Title

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Incorporating co-created knowledge into mental health social work education in Japan: An organisational case study

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Abstract: In Japan, several community-based practices have led to the formation of practical theories in community mental health social work. As an innovative example, social workers at Yadokari-no-sato, a non-profit organisation in Japan, have worked with persons with psychosocial disabilities, their families and other supporters since 1970, while developing theories based on collaborative practices. Thus, based on the work of this organisation, this study examined the incorporation of knowledge created through collaborative practices into mental health social work education in Japan from an international perspective. This study used an organisational case study design with mixed methods. First, a qualitative content analysis was conducted using data extracted from major textbooks (n = 25). This analysis identified eight categories related to the fundamental theories and innovative activities rooted in Yadokari-no-sato. Second, the reflections of students regarding a series of university lectures, which focused on the organisation's practices, further supplemented the analysis. The study findings suggest that the values and perspectives of social work practices and the process of collaborative activities with relationship building have developed historically and comprehensively. The findings further indicate the significance of incorporating co-created practical knowledge and its process into social work education beyond the organisational context.

Keywords: co-production; knowledge creation; global and local norms; international perspectives; qualitative analysis

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1. Introduction

Social work practices are required to tackle various social issues (e.g. discrimination, prejudice and marginalisation) faced by people worldwide, including those with psychosocial disabilities, and realise their human rights and quality of life (Ife, Soldatić & Briskman, 2022). Regarding the promotion of their activities around the world, the education and training of mental health social workers is fundamental. Thus, the present study focuses on the relationship between grassroots knowledge, especially the creation of knowledge with survivors/consumers (Sapouna, 2021), and mental health social work education based on global and local viewpoints (Gray, 2016). The case in this research is Yadokari-no-sato (meaning, 'the village of the hermit crabs'), a non-profit organisation in Japan that has been active since the early days of community mental health and welfare in the 1970s, and was selected as a one of the best practices in the world in 1999.[2]

1-1. Background of mental health and welfare as a social issue in Japan

Japan is a significant case country for social work in the mental health and welfare of persons with psychosocial disabilities. One of the primary reasons is that social issues faced by those with psychosocial disabilities have historically appeared (Shinfuku, 1998, 2019; Totsuka, 1990), indicating the importance of the roles of social work in Japanese mental health and welfare (Kanata, 2016).

The current mental health and welfare situation has historical roots in Japan (see Appendix 1). Around the 1960s, in contrast to the de-institutionalisation and promotion of community care in many countries in Western Europe and North America, the number of private psychiatric hospital beds in Japan rapidly increased. Consequently, issues of poor quality detention and long-term social hospitalisation (社会的入院) emerged (Anders et al., 1997; Kanata, 2016; Shinfuku, 1998). Although gradual revisions were made in mental health laws and the establishment of service systems, especially after cases involving human rights violations in psychiatric hospitals were reported by the mass media,[3] the effectiveness of such services was still inadequate (Mandiberg, 1993; Ohnishi et al., 2008; Shinfuku, 1998).[4]

Recently, although changes have been made to the health and social welfare systems for persons with psychosocial disabilities, various problems have been pointed out by scholars and international organisations. For example, following the initial review of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified by the Japanese government in 2014, the

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[2] Five Japanese organisations were selected as having best practices by the World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation in 1999.

[3] Cases of assault and death of inpatients by private psychiatric hospitals are well-known, including the Hotokukai Utsunomiya Hospital in 1983 and the Yamatogawa Hospital in 1993.

[4] The issues include long-term hospitalised length of stay of 274.7 days on average (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2018) and human rights violations such as the case of inpatient abuse at the Kande Hospital in 2020 (see also Kanata, 2016).

observations (United Nations, 2022) included: concerns regarding involuntary treatment and hospitalisation for persons with disabilities and a request for the abolition of forced treatment (Articles 14 and 15), and a recommendation to adopt a national strategy to eliminate negative stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices for persons with disabilities (Article 8). In response, various actors, including social workers, are expected to take actions with survivors/consumers, families, citizens and other professions.

The history of Japanese psychiatric social workers (PSWs) dates back to post-World War II, with certain exceptions in pre-history. The direct roots of Japanese PSWs originated from the introduction of social work by the General Headquarters (GHQ), the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (led by the United States), followed by the placement of Japan's first psychiatric social worker[5] at the Kohnodai Hospital in 1948 (Inoue, 2022; Okamoto, 1991). One of the most serious issues in the history of Japanese PSWs was the so-called 'Y's Issues' (Y 問題) in 1973. At that time, the PSWs' ethics were critically questioned by an accusation from a person, whose name starts with Y, against a PSW who had provided unjust involuntary hospitalisation (Okamoto, 1991). After the enactment of the Certified Social Worker and Certified Care Worker Act in 1987, the Psychiatric Social Workers Act, which provides for the national qualifications, was enacted in 1997 (enforced in 1998) and revised in 2010 (enforced in 2012) and in 2022.[6]

During the policy process, disabled peoples' movements and international norms on the rights of persons with disabilities (e.g. the Declaration of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 1975, the international Year of Disabled Persons in 1981 and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons 1983–1992) have influenced the development of social welfare systems for persons with psychosocial disabilities in Japan. Recently, through the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2014), such welfare systems have reached a critical juncture for moving towards further development and progress (Fujii, 2021).

1-2. Organisational case: Yadokari-no-sato

In the days when there were few public welfare systems and services for persons with psychosocial disabilities, Yadokari-no-sato, a non-profit organisation, became a practical model for community life support (地域生活支援) (Higashida & Fujii, 2023; Mandiberg, 1993; Yanaka, 2000). In 1970, Yadokari-no-sato commenced its activities, with the late Mr Teruo Yanaka leading its community-based work (Yanaka, 1974; 1993, 1996ab, 2000; Yanaka et al., 1980). Subsequently, Yadokari-no-sato promoted public awareness while emphasising the importance of building social

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[5] There were also some predecessors, such as the late Ms. Fusa Asaga, who learnt social work theories and techniques in the West and practiced as a medical social worker in Japan.
[6] In 2020, the Japanese Association of Mental Health Social Workers changed the abbreviation from PSW to MHSW. However, in this study, we use PSW, since we describe them in a historical context.

support networks based on trust. Until 1989, since there were no public subsidies and budgetary measures by the government sector, Yadokari-no-sato often faced a financial crisis. However, social workers, non-professional workers, survivors/consumers (called *Tojisha,* 当事者; or sometimes 'members' at Yadokari-no-sato, in Japanese, meaning, 'the persons concerned'), their families and other supporters overcame the crises (Fujii, 2004; Yanaka, 1996b). Meanwhile, Mr Yanaka became a member of the Public Health Council and was involved in the development of policies in the central government (Ema, 2014; Yanaka, 2004).

Since the late 1990s, Yadokari-no-sato has emphasised moving from staff-led activities, including the involvement in policy formulation, to 'togetherness' or 'cooperative activities'. Yadokari-no-sato has also conducted grassroots activities and strengthened networking while utilising plain language to live and work together beyond positionalities. Currently, Yadokari-no-sato has conducted practices and pursued social changes with 'Each person is an actor' (１人１人が主人公), a slogan that includes the meaning of 'change agent in society'. By creating places and opportunities for dialogue and mutual learning while respecting others' opinions and voices, they have increased their number of supporters (Higashida & Fujii, 2023).

Today, the comprehensive activities of Yadokari-no-sato include workplaces, day-to-day activities, consultations and living locations. Current workplaces with reasonable accommodations and supports include publishing, printing and research divisions launched in 1974 and renamed Yadokari-Kenkyujo (the research institute) in 1979. In 1977, another division began a publishing programme especially for books and journals that have often focused on experiences of *Tojisha* and other stakeholders. In 1997 the Yadokari-Shuppann was reorganised to the Yadokari-Johokan (the information centre), while the Yadokari-Kenkyujo has been positioned as part of the Yadokari-Johokan since 2001, with the objective of disseminating information for persons with psychosocial disabilities and other stakeholders.[7] For this purpose, Yadokari-Kenkyujo has adopted a three-person joint representation system, consisting of a *Tojisha*, a practitioner and a researcher (Abe, 2011).[8]

1-3. Perspectives and objectives

This study discusses the theoretical development of Yadokari-no-sato, from an international perspective on social work knowledge. It also focuses on its co-creation with *Tojisha* in social work. First, the Global Definitions of the Social Work Professions (IFSW & IASSW, 2014) explicitly states, 'Social work is informed not only by specific practice environments and Western theories but also by

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[7] According to the second author's memory, Mr Yanaka was likely to have been conscious of providing practice experiences as research material to researchers and of sharing the wisdom and ingenuity of practice with practitioners to promote community-based practices.

[8] In FY 2021, there were 319 registered members at Yadokari-no-sato, with 52 full-time employees and 48 part-time employees. In addition, various community life support activities have been conducted, such as 221 new cases of consultations and 737 continuous cases of consultations annually.

indigenous knowledges'. However, the relationship between indigenous knowledge and international norms is not straightforward (Higashida, 2022b, 2023; Higashida et al., n.d.). For example, social work based on indigenous knowledge conceptually presents variations among Western-rooted professional social work by indigenous peoples, Westernised indigenous social work and indigenous social work (Akimoto et al., 2020). Hence, it is necessary to examine the construction of knowledge and discourses through the interactions among grassroots practices, foreign knowledge and international norms.

Second, this study determines how practical knowledge is reflected in social work education while considering the process and the stakeholders. Specifically, it focuses on the knowledge created from the collaborative social work practices with *Tojisha* and their families at the grassroots level (Fujii, 2004). To date, several studies in Europe and the United States have found that knowledge is created in the mental health and welfare arena, as exemplified by the conceptualisation and movement of 'recovery', through partnerships between survivors/consumers, practitioners and researchers, among others (Higashida, 2005; Rempfer & Knott, 2002). The nature of the survivors/consumers' involvement in social work training has also been discussed (Sapouna, 2021). In sum, it is important to consider the implications of such knowledge for social work education from a multifaceted perspective.[9]

While advanced practical theories have been developed in Japan, there have been insufficient examinations of how such theories can be incorporated into contemporary social work education in the domestic context (Higashida & Fujii, 2023). Thus, the present study determines how knowledge created from collaborative practices with *Tojisha*, families and citizens is reflected in mental health and welfare education from an international perspective. The research questions (RQs) in this study are as follows:

RQ1. How are certain descriptions of knowledge rooted in practices by stakeholders of Yadokari-no-sato incorporated into textbooks?
RQ2. How can students learn from co-created knowledge rooted in Yadokari-no-sato's practices?

2. Methods
This study is part of a comprehensive project that examines the association between local and indigenous knowledge and social work education. In line with the aim and RQs, it applied an organisational case study design (Yin, 2018), using a mixed methods approach to the integration of Yadokari-no-sato's experiences and knowledge into mental health social work education in Japan. The

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[9] In Japan, there is the study of *Tojisha*, which emerged from the practice at Bethel-no-ie (Ishihara, 2015). Mr Mukaiyachi (who led the study) also stated that it was influenced by Yadokari-no-sato's practices (Yanaka & Mukaiyachi, 2003).

exploratory case study design included two types of data analysis, first, a qualitative content analysis of the selected textbooks to explore content related to the knowledge rooted in the organisation and its practices. To explore student's learning experiences, the content analysis was supplemented by a qualitative descriptive analysis of the students' classroom responses. After the data were analysed in the original Japanese, the quoted statements were translated into English by the authors.
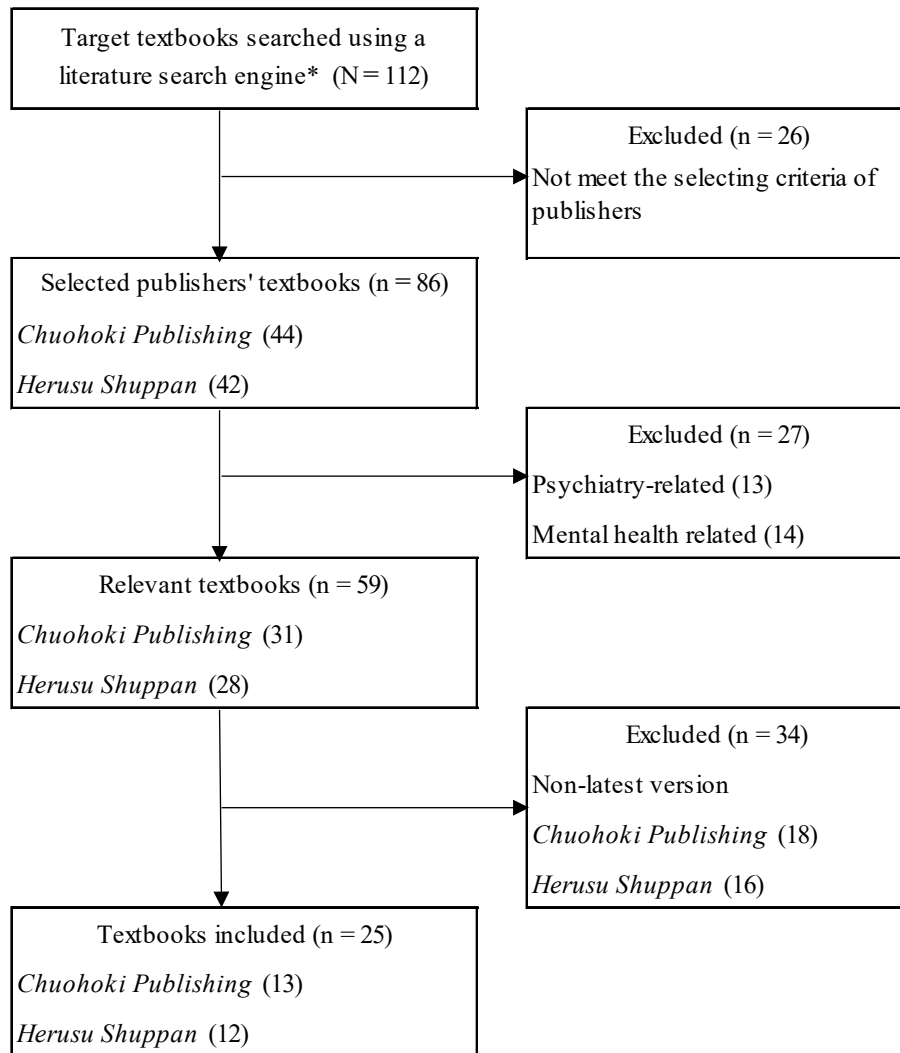
2-1. Qualitative content analysis of the selected textbooks

Following the process in Figure 1, major textbooks, which comply with the standardised curricula (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2020) and national certification examinations for social workers,[10] were collected for the qualitative content analysis. The sample selection criteria were as follows. First, one volume in a textbook series must be published per one subject in principle. Second, the sample textbooks must be continually published for each curriculum revision. Consequently, the textbooks, while excluding the those related to placement training and practical seminars, from the two publishers were set as a population using CiNii, a Japanese academic search engine (N = 112). Among them, the textbooks directly related to mental health social work were extracted while excluding the textbooks related to the medical and health discipline (psychiatry and mental health). Third, based on the curriculum revisions, the latest textbooks were extracted for each period (n = 25), with the first period from 1999 to 2011, the second period from 2012 to 2020 and the third period from 2021 onwards.

Overall, the sample textbooks were analysed in four stages. First, terms, such as 'Yadokari-no-sato' and 'Yanaka (Teruo)', were searched in indexes, after which the texts with these terms were manually extracted. Second, the extracted texts were grouped according to their content, meaning and contexts. Third, similar codes were aggregated into categories, after which eight categories emerged. The number of codes corresponding to each category was then counted. Finally, the activities of Yadokari-no-sato and its rooted knowledge and theories were interpretatively analysed.

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[10] A standardised education and training curriculum for mental health social workers has been provided by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2020).

Figure 1. Flow chart for sampling textbooks' content

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Target textbooks searched using a  │
│  literature search engine* (N = 112) │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                │           ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                │──────────▶│ Excluded (n = 26)                │
                │           │ Not meet the selecting criteria of│
                │           │ publishers                        │
                ▼           └──────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Selected publishers' textbooks (n = 86)│
│  Chuohoki Publishing (44)            │
│  Herusu Shuppan (42)                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                │           ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                │──────────▶│ Excluded (n = 27)                │
                │           │ Psychiatry-related (13)          │
                │           │ Mental health related (14)       │
                ▼           └──────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Relevant textbooks (n = 59)         │
│  Chuohoki Publishing (31)            │
│  Herusu Shuppan (28)                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                │           ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                │──────────▶│ Excluded (n = 34)                │
                │           │ Non-latest version               │
                │           │ Chuohoki Publishing (18)         │
                │           │ Herusu Shuppan (16)              │
                ▼           └──────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Textbooks included (n = 25)         │
│  Chuohoki Publishing (13)            │
│  Herusu Shuppan (12)                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Note: CiNii, a search engine and comprehensive bibliography of Japanese university libraries, was used.

2-2. Trial classes

The sample textbooks and teaching materials of Yadokari-no-sato were used to conduct teaching and evaluate the students' learning. The subject was related to a community mental health welfare system registered by 18 students at a Japanese university in 2022. Among the 15 classes (90 minutes per class), the practical cases and theories rooted in Yadokari-no-sato were intensively taught in two classes. In the first class, for 45 minutes, the history and current activities of Yadokari-no-sato and its rooted theories were introduced. In the fifth class, a group discussion was held after presenting a promotional

DVD about Yadokari-no-sato (Yadokari-no-sato, 2021). Yadokari-no-sato's activities and theories were also taught as examples of group- and community-related practices in the other classes. During each class, following the university's code of research and educational ethics, a lecturer distributed anonymous individual reflection papers to the students, who were asked to complete them on an optional basis. The lecturer collected them at the end of each class. The target classes' response rate was 88.9%. Furthermore, the collected data were anonymised, with all personally identifiable information deleted prior to analysis. Student reaction papers were analysed then interpretively to complement the qualitative content analysis, with the aim of exploring the learning opportunities and challenges faced by students in an actual teaching setting.

3. Findings

3-1. Qualitative content analysis of the selected textbooks

The qualitative content analysis of the data from the sample textbooks generated eight categories (Table 1). Category A ('Pioneering local activities and their historical background') was the most frequent category, i.e. roughly one-fourth of the categories. Except for Category H ('Others'), the categories with more than 10% were Category B ('Difficulties in living (viewpoint)'), Category D ('Community life support (model)') and Category C ('Realisation of ordinary living (philosophy)'). The categories with less than 10% included Category E ('Living together (relationship)'), Category F ('Voices and lived experiences of the members') and Category G ('Peership, groups and social support'). The quotes are described with the sample ID.[11]

Pioneering local activities and their historical background

Descriptions of Category A were observed in a wide range of areas. As for Yadokari-no-sato, it was described as an innovative and 'practical example of our home country' (2014C-K: 351):

> In 1970, Yadokari-no-sato, a private organisation emerged without an umbrella of medical care, … aiming improve social welfare facilities that take care of their living. The practices of Yadokari-no-sato, based on the philosophy of 'community-based' (地域に根ざす), 'realisation of ordinary living' (ごく当たり前の生活の実現) and 'living together' (ともに生きる), … had a significant impact nationwide. (2017H-K: 168: translation by the authors)

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[11] The ID consists of three components: year of publication, publisher (C = Chuohoki Publishing or H = Herusu Shuppan) and subject (upper-case in Roman initials). The quoted page number is shown after the colon.

Table 1. Frequency of relevant descriptions by category and period

Category	Description	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Total
A. Pioneering local activities and their historical background	The innovative practices of Yadokari-no-sato in the underdeveloped context of mental health and social welfare in Japan in the 1970s	8 (33.3%)	15 (25.0%)	9 (19.6%)	32 (24.6%)
B. Difficulties in living (viewpoint)	Conceptualisation of subjective difficulties experienced by people with psychosocial disabilities in their lives, including negative effects of long-term hospitalisation and social discrimination and prejudice	4 (16.7%)	6 (10.0%)	11 (23.9%)	21 (16.2%)
C. Realisation of ordinary living (philosophy)	The organisation's philosophy stated in the code of ethics: it not only a matter of living a life like those without disabilities but also of achieving a life that is unique to each person	1 (4.2%)	10 (16.7%)	4 (8.7%)	15 (11.5%)
D. Community life support (model)	Practical perspectives and methods of relevant activities based on consumers' views, in comparison with the medical model	2 (8.3%)	12 (20.0%)	3 (6.5%)	17 (13.1%)
E. Living together (relationship)	Mutual engagement and encounters living in the community, including cyclical relationships that could transcend positionalities	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.3%)	4 (8.7%)	6 (4.6%)
F. Voices and lived experiences of the members	Descriptions of lived experiences of persons with psychosocial disabilities, including their first-person accounts	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.3%)
G. Peer groups and social support	Group activities and social support networks, including self-help, of and by persons with psychosocial disabilities	5 (20.8%)	1 (1.7%)	2 (4.3%)	8 (6.2%)
H. Others	Other descriptions that do not match the categories above	4 (16.7%)	11 (18.3%)	13 (28.3%)	28 (21.5%)
Total		24	60	46	130

Note: In line with the curriculum revisions, the first period from 1999 to 2011, the second period from 2012 to 2020 and the third period from 2021 onwards.

Additionally, the historical context of Japanese mental health and welfare was described along with the emerging practices of Yadokari-no-sato. Note the following statement by Mr Yanaka:

> The activities of psychiatric social workers and their association have greatly influenced the agent formation of mental health welfare. ... The 9th National Congress of the Japanese Association of Psychiatric Social Workers was held in Yokohama in 1973. This was also the time when Yadokari-no-sato's activities were reported. Most of the feedback noted that the experimental attempts

[of Yadokari-no-sato] would not last long. On the other hand ... a series of events, including the so-called 'Y's Issues', also raised questions about the human rights violations by psychiatric social workers. (2007C-S: 16: translation by the authors)

Regarding this historical context, another textbook stated that Mr Yanaka served as the President of the Japanese Association of Psychiatric Social Workers. It also explained the adoption of the association's guidelines regarding professional social activities for social rehabilitation and welfare of persons with mental disabilities in 1982 (2017H-T: 134).[12]

Difficulties in living and realisation of ordinary living
Descriptions of Categories B and C were also observed as basic viewpoints and principles in mental health and welfare practices. Although these categories were intentionally divided for convenience of analysis, their integral nexus was occasionally shown. For example, as a philosophy of community life support and welfare for persons with psychosocial disabilities in the Japanese context, *Tojisha* are regarded as 'living persons'[13] (生活者) (2017H-T: 16-18). Meanwhile, the 'Difficulties in living' (生活のしづらさ) was not only presented as a suggestion in social work but also in the field of mental health and psychiatric rehabilitation:

> The perspectives of Mr. Yanaka … also had impacts on subsequent psychiatric rehabilitation. If the possibility of social participation is expanded by considering their 'difficulties in living', then it would be significant to prove that some disorders can be regarded as adjustable obstacles based on society's acceptance and promotion of employment opportunities … (2017H-K: 28: translation by the authors)

Some of the textbooks described the theoretical association with the transition from the medical model of disability to the life model (生活モデル). For instance, one textbook pointed out the significance of the 'initiation of [a concept of] "difficulties in living" based on practices' and stated that it has finally developed a form of community life support, from the medical model to the life model (2017H-T: 62).

There were also relevant descriptions highlighting the relationship between the values and ethics of certified mental health social workers and Yadokari-no-sato's vision and policy ('Each person is an actor') (2021C-G: 222).

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[12] As for official statements on 'Y's Issues' by Mr Yanaka, then-President of the Japanese Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, they are accessible at http://www.arsvi.com/1900/8106nsk.htm (in Japanese).
[13] This expression seems to have a different nuance to the terms 'survivors' or 'consumers', which are common in the Western world.

Community life support model

Regarding the descriptions of Category D, they were systematically presented while regarding community life support as a practical theory rooted in their activities. One textbook quoted Mr Yanaka's comparative table between the medical model and the life model while also introducing the perspective of 'difficulties in living' (2017H-F: 169). Moreover, social work theory and knowledge created from the practices of Yadokari-no-sato was sometimes described in comparison with other theories. The following description, based on Yadokari-no-sato's community life support activities and their social movement towards formal institutionalisation of their activities, highlighted the affinity of their life model with Charles Rapp's strengths model (cf. Ema, 2014):

> The concept of Mr. Yanaka's community life support was like 'the philosophy of realising their community-based life in respect to one's self-determination. It also realised one's self-determination and mutual support by repeatedly conducting support for *Tojisha*, based on their informed consent and choice'. Such support attempted to make the most of what the person possessed while adjusting the living environment. This idea is linked to the Rapp's strengths model. (2014C-K: 298-299, free translation by the authors, due to complexity of the descriptions)

Living together and relationship

Category E included descriptions that social workers not only need professional involvement, but also perspectives of human relationships with mutual support. The following emphasises the importance of such relationships (かかわり)[14]:

> They have advocated 'ordinary living', 'walking together' and 'community life support'. ... It is important for the internal world of the self to have an expansion in space and time. It also describes the importance of mutual exchange, mutual aid and the network construction of mutual support, not only the unilateral support by the profession. (2017H-T: 197: translation by the authors)

While it was also included in Category H, some texts corresponding to Category E described such support based on intersubjectivity. For example, one book pointed out that Yadokari-no-sato's practices have been shown as 'being-together' (ともにある) relationships, instead of supporter-recipient relationships (vertical) (2021C-G: 242). Another textbook emphasised the significance of 'assistants living together as witnesses of presence' (臨在の証人] and 'being accepted by others and becoming oneself' (2009H-F: 222-223).

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[14] This involves social workers being present (居合わせ) in the life-world of *Tojisha* and walking and learning together, considering phenomenological perspectives on coexistence and corporeal existence (Hayakawa & Yanaka, 1984).

Voices and lived experiences of the members

Category F refers to the first-person accounts of *Tojisha* with psychosocial disabilities. Although the number of textbooks that covered them was small, the descriptions were still revealing. For example, such accounts included a person who lived into his 70s after being hospitalised for 22 years, and another person explained the real feeling of 'being alive today', in a community. They also mentioned the negative aspects of psychiatric hospitals, prejudice and discrimination against psychiatric disorders, as well as environmental improvements that promoted recovery (2017H-S: 229-232).

Peers, groups and social support

Descriptions of Category G were particularly observed in regard to current activities. Some descriptions noted that formation and strengthening of peer relationships (仲間づくり) was an advanced community life support activity, especially when public financial aid was practically unavailable (2009H-F: 377). The textbook also explained the viewpoint of respect for an 'independent actor of will' (主体性) in mental health and welfare, with an episode on group activities and Japanese-style living and tea rooms (茶の間) (2009H-F: 223-224). Specific examples of self-help group activities in a community included joint workshops and mutual support groups at apartments/group homes (2005H-K: 118-119).

Other descriptions

Finally, Category H included various themes, ranging from the macro level to the micro level. Examples at the macro level included the involvement in legal institutionalisation based on practices, reporting practices at the national level and criticism against the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act, whereas those at micro and mezzo levels included the importance of recording/documenting practices (記録化), internal and external prejudices, intersubjectivity and cyclical relationships (循環的関係) and mutual training. For instance, some textbooks highlighted the importance of recording/documenting practices when engaging with people with various backgrounds and needs towards realising 'ordinary living' in which they can be themselves (2015C-F: 149). This description corresponds to the phrase 'No practice without records' (記録のない実践は実践にあらず), which has been handed down in Yadokari-no-sato from the early stages of its activities.

Other descriptions regarding network formation at the community level and macro practices were also observed. The following points out the macro-level actions based on mutual support between *Tojisha* and their families:

Despite the extreme difficulties in managing and continuing activities, the organisation first nurtured and strengthened its network and then overcame many barriers. ... Mutual support between members

was nurtured through creating and strengthening peer relationships (peer support), while consultations provided by the families helped continue their activities. These activities also had an impact on local governments. On the other hand, Mr. Yanaka became a member of the national council and was also involved in the development of related policies. (2014C-K: 201: translation by the authors)

3-2. Students' reflections

To complement the findings of the qualitative content analysis, the first author explored the learning experiences of students taught at the community mental health and welfare courses using three textbooks (2017H-T; 2017H-K; 2021C-G) and related educational materials. In the first class, the lecturer introduced Yadokari-no-sato's past and present activities and held group discussions on 'what can be learned'. First, seven students' comments indicated their endorsement of the community life support theory with some key practical concepts, such as 'difficulties in living' and the 'realisation of ordinary living':

> By thinking of the nature of support from practical examples [of Yadokari-no-sato], I realised that it is important to think about people's 'ordinary living' and their 'difficulties in living'.

> I once again learned about the importance of understanding a person's wishes in order to realise their ordinary living that is uniquely their own.

Interestingly, four students seemed critical of modern institutionalised social welfare systems while drawing on their own role model of social workers:

> By learning from Yadokari-no-sato's practices, I understood the importance of social work... Since there are always people left behind by existing laws and systems, I felt the necessity for social workers to reflect on their practices in society without being bound by current situations.

> [Like Yadokari-no-sato's cooperative practice] I wanted to become a social worker who could work together with *Tojisha* and be a catalyst for them.

Second, after presenting Yadokari-no-sato's brief promotional DVD in the fifth class, the first author facilitated the group discussions and focused on the students' learning experiences. The following comment indicated that he learned more about Yadokari-no-sato's practices through visual imagery:

> At the lecture, I was able to understand what types of practices were conducted by Yadokari-no-sato

for significance in the community. ... By running coffee shops and box lunch services, as well as agricultural activities [where the members also work], I also learned that its network has been strengthened in the community.

Four students also noted how Yadokari-no-sato's activities, values and perspectives were indicated in the narratives of the stakeholders in the video. From the stories, voices and facial expressions of the various people, two students stated the following:

A man who was hospitalised in a psychiatric department from the age of 19 was described as feeling shameful about his illness and hospitalisation. However, he expressed his joy of being free after reaching Yadokari-no-sato. I was very impressed by his change, as seen in his beaming face. I felt that not only the disabled persons, but also the staff members, their families and the people in the community have a place where they can feel at ease.

When watching the video, everyone smiled and I felt glad that they came to Yadokari-no-sato. As exemplified by the community café that they managed, I noticed that these activities were not only supported by *Tojisha*, but also by the local people.

Third, other comments were not directly related to the eight categories. In this regard, there was an example of learning from advanced approaches such as agricultural cooperation:

Looking at the video, I was able to understand what functions and mechanisms were available at Yadokari-no-sato. The phrases that appeared in the video were particularly impressive such as 'Each person is an actor' (１人１人が主人公) and 'For realising the prosperous connections between people, and between people and nature' ... I felt that support for people's dreams and a place where they will not feel alone can lead to confidence.

4. Discussion

This study determined how knowledge created from collaborative practices with *Tojisha* is reflected in mental health social work education, from an international perspective. In line with the RQs, this section discusses the integration of co-created knowledge into social work educational materials and the students' learning experiences.

4-1. Summary and Interpretation of the findings

This section summarises the findings in relation to research questions. First, knowledge and practices rooted in Yadokari-no-sato were widely adopted in mental health social work education and training.

Quantitatively, the activities in the organisation with the historical context in the 1970s (Category A) and concepts and theoretical formulation (Categories B, C and D) were incorporated into many textbooks. Meanwhile, descriptions about knowledge and practices at the micro level and about systems at the macro level were included in the textbooks. For example, there was peer support (Category G), relationship features (Category E), the importance of records and reports, living and tea rooms and living support systems (Category H).

Second, some textbooks included *Tojisha*'s accounts and their subjective experiences (Category F), condition surveys and the slogan 'Each person is an actor' (Category H). While the lived experiences of *Tojisha* with Yadokari-no-sato were described in detail, the frequency of accounts of *Tojisha* seemed generally limited to textbooks. Additionally, the descriptions introduced Yadokari-no-sato's condition surveys that examined the issues faced by persons with psychosocial disabilities and their families—interviewed by Yadokari-no-sato's staff/practitioners—while calling for institutional reforms in the country. This can be described as 'learning from the person in front of you and connecting to practice', a concept influenced by the phenomenological thoughts of the late Mr Hayakawa, who interacted with staff and members at Yadokari-no-sato in its early days (Masuda, 2005; Sakamoto, 2005).

Third, many theories and practices of Yadokari-no-sato were quoted from Japanese-language books and articles published by the in-house Yadokari-Publishing. This seems to be an indirect impact of their knowledge on the integration into social work education materials. Moreover, the textbooks were written by various Japanese researchers and practitioners while referring to the organisation's publications.

In terms of RQ2, educational lessons were learned from students' subjective experiences in trial classes using some textbooks with multimedia. In the social work education context of community mental health, it was partially shown that the knowledge and practices rooted in Yadokari-no-sato could be learned using textbooks. However, the finding also indicated that some parts that were newly learned from the current practices were not integrated into the textbooks. Overall, these findings indicate the potential for continuous learning from ongoing community-based developmental practices.

Since knowledge, theories and practices rooted in Yadokari-no-sato were generally scattered across the textbooks, the findings indicate the need to conduct classes in a comprehensive and intensive manner for deeper learning. Given that the students not only learned about historical and traditional matters, but also the theories, skills, values and ethics relevant to mental health and welfare systems, their comments suggest that the use of various teaching methods, including multimedia and group work, can be effective for understanding multifaceted views and practical knowledge through students' actual feelings and senses. Although face-to-face classes with *Tojisha* were not implemented during the study period due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some students' mentioned the importance of

learning from their subjective experiences in person.

4-2. Implications for co-created practice theory and teaching

This section discusses the return of knowledge to social work education, the theoretical formation in practice, co-created knowledge through dialogues and international implications. First, one of the points is how practical theory is taught in social work education. The theories and contents rooted in Yadokari-no-sato might not always be taught as they were originally constructed. Typically, Japanese students might tend to simply memorise historical facts, theories and perspectives in order to pass the national examination to become a certified (mental health) social worker (Ito, 1995). If educators are unfamiliar with Yadokari-no-sato's practices and simply use the contents of textbooks, then they may face difficulties explaining practical theory and concepts in plain language to students. Thus, in addition to teaching content, continual reflection on how viewpoints and values beyond the organisational context should be taught is crucial in educational settings (Higashida, 2022a).

Second, the findings of this study suggest the importance of ensuring that practical experiences are verbalised/shared among *Tojisha*, their families, social workers and other stakeholders. Similar to participatory action research (Fujii, 2004; Rempfer & Knott, 2002), the process of formulating practical theory at Yadokari-no-sato is regarded as knowledge creation through dialogues, mutual learning and social movement based on the accounts and voices of *Tojisha*. Meanwhile, the sample textbooks tended partially to present the viewpoints and theories, with few details. Hence, the gap between the theoretical formation of such practices and the return to education indicates a significant teaching challenge. Again, one approach could be using books, journals and multimedia published by Yadokari-no-sato, and by inviting *Tojisha* and collaborators as guest speakers.

Third, the findings provide implications for the international exchange of knowledge and practical theories. Currently, many scholars are exploring alternative knowledge in social work practices, including indigenous social work and the decolonisation of social work (Gray et al., 2010). The knowledge presented in this study was not necessarily constructed only from grassroots practices, since it was influenced by an international exchange with Western countries and learning from international norms (Ema, 2014; Fujii, 2004; Yanaka, 1996a). Instead, they were formed through social work practices and dialogues with intentional interactions with cross-border/foreign perspectives. As Mr Yanaka described, 'We have been looking for the nature of community life support in the Japanese context. However, the outcome is almost the same [as the Western models], although the [Yadokari-no-sato's] life model itself may be different from that in the United States' (Yanaka, 2000: 132: author translation). This suggests the significance of exploring contextually relevant practical knowledge with *Tojisha*, their families and citizens in front of the practitioners while learning from the practices in other countries/regions (Mandiberg, 1993).

4-3. Limitations

Although this study focused on the integration of co-created knowledge into mental health social work education in the Japanese context, it includes several limitations related to the study design and methods. The case study design was exploratory and did not comprehensively reveal the relationship between theory rooted in practice and education. First, in the qualitative content analysis, data were extracted from textbooks by collecting a wide range of samples from three periods, and the relevant textbooks were analysed without distinguishing subjects. Although this indicates the widespread dissemination of Yadokari-no-sato's knowledge in certified mental health social work education, this analysis did not consider the various subject's contexts. The second challenge was that most of the findings depended on the analysis of textbooks and educational experiences in only one setting. In addition, the analytical findings, including categorisation of the qualitative content analysis, relied on the authors' subjective interpretation. Hence, the results are considered preliminary, since they were not examined in a wider range of educational settings. Third, while the findings have international implications, they were not compared with mental health social work in Asia or other regions.

5. Conclusion and Future Recommendations

This study examined the incorporation of knowledge created through collaborative practice into mental health social work education in Japan from an international perspective. First, the findings indicate the importance of comprehensively teaching developmental practices that lead to institutions and policies based on the cyclical relationship between *Tojisha*'s experiential world and social workers. In education and human resource development settings, it is also important to determine how these aspects are taught with plain language and based on a sense of reality. Second, while recognising the interactions with Western-rooted theories and international norms under globalisation, it is necessary to examine the creation and dissemination of grassroots practical knowledge. Such knowledge and experiences can be used to promote an understanding of contextually relevant social work with persons with psychosocial disabilities on a wider level. Third, this study only presented some snapshots of the historical creation of social work knowledge and its current integration into social work education. However, future studies should critically re-examine the findings of this study in consideration of the time axis, i.e. the past, present and future.

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