GSAPS  THE SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS
Subjective Well-Being and Adaptation of Newcomer Chinese Immigrants in Japan

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Introduction
Facing low fertility replacement level, rapidly aging population, and globalization tendencies, Japan needs large number of foreigners as labor force. Although migration into Japan has gone for many decades, research still suggests that Japanese government officials do not see Japan as an immigrant country (Pak 1998). As the largest immigrant group in Japan since 1980s, newcomer Chinese immigrants are experiencing marginal social positions in Japan, and their transnationalism represents their strategies to overcome marginality in a society they perceive as resistant to immigration and closed to outsiders (Liu-Farrer 2012).

How do newcomer Chinese immigrants adapt to Japanese society emotionally? Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his/her life (Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2002). During recent decades, numerous researches have investigated immigrants' SWB in the host country. Some literature points out that people migrate to improve their income and living standards as well as their SWB (e.g. Borjas 1987). Besides economic adjustment, immigrants also have to adapt to the new cultural environment in many aspects. In newcomer Chinese immigrants’ case, the predictors of their adaptation and SWB in Japan are still unclear. From the points above, a few questions will be put forth: How do newcomer Chinese immigrants evaluate their life in Japan? What factors exactly affect their sense of SWB? This study aims to examine the level of SWB among newcomer Chinese immigrants, and understand the narratives of their processes of adaptation in Japanese society.

This study makes a significant contribution in two ways. First, it explores the predictors of SWB, which can provide information for organizations developing effective programs to assist immigrants’ adaptation to the host society. Second, this study highlights newcomer Chinese immigrants’ assimilation towards Japanese society to reduce cultural gap between two societies, referring to Japan as the host society and China as the homeland society, and achieve positive acceptance.

Data and Methods
This study investigated SWB of newcomer Chinese immigrants in Japan by employing mixed methods. To validate whether attitudes of host country toward immigrants effect on the latter’s SWB, Japanese General Social Survey (2008) was used to look into Japanese attitudes toward Chinese immigrants. Thus, employing data analysis of the multicultural survey in Shizuoka Prefecture (2009), this study examined the determinants of SWB among newcomer Chinese immigrants in comparison with other immigrants groups. Yet, utilizing only statistical analysis provides limited understanding of how these factors work on every individual’s psychological outcomes, and why they can affect newcomer Chinese immigrants’ sense of SWB. Therefore, a qualitative method is necessary. To examine the results of quantitative research, and obtain more detailed information, a qualitative method was done through interviews with 52 newcomer Chinese immigrants to record their life stories in Japan. Interviews focused on their perceptions of communication with the Japanese, life satisfaction and their adaptation process in Japan.

Conclusion
To understand the context of SWB among newcomer Chinese immigrants, JGSS 2008 was used which showed the following results: a) the Japanese presented higher acceptance towards immigrants from North America, Europe, South Korea and Southeast Asia over China; b) Japanese women tend to have negative attitudes toward accepting newcomer Chinese immigrants as families than men; c) young people showed higher acceptance toward newcomer Chinese immigrants and; d) education presented a positive effect on acceptance attitude.

Thus, using quantitative approach, this research highlighted the following points: a) newcomer Chinese immigrants presented lower life satisfaction than immigrants from Brazil, Peru, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam; b) married immigrants tend to dissatisfied with their life than singles, but have stronger intentions to stay in Japan; c) education represented negative effect on life satisfaction; d) language proficiency showed positive effect on life satisfaction and willingness to stay in Japan.

Furthermore, to compliment the results of quantitative study and understand the sense of well-being of Chinese newcomers, qualitative interviews with 52 Chinese nationals were conducted in Tokyo and Shizuoka. The narratives of newcomer Chinese immigrants reflected that, they keep comparing themselves to both relatives in China and new peers in Japan, then social comparison lead to low level of SWB among newcomer Chinese immigrants in Japan. In addition, due to family visa status and lack of language proficiency, married Chinese experienced self-marginalization after moved to Japan, causing them to experience institutional isolation. Moreover, migration may benefit newcomer Chinese immigrants economically, but harm their social positions and psychological outcomes, especially the specific experience—been discriminated against by Japanese—showed negative effect on newcomer Chinese immigrants’ SWB in Japan.

References