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Japanese Female Social Studies Teacher's Perceptions
on Their Career Choices:
A Focus on Those with More Than 20 Years of Service

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I. Introduction

According to the School Teachers Survey (2016) issued by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, social studies as a school subject (including geography, history, and civics in senior high schools) has the lowest percentage of female teachers in junior and senior high schools in Japan⁽¹⁾. What were the reasons behind the career choice of these few women who chose to become social studies teachers?

Previous research on social studies teachers in Japan only focused on the development of their teaching skills and expertise in their field (Murai 2014, Kubota 2007, Igarashi 2011). However, various previous researches have been carried out in other countries in English. The following two papers are attracting attention for their inquiries into career choice in the area of social studies.

The first research was carried out by Connors et al. (2000) on 106 students, of which 71 were men and 35 were women from three universities in the United States, to investigate the reasons these individuals decided to teach social studies. This study was begun on the hypothesis that these students' interest in sports coaching is connected to their aspirations to become secondary social studies teachers. The results, however, demonstrated that the students' reasons for their career choice was their interest in the content of middle school social studies, rather than in coaching, and that they were drawn to the importance of the profession.

The second research is that carried out by Şahin, A. (2014), who interviewed twelve university students, of which six were men and six were women, aged 18 to 26 and from western Turkey, before they became teachers. This study revealed that their choice to become middle school social studies teachers were affected by the following five factors: disturbances, role models, getaway, status, and transformation. Disturbances, which is the first of these, indicate inequality, repression, and other adverse situations that include economic, social, cultural, political, psychological, and educational difficulties. The second factor, role models, points to teachers and relatives who compel youth to take interest in the teaching profession through their innate qualities (worldviews, attitude to their students, relationships with others, approach to education, and so forth). The third factor, getaway, is a means to escape from the aforementioned disturbances that hinder one's growth. It reveals that the students in the study not only intentionally strived to escape from obstructive situations, but they also actively took the next steps forward. These steps comprised the following: 1) summoning of the will to distance themselves from turmoil, 2) endeavoring to move on, and 3) for many, making the choice to go to university when they left their homes and to study to become teachers. The fourth factor, status, is about how the students can express themselves upon achieving social prestige, and as a result, transform the problems

that surround them. Teaching as a profession becomes a vital tool for this, and graduation from university or a teacher training course grants one a significant status, particularly for women more than for men and in rural regions more than in urban areas. Transformation, which is the fifth factor, includes that of oneself, of negative impressions regarding teachers, in education practice, and within society. In other words, the students were concerned with unfavorable perceptions and the decline in the general reputation of the teaching profession, and they considered it their duty to change such notions and attitudes. This fifth factor made the deepest impact on the career choices of the students in the research.

However, these previous research into decisions to become social studies teachers target students who have not yet entered the teaching profession, and as such, it is not clear whether the factors revealed by the inquiries in fact apply to those who ultimately became educators. In contrast, one study in Japan looked into subjects who had actually taken up teaching upon graduation from university, and these individuals were asked the reasons for their career decision.

In a questionnaire of 157 Japanese home economics teachers conducted by Watanabe et al. (2010), home economics retained the highest percentage of female teachers, which is the opposite of that of social studies. The largest number of respondents (70) chose to become teachers during their university years, followed by 45 during their senior high school years. The results indicated that their studies at senior high school and university had significant influence on their career choices. The reasons the subjects chose to become home economics teachers were ranked from the top as the following: interest in the subject, influence from others (e.g., teachers), and access to obtaining home economics teaching licenses while at university, passive motives, and the availability of a good work environment.

How, then, were the career selections of female social studies teachers made? My study clarifies how women chose the social studies teachers' profession, which can in turn provide suggestions for the field of social studies education as a whole, which retains a low rate of female teachers.

2. Research methods

This paper aims to illuminate the factors in and timing of female social studies teachers' decisions to select their occupations. The research questions to achieve this are as follows:

- 1) The timing when each subject chose to become a junior high school social studies teacher
- 2) The reason(s) each subject chose to become a junior high school social studies teacher

I conducted interviews with female social studies teachers as the main research method. The interviewees were selected using the snowball technique. Using semi-structured interviews, I gave the interviewees a short list of guiding questions in advance, such as "Why did you become a social studies teacher?" Each interview took approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Table 1 shows a summary of the information on the eight female social studies teachers interviewed.

In 2019, when the interviews were conducted, the ages of the interviewees ranged from the late 40s to the 60s. The interviewees in their late 40s and early 50s were employed when the Japanese bubble economy was at its peak or had just burst, and the others in their late 50s and older were employed before the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was put into effect in 1985. At the time, almost all of them lived in the Kanto region (on Honshu Island that includes the Greater Tokyo Area), except for interviewee No. 7, who lived in western Japan.

M-GTA⁽²⁾, a modified version of the grounded theory approach, was applied to analyze the interviews for

Table 1. Interviewees' characteristics

No.	Educational background (Major)	Work Experience: Years of service
1	Private girls' junior and senior high school Private women's university (History)	Teacher → senior teacher → vice-principal → principal (public junior high school): 36
2	National junior and senior high school National women's university (History)	Teacher → retired → part-time (public junior high school): 41
3	National junior and senior high school National women's university (Geography) National university, graduate school (Education)	Teacher (overseas private Japanese school → public junior high school): 34
4	Public junior and senior high school Private university (Education)	Teacher → senior teacher → supervisory teacher (public junior high school): 36
5	Public junior and senior high school National university (Humanities) National university, graduate school (Education)	Teacher (overseas private Japanese school) → lecturer → teacher (public senior high school): 22
6	Public junior and senior high school National university (Education) National university, graduate school (Education)	Teacher → supervisory teacher → vice-principal → principal (public junior high school): 39
7	Public junior high school and private senior high school Private university (History) Private university, graduate school (History)	Part-time → teacher (private boys' junior and senior high school → private junior high school): 24
8	Private girls' junior and senior high school Private university (History) Private university, graduate school (Education)	teacher (private high school → private girls' junior and senior high school): 37

two reasons. The first is that it is an inductive methodology that derives some meaning from the data, and it is also an empirical one that combines various data in context and obtains categories through a comparative study. The second reason is that previous studies have used it as a method of analysis to clarify the process of cognition formation. I perceive that with this method, within the individual context, it is possible to clarify specific content that is not made clear by the questionnaire.

Variations in the interview data were extracted in a coherent manner to avoid damaging the context in which the interviewees' narratives were transcribed. The interviewees' narratives were defined as concepts when they continued in the same context. Several of these concepts were integrated into a category, of which a number were then integrated into a core category (but this was not always necessary).

3. Analysis results

3.1. Choosing to become a teacher

In this section, I identify the timings and factors for the interviewees' choice to become teachers. Table 2 shows the analysis of the five categories of these factors: influence of teachers, influence of parents and/or relatives, dissatisfaction with education, interest in education, and intent in continuing to work until the mandatory retirement age.

All interviewees' reasons for choosing to become teachers were influenced by other individuals. For example, in the first category, the influence of teachers, interviewee No. 6 moved to a new school in the second semester of her third year of junior high school. Interviewee No. 4 was in senior high school when her father,

Table 2. Analysis worksheet on reasons the interviewees chose to become teachers

Category	Variations: Interviewee No. (Code No.)
Influence of teachers	<p>“I transferred to a new school in December of my second year of junior high school. It was (the next to the last year of junior high school, when obligatory education ends in Japan) when I had to decide on a career path. I had to do this without knowing anything about what kind of school I had transferred to. My homeroom teacher told me that I should go to (a certain) high school, and then (a certain) university, to become a teacher. At that time, I thought, ‘What kind of selfish thing is this teacher saying?’ What I had I really wanted to become was a pharmacist or something similar. Then I thought it would be too expensive to become a pharmacist, and given my family’s financial situation, I thought I would have to become a public servant, as I didn’t have connections to be hired by a big company. So becoming a teacher is what I ended up thinking, and that’s what stayed in my mind.” – No. 6(1)</p>
	<p>“My father died suddenly when I was in the third (and last) year of junior high school. My mother had been a housewife until then, but she began working, and it was she and some others who told me that it would be more stable to become a public servant, and that it was a profession in which women could have an established career. My homeroom teacher in senior high school also told me that I should become a teacher because my father had passed away. What was more, I happened to have been around teachers since I was a child, so I thought I would like to become a teacher.” – No. 4(1)</p>
Influence of parents and/or relatives	<p>In response to the interview comment, “You said you didn’t know if you wanted to become a schoolteacher”: “Well, I was not suited for office work. I thought I wanted to work with people. I didn’t know (teaching) had so much paperwork. ... I’m really not good at (desk work), I’m really not suited for it. So I’ve been really inconveniencing my colleagues, but I’d always wanted a job where I could interact with people. Also, many of my family members were teaching at universities, and so were my relatives. I was interested in something related to education, but I initially felt that I wasn’t suited to the formalities of (that field).” – No. 3(3)</p>
Dissatisfaction with education	<p>“I was in Osaka during my junior high school years, and my father used to take me to (the historic town of) Asuka in (nearby) Nara Prefecture (see footnote 5). My father was literary, and although he was a businessman, he was the kind of individual who would have been better off working as a teacher. He taught me ancient Japanese poems of the <i>Man’yōshū</i> (see footnote 6) from memory as we walked around, and I decided to become an archaeologist when I saw the archaeologists (working on the digs in the area). When I returned to Tokyo for senior high, it was the period of the 1970 Anpo protests (against the Japan-US Security Treaty). I was only a high schooler but I really wanted to make home economics coeducational. ... At the time, girls took home economics, and boys took physical education. It was worse at my school, ○○Senior High School, as boys were allowed to take German as a second foreign language (in addition to English). I was so frustrated when I heard about this that I went to talk to the home economics teacher, and she gave me a 2 (the second lowest grade out of 1 to 5) in her class. ... Yes, yes. That’s why I decided to become a teacher in order to change the schools, because students can only stay for three years, but if you become a teacher, you can stay there forever.” – No. 2(20)</p>

<p>Interest in education</p>	<p>Interviewer, “When did you choose to become a schoolteacher?” “It was around the second year of college.” Interviewer: “Were you thinking of a different career before you started college?” “I first thought to go into journalism or publishing. ... What I wanted to do was the same no matter which one I chose; I wanted to learn about historical issues and Japan-Korea relations, because when I was in senior high school, Japan-Korea relations were particularly bad, and I was dissatisfied with the history education I was receiving. I thought that if I wanted to research and convey this information more properly, it would probably be too much to digest in the school classroom, so I thought I should work in the publishing industry or as a journalist, but then I became a teacher. Interviewer: “Was there a reason for this?” “One reason was that even if I worked for a publishing company or a newspaper, I thought I would not know whether I would be able to find a subject I really wanted to work on, and I did not want to be assigned to a subject that was completely unrelated to my interests. I also really enjoyed interacting with children, so the combination of both of these factors made me realize that I wanted to become a teacher and solve my own questions in history classes.” – No. 5(2)</p>
<p>Continuing to work/fixed retirement age</p>	<p>“I just wanted to have a job for the rest of my (working) life. At that time (when I was at university), it was a little before the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (was enacted), and women had to quit their jobs at the age of 25. I wanted to work forever. I thought about what I could do to do this, so I decided to become a teacher and studied hard.” – No. 1(13)</p> <p>“When I was given (the list of interview questions) beforehand, I started thinking back on (the reason why I had become a teacher), and I think I started considering becoming a teacher very early in my life. I think I felt that the school as an institution was a good fit for me. When I was in senior high school, I used to say things like, “I’m going to do my teaching practice at this school,” and I was planning to take a teaching course at university. But I didn’t go to a so-called teacher training school, and I didn’t choose such a school when (selecting where to take) my university entrance examinations, so I’m not sure how seriously I was saying that.” Question: “You said you felt [employment at] school was a good fit for you. Did you experience something specifically that compelled you to feel that way?” “I can’t really remember what it was, but I think I had good teachers. I didn’t meet many that I didn’t like, but there were many people who were very close to me, who were elders, and who had a lot of knowledge and were able to teach me a lot. The other reason is that I was in senior high school at the end of the 1980s, just after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into effect, and it was a time when women had to think about what it meant to work. The hiring of career-track workers was finally beginning (for women), but when I thought about what kind of work men and women can do on an even footing when continuing to work for a long time, it was the so-called specialist jobs. “In hindsight, I think that was one of the reasons I decided on the teaching profession. However, it was a time when there were very few job openings (in other occupations), so I think it was not only that but also there was a position that I really wanted at the time. ... So I had very positive encounters (with teachers), and I also planned to work until I reached retirement age, and when I looked for such jobs, teaching was probably the one that was closest to me, easy to see, and met my various conditions.” – No. 7(6)</p>

who had been working, died suddenly, and her mother, who had been a housewife, started working instead. Both subjects began to consider the teaching profession at the advice of their homeroom teachers. Neither, however, had specifically chosen social studies at the time. Incidentally, the major of the teacher mentioned by interviewee No. 6 was mathematics.

The second category is the influence of parents and/or relatives. For instance, interviewee No. 3 chose to become a teacher by taking into account her upbringing among family and relatives who were teachers, her preference for working with people, as well as her discomfort with facing a future in corporate office work.

The third and fourth categories, dissatisfaction with education and interest in education, is represented by interviewee No. 2, who wanted to become an archaeologist during her junior high school years when she visited the ancient cities of Kyoto and Nara. But after moving to Tokyo, she directly experienced the Anpo protests (large-scale opposition movements led by students against the Japan-US Security Treaty mainly in the 1960s to the 1970s) during her high school years in the 1970s. At the time, home economics was a school subject that was only offered to female students, and she directly appealed to the teachers to have it taught to her male colleagues, but to no avail. This became the reason she wanted to become a teacher, so that she could change schools, and it thus reflected the social situation of the era. On the other hand, interviewee No. 5 was a high school student around the time of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, so she made her career choice based on the historical issues and relations between Japan and South Korea at the time. She actually wanted a job related to publishing or journalism, but she was worried about whether she could take on such a career. Ultimately, in her university years, she chose to become a part-time teacher to be able to deliberate on contemporary issues while teaching children.

The last category is the intent in continuing to work until the mandatory retirement age. Interviewee No. 1 wanted to become a teacher because she started working before the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was passed in 1985, which prohibited companies from recruiting, hiring, retiring, and firing people based on their sex. At the time, teaching was the only profession in which women could continue working instead of being pressured into quitting at the age of 25. As mentioned in the previous section, the eight interviewees in their 40s to 60s are from the generations that graduated from university and started working before and after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law took effect. This law was in fact problematic because there were no penalties for companies that violated it at the time, but it is also true that it expanded the range of employment opportunities for women to a much greater extent than before. Interviewee No. 7 was employed after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was enacted, but she was in senior high school in the late 1980s when she was thinking about her career. In light of the social situation immediately after the enforcement of the law, she chose to become a teacher because she saw it as a job where men and women can work in an equal manner and continue working for a long time. In other words, it can be understood that women choose teaching as a profession in which they could work in an equal manner with men for the rest of their working lives, even up to ten years after the enforcement of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law.

3.2. Choosing to teach social studies

Interviewee No. 5 decided to teach social studies when she became a teacher, while the others decided to become teachers first and then selected social studies as their specialized subject. Table 3 shows the four processes in which these interviewees chose this path: passive motives/availability of the social studies teaching license, interest in social studies, influence of teachers, and combined factors.

Two teachers pointed out passive motives/availability of the social studies teaching license at university,

Table 3. Analysis worksheet on how the interviewees chose to teach social studies

Category	Variations: Interviewee No. (Code No.)
Passive motives/availability of the social studies teaching license	<p>“The department I joined at university happened to offer a license in social studies, so it wasn't that I was aiming for social studies from the beginning. Of course, I didn't dislike social studies. Rather than thinking that I (specifically) wanted to become a social studies teacher, I first decided that I wanted to become a teacher. So it was not the subject matter or anything like that, but rather, my desire to become a teacher, and I became one in social studies by getting my license in social studies.” – No. 4(1)</p>
	<p>“I wanted to study international relations, so I wanted to go to Tsuda (University)³. But I couldn't get in, and I only studied history at (the university I did get into) because it just happened to be a subject that I was good at.” – No. 1(12)</p>
Interest in social studies	<p>“(My major) geography was more of a thing I that I kind of just fell into, but I actually liked history better. So, it's a mess, right? I had been a kind of history buff who liked history and historical dramas. ... But I'd simply been following the trends of the time. My sister was an actual history major, and she was the type to look at documents properly. I just liked to talk about history. In geography, there was always fieldwork required at university. At first, I was a person who disliked fieldwork, such as mountain climbing, because it was very difficult and painful. However, thanks to this geography course, I came to like traveling very much, and I also had the opportunity to go abroad ... It was when I started to like traveling that I started to like geography.” – No. 3(9)</p>
Influence of teachers	<p>“The (then) governor of Okinawa Prefecture, Mr. Onaga, is wonderful. I heard that he is working hard on the prefectural referendum now. I guess that's why I became a social studies teacher. Actually, I liked Japanese (language arts). When I was in junior high school, my grades were better in Japanese, but I hated grammar and thought that I would never want to teach it. In social studies, I was the student who didn't raise my hand because all the boys raised theirs. But now that I think about it, (my teachers) were all (members of) Rekkyoukyou (see footnote 4), in both junior and senior high school. I actually didn't stay long at (my first) junior high school, but a certain teacher, Mr. X, was there. My older sister was taking his class, and he took me under his wing, so that's how I became a social studies teacher.” – No. 2(7)</p>
Combined factors	<p>“(The person who suggested that I become a teacher was) my math teacher. He did not specify (that I major in) social studies. He just told me that I should become a teacher. Somewhere in your questionnaire, you asked for the reason I became a social studies teacher. At first, I couldn't remember why, so I tried to write all sorts of things down, and what it comes down to is that it was because I liked the subject. It wasn't my strongest subject. I was better at math, but I think I enjoyed (taking social studies), and I probably still place importance in thinking of things in a scientific manner. In addition, my social studies teachers in junior and senior high were fascinating. I actually don't remember much about whether their classes were fascinating or not. But my teachers in both junior and senior high were attractive as people. Also, it was easy for me to understand what I was learning when I studied, or maybe I should say that it was easy for me to get good grades. I do think it was a subject that was easy to understand. So maybe I didn't need to become a social studies teacher, but I think I was somehow attracted to the person (of my teachers).” – No. 6(1)</p>

compared to the lack of such licenses for other subjects, as the reason for choosing to teach social studies. Interviewees No. 4 and No. 1 both used the same phrase, “I happened to.” When they decided to become teachers, they were able to acquire social studies teaching licenses in their university departments. Interviewee No. 4 was able to choose to teach not only social studies but also Japanese (language arts) at her university. All of her friends chose to take the Japanese language teaching license course, and No. 4 was the only female student who chose social studies. Interviewee No. 1 initially wanted to study at a university that had an international relations department, but she failed its entrance examination and entered the history department of another university. Both interviewees said that they chose to teach social studies “by chance” due to these circumstances at their respective departments. However, they did have some idea of becoming social studies teachers when they chose their career in their senior year of high school, and they chose social studies over other subjects.

On the other hand, one teacher pointed to an interest in social studies. Interviewee No. 3 entered the geography department at her university. While studying this subject, she came to like traveling. She visited people in unfamiliar areas, which made her like social studies as a subject. As mentioned earlier, No. 3 also came from a family related to education and wanted to become a teacher because she wanted to work with people. It was against this background and factors that she chose to teach social studies.

Interviewee No. 2 described the historical situation and political events of the time in which she was interested, as well as the fact that her favorite social studies teachers belonged to a private education group, the Rekkyoukyou (History Educationalist Conference of Japan)⁽⁶⁾. Her favorite subject was Japanese (language arts), and she was not as active in her social studies classes as the male students. However, she chose to teach the subject because she resonated with the ideas of her teachers and their organization, which taught her about the conditions of the time.

Interviewee No. 6 cited the combined reasons of interest in social studies and the influence of teachers. In her narrative, she expressed admiration for her social studies teachers in high school.

4. Discussion

In the above, I analyzed the interviews with female social studies teachers regarding the timings and factors of their career choice.

First, regarding the timing of when they had wanted to become social studies teachers, only interviewee No. 5, of the eight interviewees, stated that she had wanted to become a social studies teacher from the beginning, when she chose teaching as an occupation. In contrast, the others first chose teaching as a career choice and then selected the social studies teaching course. Two of the interviewees were in junior or senior high school and four were in college when they made their career choice. This overlaps with the selection period of respondents in the research by Watanabe et al. (2010); many of them chose to become home economics teachers while at university. Therefore, this can be interpreted as follows: even if one decides to become a teacher while at junior high school or high school, one still must go through the process of either taking teaching courses at university, taking the public or private school employment examinations, or both, in order to actually become a teacher. If one fails in this attempt, one may choose to work as a part-time or full-time instructor after graduation, or one may simply choose to give up teaching and enter the corporate world.

Next, the reasons that led the interviewees to want to become teachers included the influence of teachers, influence of parents and/or relatives, dissatisfaction with education, interest in education, and their intent in

continuing to work until the mandatory retirement age. The influence of parents and/or relatives included two factors: teachers among the family members and the family's financial situation. Multiple factors overlapped in some cases.

The reasons the interviewees chose to become social studies teachers were sorted into the following categories: passive motives/availability of the social studies teaching license at their universities, interest in social studies, influence of teachers, and combined factors. The first, passive motives, include the interviewees' views that they chose the subject because the teaching course in the university department they entered happened to be for social studies. However, they could have anticipated obtaining teaching licenses in social studies the moment they chose departments such as geography, history, politics, or economics, which grant such a license. Regardless of the subject, acquiring a teaching license applies to the status identified by Şahin, A. (2014). The third category, the influence of teachers, has been indicated by Watanabe et al. (2010) as well, and the fourth category of combined factors is similar to that mentioned by Şahin, A. (2014), where transformation is closely tied to other factors and is therefore composite. It is in such a light that the second category, interest in social studies, warrants attention. Previous studies by Connors et al. (2000) and Watanabe et al. (2010) point out interest in this subject as being the greatest contributing factor to subject choice. However, when exploring this interest in more detail, my research revealed that there were processes that cultivated social studies-related factors that led to the teachers' ultimate subject choice in their youth.

First of all, as seen in Table 2, interviewee No. 7(6) said, "I was in senior high school at the end of the 1980s, just after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law came into effect, and it was a time when women had to think about what it meant to work. The hiring of career-track workers was finally beginning (for women), but when I thought about what kind of work men and women can do on an even footing when continuing to work for a long time, it was the so-called specialist jobs." Next, interviewee No. 2(19) said, "I was in Osaka during my junior high school years, and my father used to take me to (the historic town of) Asuka in (nearby) Nara Prefecture⁽⁶⁾," "He taught me ancient Japanese poems of the *Man'yōshū*⁽⁷⁾ from memory as we walked around, and I decided to become an archaeologist when I saw the archaeologists (working on the digs in the area)," and "I was only a high schooler but I really wanted to make home economics coeducational." In addition, interviewee No. 5(2) said "I wanted to learn about historical issues and Japan-Korea relations, because when I was in senior high school, Japan-Korea relations were particularly bad, and I was dissatisfied with the history education I was receiving." Furthermore, interviewee No. 1(14) also stated, "It was the time when Beauvoir – was it *The Second Sex?* – was trending (in Japan), and I didn't quite understand the complexities, but I did feel, and still do, the importance of being economically dependent."

The following three points can be indicated about the interviewees from their narratives: 1) they were exposed to geographical and historical things in their early childhood and teenage years, such as Asuka in Nara, the *Man'yōshū*, shrines, and historical dramas; 2) they were interested in the events of the time as they had experienced the Anpo protests against the Japan-US Security Treaty while in high school or were aware of the historical issues related to the 1988 Seoul Olympics; and 3) they were concerned with women's social standing and situation at the time and took action through seeking coeducation in home economics at school, deliberating on how the Equal Employment Opportunity Law affected them, and reading Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. It can be inferred that their experiences in and awareness of various geographical, historical, and social issues throughout their formative years developed into social studies-related factors in their career choice later in life.

5. Conclusion

This paper clarified when and why women decided to become teachers and teach social studies in particular. First, the choice to define teaching as a career was made in junior or senior high school, and the reasons for their decision included the influence of others (teachers, parents, and/or relatives), dissatisfaction with or interest in education, and the prospect of stable and independent work. Next, most female social studies teachers had chosen to teach social studies as a subject after first deciding to become teachers, and they were able to obtain social studies teaching licenses in the departments or faculties at their universities. Additionally, several interviewees decided to teach social studies during their university years, instead of choosing to work for private companies or as public servants in other institutions. Moreover, the reasons given for opting to teach social studies included their interest in the subject as well as the influence of their teachers.

The timing of and factors affecting the career choices of the female social studies teachers in this exploration were not significantly different from those in previous research. However, the interviewees shared that they had been interested in geography and history from a young age, had questions about current affairs in Japan and abroad, and felt the glaring gendered division of labor in Japanese society during their high school years. In other words, their early experiences and awareness of issues related to social studies ultimately led them to become teachers in this particular field. Whereas previous research utilized questionnaires in which the respondents wrote down their interest in this school subject, this study illuminated the process in which female social study teachers came to be interested in their subject of choice. This fact may indicate important elements in the career choice of social studies teachers, of which women are the minority in Japan.

In future research, it is necessary to clarify whether the career choices and their processes revealed in this study are unique to female social studies teachers, by comparing them with male teachers who also came of age around the time the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was put into effect, as well as with female social studies teachers of different generations.

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Notes

- (1) The Statistical Survey shows that secondary school teachers are heavily male in general: 19,980 male teachers versus 4,724 female teachers in social studies; 18,580 male teachers versus 3,180 female teachers in geography and history; 11,398 male teachers versus 1,837 female teachers in civics. (<https://www.e-stat.go.jp>)
- (2) M-GTA was developed by Yasuhito Kinoshita. See Kinoshita's books (2009, 2014, 2020) for more details.
- (3) Tsuda University is a private women's university in Tokyo founded in 1900 by Umeko Tsuda, a pioneer in English education and women's education in Japan.
- (4) The Rekkyoukyou (History Educationalist Conference of Japan) is a private educational organization on history and history education established in 1949. Its Founding Prospectus states that history education should be based on historical studies, rely only on correct educational theory, and should be independent of anything other than academic and educational truth.
- (5) Asuka, in Nara Prefecture in central Japan, is considered to be the birthplace of ancient Japan. For about 100

years, from the accession of Emperor Suiko to the throne in A.D. 592 until Emperor Jito moved the capital to Fujiwara-kyo in A.D. 694, Asuka was home to emperors and flourished as a political and cultural center. Then a new capital called Heijo-kyo was established in another region of Nara in 710, and Emperor Shomu and successive emperors governed that city. Buddhism and Chinese characters were introduced from China and the Korean peninsula, giving birth to the richly cosmopolitan Tenpyo culture in the eighth century A.D. Asuka is filled with ruins and relics that remain to this day.

- (6) *Man'yoshu*, which literally means “a collection of ten-thousand leaves,” is the world’s oldest anthology of poems from the eighth century A.D. Not only does it include Japanese poems written by nobles, but it also contains those composed by people of lower classes, such as farmers and warriors.

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Japanese Female Social Studies Teacher's Perceptions on Their Career Choices: A Focus on Those with More Than 20 Years of Service

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Through interviews with female Japanese junior high and high school teachers, this study sought to determine the timing and factors in their choice to become social studies teachers. A Modified Grounded Theory approach (M-GTA) was used to analyze the interviews. The results of the analysis are as follows. First, the respondents chose teaching as a profession during their middle and high school years, and the reasons cited for their choices included the influence of their surroundings, dissatisfaction with and interest in education, and the expectation of a stable and independent job. Second, most of the female teachers chose social studies as a subject after they became teachers. Their reasons for becoming social studies teachers included their interest in social studies and the influence of their teachers. In this study, the timing and influencing factors of the career choices of female social studies teachers did not differ significantly from those in previous studies. However, the interviewees shared a common understanding that they had been interested in geography and history since childhood, had questions about current issues in Japan and abroad, and felt the division of labor by gender role in Japanese society during their high school years. In other words, their childhood experiences and awareness of issues ultimately led them to become social studies teachers. In addition, while previous studies had investigated interest in social studies through questionnaires, this study was able to clarify how female social studies teachers became interested in the subject through interview analysis. This has implications for the career choices of future female teachers.

日本の女性社会科教師のキャリア選択に関する意識 — 勤続20年以上の女性教員に焦点を当てて —

國分 麻里

本研究では、日本の中学校および高等学校の女性教師へのインタビューを通じて、社会科教師を選じた時期や要因を明らかにした。インタビューの分析には、修正版グラウンデッド・セオリー・アプローチ (M-GTA) を用いた。分析結果は次の通りである。まず、教師を職業として選択するのは中学・高校時代であり、その理由は、周囲の影響、教育への不満や興味、安定・自立した仕事への期待などが挙げられている。次に、女性教員の多くは教員を志した後に教科としての社会科を選択し、社会科教員になった理由は、社会科への興味や教師の影響などを挙げている。社会科の女性教師の進路選択の時期や影響要因について、今回の調査は先行研究と大きな違いはなかった。しかし、幼い頃から地理や歴史に興味があったこと、国内外の時事問題に疑問を持っていたこと、高校時代に日本社会の性別役割分業を感じたことなどは、インタビュー対象者たちの共通認識であった。つまり、幼い頃の経験や問題意識が結果的に社会科の教員を目指すことにつながったとすることができる。先行研究では社会科への興味を質問紙で調査していたが、本研究ではインタビュー分析により女性社会科教師がいかに教科に興味を持ったのか、その過程を明らかにすることができた。このことは、女性教員の進路選択にも示唆するところがある。