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Study of the effective promotion of public marriage-hunting support businesses:

ISHIKAWA marriage support center

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In Japan, the high number of unmarried people has been a social problem for half a century. In response to this, efforts by 'marriage support projects' targeting people who cannot seem to get married in each prefecture and municipality are increasing. However, there are prefectures and municipalities that have ended their marriage support projects for reasons such as the number of marriages not increasing and financial difficulties. Meanwhile, the number of marriages increased year after year in Ishikawa Prefecture after matchmaking businesses opened in 2007, with 610 marriages being recorded in 2015. Therefore, this research, by focusing on matchmaker businesses, aims to clarify the role of matchmakers in marriage and the reason for the increase in the number of marriages.

First, in order to clarify the characteristics of the matchmaker businesses, we conducted a questionnaire survey covering all 42 prefectures implementing marriage support projects. The questionnaire covered 1) basic information such as the number of unmarried people and the number of staff, plus the outline of the organization implementing the marriage support project; 2) evaluations of marital activity support projects; 3) the implementation status of marriage support projects; and 4) the approach to matchmaker businesses and the characteristics of the matchmaker project implementation organization. These factors were analysed while comparing the organization that carried out the matchmaker project and the system matching implementation organization.

The second survey was an interview survey carried out by those in charge of the matchmaker businesses. Its purpose was to clarify the roles of matchmaker business support projects and the nature of the support by companies. Specifically, it asked questions about the overall composition of the support project, the activities of the matchmakers, and the content of the educational support for would-be matchmakers.

The third survey was an interview survey conducted with three active matchmakers. Its purpose was to clarify the process by which matchmakers actually arrange marriages. The interview content was analysed using the KJ method.

Matchmaker organizations are typically relatively small, with few staff and low project costs. They have fewer support project users than organizations that implement system matching projects. However, there are organizations like the Ishikawa Wedding Support Center that have seen great results, such as an increase in the number of marriages. It is not the 'creation of encounters' that is emphasized in the implementation of support projects by this matchmaking

business, but rather, they say that 'we value each marriage and want to increase the number of marriages'.

The results of the survey showed that a matchmaker has three roles: 'raising awareness of marriage', 'acting as a third party who makes objective judgments' and 'providing knowledge unique to a matchmaker or network'.

Also, in order for a matchmaker to fulfil its role, it needs to acquire knowledge for information management, freely exchange information among friends, find places where people can interact and regularly hold information exchange meetings.

In this thesis, I analyse the activities of matchmakers and summarizes them using four categories: 'Improving positive consciousness of marriage', 'selecting a partner', 'occupant mediation' and 'constructing a trusting relationship'. I point out the necessity of regular training, information exchanges and exchange meetings before becoming established as a matchmaker, as well as the need to establish an activity base for educational support and a mechanism for activities to be smoothly carried out. These findings will be valuable when a public support organization starts a new marriage support project from now on.