

Abstract

Japan, as the most aged country in the world, has been experiencing various issues due to the population aging. For many Japanese elderly, opportunities of social involvement and participation are limited, and it leads to their mental well-being threatened. The research is to examine how their participation in ICT mediated volunteering can positively affect their mental well-being, to investigate barriers to their participation, and finally to consider possible solutions to overcome the barriers. In the first chapter, the reason why this research is conducted and its strategy are briefly covered. Chapter 2 and 3 explore the current state of Japanese elderly, especially their mental well-being, and ICT mediated volunteering. In Chapter 4, its benefits on mental well-being of Japanese elderly are examined with some case scenarios. Chapter 5 reveals existing barriers to promoting their participation, and considers possible approaches to overcome the barriers. In the last chapter, the methods and result of a qualitative survey on 20 Japanese elderly and pre-elder generation are summarized. This research concludes that participation of Japanese elderly in ICT mediated volunteering is able to benefit their mental well-being as prevention on account of its features: social relationship and involvement, active engagement, learning and personal growth, altruistic action, and creation of sense of identity. Although there are various barriers, including their attitudes toward the Internet and volunteering, aptitudes and social issues, however, these could be overcome through promotion based on their interests and behaviors, increasing access points to the Internet, training them to use the Internet and to participate in volunteering, and designing for the elderly.

Key Words: healthy aging, elderly, mental well-being, ICT, volunteering, Japan