Reconstruction of Transnational Educational Strategies through Parent-child Interaction: A Case Study of High School Students of Brazilian Schools in Japan

Rafaela Yoshiy Olivares†

In recent years, interest in studying at Japanese universities or studying abroad in a third country has increased among students enrolled in Brazilian high schools in Japan. However, although the career options of Brazilian school students have expanded, their parents’ perceptions of this situation and the ways in which these perceptions are reflected in their transnational educational strategies have not yet been clarified. Therefore, this study sets forth the following research questions to clarify how the parents of Brazilian school students reconstruct their transnational educational strategies as they interact with their children in the face of socioeconomic changes in Japan.

This study examined the following research questions based on interviews with Brazilian high school students and their parents: (1) What educational strategies did these parents originally employ? (2) What factors affected changes in these strategies? (3) What strategies emerged through negotiations between these parents and their children? (4) What difficulties do Brazilian families face in implementing these new strategies?

The results of this research revealed that the educational strategies of Japanese-Brazilian families are no longer premised on returning to Brazil, contrary to the findings of previous studies. Instead, both the parents and the children of these families now envision the children’s futures in Japan or a third country. In other words, transnational education strategies are fluid. In the process of family adaptation to Japanese society, these strategies are transformed by macro and micro factors, including parent-child interactions in the home.

Keywords: Brazilian schools in Japan; second-generation immigrants; immigrant youth; transnational educational strategy; career formation

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INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the number of foreigners living in Japan reached 2.8 million (Ministry of Justice, 2021). Japan has received Brazilian workers to make up for its labor shortage since 1990. Currently, there are 206,365 Brazilians living in Japan, making up the fifth-largest ethnic group in the country (Ministry of Justice, 2021).

With the increasing number of foreigners in Japan, the number of children requiring Japanese language support has also increased (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT], 2020). According to MEXT (2020), over forty thousand public school students in Japan are in need of Japanese language assistance, nearly 25.6% of whom are Portuguese speakers.

While Japanese public schools have struggled to provide support for foreign students, international schools—including long-established Chinese, Korean, and Brazilian schools—have played an important role in providing access to education for these children. Currently, over two hundred *gaikokujin gakko* (“foreign schools”) are spread across Japan (Shimizu et al., 2014), of which Brazilian schools are the most common, totaling approximately 50 schools (Embaixada do Brasil).

Having strong ties to both Brazil and Japan, Brazilians living in Japan reside in a transnational space. Therefore, sending children to Brazilian schools in preparation for returning home is an important transnational educational strategy employed by this group.¹ Brazilian schools in Japan provide education following the curriculum set by the Brazilian government, serving as alternative schools for Brazilian children who intend to continue their education in Brazil or who cannot function in regular Japanese schools. Given the educational characteristics of these schools, until approximately five to ten years ago, it was very common for Brazilian school students to return to Brazil after they graduated.

However, in recent years, an increasing interest in studying at Japanese universities or studying abroad in a third country has been noted among students enrolled in Brazilian high schools (Yamanouchi, 2014). Consequently, the transnational educational strategies of parents who have enrolled their children in Brazilian schools are expected to have changed. Nevertheless, the process by which these strategies change and the impact of these changes on students’ career consciousness are not fully understood. Thus, this study examined how and why both parents’ and children’s attitudes toward transnational educational strategies have changed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Transnational Educational Strategy

Second-generation immigrants’ educational attainment and career formation are influenced by parental human capital and family structure, as well as government immigrant acceptance policies, labor market structure, and the presence or absence of support from the ethnic community (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Shimizu et al., 2021). Furthermore, transnational educational strategy is important in the careers of immigrant youth. As globalization accelerates, parents are implementing a variety of strategies to ensure their children’s upward mobility, which has evolved in response to changing times and family needs.
For example, Nukaga’s (2012) ethnographic research on Japanese expatriate families in Los Angeles revealed that mothers have begun to increasingly value local education as a way of better preparing their children to become global talents through the acquisition of the English language and local culture. One reason Japanese mothers have been able to respond flexibly to these changes is that Japan has an entrance examination system for returnee students. Furthermore, most expatriate families are middle class or higher, which can help reduce economic barriers to the implementation of transnational educational strategies.

Transnational educational strategies have also been used by immigrant families in Japan. Shimizu et al. (2013) conducted a significant comparative study on ethnic schools in Japan, which revealed that parents who enroll their children in Chinese/Korean, international, or Brazilian schools have very different perspectives and practices regarding their children’s education. Oldcomer Chinese and Korean immigrant parents tend to emphasize ethnic education as a result of their experiences being excluded from Japanese society. Newcomer immigrant parents, on the other hand, tend to enroll their children in Chinese/Korean ethnic schools to prepare for a successful return home. Parents of children in international schools tend to prioritize bilingual/bicultural education because the majority of students in these schools come from international families. Brazilian parents, on the other hand, tend to prepare for a return home by utilizing their family networks in both countries after analyzing both countries’ educational systems.

Much like Japanese expatriate families, immigrant parents who have enrolled their children in the aforementioned ethnic schools in Japan have readjusted their transnational educational strategies. In recent years, the desire of newcomer families to settle in Japan has increased, as has the number of immigrant students who wish to continue their education in Japan. The career paths of Brazilian school students are also diversifying, and some students are enrolling in Japanese universities, attending distance learning courses offered by Brazilian universities, or studying abroad in a third country (Yoshiy, forthcoming). Accordingly, Brazilian schools are taking measures to meet both parents’ and students’ changing needs (Yoshiy, 2020).

Despite the fluidity of transnational education strategies, few prior studies have captured these changes. The number of immigrants in Japan has been on the rise in recent years, and the presence of young people who form their careers with multiple countries in mind is becoming more prominent. However, there is insufficient debate surrounding how to support these youth, especially those with typically low socioeconomic status, such as Brazilians in Japan. In this sense, capturing changes in the transnational education strategies of Brazilian parents in Japan is expected to have important implications for policy intended to address this situation.

2. Transnational Education Strategy of Brazilian Parents in Japan

Brazilian immigrants are spread across the world and are primarily transnational immigrants (Margolis, 2013). Among these immigrants, Brazilians living in Japan are particularly engaged in transnational activities. There are two primary reasons for this. First, Brazilian immigrants in Japan are granted long-term resident status by the Japanese government because they are descendants of Japanese emigrants in Brazil, facilitating their mobility between the two countries. Second, these immigrants tend to work as irregular factory workers and thus to be easily affected by the global economy, which often leaves them with no option...
but to return home when there is an economic recession (Takenoshita, 2013).

Brazilian parents in Japan have used transnational educational strategies to mitigate the impact of frequent relocation between nations on their children’s academic progress and professional development. In particular, school selection between local Japanese schools and Brazilian schools is one of the main transnational educational strategies employed by these parents (Shimizu & Shimizu, 2001).

Providing education in Portuguese that follows the curriculum set by the Brazilian Ministry of Education, Brazilian schools in Japan were originally established to serve Brazilian families who planned to return home. However, Brazilian schools have also served students who did not function well in Japanese public schools due to cultural differences. Although they are of Japanese descent, Nikkei-Brazilians tend to be marginalized because they are perceived as foreigners in Japanese society; this tends to prevent cultural adaptation, including the language acquisition of both parents and children (Tsuda, 2003). In addition to linguistic barriers, long working hours in factories can also make it difficult for Brazilian parents to support their children’s education. With insufficient support for immigrants in Japan, Brazilian schools have played an important role in meeting the needs of Brazilian families for more than 20 years.

Since Brazilian institutions incorporate Brazilian teaching materials, some Brazilian students have returned to Brazil from Japan to pursue their education. Studies on these individuals have shown that their willingness to continue their education in Brazil, communication with their parents, and resources all have a significant impact on their career formation (Kojima, 2010).

However, among the students of Brazilian schools in Japan, very few return to Brazil. Many of these young people stay in Japan and engage in unskilled labor like their parents. Some of these students choose to work in factories and raise money to pursue careers in Brazil due to their fragile financial situations. However, the length of stay of their families in Japan also has an impact on these students’ career decisions (Haino, 2010). According to Haino (2010), most of these students are influenced by their parents’ plans, but some families modify their plans to suit their children’s desire to stay in Japan, indicating that parent-child negotiations are taking place.

Together, the aforementioned studies have shown that Brazilian parents in Japan have flexibly adapted their transnational education strategies amid financially vulnerable situations and a lack of educational support in Japan. However, although the career options of Brazilian school students have expanded (Yoshiy, forthcoming), their parents’ perceptions of this situation and the ways in which these perceptions are reflected in their transnational educational strategies have not yet been clarified.

Therefore, this study sets forth the following research questions to clarify how the parents of Brazilian school students reconstruct their transnational educational strategies as they interact with their children in the face of socioeconomic changes in Japan. The specific research questions will be divided as follows: (1) What educational strategies did these parents originally employ? (2) What factors affected changes in these strategies? (3) What strategies emerged through negotiations between these parents and their children? (4) What difficulties do Brazilian families face in implementing these new strategies?
RESEARCH METHOD

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three high school students, five high school graduates, and four mothers of students from three Brazilian schools in Japan.

To capture the career development process of a diverse group of students, schools of different academic achievement levels, school’s legal status, and sizes were selected. Schools X and Z were designated as high schools high school equivalent according to Japanese law. Some of the graduates of School Z went on to Japanese universities through a language vocational school with which the school had a partnership. Although School Y was not designated as a high school equivalent by MEXT, one of their former students enrolled in a Japanese university after transferring to a Japanese high school. School X is a private school, School Y is a non-profit organization, and School Z is a semi-incorporated educational institution. The parents of the students in these schools tended to have different transnational educational strategies because the students’ academic achievements differed from school to school.

Interviews were conducted in both Portuguese and Japanese for 30 minutes to 2 hours each. Most of these interviews were conducted individually, and some in groups with family members. Most of the interviewees were previously acquainted with the interviewer, and the remaining students were introduced by school teachers. The diversity of the sample was tak-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>School experience</th>
<th>Career (plan)</th>
<th>Parent (Interviewed)</th>
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* The number in ( ) represents the number of years the students had lived in Japan.  
ELEM: elementary school / JHS: junior high school / HS: high school
en into consideration to capture the diverse career consciousness of Brazilian school students. However, one limitation of the present study was gender bias. Typically, Japanese mothers take nearly all the responsibility for their children’s education, and this also applies to Brazilian mothers, albeit with less intensity. However, words such as nós and a gente (meaning “us”) were often used in the narratives of the interviewed mothers, indicating that both mothers and fathers engaged in decision-making regarding their transnational educational strategies.

All of the interviewed students had lived in Japan for over 15 years, and over half were intermediate Japanese speakers. Seven out of eight students wanted to stay in Japan. Almost all the students’ parents were factory workers, but they all strongly encouraged and supported their children’s plans to enter university. All survey subjects are identified by fictitious names herein.

FINDINGS

1. The Original Transnational Educational Strategy

The number of Brazilian immigrants in Japan has increased dramatically since 1990, when the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was amended. The parents of the students interviewed for the present study came to Japan during this period. Some of them immigrated to Japan when their children were infants, and some gave birth to their children in Japan. Often called dekasseguis (“temporary workers”), many Brazilian immigrants have aimed to save money and return to Brazil after a few years in Japan (Shimizu et al., 2001). Consequently, enrolling their children in Brazilian schools played an important part in Brazilian immigrant parents’ transnational educational strategies. For example, the parents of Isabella, Lorena, and Leticia had a strong will to guide their children to continue their studies in Brazil after they graduated from high school.

Our plans for her after she finishes school are: I’ll take her to Brazil, and she’ll try entering college there. Then we’ll see. I’m that kind of mother [who gets worried], you know? But I prefer—my sister also prefers—we prefer that she go there to study law in our language. (Andrea, Lorena’s mother)

However, not all parents had the choice of enrolling their children in Brazilian schools from the beginning. For example, the families of Michelle and Camila lived in an area with a relatively low concentration of Brazilian immigrants, leaving them with no choice but to enroll their children in Japanese schools. However, after these children experienced hardship in Japanese schools due to a lack of Japanese language proficiency, their parents decided to transfer them to Brazilian schools. This situation was commonly observed in the studied community. Other parents, such as Shoh’s and Melissa’s parents, enrolled their children in Brazilian schools to protect them from bullying. Eliza, on the other hand, did not have much difficulty adapting to Japanese schools. However, due to financial conditions, her parents decided that she should return to Brazil and thus transferred her to a Brazilian school during junior high school.

Eliza’s parents were not the only ones who had to make changes to their transnational educational strategies. The economic crisis of 2009 had a great impact on Brazilian immi-
grants in Japan. As irregular factory workers, many Brazilians lost their jobs and were forced to rethink their education strategies, including many parents of children enrolled in Brazilian schools. Among the students interviewed, a few continued to pursue their education in Brazilian schools, but some (e.g., Eliza and Leticia) faced changes.

Regardless of these unexpected events, the parents interviewed consistently held one thing in mind: they wanted their children to achieve high educational attainment. Enrolling their children in Brazilian schools was a very important part of their transnational educational strategies.

We see a lot of Brazilian children suffering. They go to Japanese school for a while, then [spend] a while in Brazilian schools. And it turns out the child learns neither enough Japanese to get a good job nor enough Portuguese to try to get into college in Brazil. So that’s why we planned from the beginning. The goal is to leave [Japan]. So she’s going to study at the Brazilian school because that’s what’s going to help her in Brazil. That was our plan. (Andrea, Lorena’s mother)

Until junior high school, most of the students did not question their parents’ transnational educational strategies. Once they were enrolled in Brazilian schools, they started to think of continuing their studies in Brazil. Part of the reason for this was that the curriculum in Brazilian schools is designed to guide students to enroll in universities in Brazil. Even more importantly, the students’ parents had a great impact on their decisions. Growing up, students of Brazilian schools are often told by their parents that they do not intend to stay in Japan. Consequently, these students may grow accustomed to the idea of returning to Brazil. However, as they grew older and the moment of decision-making approached, both the interviewed students and their parents changed their perspectives regarding their future careers.

2. Contributing Factors to Changes in Strategies

As their children grew older, many of the interviewed mothers of Brazilian school students began to reconsider sending their children back to Brazil to continue their education.

When Brazilians began emigrating to Japan approximately 30 years ago, many Brazilian parents hoped that the economic situation in Brazil would improve by the time their children grew up and returned to Brazil. Although Brazil has experienced rapid economic growth, the gap between rich and poor is widening every year, leading to serious issues, such as a high unemployment rate among youth and the deterioration of public security.

I was born here and raised here [in Japan], and when I went to Brazil, I was very young. I stayed there for about two months. I don’t remember anything. And the only thing I hear about Brazil are things that others tell me and that I see in the news. And normally, they are always negative things. (Lorena)

In addition to messages propagated by the media, the students were often told “negative” stories about Brazil by relatives living in Brazil. Therefore, it makes sense that not only the students but also their parents would have been anxious and thus changed their perspectives about returning to Brazil.

These negative social factors have also brought forth other concerns that caused both students and their parents to rethink their plans to return to their home country. Most of the parents had agreed to send their children to Brazil alone so that the parents could continue
working in Japan to cover their children’s university tuition and living expenses. However, many of the students regarded this plan with hesitation because they did not want to burden their families or were afraid of living in Brazil without their parents, given the socioeconomic state of the country.

My mother said, “We’ll stay here, and then you’ll leave for Brazil. Go to college there. Then we’ll keep sending you money.” But at that point, I no longer ... I started to feel bad because I’d always lived with my parents here and stuff. So I couldn’t imagine what it would be like. There was a point where I was a little scared. (Shoh)

Finally, many of the students were concerned about enrolling in Brazilian universities because they were worried they might not be able to adapt to the local culture and lifestyle.

I don’t like Brazil, and I don’t [think I can] adapt to it. I think human beings adapt wherever [they] go. However, I think it’s very difficult there, even for those who are already there. Then what are you going there for? If there are other paths, I prefer to follow them and leave Brazil as the last option. (Eliza)

Although the students had attended Brazilian schools, they had absorbed Japanese culture and customs while living in Japan. As a result, they experienced reverse culture shock when they returned to Brazil, temporarily making them “feel like an alien” (Leticia). Consequently, the students began to explore new horizons, “leav[ing] Brazil as the last option.”

3. Negotiation to Create New Transnational Strategies

Some of the parents did not entirely let go of the option of returning to Brazil, but they also began to consider Japan and other countries as indispensable options for their children’s futures. Compared to Brazil, Japan has a strong economy, and it is one of the safest countries in the world. This social factor certainly affected the parents’ decision to choose Japan instead of Brazil for their children’s education. Most importantly, they began to see more value in Japanese education.

I think colleges in Brazil are good—very good—but, like I’ve already said, there’s no future. There are no jobs, right? There are no jobs. But there is nothing like college abroad, from my point of view. College abroad is something else. It creates a foundation ... because, for example, whoever goes to college here in Japan and [then] goes to Brazil is ranked highly [in society]. Now, if you do it [in Brazil] ... and come here [to Japan], it’s not worth anything, right? (Lidiane, Eliza’s mother)

Eliza’s mother recognized that the quality of higher education in Brazil was good. However, she was confident that a degree acquired outside Brazil would be more beneficial for her daughter. This idea arises from the fact that career options for Brazilian school students have increased in recent years, empowering these students to renegotiate their parents’ transnational educational strategies.

During the economic crisis of 2009, the Japanese government eased restrictions on Brazilian schools and allowed them to become authorized so that they could improve their financial conditions. School Z was among the schools that benefited from this change. Authorized by the Japanese government, the school earned more credibility in Japanese society, leading a Japanese university to contact School Z for a new partnership. Thanks to this partnership,
some students from School Z enrolled in the language school owned by this university, enabling them to gain easier access to Japanese universities. Leticia, who enrolled in this language school, is studying to transfer to a Japanese university in two years. Seeing other students walking the same path, including her boyfriend, gave her hope to continue her studies in Japan.

Another positive change that occurred during this period was the implementation of the Niji no Kakehashi Project, which was set up to support immigrant children by providing Japanese language education. All three schools included in this study were selected to receive aid to fund Japanese classes. Shoh, one of the students from School Y, showed great improvement in his Japanese language abilities, which gave him the confidence to enroll in a local Japanese high school a few years later.

Shoh’s parents had plans for their son to return to Brazil, but these plans changed entirely when he entered a Japanese high school. When Shoh was in his first year of high school at School Y, his mother decided to enroll him in the last year of a Japanese junior high school to obtain a junior high school certificate. At that time, Shoh’s Japanese classmates were applying to Japanese high school, and he decided to follow their path.

I wasn’t thinking of going to koko [Japanese high school]. But it’s just that practically my whole class was going, so then I started to feel like going too. In this attempt, I managed to pass ... I was just talking to my mother. If I pass, then we stay. If not, we will go to Brazil. (Shoh)

As mentioned previously, Shoh took Japanese classes offered by the Niji no Kakehashi Project, which helped him improve his Japanese language skills. This encouraged him to apply to Japanese high school. His mother also said that the principal of School Y played an important role in his decision, as she had always encouraged him to study Japanese and take the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, even when it had not yet captured his interest. When Shoh told his mom that he was going to take the exam, she did not think he would pass.

He said, “But Mom, I just want to take the exam for one school. If I can’t get into that school, we’ll leave Japan.” I said, “OK, you can take the test. Do it.” Why? I did not imagine that his effort—that his willpower to pass—was so great. I just thought it was like doing it for the sake of doing it because I think he was seeing others do it, so he wanted to do it too. I didn’t imagine his willpower was that big. (Erica, Shoh’s mother)

Enrolling in Japanese universities is not the only option available to students from Brazilian schools. Since 2000, some Brazilian universities have offered distance learning courses to meet the needs of Brazilian immigrants living in Japan. This has become one of the most popular career options for Brazilian youth in Japan, especially those who have difficulty learning Japanese.

A lot of her [Michelle’s] friends who studied with her in Brazil—very hardworking—have the dream. One of them wants to be a veterinarian, and she can’t. That’s why she [Michelle] said, “Mom, thank God we’re here [in Japan] and have this opportunity.” That’s why I told her to take the opportunity. Because those who are there [in Brazil] sometimes really want to study, but they can’t.... It’s sad, right?... As there is this
chance now that we didn’t have before to enroll in a distance learning university in Japan, I think Brazilian schools will grow. Because we have the opportunity to be here and continue our studies. (Ellen, Michelle’s mother)

For Brazilian students whose parents have unstable job status, distance learning courses are an affordable option because their tuition fees are low and they allow students to work and study simultaneously. In addition to distance learning courses, studying abroad in a third country has also gained popularity among Brazilian students over the past few years. For example, Lorena was attending classes at an English language school and had been placed at an advanced level. She was hoping to either gain admission to a Japanese university offering English courses or pursue her career in a third country. However, she was still in her second year of high school, and the question of whether she would persuade her mother not to send her to Brazil remained to be seen.

4. Challenges in Implementing New Transnational Education Strategies

With the diversification of career aspirations among Brazilian school students, career-related negotiations between parents and children have become more active. However, even when students and their parents reach the conclusion that returning to Brazil may not be the best option, they must still solve financial problems. As noted by Lorena’s mother, due to the currency exchange rate, private universities’ tuition fees in Brazil may cost as much as sending their children to Brazilian schools in Japan. On the other hand, the tuition fees of Japanese universities are three to four times higher than those of Brazilian universities. This makes Japanese universities inaccessible to the parents of Brazilian school students in Japan, most of whom are irregular factory workers. Additionally, the parents of some students (e.g., Camila, Leticia, and Michelle) lacked sufficient savings to pay for their children’s higher education. Thus, these students had to work to raise money for their tuition fees.

For example, what parents normally do when their children are still young is save money for when they grow up to study. But my mom didn’t do it. So I told her, “Don’t expect me to study soon. Because I’m going to have to save money.” Because she didn’t save any money for me, nothing. So I’m going to have to go after the money. (Camila)

Camila decided to study abroad in an English-speaking country after realizing that she had a low chance of gaining admission to a Japanese university due to her lack of Japanese language proficiency. However, her stepfather got into an accident, making it difficult for her mother to save money for her studies. For this reason, Camila had no choice but to work before entering university so that she could save money to pay for her studies. Meanwhile, Michelle and Melissa decided to enroll in distance learning courses offered by Brazilian universities, which allowed them to work and study at the same time.

These findings indicate that students do not necessarily choose to work at factories to save money so they can return to Brazil, as indicated by previous research. Instead, they are working so that they can enroll in Japanese universities, attend distance learning courses offered by Brazilian universities, or study abroad. Furthermore, these findings imply that financial difficulties have a negative impact on the execution of transnational educational strategies among immigrant families with a relatively low socioeconomic status.
CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the process by which the transnational educational strategies implemented by parents of Brazilian school students are restructured, not only from the perspectives of parents but also through their interactions with their children. To clarify this matter, the following questions were set forth: (1) What educational strategies did these parents originally employ? (2) What factors affected changes in these strategies? (3) What strategies emerged through negotiations between these parents and their children? (4) What difficulties do Brazilian families face in implementing these new strategies?

Since many of these parents had always envisioned a return to Brazil, enrolling their children in Brazilian schools was the most rational choice for them. Many also had very high expectations for their children’s educational attainment, which they always made clear to their children. However, having grown up in Japan, many of these students did not entirely agree with their parents’ original educational strategies. This change of opinion toward their parents’ plans was also affected by their experience seeing former classmates expand their career options by enrolling in Japanese language schools with the goal of transferring to Japanese universities, enrolling in distance courses offered by Brazilian universities in Japan, or studying abroad in a third country.

Eventually, Isabella was the only student in the study group to pursue her parents’ original plans and return to Brazil, while the other students decided to seek another path in either Japan or a third country. Compared to the other students, Shoh and Lorena negotiated with their parents most actively to avoid returning to Brazil. The only way for them to succeed in doing so was to improve their Japanese or English language abilities so that they could increase their chances of gaining admission to a university in Japan or a third country. On the other hand, Eliza, Leticia, Michelle, Melissa, and Camila experienced easier transitions to their new plans to stay in Japan, as their parents eventually accepted the idea of changing their educational plans.

These changes in the parents’ plans were related to their concerns regarding the unstable social and economic situation in Brazil, which accelerated the settlement of parents in Japan. Given that most of the students interviewed were female, the parents’ concerns about sending their children to Brazil were heightened, as violence toward women is a significant problem in Brazil (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, 2021).

Additionally, seeing former students of Brazilian schools follow nontraditional paths and achieve higher education without returning to Brazil opens a window for these parents to start believing there are options other than sending their children to Brazil. Parents who have experienced difficulties in blue-collar factory jobs may not want their children to follow the same path, especially knowing that it can be a harsh work environment for women. Previously, the only way for their children to avoid working in factories was to move to Brazil, but now that other paths are opening, parents have begun to consider new ways for their children to continue their studies in either Japan or a third country.

In other words, the decreasing sense of opportunity afforded by sending their children to Brazilian universities, combined with the increasing sense of opportunity afforded by other career options in Japan and third countries, has caused Japanese-Brazilian parents to change their transnational educational strategies. However, due to their lack of knowledge regarding the educational system in Japan as well as their unpreparedness to cover educational expens-
es, many of these parents had no clear plans regarding how they would support their children’s futures.

The results of this study revealed that the educational strategies of Japanese-Brazilian families are no longer premised on returning to Brazil, contrary to the findings of previous studies. Instead, both the parents and the children of these families now envision the children’s futures in Japan or a third country. Furthermore, many Japanese studies on transnational educational strategies have focused on immigrants from relatively higher socioeconomic classes, such as international and Chinese school students. By focusing on Brazilian families in financially unstable conditions, this study revealed the challenges that lower-class transnational migrants face in implementing their education strategies.

As globalization progresses and the number of immigrants in Japan increases, Japanese society must continue to strengthen career support for young people who will form careers in a transnational space. This will involve establishing more scholarship programs catering to immigrant students as well as providing information for the parents of these students in their native languages. Most importantly, more research on changes in transnational educational strategies must be conducted to identify the needs of transnational migrants.

Notes

i Transnational educational strategy is a term for parents’ cross-border educational awareness and practices, which often develop in families living in transnational social spaces connected by strong ties/networks with more than one country. Furthermore, transnational educational strategy has a significant influence on the career consciousness and academic achievement of second-generation immigrants (Nukaga, 2012).

ii Typically, Japanese mothers devote a great deal of time and effort to their children’s education, carrying all the responsibilities (Hirota, 1999).

References


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