Japanese language schools in Japan. Previous research has found that there were mainly seven problems Chinese students face: inappropriate curriculum and learning materials, inappropriate teaching style and teachers' attitude, lack of learning opportunities, lack of guidance for students' future, financial problems, discrimination, and psychological problems. However, previous research is outdated and it has not compared the seriousness of these problems. This study attempted to fill in such research gap. Through a questionnaire survey with 86 Chinese students and semi-structured interviews with 10 respondents, this research found that the seriousness of these problems was various. It showed that (1) lack of guidance for students' future, inappropriate teaching styles and teachers' attitudes, lack of learning opportunities, inappropriate teaching curriculum and teaching materials were serious problems, (2) financial problems and psychological problems were less serious problems, and (3) discrimination was not a problem at all. Besides these seven problems, this study also found problems related to their personality and/or adaptability and problems concerning school rules and systems. Part of these findings may reflect the change in Chinese students' current situation in Japan.

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Last but not least, I would also like to show my appreciation to the Chinese students who responded actively to my online survey. I thank them for spending their valuable time on the online survey.

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1 Introduction

I was a student who studied at a Japanese Language school in Japan for two years. As a Chinese student studying in Japan, I faced many kinds of stress and problems. The problems are communication problems, too many rigid school rules, and being treated as a small child by teachers. Such experiences motivated me to conduct this research. Like me, there are many Chinese students who face a lot of problems in JLS.

Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) (2022) provided the following data. There are 231,146 overseas students studying in Japan. Among them, Chinese students occupy the most significant share of these students (103,882 Chinese students occupied 45% of the total number). There are 49,405 overseas students studying at Japanese language schools, accounting for one-fifth of the total number of overseas students. These data indicated that there may be a large number of Chinese students studying in Japanese language schools. They seem to face many problems in JLS. However, as the times have changed, the problems Chinese students encounter may have changed and evolved.

Therefore, this paper investigates and analyzes their current problems to find what problems have changed or existed. This paper assists Japanese-language Chinese learners and discusses various academic fields, such as education and linguistics. This paper consists of 5 chapters. First is the introduction part. The second chapter shows the literature review. The third chapter explains the methodology. The fourth chapter shows the result and discussion. The fifth part draws the conclusion.

2 Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature about the problems encountered by students who study at JLS. According to reviewing previous research, seven problems were found. They are inappropriate curriculum and learning materials, inappropriate teaching style and teachers' attitude, Lack of learning opportunities, Lack of guidance for students' future, financial problems, discrimination, and psychological problems.

2.1 Inappropriate Curriculum and Learning Materials

Chinese students in JLS in China need help with appropriate curriculum and learning materials.

First, inappropriate curriculums discourage learners from learning Japanese comprehensively. Li (2011) described that the curriculum of Japanese language teaching in China emphasizes reading and neglects listening and speaking. The curriculum should be more on test-taking at the expense of practical activities. Such curricula and programs do not satisfy students' needs.

Second, the choice of textbooks is a serious problem. Cui (2009) pointed out that the textbook "Sino-Japanese Exchange Standard Japanese" which was widely used in China, has the following problems: 1. It does not meet the learning needs of learners, 2. It does not fit the learning environment of learners 3. The content of the textbook is not flexible 4. It is not convenient enough for Japanese language teachers to use.

Students reflected on the problems of learning materials. Qiu (2009) proposed that JLS should divide students into different classes according to the corresponding study level;

Adjust the curriculum difficulty according to students' study ability; Students also referred to the insufficient curriculum setting. They expected JLS to add English, math, and related courses to cope with the university entrance examination.

Students are desperate for practical textbooks. Qiu (2009) says: Students pointed out that the content of textbooks was not meeting their needs of them, especially the students who were enrolled in October (who may have higher language levels than students enrolled in April); some students claimed that the content of textbooks was disconnected from students' lives and interests and unpractical in the oral speaking.

2.2 Inappropriate Teaching Style and Teachers' Attitude

Some international students claimed that they have problems with teaching style. Kajiwara (2002) said that most of the JLS lack of Teachers who are equipped with cross-cultural education ability; some teachers' instruction styles are considered as power harassment from a human rights perspective. Meanwhile, Japanese teachers consider their teaching style as common sense, such as forcing students to obey rules, isolating students in small rooms as punishment, making them do meaningless copying and other punishments.

Second, students lack opportunities for professional guidance.

Qiu (2009) reported that some students doubted that their teachers needed more professionalism, such as being unable to point out students' mistakes. Some teachers had a bad attitude in class, such as not preparing for class and chatting too much during classes.

The low motivation of teachers and the high turnover rate is also a problem that is difficult to overcome. Sato (2020) said that after graduating from the JLS, students could

quickly gain admission to a specialized training college run by the same organization. They do not need to study hard to reach a high level of Japanese language proficiency. This situation reduces teachers' motivation and leads to a high departure rate. A vicious circle exists in the JLS.

2.3 Lack of Learning Opportunities

One of the problems for international students is the Lack of interaction with Japanese people. Ogiso (1991) discussed that the interaction between international students with Japanese people is essential in deciding the success or failure of international students studying in Japan. In reality, however, the communication between international students and Japanese people does not always go well.

Some Chinese students referred to the problem of learning opportunities.

First, Lack of interaction with Japanese people is a problem. Qiu (2009) illustrated that most students thought communication with Japanese people needed to be improved and hoped JLS would organize regular communication events with Japanese students, recruit volunteers, and hold homestay activities. However, others complained that too many events would affect their study. They want to decrease the number of school events.

Most Chinese students have communication problems with Japanese. Ikeguchi (2012) reported that Chinese students need help communicating with Japanese people fluently, and the Japanese people's character is difficult to understand.

Sato (2020) pointed out that overwork also gives students fewer learning opportunities. Many students work more than 28 hours a week in casual jobs. They need more time and

energy to study.

2.4 Lack of Guidance for Students' Future

Some students who come to Japan need more guidance for academic purposes and future vision.

Masumi (2018) proposed that some students come to Japan with ambiguous academic goals and no clear future vision. Some students are in an unstable state of mind because they have not fully achieved self-realization during their studies in Japan. For example, they felt alienated because they could not quickly enter Japanese society and failed to gain self-confidence. Shigematsu (2002) proved that some students realized their reasons for coming to Japan needed to be revised. They are in great need of professional consultation to eliminate their anxiety. However, the teachers who have corresponding experiences are insufficient.

Students perceived that some JLS couldn't help them with the problem of further study and career support.

Some JLS lack further study support for students. Qiu (2009) pointed out that first; there needs to be more guidance for further studies, for example: how to choose a school, choose a major or a tutor; how to prepare for the target university—second, insufficient study materials, such as insufficient or outdated reference books and materials.

Some JLS lack career support for students. Qiu (2009) reported that: The JLS lacks the relative information to support students' job hunting.

2.5 Financial Problems

Some Chinese students have financial problems. Qiu (2009) explained that financially, the difficulties faced by Chinese students are high tuition fees and few scholarships. Second, the amount of part-time jobs provided by the language school is insufficient; the time conflict between the school work and part-time jobs, and the language ability doesn't match the required level of part-time jobs.

ASaNo (2004) also agreed that the greatest difficulty for JLS students in achieving their academic goals is financial problems. In addition to the tuition fees for Japanese language schools, students must pay the first years' tuition fees for universities and other institutions. Due to financial difficulties, they cannot devote themselves to their studies and are forced to balance their studies with part-time jobs.

Sato (2020) pointed out that some students faced serious problems of poverty and overwork. JLS students face a dilemma that is driven by the need to work to support their studies; they find it's almost impossible or unnecessary to pursue these studies.

Huang (2010) also proved that the economic gap between China and Japan is great. Only a few Chinese students can fully rely on their family's financial support; many have to take part-time jobs to cover living expenses and tuition fees.

2.6 Discrimination

As far as I studied in previous reviews, most discrimination happened in the workplace; however, it indicated students may be discriminated against in Japanese Language Schools too. International students are suffering from discrimination in the workplace. Ikeguchi (2012)

noted that many international students feel “foreigners are not liked in Japan” “Asian students are rejected in part-time jobs.” Huang (2010) also examined that many respondents felt discriminated against in part-time jobs because they were foreigners.

Qu (2015) proposed that the Chinese still suffer from Country-specific discrimination. The Japanese media and public opinion blame the Chinese for the rising crime rate. The dominant Japanese culture views Chinese students as “undesirable” Based on this fact, it is difficult for the Chinese to be fully accepted by Japanese society. If a person is not accepted by his new society, he cannot recognize his home culture. As a result, he becomes hopeless, lonely, prone to poor overall health, and, in extreme cases, suicidal tendencies. Recently, Japanese prejudices and stereotypes about China do not only exist in historical relationships but also in air pollution and food contamination. Shimojimai (2017) proposed that teachers at JLS in Japan tend to ignore “culture matters” for students in the cultural transition stage. He insisted that teachers in JLS in Japan should be conscious and sensitive to this problem. Chinese political ideology was also a controversial matter. Shimojimai (2017) pointed out that when referring to the relationship between Japan and China, some Chinese students were objective, but others were subjective. Chinese students may feel intrusive and offended, even discriminated against.

Some students suffered from discrimination in Japanese Language Schools. Qiu (2009) pointed out that school operators were biased against Chinese students and had a better relationship with European and American students.

2.7 Psychological Problem

Students encountered a lot of psychological problems, like clinical depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, dependence syndrome, and anxiety disorder.

Shigematsu (2000) proposed that students who encounter a gap between expectations and reality often need clarification on their purpose for coming to Japan. Berry (1980) pointed out that students' reasons for coming to Japan to study may suddenly seem poor and inadequate, leading to loss and emptiness. Many students experience a period of disgust with life in Japan, and they tend to interpret what they observe in a negative way. These students' problems include depressive feelings, obsessions, dependencies, anger, confusion, and anxiety.

Sadowski and Plake (1992) stated that the ability of students to cope with the gap between expectations and reality varies greatly. Anxiety and frustration of inadequate adaptation to life in Japan may bring anger and confusion. When international students are disappointed with society, or they feel vulnerable and incompetent in that place, they will tend to think that people in society are not considerate or threatening.

Berry (1980) also indicated that students' positive or negative stereotypes of their own culture and the host country's culture will affect their cultural adaptation process. If they have a positive attitude toward the host culture, they are willing to adopt its values, practices, and behaviors. Tsai (1995) explained that if they have a negative attitude toward the host country, they will often reject the values, practices, and behaviors they encounter. Some international students in Japan may seek asylum of nationalism and refuse to integrate into the culture. Qiu (2009:88) also proved that some students cannot adapt to Japanese culture immediately,

which leads to students' psychological problems in JLS.

Shigematsu (2002:24) claimed that the history of psychological difficulties of some students further exacerbated the problem. These symptoms may become more difficult under the pressure of their life in Japan. Others found that coming to Japan eliminated the urgency and urgency of some worries about work and family but made them pay more attention to personal problems. This excessive attention to self may eventually bring greater peace of mind, but it will first lead to painful self-consciousness.

2.8. Summary of Literature Review

Previous studies found that Chinese students in Japanese language schools faced mainly 7 problems: inappropriate curriculum and teaching materials, teaching styles and teachers' attitudes, Lack of learning opportunities, financial problems, discrimination, and psychological problems. However, previous researches have yet to uncover the degree of seriousness of these problems. Moreover, most of these studies were conducted in the very old days, that is, when China was considered politically and economically weak.

Having such a research gap, this study examines the current problems Chinese students encounter in Japanese language schools and explores the degree of the seriousness of these problems. Therefore, the research questions of this research are:

1. What problems do Chinese students currently encounter at Japanese language schools?
2. How serious are the problems?

3 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology of this study. The first part reported on the method of this research, which was a mixed method combined questionnaire survey and semi-structured interview. The second part explained the data collection process. The third part introduced the research respondents. The last part discussed ethical considerations in this research.

3.1 Mixed Method

This paper used a mixed method to collect the data, including both quantitative and qualitative methods, to research the problem Chinese students face in JLS in Japan.

Cook (1979) briefly compared the two methods for collecting data: qualitative and quantitative. The more obvious distinction to be drawn between the two is that quantitative methods produce numerical data and qualitative result information or descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviors, direct quotations from people, and extracts or passages of documents, correspondence, records, and case studies. Quantitative research collects and analyzes quantitative data; meanwhile, qualitative research prevents quantification; however, records are made through narrative, participant observation, and unstructured interviews.

Brewer & Hunter (1989) stated that using mixed methods can get a better understanding of the problem being studied; improved understanding arises when the complementary strengths of quantitative (numbers, trends, generalizability) and qualitative (words, context, meaning) approaches offset the different weaknesses of the two approaches.

Clark (2008) also supported that through mixed research, researchers may obtain stronger, more corroborated conclusions when the results are derived from two different types of data instead of a single type. In addition, the researcher can use different types of data to examine different aspects and outcomes. This approach can also be used to achieve a complete understanding by capturing multiple perspectives or different levels within a system when these different aspects require different methods.

This study wants to get a deeper understanding of Chinese students' problems and to obtain more decisive, more corroborated conclusions from different ways; therefore, this study uses a mixed method. The research focused on revealing respondents' proper perspectives, experiences, and narratives.

3.2 Data Collection

Data is collected to verify the research questions. Moreover, the data is evidence to support the findings of the research questions. Fiona Middleton (2019) figured it is important to consider reliability and validity, especially in quantitative research. Reliability is about the consistency of a measure, and validity is about the accuracy of a measure. Failing to do so can lead to several types of research bias and seriously affect work. Therefore, to obtain higher data reliability and validity, I collected two sets of data for analysis from questionnaire surveys and semi-interviews.

The data collection has two phases. The first phase involved 86 respondents completing an online qualitative survey to gather general ideas and information about the problems they encountered in Japanese language schools (see Annex 1). Then, according to the

questionnaire survey, analyze this topic.

The second stage consisted of semi-interviews with 10 respondents, which gave me the time and opportunity to talk to them extensively. (Annex 2 shows interview questions) The in-depth information could get from what they shared. For example, the survey section did not cover actual personal experiences, feelings, and expectations.

The survey was written in Chinese in order to collect data. The survey and data were translated into English before moving on to coding and analysis.

3.3 Research Respondents

Research respondents in the online survey were Chinese students currently studying at language schools in Japan and Chinese students who had previous experience studying at a Japanese language school. 86 respondents joined the questionnaire survey, and 10 accepted the semi-structured interview.

Respondents in phase 1 are shown in Figure 3.1.

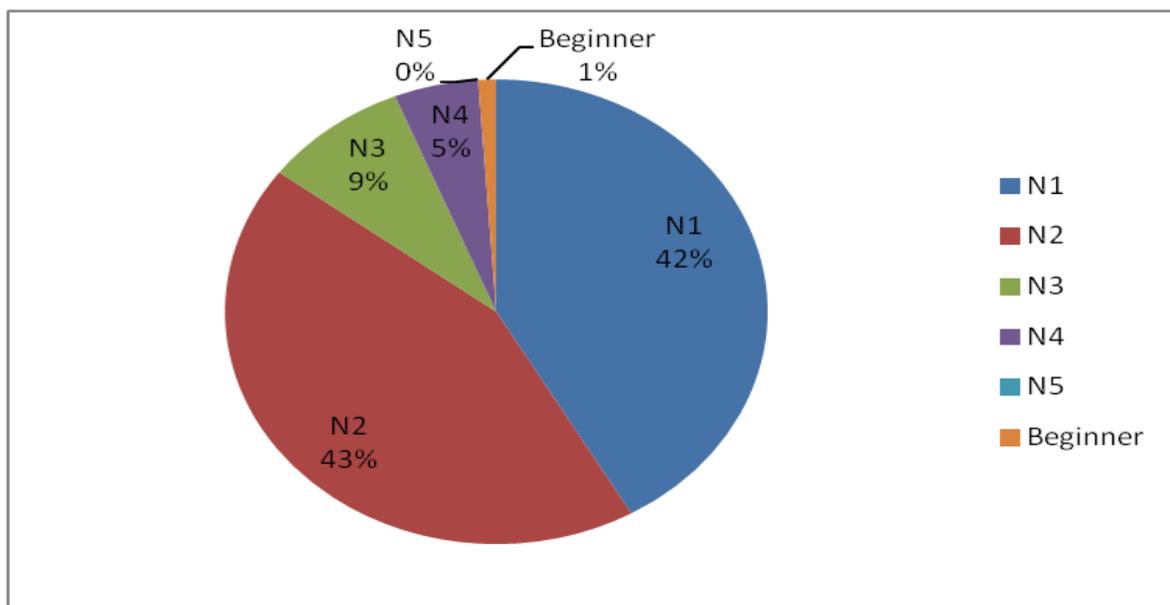


Figure 3.1 Respondents' Japanese Proficiency

Figure 3.3.1 suggests that 45.3% of respondents possessed N1 certifications. 40.7% of respondents reached N2 certification. Only 14% of respondents were under the N3 level. The finding showed that most students have a high level of Japanese language proficiency certification.

Respondents for the personal interviews were selected based on their responses to the online survey. The online survey was conducted in March 2023, using Google Forms for data collection. I found several Chinese students and launched the survey on WeChat, XiaoHongShu and WeiBo, Chinese students' most frequently used social media. Respondents were from different Japanese language schools in different parts of Japan.

Respondents in phase 2 are shown in Table 3.1. These interview respondents were obtained from those willing to accept the voice link in the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire survey, I set up a section asking respondents if they would accept my interview with them. Some of them left their contact approaches so that I could contact them and do an in-depth interview. The Basic profiles of the Interviewees are as follows:

Table 3.1 The Basic Profile of the Interviewees

Respondents	Sex	Age	Educational background	Duration of staying in Japan	Japanese proficiency	Present situation
A	Male	18	Senior high school	1 year	N2	Japanese language school student
B	Male	30	University	4 months	N1	Japanese language school student
C	Male	27	Graduate school	3years	N1	Newly graduated
D	Male	27	Graduate school	3.5years	N1	Work in Japan
E	Female	25	University	6 months	Beginner	Japanese language school student
F	Female	22	University	6 years	N2	University student
G	Female	25	University	3 years	N1	Newly graduated
H	Female	27	University	6 years	N2	Work in Japan
I	Female	22	Vocational school	2 years	N3	Vocational school in Japan
J	Female	25	Graduate school	2.5 years	N4	Graduate school student

3.4 Ethical Consideration

This study aims to discover what problems Chinese students face in Japanese Language Schools in Japan. The data are collected online.

This study guaranteed voluntary participation. Respondents can opt in or out of the study at any time. This survey respects their willingness to cooperate, and none are coerced.

This study assured informed consent. I have given a written explanation to the questionnaire respondents and an oral explanation to the interview respondents. Respondents know the study's purpose, benefits, risks, and funding before they agree or decline to join.

Anonymity is also with guarantee. In the questionnaire survey, I need to find out the respondents' identities; Personally identifiable data and names of the schools were not collected.

Confidentiality is insured. In the semi-interview, I know who the respondents are, but I keep that information hidden from everyone else. I anonymize personally identifiable data so that it can't be linked to other data by anyone else. Respondents' names are replaced with alphabet letters in Table 3.1

Potential for physical, social, psychological, and all other types of harm are kept to an absolute minimum.

Results communication is ensured. I promise the work is free of plagiarism or research misconduct and accurately represents my results. I got their oral permission in the process of the interview. The interviewees agreed to be recorded, transcribed, and the findings can be used in the study.

4 Results and discussion

This chapter shows and discusses the results of this research. Figure 4.1 shows the responses to the question, “Which problem was the most serious problem when you were studying in a Japanese language school?” in the questionnaire. As shown in Figure 4.1, this research found that four problems (i.e., Lack of guidance for students’ future, inappropriate teaching style and teachers’ attitude, Lack of learning opportunities, inappropriate curriculum and learning materials) were still seen as serious, two problems (i.e., financial problems and psychological problems) were seen as less serious. Moreover, this research found that discrimination was not considered as a problem at all.

The rest of this chapter discusses the details of the seriousness of these 7 problems and other problems that were not explored in previous research.

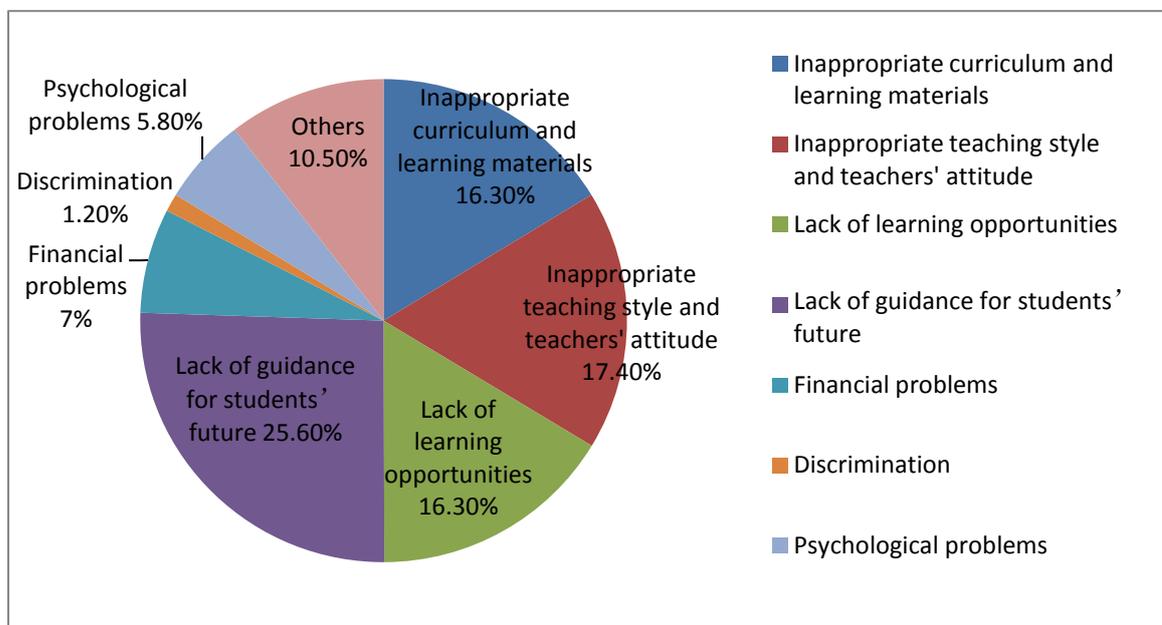


Figure 4.1 Which problem was the most serious problem when you were studying in a Japanese language school?

4.1 Inappropriate Curriculum and Learning Materials

This research found that inappropriate curriculum and learning materials were still considered as one of the serious problems for Chinese students.

Although, in the questionnaire survey, the satisfaction rate with their curriculum and learning materials reached nearly 70% (see Figure 4.2), the interviews revealed the seriousness of this problem.

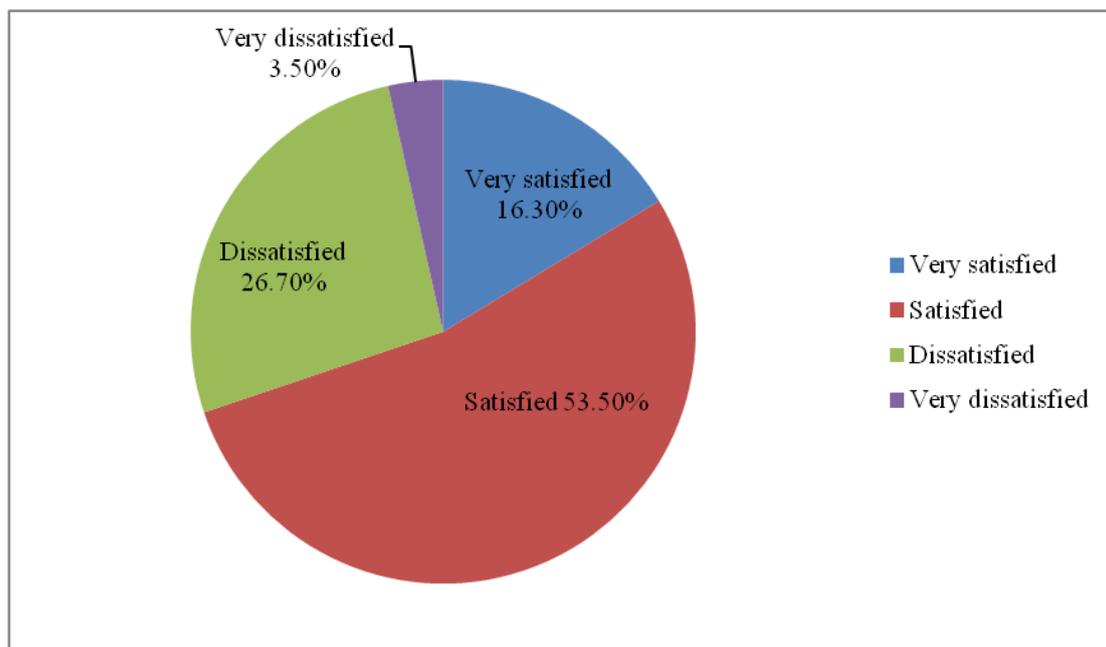


Figure 4.2 Are you satisfied with your Japanese language school’s curriculum and learning material?

There are some negative views about curriculum and learning materials in the interview. They viewed that curriculum and learning materials were not based on students’ abilities and needs.

First, the pace of the curriculum was complained about. Students with high ability thought that the teaching pace was too slow, and beginners thought that the pace was too fast to understand. For example, respondents C, D, and G consistently agreed that the pace is slow,

while respondent E argued the pace is too quick.

“Classes are not divided according to the level of Japanese language ability of us; the curriculum for me is too slow, my time is wasted” (Respondent C)

“Although the school has a placement test, it is only a formality, and the school places students with N2 level in N5 level classes, which is unfair. The school only wants to walk through the form and save time, which is a serious waste of students’ time.” (Respondent D)

“Teaching progress is too slow; the school has not yet finished the corresponding teaching range before students take the Japanese Language Proficiency Test.” (Respondent G)

“The pace of the curriculum is too quick for me; I cannot catch up with it.” (Respondent E)

Second, two students claimed that the learning materials were inappropriate. For example, respondents E and F answered as follows:

“The learning materials are impractical; some content is simply not used in real life.” (Respondent E)

“The texts are boring and a bit rigid.” (Respondent F)

Thirdly, the curriculum is not focused on students’ needs. The two respondents had very similar views:

“There are no special courses for students aiming at university, graduate school or college. If we want to learn, we can only rely on self-learning.” (Respondent F)

“The curriculum is not specialized and the course standards are not detailed.” (Respondent C)

Thus, this research found that inappropriate curriculum and learning materials were considered a serious problem. This confirmed the findings of previous research.

4.2 Inappropriate Teaching Style and Teachers' Attitudes

Inappropriate teaching style and teachers' attitudes were considered as one of the serious problems for Chinese students, although the satisfaction rate of teaching style and teachers' attitudes reached 73.3%, as Figure 4.3 reflected.

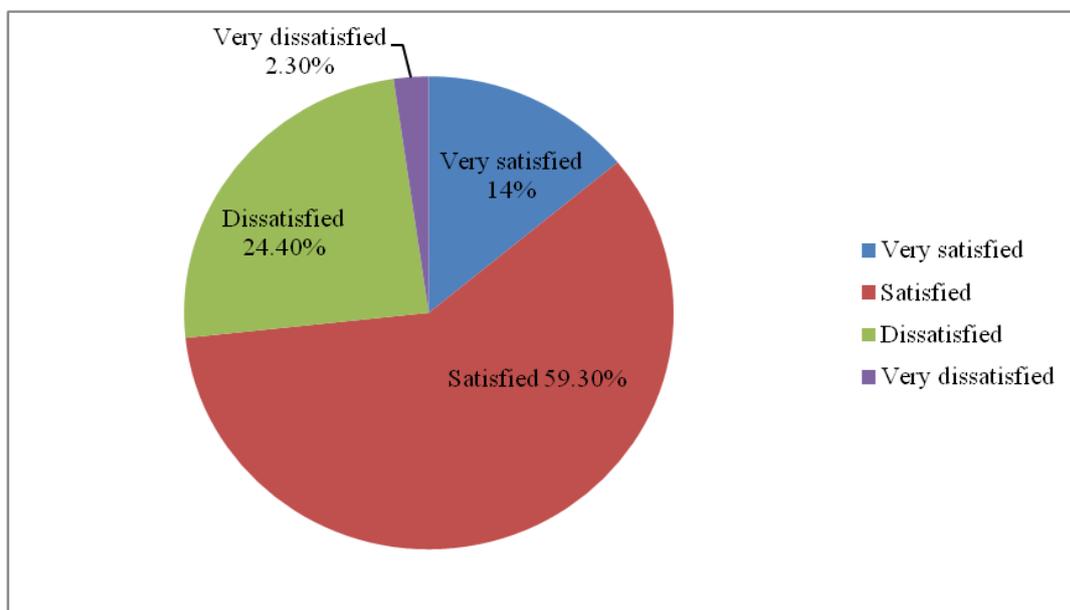


Figure 4.3 Are you satisfied with the teaching style in your school?

In the interview, the reasons for dissatisfaction are as follows:

Firstly, the inappropriate teaching style is complained about the most. The following two respondents have given their explanations:

“The teaching style is verbose, the content is too simple, only three grammars are taught in a day; Some teachers look down on students, have a very bad attitude, and like to undermine students’ confidence.” (Respondent A)

“There is no discipline in class, and teachers do not care; the class is in a mess.”

(Respondent F)

Second, students doubt the professional competence of the teachers. For example, respondents C, E, and D talked similarly.

“Although the teaching materials are similar, the curriculum quality is decided by teachers’ teaching ability. Their professional competence varied a lot.” (Respondent C)

“Some teachers do not prepare lessons before class, they improvise their lessons or just read from the book, and I cannot understand what they are saying.” (Respondent E)

“Some teachers are inexperienced, have a boring teaching style, and fail to expand their knowledge, leaving students with limited learning.” (Respondent D)

Thirdly, teachers lack interaction with the students in class. For example, respondents I claimed this way:

“There is a lack of interaction between the teacher and the students in the class; some teachers just teach knowledge and ignore the students.” (Respondent I)

Fourthly, teachers have a bad attitude; for example, respondents G and J noted the same problem:

“They are not serious in class and keep talking off-topic.” (Respondent G)

“Some teachers look down on students and treat students of all ages like children, with a bad attitude, suppressing, mocking and belittling students.” (Respondent J)

Fifthly, there is a high turnover of teachers in Japanese language schools. For example, one respondent noted:

“Teachers change frequently and there is a high turnover of young teachers in particular;

the teachers who stay are all senior teachers, very confident and rigid; they do not keep up with the times' education style, and young students find it difficult to accept.” (Respondent H)

Sixly, one student referred to power harassment.

“I do not know where she gets her superiority complex from, but she always picks on me, and whenever I meet her, she criticizes me for something, treating me like a child, a bit of power harassment, and I always avoid her, which is annoying.” (Respondent F)

Reviewing the literature, they pointed out that most teachers lack cross-culture communication ability; some schools had power harassment and punishment. Some teachers had poor professional competence in teaching students; some teachers had poor attitudes; some teachers were not motivated to teach and had high turnover rates. The results of this study also validate these problems. Thus, the inappropriate teaching styles and teaching attitudes problem still appeared as a serious problem that needed to be paid much more attention.

4.3 Lack of Learning Opportunities

Based on the study result, the Lack of learning opportunities seems to be a serious problem. As Figure 4.1 showed, 16.3% of students felt that there was a lack of learning opportunities during their study at the Japanese language school. For example, there were few opportunities to interact with teachers. According to the survey data in Figure 4.4, 51.2% of students felt that they rarely interacted with their teachers at school. In Figure 4.5, students felt that the different cultural backgrounds caused students not to want to interact with Japanese people. Personality problems are also an element that causes the reluctance of

students to interact with Japanese people.

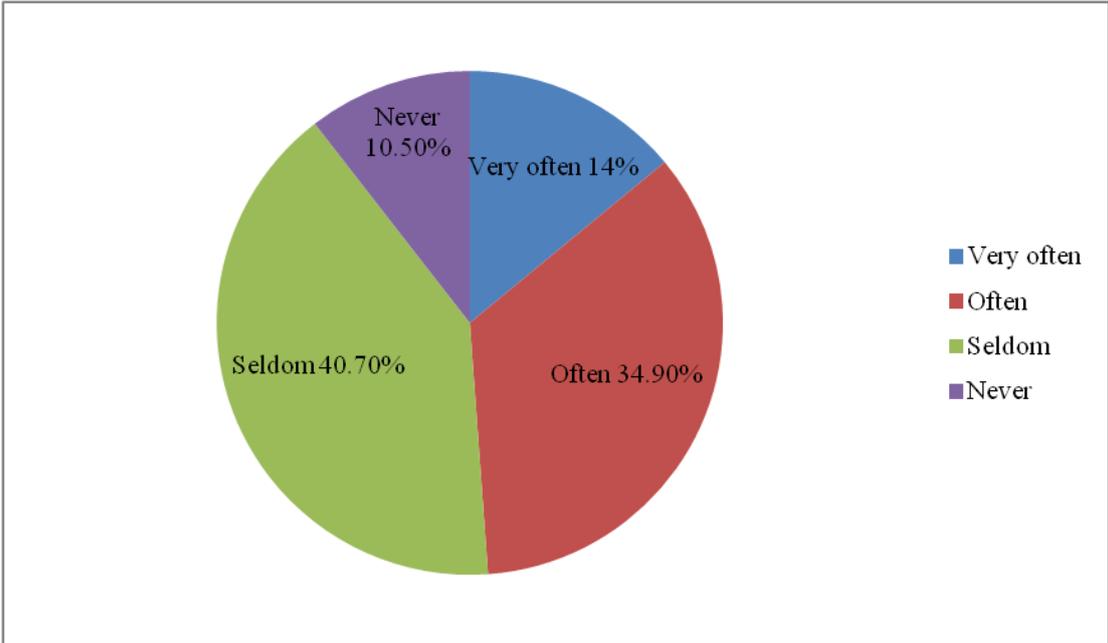


Figure 4.4 How often do you interact with teachers?

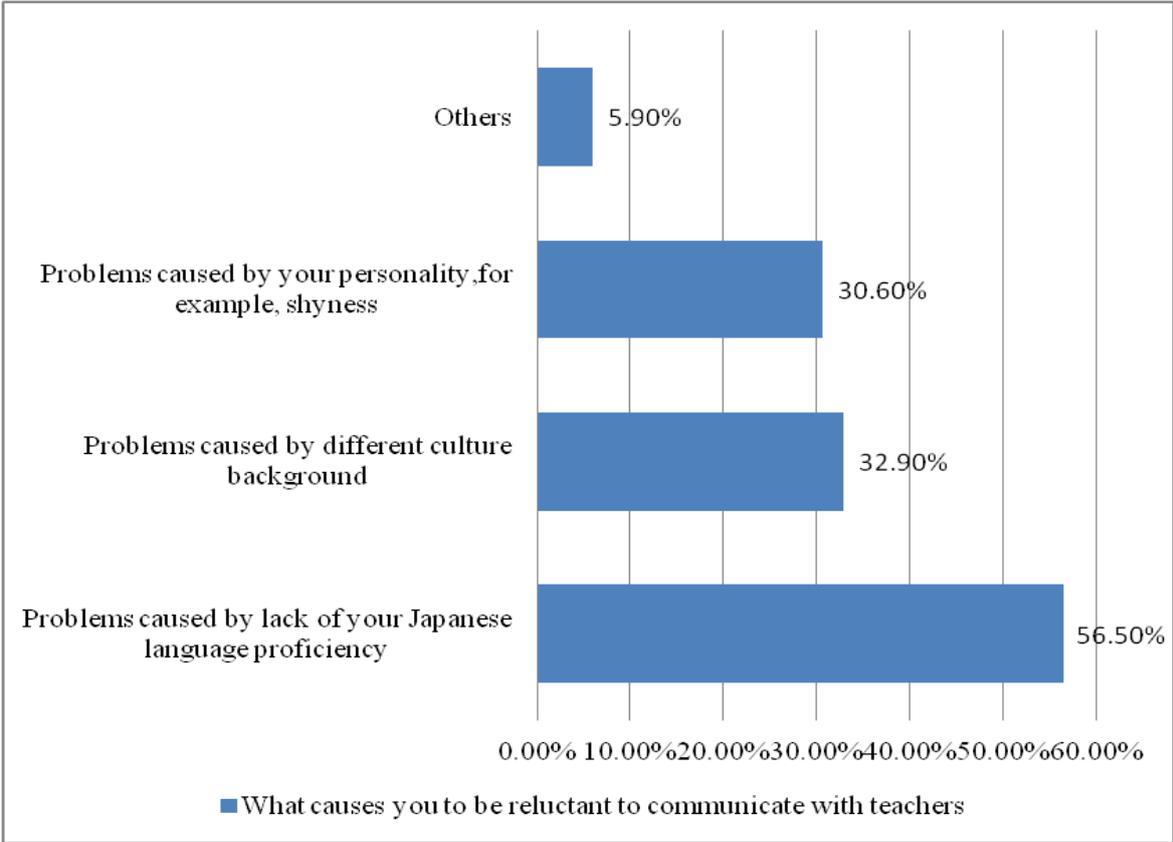


Figure 4.5 What makes you to be reluctant to communicate with teachers?

According to the interviews, a general consensus was that communicating with Japanese teachers was an important and effective learning opportunity. However, some students felt that the teacher left after the class, and there were limited opportunities to communicate with teachers. For example, one respondent said:

“There is a few opportunities to interact with the teacher after class, nor are there any regular student-teacher communications activities held by the school.” (Respondent E)

Secondly, students claimed the short school hours. For example, respondents E and F explained similarly:

“Japanese language school hours are only half days, and the pace of teaching is a little slow, leaving insufficient opportunities to learn.” (Respondent E)

“The school is only in the afternoon, and there are very few school hours.” (Respondent J)

Thirdly, personality problems are also an element that causes less communication with teachers. For example, respondent D and I pointed out:

“I felt very introverted, so I didn’t have much to talk about with my Japanese teacher. It's awkward when we talk, so I try to avoid interaction with teachers.” (Respondent D)

“I am very nervous about talking to the teacher, and I am always afraid that I will make a mistake.” (Respondent I)

Based on the previous research, it can be concluded that Chinese students lack opportunities to interact with Japanese people due to language barriers, short school hours, cultural differences, and personality differences. The findings of this study confirmed these problems. It can be found that Lack of learning opportunities continues to be a serious

problem.

4.4 Lack of Guidance for Students' Future

Lack of future guidance is a serious problem Chinese students encounter during their Japanese language school studies. As shown in Figure 4.6, 70% of students were anxious about their future prospects. This demonstrates that most students feel anxious about future prospects and careers.

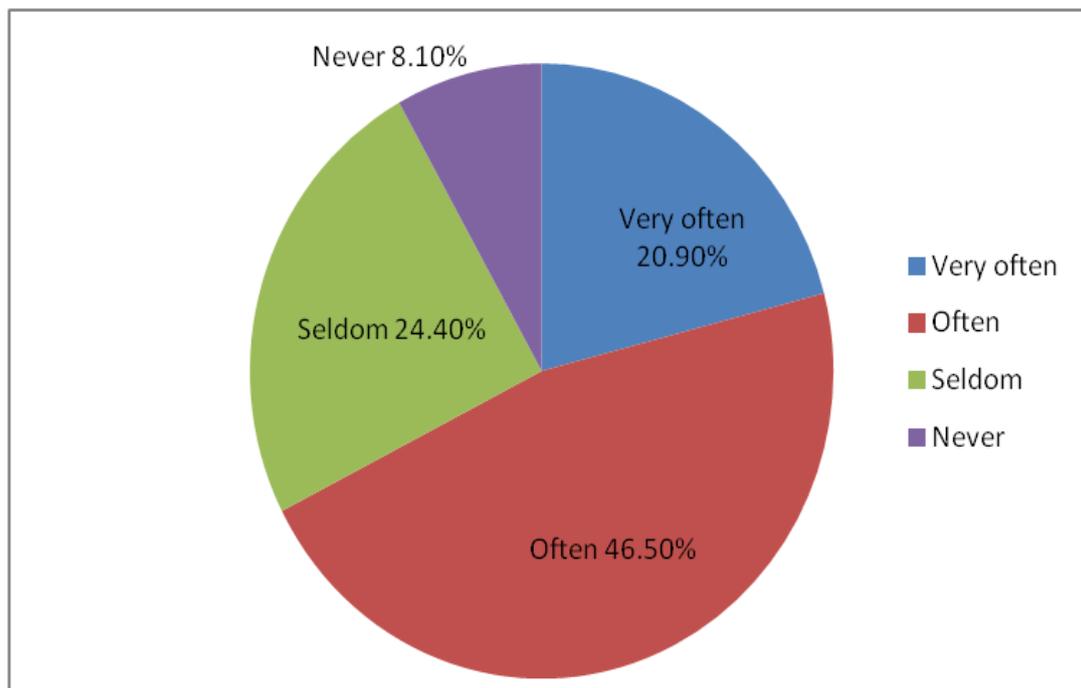


Figure 4.6 During studying in a Japanese school, do you feel anxious about your career?

Respondents to the questionnaire gave the following short answer as to why they were anxious about their future while at Japanese language school: “There is no professional guidance.” “I can only rely on myself.” “I don’t have a long-term plan. I don’t know what I can do in the future.” “No career plan makes me doubt whether I should stay in Japan or not.” “I am unfamiliar with Japanese society and don't know what the future holds for me.” “It is difficult to find a job after graduating from the Japanese language school.” The above

responses support the fact that Chinese students have a great deal of anxiety about their future careers while studying at a Japanese language school.

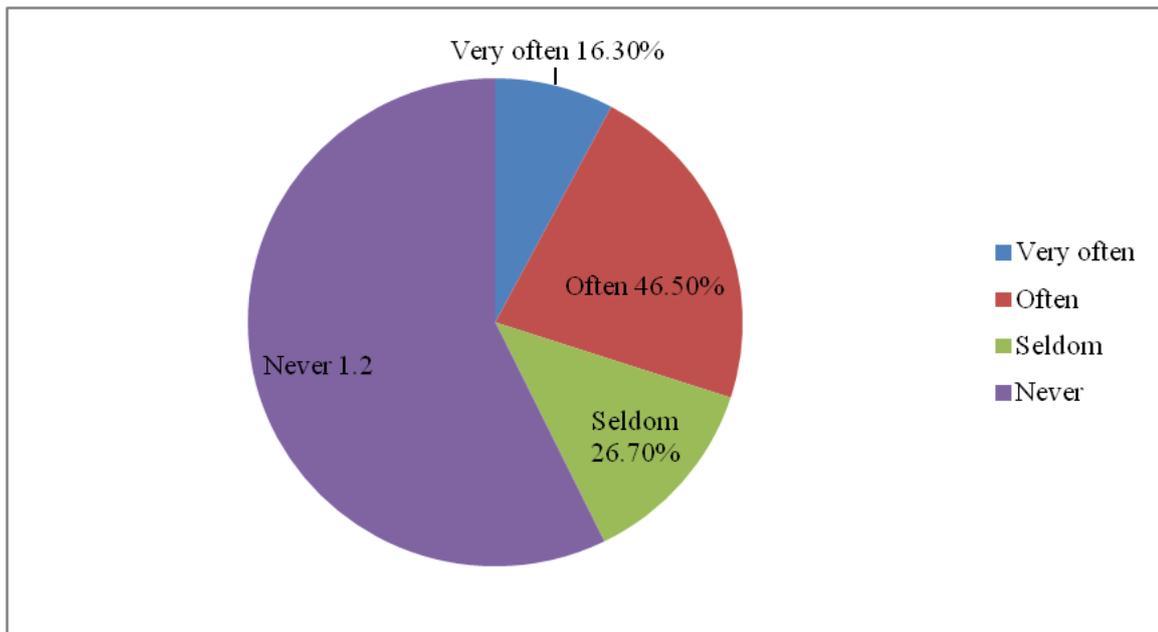


Figure 4.7 How often does your school offer further study and career support guidance?

In this regard, Figure 4.7 further investigates how often your school offers guidance for further study and career support. The result showed that most language schools offer career guidance and orientation sessions to help students with this issue.

In the interview survey, low-quality guidance instructions are complained about. Interviewees indicated that even though schools have activities regarding career guidance and guidance for further education, most of the activities are of poor quality and too formal; many respondents claimed this problem, taking three respondent C, G, and I’ answers as represented:

“Schools offer mostly schools with high pass rates in order to increase the rate of further education, but we want to enter better institutions; schools are unable to provide help.”

(Respondent C)

“I want more efficient, high-quality guidance. Such as life guidance courses, introduction to Japanese culture courses, etiquette courses for further education interviews, and guidance courses on the process of further education. Besides, Japanese language schools could hold more information sessions on entering the school, organize experience sharing sessions with former students who have been successfully enrolled in various majors, or recruit more good teachers to improve the teaching quality.” (Respondent G)

“The school just sent us some enrolment leaflets for us to read on our own, which was not very useful, and we had to find some enrolment information on the internet on our own; I felt very helpless.” (Respondent J)

Through the interview, the research further verified the problems referred to in previous studies. Therefore, it indicated that Lack of future guidance is a serious problem encountered by Chinese students

4.5 Financial Problems

Financial problems are no longer a serious problem. According to Figure 4.8, How much do you have financial problems while studying in a Japanese language school? In a questionnaire, the majority of respondents thought that financial problems are not a problem. In terms of how Chinese students solve their financial problems, this study was done in Figure 4.5.2. 53.5% of the students' financial sources were family support. 38.4% chose to work part-time. 1% relied on scholarships and the other 7% came from other sources.

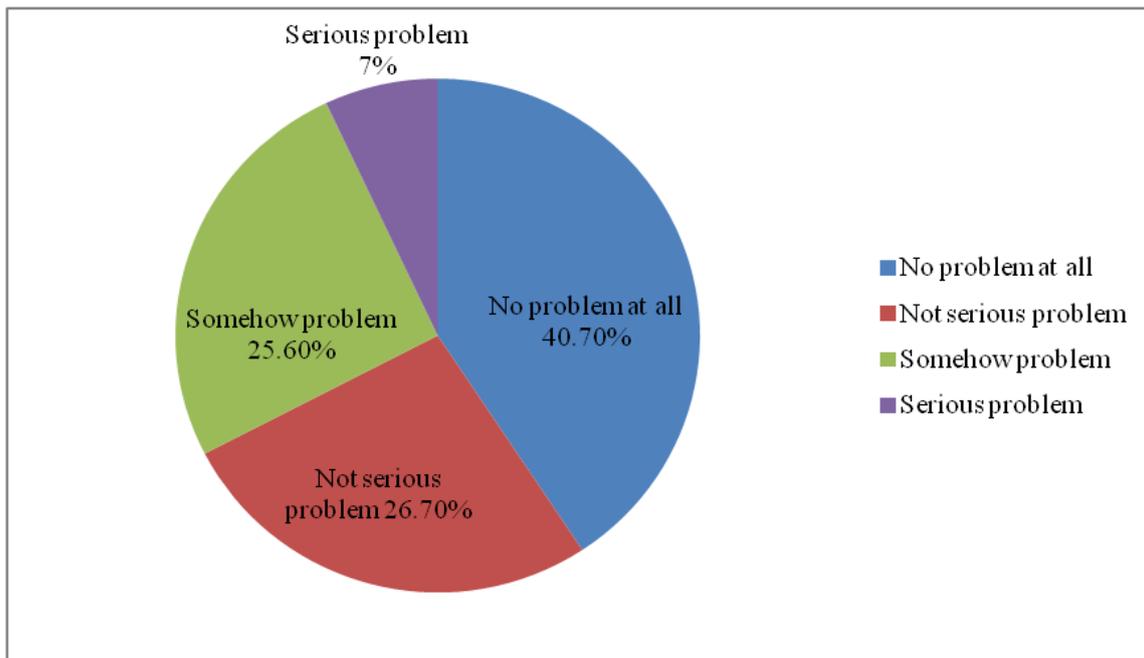


Figure 4.8 How much do you have financial problems while studying in a Japanese language school?

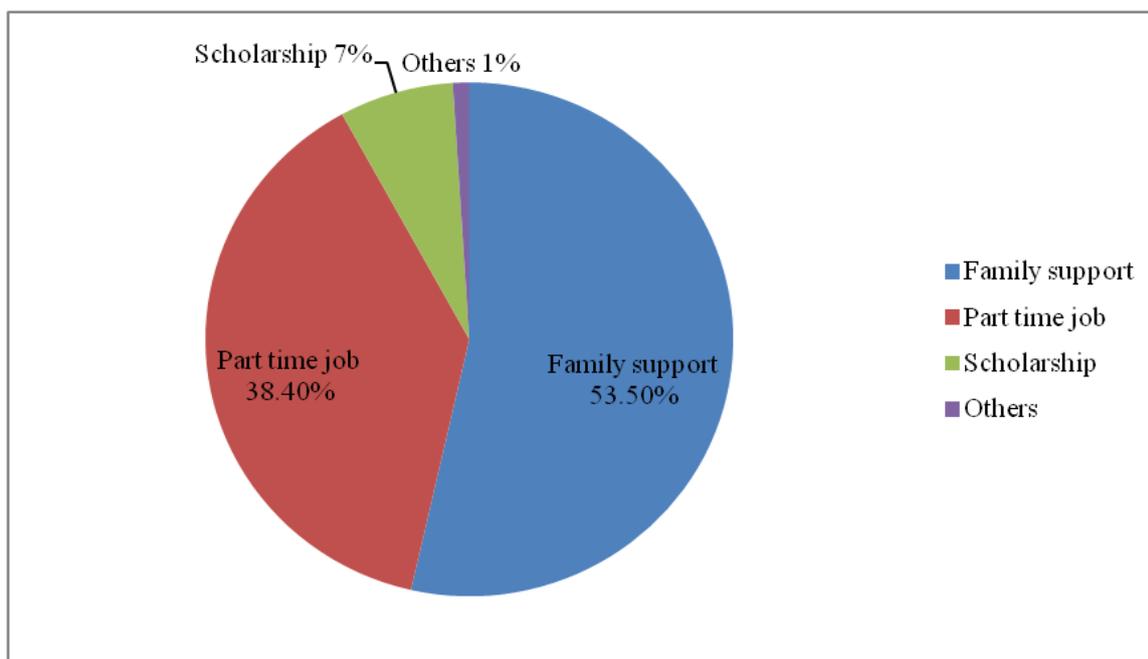


Figure 4.9 What are your main financial resources?

According to Figure 4.9, how much do you have financial problems while studying in Japanese language schools? Financial problems are not the biggest problem for international

students, with 70% of students not having financial problems, half coming from family support, and only 40% needing to work part-time. The previous study and the survey results produced a significant gap in this finding. To further address this gap, interviews were conducted next.

According to the interviews, the majority of respondents felt that their main source of financial support was their families and that they were under no financial pressure and did not need to work a part-time job at all. For example, one respondent proposed:

“Five to ten years ago, Chinese people who came to Japan to study were generally poor, and some even borrowed money to come to Japan, with the main purpose being working to earn money rather than studying. Nowadays, the Chinese economy is developing rapidly, and Chinese students are generally richer than before, so, normally, they do not have financial problems.” (Respondent F)

Only three out of ten respondents thought the economy was serious. Take respondent G and D as examples:

“The high tuition fees of Japanese language schools and the high cost of living make me require part-time work, but part-time work decreases study time. I feel tired every day.” (Respondent G)

“I borrowed money to come to Japan, but working part-time was a waste of time. I plan to graduate and work part-time to pay back the money, and now I am focusing on my studies. So I have to be very frugal.” (Respondent D)

A previous study has shown that financial problems seem very serious for Chinese

students, with most students even working overtime to earn money. However, in this survey, different results emerged. This research found that most students no longer see financial issues as a serious problem.

4.6 Discrimination

It can be concluded that discrimination is a less serious problem. As Figure 4.10 showed, 70.9% of Chinese students felt no discrimination problem at the Japanese language school.

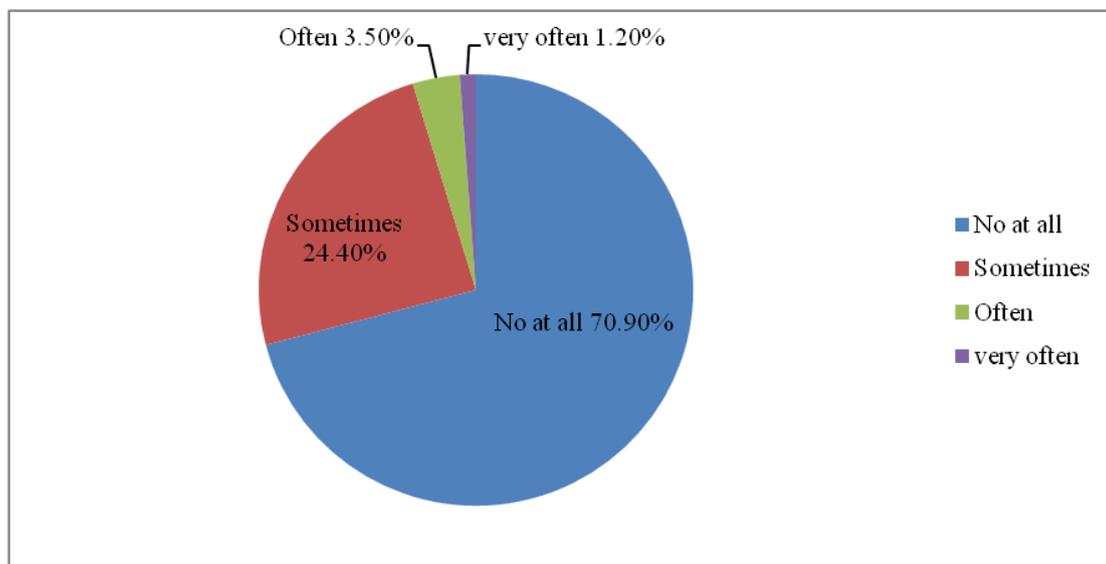


Figure 4.10 Have you ever been discriminated against by somebody such as teachers, staff, and students in a Japanese Language school? If so, how often?

According to the interviews, most respondents said there is no discrimination at Japanese Language Schools. Some students think discrimination can be understood because of different cultural backgrounds.

One respondent felt they suffered from serious discrimination.

“Some teachers in our school look down on us.”(Respondent F)

Surprisingly, some respondents discriminate against students from other countries.

Respondents C and E described similarly:

“No one discriminates against me, but I discriminate against people from other countries who have body odor and talk very loudly. I don’t want to be in a class with them.”

(Respondent C)

“No one ever discriminated me, but I discriminated against some students from other countries, causing the heavy body odor.”

Based on the previous study, discrimination is a less serious problem.

4.7 Psychological Problem

Psychological problems are not a serious problem, according to my study. When asked, “Did you have psychological problems such as clinical depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, dependence syndrome, and anxiety disorder when you were studying at a Japanese Language school? If you did, how serious were they?”. 70% of the respondents considered their psychological problems not serious (see Figure 4.1.1).

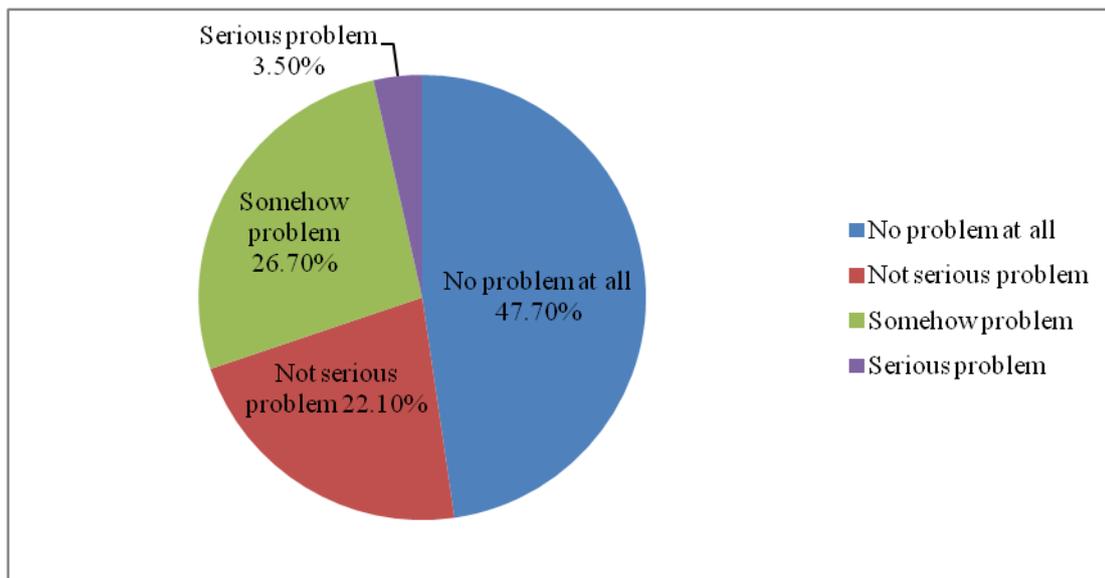


Figure 4.11 Did you have psychological problems If you did, how serious were they?

In the interviews, on the one hand, those students who had no psychological problems claimed that they came to the Japanese language school with a clear goal in mind, that they received care and encouragement from their teachers and the students around them, and that they were the social type. For example, respondent A stated:

“I am very social, and I have made many friends since I first came to the Japanese Language School. The teachers are very gentle, and I am happy and have no psychological problems.” (Respondent A)

On the other hand, some respondents had psychological problems; for example, respondents H, C, and G said:

“I feel confused about complicated social relationships; it makes me kind of anxious.” (Respondent H)

“I feel anxiety about going on to higher education, worries about the future, financial situation and unfamiliarity with the environment. Seems like a tendency towards clinical depression.” (Respondent C)

“I think teachers' attitude and concern for them was an effective way to alleviate my psychological problems; I think special psychological counseling sessions and regular talks between teachers and students were necessary methods.” (Respondent G)

Compared with previous studies, this study found less psychological problems. Thus, psychological problems are not a serious problem.

4.8 Other Problems

In addition to the above issues, 10.5% of Chinese students face other problems. The students responded with the following:

First, bundled spending happened in some Japanese Language Schools. For example, respondent C said:

“School forces us to apply for a phone card with the school's partnership, rent rooms, and take kickbacks, which add to the student's financial woes. The school pretends that it is for the safety of the students, but in fact, it is a fraud” (Respondent C)

Second, false advertising is also mentioned by one respondent.

“Japanese language school enrolment is falsely advertised, exaggerated, no refunds even if they drop out.” (Respondent F)

Thirdly, old infrastructure is a problem complained by two respondents. For example, they said as follows:

“The school infrastructure is inferior, the internet is prolonged and it is inconvenient .” (Respondent G)

“The desks and chairs are very old, which makes my back feel pain, and it affects my study mood.” (Respondent I)

Fourthly, tough school rules are complained about. For example, one respondent claimed as follows:

“The school has many inhumane rules, such as being unable to dye your hair or you will be suspended, copying scriptures as punishment, and writing pledges. You are not allowed to

wear tops that show your arms at school, your trousers must be longer than your knees, and you are not allowed to wear slippers. Very anti-human, not sure what the point is, feudal-minded rules.” (Respondent E)

This shows that bundled spending, false advertising, old infrastructure, and strict school rules can also make students dissatisfied.

5 Conclusion

This study examined what problems Chinese students encountered in Japanese language schools in Japan. Through a questionnaire survey of 86 respondents and semi-structured interviews with 10 respondents, this study found the seriousness of these problems. The study revealed that (1) lack of guidance for the student's future, inappropriate teaching style and teachers' attitudes, lack of learning opportunities, inappropriate teaching curricula and materials were serious problem for Chinese students. (2) financial and psychological problems were less serious, and (3) discrimination was not a problem at all. In addition to these seven problems, this study also identified issues related to their personalities and/or adaptability, as well as issues concerning school rules and systems. Part of these findings may reflect the change in Chinese students' current situation in Japan.

This study has some limitations. Among them, the most critical limitation is the sample size. There are 49,405 overseas students studying at Japanese language schools, but I have only found 86 respondents and 10 people accepted my interview. Besides, although in the questionnaire I have asked their gender, education background, language proficiency level, these answers are not analyzed or reflect in the thesis.

Despite such limitations, this study complements and updates the research on the problems Chinese students encounter in Japanese language schools. It explores Chinese students' current views and perceptions towards Japanese language schools. To some extent, this study reverses some of the perceptions of earlier studies and allows for a concrete

description of students' views of Japanese language schools. Japanese language schools can also refer to this study for their improvement. This study can also serve as a precaution for Japanese language schools' oncoming students so that they can be prepared in advance for the difficulties they may encounter at Japanese language schools in Japan.

There are some suggestions for Japanese language schools. Firstly, the class allocation system should be improved. Second, the curriculum should be enriched to improve the relevance of the course according to the needs of different students. Thirdly, the teacher should expand some practical Japanese in addition to the teaching materials. Fourthly, the teacher should maintain appropriate discipline in the classroom.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Experience of Chinese Students in Japanese Language Schools in Japan

My name is WU XINGYU, and I am a graduate student from Osaka Jogakuin University.

I research what problems Chinese students face in Japanese language schools in Japan through this questionnaire. This questionnaire asks about your PERSONAL experience in Japanese language school in Japan. Your responses will be anonymous and will never be linked to your privacy. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If there are items you do not want to answer, please skip them. Thank you for your cooperation.

1.What is your gender?

Male

Female

Others don't want to answer

2.What is your educational background?

Senior high school graduation

College/University graduation

3.What is your current Japanese language proficiency level?

N1

N2

N3

N4

N5

Beginner

4.Are you satisfied with your Japanese language school's curriculum and learning material? Please rate your satisfaction level.

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Please explain the reason for your answer above.

5.Are you satisfied with the teaching style in your school?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Please explain the reason for your answer above.

6.How actively do you interact with teachers?

Very often

Often

Seldom

Never

7.Do you have the following problems when you communicate with teachers and staff?

Problems caused by Lack of Japanese language proficiency

Problems caused by different cultural backgrounds

Problems caused by your personality, for example, shyness

Problems caused by teachers/staff discrimination against you

If you choose "Others," please explain the reason.

8.When studying in a Japanese language school, do you feel anxious for your future career?

Very often

Often

Seldom

Never

Please explain the reason for your answer above.

How often does your school offer guidance for future study and career support?

Very often

Often

Seldom

Never

9. What is your main financial resource?

Family support

Part-time job

Scholarship

Others

How much do you have financial problems while studying in a Japanese language school?

No problem at all

Not serious problem

Serious problem

Very serious problem

10. Have you ever been discriminated against by somebody such as teachers, staff, and students in a Japanese language school? If so, how often?

Not at all

Sometimes

Often

Very often

11. Did you have psychological problems such as clinical depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, dependence syndrome, and anxiety disorder when you were studying at a Japanese Language School? If you had, how serious are they?

No problem at all

Not serious problem

Serious problem

Serious problem

12. Which problem was the most serious when you were studying at a Japanese Language School?

Inappropriate curriculum and learning materials

Inappropriate teaching style and teachers' attitude

Lack of learning opportunities

Lack of guidance for students' future

Financial problems

Discrimination

Psychological problems

Others

If you choose "Others", please explain it in detail.

Thank you for answering the questionnaire. If you are willing to be interviewed , please write your email address.

Translation

中国留学生在日本的日语学校的经历调查

我叫 WU XINGYU，是大阪女学院大学的一名研究生。我通过这个问卷调查来研究中国留学生在日本的日语学校里面临或遇到过哪些问题。调查对象是就读日语语言学校或者有过日语语言学校学习经历的同学。你的回答将是匿名的，不会与你的隐私相联系。你的参与是完全自愿的。如果有你不想回答的项目，请跳过它们。谢谢你的合作。

1.性别

男

女

不想回答

2.教育背景

高中毕业

大学，大专，或同等经历

3.目前日语水平

N1

N2

N3

N4

N5

初学者

4.你对你的日语学校的课程和学习材料满意吗？请给你的满意程度打分。

非常满意

满意

不满意

非常不满意

请解释您上述答案的原因。

5.你对你学校的教学方式满意吗？

非常满意

满意

不满意

非常不满意

请解释你上述答案的原因。

6.你是如何积极地与教师互动的？

很经常

经常

很少

从不

7.你在与教师和工作人员交流时，是否有以下问题？

由于你的日语能力不足而造成的问题

因文化背景不同而产生的问题

因你的性格而引起的问题，例如，害羞

由于教师/工作人员对你的歧视而造成的问题

如果你选择“其他”，请解释原因。

8.在日语学校学习期间，你是否为自己的未来职业感到焦虑？

很经常

经常

很少

没有

请解释你上述答案的原因。

你的学校多久会提供未来学习和职业支持的指导？

很经常

经常

很少

从不

9.你的主要经济来源是什么？

家庭支持

兼职工作

奖学金

其他

你在日本语言学校学习期间有多大的经济问题？

完全没有问题

问题不大

问题严重

问题严重

10.你是否曾经在日语学校受到过老师、员工和学生等人的歧视？如果有，多长时间一次？

完全没有

有时

经常

很经常

11.你在日语学校学习时，有没有出现心理问题，如临床抑郁症、强迫症、依赖症、焦虑症等？如果有，其严重程度如何？

完全没有问题

问题不大

严重的问题

非常严重的问题

12.你在日语学校学习时，哪个问题是最严重的？

课程和学习材料不合适

教学方式和教师态度的不恰当问题

缺乏学习机会

对学生的未来缺乏指导

经济问题

歧视

心理问题

其他问题

如果您选择“其它”，请详细说明。

感谢您对问卷的回答。如果您愿意接受采访，请填写您的电子邮件地址。

Appendix B: Interview

Thank you for accepting my interview, your answers will be recorded or transcribed, and your real name will not be disclosed.

1. Gender
2. Age
3. final education
4. how long you have been in Japan
5. Japanese language level
6. Current situation
7. Are you satisfied with the course and study materials at your Japanese language school?

Why?

8. What problems did you encounter when interacting with the teachers and staff?
9. Did you feel anxious about your future career while studying at the Japanese language school? Why?
10. Does your school provide guidance on future studies and career support? Was it satisfactory? Why?
11. What is your main source of financial support? Do you have financial problems? Does it affect your studies and life?
12. Have you ever been discriminated against by people such as teachers, staff, and students at a Japanese language school? If so, please explain in detail.

13. Did you have any psychological problems while studying at the Japanese language school, and if so, what were they specifically?

14. Which of the following problems do you think is the most serious when studying at a Japanese language school: inappropriate curriculum and study materials, inappropriate teaching methods and teachers' attitudes, Lack of learning, Lack of guidance for students' future, financial problems, discrimination, and psychological problems? Explain in detail.

Translation

感谢接受我的采访，您的回答将会被录音或者记录，您的真实姓名将不被公开。

1. 性别

2. 年龄

3. 最终学历

4. 在日本待了多久

5. 日语水平

6. 现在情况

7. 你对你的日语学校的课程和学习材料满意吗？为什么？

8. 你在与教师和工作人员交流时，遇到过那些问题？

9. 在日语学校学习时，你是否为自己的未来职业感到焦虑？为什么？

10. 你的学校会提供未来学习和职业支持方面的指导吗？是否满意？为什么？

11. 你的主要经济来源是什么？你有经济问题吗？是否会影响你的学习与生活？

12. 你是否曾经在日语学校里受到过老师、职员和学生等人的歧视？如果有，请具体解释一下。

13. 你在日语学校学习时，是否有心理问题，如果有，具体是哪些问题？

14. 你认为在日语学校学习时，“课程和学习材料不合适，教学方式和教师态度的不恰当问题，缺少学习，对学生的未来缺乏指导，经济问题，歧视，心理问题”中哪个问题最严重？具体解释一下。

