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Culture and Nursing Research: An Empirical Analysis of Kiyo Journals

K. Keiko Hisama

An interesting phenomenon occurring in the Japanese academic world is the popularity of a genre of journal called *kiyo*, a periodical published by various units within a large institution (e.g. department, school, or college) that contains a collection of research papers and reports. The purpose of this study was to assess the significance of *kiyo* journals in terms of the cultural context. The present study consisted of (1) a review of literature focusing on Japanese culture and (2) a limited analysis of data obtained from a sample of *kiyo* journals. The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

(1) how widely are *kiyo* journals circulated among nursing institutions?
(2) to what extent does the content of the journals reflect the difference among nursing institutions?
(3) how *kiyo* journals, if any, might be able to contribute to the advancement of nursing research, education, and practice?

The results showed that *kiyo* journals are mainly circulated among the members of the publishing unit and to some extent, among institutions that have similar programs. Quantitative analyses on content variables showed that a larger number of nursing articles were published in the journal if the publishing unit was nursing only for both 3-year and 4-year college programs. T-tests showed significant differences between 3-year and 4-year colleges with regard to three content variables. Based on this study, future research guidelines are given. It was concluded that *kiyo* journals, if utilized with caution, have unique value and potential in advancing nursing research and scholarship.

Key Words

*kiyo* journals, Nursing research, Japanese culture.

INTRODUCTION

An interesting phenomenon occurring in the Japanese academic world is the popularity of an in-house journal called *kiyo*, a periodical that contains a collection of research papers and reports. *Kiyo* has been published by a wide range of Japanese institutions including hospitals, companies, and most frequently by educational institutions. Some of the dominant features of *kiyo* journals are that anyone who is affiliated with the institution can publish in it, and everyone is encouraged to publish without being rejected. Since I knew how difficult it was to publish academically in America, it was refreshing to witness my colleagues being given a chance to have their papers published in a professionally designed journal.

The purpose of this study was to assess the characteristics and significance of *kiyo* journals in terms of the
cultural context. This study consisted of (1) a review of literature, focusing on Japanese culture, and (2) a limited analysis of data obtained from a sample of kiyo journals. The study attempted to answer the following questions:
(1) how widely are kiyo journals circulated among the nursing institutions?
(2) to what extent does the content of the journal reflect differences among the nursing institutions?
(3) how kiyo journals, if any, might be able to contribute to the advancement of nursing research, education, and practice?

Based on the results of this study, it is hoped that we can delineate the future research directions in assessing the unique value of kiyo journals.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Characteristics of Japanese Culture

The development and proliferation of kiyo journals seem to be related to the characteristic of the Japanese society called mura shakai. Mura is a Japanese word for an agricultural village and shakai for society. Many Japanese villages developed early in the history as a close-knit community where rice farmers helped each other. However, mura shakai is uniquely Japanese in several respects. The work of two social science scholars sheds more light on the nature of mura shakai.

Chie Nakane, a prominent Japanese social scientist who was most active in the 1970s, developed a theory of Japanese society and its dynamics. She explained her theory in two well-known books, Tate shakai no ningenkankei (human relationships in Japanese society)\(^1\) and Tate shakai no rikigaku (the dynamics of Japanese society)\(^2\). Her work was translated into English and had significant influence on subsequent studies of the Japanese people and culture.\(^3\)

The highlight of her theory is that Japanese society, at all levels and types (e.g. formal and informal,) is based on close-knit small groups. In many respects, those groups have the characteristics of mura shakai. Nakane characterized mura shakai as being tan-ichi shakai, meaning a uniform society where few variations are seen. In terms of thinking patterns, for example, a single view (or value) often dominates and different views are strongly sanctioned within the group. "The nail that sticks out must be hammered down" is the Japanese proverb that depicts the characteristics of mura shakai.

The tradition of mura shakai is seen in group dynamics that lack strong leadership because group consensus and group harmony, called wa, is of tantamount importance. The group follows traditions and moves by a sort of random force, as in a starfish, according to Nakane. Within the group, absolute egalitarianism and primitive democracy, as many social scientists pointed out, governs. Any criticism directed toward the group, or of any group member, is regarded as being harmful to the group harmony.

In order to maintain egalitarianism and group harmony, individual effort
or excellence in an individual's work is often discouraged. On the other hand, group members, especially senior members, are allowed much freedom in their behavior and they receive little criticism. Laws or customs imposed by the outside forces have limited power in regulating the behaviors of group members.

According to Gregory Clark, a journalist and scholar who studied various societies of the world, Japanese society is unparalleled by any others including those of India, China, and Korea. The only comparable culture to Japanese culture, that retained goodness of primitive society where people place a greater value to human relationship and emotions rather than ideology or rational thinking, is Minoa culture of Kreta. However, Clark pointed out that the Japanese culture can be a sort of antidote for the extremely individualistic and competitive western culture. He proposed that the western world needs to learn from the Japanese as much as the Japanese need to learn the western democratic ideas that propelled western civilization.

**History of Professional Journal Publication**

Until the end of World War II, the Japanese educational system followed the elitist tradition of Germany. In this climate, publication of academic journals was not widely practiced. Shoichi Fuse, a medical historian, wrote that GHQ (general headquarters for the allied forces) officers who worked forward developing Japan to become a democratic country immediately following the end of World War II, were amazed to find that there were no professional journals in the headquarters of the Japanese Medical Association. Under the leadership of GHQ nurse officers, the first nursing journal called *Kango* was published in 1947.

Today, dozens of nursing journals are being published and new ones constantly are coming out. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, nursing periodicals are being published by a few leading commercial companies where making profit is important. Also, the tradition of group harmony seems to govern the editorial policy, that is, controversial subjects are seldom seen in these journals which would conflict with their commercial value. Under such circumstances, *kiyo* journals, if managed well, could be utilized as a vehicle for substantial scholarly work.

**Historical Development of Nursing Education**

Nursing education of the kind espoused by Florence Nightingale dawned in Japan in 1885 when Kanehiro Takagi, a navy physician, opened the first nursing school in Tokyo. Takagi studied medicine at St. Thomas' Hospital in England and he was impressed by the nursing school established by Nightingale. Another nursing school was established in Kyoto with the help of Takagi's subordinate who also studied in England. However, both schools were closed in 10 years. Since then, two major patterns in nursing education have emerged.

The first was that given by the Japanese Red Cross organization that
needed nurses to care for injured soldiers in battle fields. The other type of nursing education was given at the newly established medical schools where physicians learned western medicine. In both cases, physicians led nursing education in order to train nurses to assist them by covering menial medical work. In addition, practicing physicians, who maintained traditional medical practices called *kaigyoisei* (kaigyo = open for business; isei = medical service), trained the thousands of nurses they needed for their *shimryoshos*, a combination of clinic and hospital with less than 20 beds. Although there have been some changes since Japan’s defeat in World War II and its subsequent occupation by the Allied Forces, the basic patterns of nursing education remain up to the present.

It was only in the 1990’s that Japanese nursing education, as a whole, changed its focus to caring patients rather than assisting physicians. Faced with declining birth rates and a sharp increase in the number of people over 65 (of which over one million are called *netakiri rojin* meaning bed-ridden old people), Japanese government has finally recognized the importance of nursing as an independent profession that requires college level education. A sudden geometric increase of nursing universities and colleges seems to have encouraged the publication of *kiyo* journals to demonstrate a certain level of scholarship among nursing educators.

**METHODS**

**Sampling**

All issues of *kiyo* journals mailed to our health sciences library, where this research was conducted during March through July of 1996, were examined. At the time of this study, our 3-year technical college was still in operation along with a newly established 4-year college. However, as in previous years, the library was the part of a technical college associated with a large national university. Starting this year, as in many other nursing colleges, the technical college is closed and the library became a division of the main library for the School of Medicine. However, the library is separated from the main library building for medical students and physicians in terms of its location and daily operations. According to the librarians, a majority of the *kiyo* journals arrived during the period in which this pilot study was conducted.

**Variables**

A. Independent variables
(1) Type of institutions: three types are public-national, public-other, and private
(2) Type of publishing unit: nursing only (single college or department), or combined (nursing and other areas of study)

B. Dependent variables
(1) Total number of articles (Total)
(2) Articles written in English language (English)
(3) Nursing articles (Nursing)
(4) A ratio between (4) and (3) (Nursing2)
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(5) Volume of each journal (Volume)

**Procedure**

Data collection and coding variables

(1) *Kiyo* journals: In the February of 1996, I asked our librarians to temporarily hold all new *kiyo* journals delivered to the library. I visited the library on a weekly basis and selected journals published by the educational institutions that offered nursing as a major. Subsequently, I copied the cover and Table of Contents from each journal before it was processed and displayed. This procedure was continued until the first week of August, 1996. Coding variables started after the completion of journal collection.

(2) Institutional records on *kiyo* journals: Our university had an annual record of journals sent to other institutions as well as those received from them. They were tabulated and totals were computed according to the type of institution.

(3) Number of nursing colleges and universities: Information on 3-year nursing programs was obtained from the latest list of all nursing programs. The list was distributed by a leading publisher during 1996-1997 academic year. However, information on the list seemed to be already outdated for the 4-year colleges because their number has been increasing at an unprecedented rate. Therefore another list was obtained from the "Japan Association of Nursing Programs in University (sic) (JANPU (sic))." \(^{15}\)

Data were entered into a personal computer and statistical analyses were performed using SPSS program version 6.1.\(^{16}\) Mostly descriptive statistics were applied, but, when appropriate, a limited number of inferential statistics were also used.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

**Group Average and Standard Deviations**

Group averages were computed according to the three types of institutions and two types of publishing units. Variables examined were: total number of articles (Total), nursing articles (Nursing), and articles written in English languages (English). In addition, Nursing2 was derived by taking a ratio between two variables: Nursing and Total.

**One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

Group differences among the 5 dependent variables for 3-year colleges were examined by applying ANOVA. The independent variable was the organizational type of institution.

**RESULTS**

**Journal Circulation**

Four-year colleges: Although there were a total of 46 colleges (45 excluding our program), 10 of them were established during 1995, and 5 during 1996. It takes about a year or two before newly established colleges
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begin their actual operations. Therefore, receiving 18 journals was satisfactory in terms of journal circulation, considering they were only collected for 6-month period, and the fact that many of the 4-year colleges have been newly established.

Three-year colleges: There were a total of 88 3-year nursing programs. Therefore, receiving 41 journals for 6-month period was considered satisfactory in terms of journal circulation.

Means and Standard Deviations

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations (SDs) for the 5 variables for both the 4-year and the 3-year colleges. Subsequently, the t-ratio between the two groups was computed for all variables. Significant differences were obtained for Volume, Nursing, and Nursing2.

Table 2 shows the means and the SDs for the 5 variables at the three types of institutions for 3-year colleges. One-way ANOVA was performed to test the level of significance. Two variables (English and Nursing2) showed significant dif-

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations on Kijo Journal Variables: Colleges Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>3-year (N=41)</th>
<th>4-year (N=18)</th>
<th>t</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>11.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing2</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. Total=total number of articles; English=articles written in English; Nursing=number of nursing articles; Nursing2=Nursing/Total; Volume=vol. number
** p<.01

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations on Kijo Journal Variables by College Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Public-National(N=13)</th>
<th>Public-Other(N=12)</th>
<th>Private(N=16)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1.231</td>
<td>1.481</td>
<td>.583</td>
<td>1.240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>3.154</td>
<td>2.577</td>
<td>5.750</td>
<td>3.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing2</td>
<td>0.260</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>12.000</td>
<td>7.746</td>
<td>8.000</td>
<td>5.878</td>
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</table>

Note. Total=total number of articles; English=articles written in English; Nursing=number of nursing articles; Nursing2=Nursing/Total; Volume=vol. number
* p<.05
The means and SDs were also computed for the same variable for 4-year colleges as shown in Table 3. However, because of the small number of subjects in each subgroup, statistical significance was not examined for this sample.

Tables 4 and 5 show the means and SDs for the 5 variables at two types of publishing units. In the case of 3-
year colleges, two-thirds of the publishing units were combined with other departments. However, the ratio is opposite for 4-year colleges; nearly two thirds of the publishing units were single nursing unit. In both cases, more nursing articles were published if the publishing unit was a single nursing unit.

Volume numbers in Tables 4 and 5 reflect the difference in the history among kiyo journal publications. Among 4-year colleges, publishing units for nursing only had a much longer history of publication. Among 3-year colleges, the results were opposite, in that, single nursing units had much shorter histories of publication of kiyo journals. Although the total number of English articles was small, private nursing institutions published fewer English articles than public institutions.

DISCUSSION

Circulation

kiyo journals are mainly circulated among the members of the publishing unit of an institution. Only a limited number of journals are being sent to outside institutions. On the local level, kiyo journals seem to be circulated beyond the same type of institutions such as from colleges to hospitals and vice versa when researchers of different institutions cooperate. A partial nationwide circulation is being practiced among the same type of educational institutions (e.g. 3-year colleges of medical technology).

This pattern of circulation seems to reflect one aspect of cooperation in Japanese society among people belonging to a small and close-knit group. A lack of information regarding clear objectives and rules for publishing kiyo journals also relates to the nature of the journal as being internal. As an official journal, however, all kiyo journals are sent to the central depository maintained by the Japanese government.

There is a question of whether we should increase the circulation of kiyo journals. While examining kiyo articles, I found some articles innovative and interesting. It is true that more experienced researchers might look to national or international journals for publication of their articles. However, kiyo could be a cradle for researchers who are starting out or it might be a good place to report about exploratory studies like this one. For example, an article about Nightingale which I thought interesting, was first published in a Kiyo journal. A few years later, the same author expanded its scope with the help of a government grant (Kakenhi.)

The results of this study showed that the circulation rate of kiyo journals among similar educational institutions was less than 50%. In my opinion, we should exchange kiyo journals among the similar educational institutions in Japan unless the other party refuses them.

Analyses of Variables

The results of quantitative analyses on the variables showed some interesting patterns regarding the content of kiyo journals.

First, volume numbers generally indicate how long, and how well the nursing programs have been running.
For example, many 3-year technical colleges of nursing were established by the mid-1980s, while there were only 11 for 4-year nursing programs prior to 1990. The differences in means for volumes between the two types of programs (4.94 for 4-year and 10.83 for 3-year) was significant at .01 level. There was a wide difference in volume numbers according to the different organizational type of institutions and the publishing units. If the journal is published by a single nursing unit, volume numbers were higher for 4-year colleges, but the results were opposite in the case of 3-year colleges.

Second, although total numbers were very small, public colleges published more articles written in English than private ones. Persons who wrote English articles are mostly non-native speakers of Japanese. Our health sciences department was an exception in that the department published two sets of *kiyo* journals, one in Japanese and the other in English. Nursing faculty members published one English article.

Third, although differences were not very large, more nursing articles were published if the publishing unit was for nursing only, for both 3-year and 4-year programs. The effects of college organization type (public-national, public-other, or private) showed that the number of nursing articles was larger for colleges other than public-national among 3-year colleges. In case of 4-year colleges, the sample for each subgroup was too small to make any valid statement.

**Future Research on *kiyo* Journals**

*kiyo* journals will remain an internal journal to stimulate research among the members of small close-knit groups. However, *kiyo* journals must expect a danger of being affected by some negative aspects of Japanese culture pointed out in the review of literature. One phenomena that concerns me is that some articles lack freshness of ideas. Another concern is the listing of a large number of author names per article. All of them might need some credit but do not qualify as authors according to prevailing academic standard. In the long run, such practice will hinder their growth as scholars.

In order to utilize the unique value of Kiyo journals as a cradle for developing scholarship among the faculty, I recommend the following for the committee and the individual members of institutions publishing *kiyo*:

The role of the committee

1. establish a clearly written mission statements and the standard that guide the journal publication, and print them in each issue,
2. decide on a uniform writing style similar to one accepted as national or international standard,
3. provide guide to all members in following it as carefully as they can,
4. help inexperienced authors so that they develop into good writers at the early stage of their writing career.

The Role of Authors

1. avoid being trapped by a number of negative aspects of Japanese culture that might discourage excellence in the individual's work,
2. try to actually write the article professionally. Writing well requires
long and sustained training and enormous self discipline, (3) along with writing for Kiyo journals, submit to outside academic journals even though your article might be rejected.

The above guidelines must be considered in order to maximize the contribution of kiyo journals to improving nursing scholarship. Future research needs to investigate issues that are related to the above mentioned problems.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, kiyo journals, as in-house journals, have unique value and potential in the Japanese academic world. As more and more nursing programs are upgraded to the university level, the role of kiyo journals becomes greater. As members of the intellectual community, nurses should utilize kiyo journals and help not only themselves but the journal to become a useful cradle for nurturing nursing scholarship and practice.

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