Pengaruh Fenomena Shoushika Terhadap Perekonomian Jepang

The Influence Of The Shoushika Phenomena On The Japanese Economy

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ABSTRAK


Kata Kunci : Shoushika, Jepang, angka kelahiran, populasi, penurunan, ekonomi.

ABSTRACT

Japan is a country that has a relatively stable and superior economy compared to surrounding countries. Behind this are challenges in the form of Shoushika's demographic conditions, namely the low birth population. The Shoushika phenomenon is a challenge for Japan. This phenomenon impacts various fields as a chain of cause and effect, which causes this to become a serious problem as time progresses. This article is analyzed using the concept of the population pyramid and constructivism theory. This research was compiled using qualitative research methods with data collection methods carried out by studying various literature, namely by searching, collecting, and processing documents from various literature sources and previous research scientific works to analyze what factors influence the shoushika phenomenon in Japanese society. And the extent of its influence on the Japanese economy. The study results indicate that the shoushika phenomenon will challenge individuals, companies, and the Japanese government. Japan will need a high number of workers to support its economy in the future. Thus, the need for workers in the high economic sector, also faced with shoushika challenges, will make Japan a country that needs workers outside its territory. The efforts made by the Japanese government were sufficient to overcome some of the effects of the shoushika phenomenon, such as the energy crisis, high spending, and declining income of the Japanese government. However, there are no definite measurable results from all the efforts made by the Japanese government to overcome the impact of the shoushika phenomenon.

Keywords : Shoushika, Japan, birth rate, population, decline, economy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Around the twentieth century, the international history of East Asia became one of the essential subjects to understand the dynamics of modern times. One of the countries in the East Asia region that is interesting to study further is Japan. This is based on the rationalization that Japan has very high economic success compared to other countries in its region. Especially at the end of World War II, when the international world was going through substantial economic growth with repeated frequency. Japan, which at the end of the second world war, experienced massive destruction due to the bombing of two cities, namely Hiroshima and Nagasaki, paralyzed this Asian imperialist country. This situation changed when Japan rose and emerged as the leader of the newly industrialized countries (Hennida, Felayati, Wijayanti, & Perdana, 2017).

The Japanese economy is often seen as a “flying machine—a graceful duck” that flies very high. Japan is also the first major country outside of North America and Europe to have a period of very rapid and stable economic growth. Thus, this led Japan to the league of major industrial powers in the international world. The progress of these East Asian countries is viewed positively by the world, and even the World Bank has dubbed it the East Asian Miracle. However, this research focuses on Japan's condition and the prospects of the Japanese economy. As previously mentioned, the presence of China shifts the position of Japan, which has long been in the position of the second-largest economy in the world. This is related to Japan’s economic stagnation, which is not comparable to the emergence of China in Asia (Usman & Tomimoto, 2013).

This problem the author relates to the problems faced by Japan in the field of demography. This demographic anomaly is referred to by the Japanese as Shoushika. Shoushika is a condition where the birth rate is low in a society, and this phenomenon impacts various fields as a chain of cause and effect, which causes this to become a serious problem over time. This phenomenon became a topic of conversation increasingly when in 1989, the birth rate in Japan reached a critical number of 1.57 even though the minimum birth rate there was set at 2.3. This phenomenon is known to a broad audience as “1.57 shock” (Widiandari, 2016).

Shoushika being present causes the Koreika or aging population growth. This causes the burden of the presence of the elderly population to be shifted to the productive age population as the driving wheel of a country's economy. Japan is well known to the world as a country with a high life expectancy where the age range of its population can reach up to 80 years. This again gives us a clear example of Japan's glory as a developed country that is adequate in terms of health (Maehara, 2015).

The decline in the young population and the increase in the old population certainly impact Japan's economic conditions. This is because the number of productive ages needed in the economic sector and jobs is significantly less (Karo M. T., Hikmatullah, Puteri, Aulia, & Shafira, 2021).

The data that can become a fact from the number of births in Japan can be seen in the figure below:
Figure 1. Number of Births in Japan
(Source: National Institutes of Population and Social Security Research)

The attached graph above shows the rate of decline in the number of births in Japan from time to time. In addition, it is projected that by 2050, most of Japan's population pyramid will rely on the elderly population (IPSS, 2021).

The shoushika phenomenon that occurred in Japan, where the number of births continued to decline until it reached a figure below that required to maintain population stability, significantly impacted Japan's economic and security sectors (Karo M. T., Hikmatullah, Puteri, Aulia, & Shafira, 2021). This is due to the lack of productive age to fill the employment sector in Japan and also to maintain Japan's cultural heritage as well as ethnic homogeneity itself. As a result, Japan brought in foreign workers to meet the required number of workers. The role of human resources in the country's development is enormous because, with efforts to improve the quality of human beings and the quality of its population, a country can reach a level of growth as high as that achieved by developed countries today. On the other hand, human resources are also a significant factor in the economic development of a country (Widiandari, 2016).

Therefore this study aims to analyze what factors influence the shoushika phenomenon in Japanese society, the extent of its influence on the Japanese economy, and the Japanese government's efforts in responding to this problem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is about the effect of the shoushika phenomenon on the Japanese economy. Several writings related to this research were found based on the author's exploration. The first study, entitled “Fenomena Shoushika: Analisis Kebijakan Pemerintah Jepang Pada Era Kepemimpinan Shinzo Abe” (Karo M. T., Hikmatullah, Puteri, Aulia, & Shafira, 2021), this research using the Copenhagen School theoretical framework, explains the dynamics of growth in Japanese society, the phenomenon of the demographic crisis in Japanese or what is called Shoushika, how is the impact of the Shoushika phenomenon and course explaining the policies of the Japanese government during the leadership of Shinzo Abe towards the Shoushiika phenomenon. In this study, the researchers concluded that the Shoushika phenomenon, or the declining birth rate in Japan, then arose due to the demographic crisis that threatened the survival of Japanese society in the future. The many factors described in this study

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focus on the attitudes of Japanese society, which have been constructed from the policies of the Japanese government to shape thinking in Japanese society to prioritize careers over having a family let alone having children. The current decline in the birth rate laid the foundation for Japan's expected population decline to continue. This demographic shift has profound implications for social and economic security. The Japanese government is too concerned with the economic sector in overcoming this problem, making the demographic crisis worse. This phenomenon is also considered to have implications for non-traditional security in Japan due to the decline in productive age, which has implications for the large number of foreign immigrants who come to Japanese territory and become a separate threat to culture, society, and demographics in Japan. Given the long-term severe demographic and socioeconomic consequences of low birth rates, the Japanese government has little choice but to strengthen policies to assist women and their partners in balancing work and family life. If these efforts are made, the Japanese population will continue to be maintained, and the socio-cultural and economic threats due to the demographic crisis can be resolved.

The second study, entitled “Fenomena Shoushika di Jepang: Perubahan Konsep Anak” (Widiandari, 2016), is based on the economic theory of fertility presented by Leibenstein because this research is about the birth rate, which is influenced by economic factors. As the title suggests, this study aims to determine the background of the Shoushika phenomenon and the economic factors that influence changes in the concept of children in Japanese society. According to researchers, the high cost of raising children is one of the factors behind Japanese society's need to have the ideal number of children set to maintain the stability of the availability of human resources. Of course, this will be a challenge for Japanese society in the next few years in maintaining natural population growth conditions. In this study, researchers argue that the Shoshika phenomenon must be viewed from several perspectives. In addition to the increasing Bankonka phenomenon, which is often associated with a decrease in the number of births in Japan, the decrease in the number of births is also related to the changing concept of children in Japanese families. This change in the concept of children is often associated with changes in families from traditional to modern.

In the third study entitled “Fenomena Penurunan Angka Kelahiran di Jepang Pasca Perang Dunia II Sampai 2012” (Widarahesty & Ayu, 2014), the main problem in this study is how Japan, after the developments and progress it has passed gave birth to a phenomenon of declining birth rates that are visible since World War II ended, where the birth rate in Japan experienced ups and downs, then in 1975 the birth rate in Japan continuously decreased drastically until now, even up to March 31, 2012, the population number of Japanese citizens is perched at position 126,659,683 people where the figure decreased by 0.21% from the previous figure. This research using library research methods with qualitative methods concludes that the phenomena that occur are also influenced by the many "career women" who feel more courageous to live their life choices without having to be confined by old traditions. Things such as postponing marriage (bankonka), refusing marriage (hikonka), choosing not to have children, stopping at one child (hitoriko), and many other phenomena that color Japanese women today. As a result, this resistance gave birth to the phenomenon of declining birth rates in Japan, which decreased successively after World War II until 2012.

3. METHOD

A. Population Pyramid Concept

The concept of a population pyramid can be used as a measuring tool to understand and describe the condition and position that is being experienced by a country. The population pyramid is divided into three models. The first model is the constructive model, which illustrates that the population in this graph has a lower number of young people (productive age) than the number of older people and a relatively
low birth rate. This graph shows that the population in a country is said to be shrinking or decreasing, and this kind of model is usually experienced by countries with a high level of socioeconomic development (Richmond, 2020).

The second model, namely the stationary model, explains that the population in all categories is almost the same in number, and the shape of the graph is slightly tapered in the old age category. The last model, namely the expansive model, illustrates that a country has a high birth rate with more young children (productive age) than old age. However, this is accompanied by a low life expectancy where people are only up to around 70 years old. The graphical form of the expansive model is the most ideal compared to the others because there has been population growth on a graph like this. Developing countries experience this form of graphics (Richmond, 2020).

![Population Pyramid](Source: Bureau, Portal Site of Official Statistics of Japan)

B. Constructivism Theory

The Constructivism Perspective initially developed in the post-Cold War era, which arose due to the failure of mainstream theories. This theory is different from the mainstream theory, where the actors have experienced a process of socialization. Constructivism is formed from how we see an interaction pattern consisting of several other elements, such as norms, identity, intention, and language, which are essential to the historical process of relations between subjects (Hadiwinata, 2017).

In constructivism, International Relations are the result of social construction. Constructivism has its perspective in assessing war and peace, which can change according to a particular cultural and historical context. This constructivist point of view is an alternative to other mainstream theories that can be used as a reference in solving an existing problem (Hadiwinata, 2017).

In constructivism theory, this social order or structure has at least three components: shared knowledge, material resources, and practice. Shared knowledge here is the knowledge that is then constructed from the interactions between many actors. This tends to be very dynamic, which is also a variable to regulate, organize, and become a reference for actors’ behaviors. Based on this component, this constructivism is an idea that is then constructed from the interactions between actors (Pramono & Purwono, 2017).

Describe the concept of constructivism in the discussion material on the Shoushika phenomenon; based on this concept, and it can be seen from the rapid development in Japan that made Japan a developed country in a relatively short time to make Japanese people today become ambitious in doing all things.

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The work ethic and high discipline that Japanese people have then lead to a construction of individual thoughts in Japan being reluctant to commit to having children because it will take up much time, which they consider wasted (Hadiwinata, 2017).

Coupled with the emergence of thoughts or ideas instilled by the Japanese government through the “Womenomics” policy for women in Japan, where there is a demand that if women want to live independently, be successful in the economic field, and if women want to continue working, they are advised to postpone having children. Because the work that is juxtaposed with taking care of children is very burdensome, coupled with the cost of caring for children, which is costly. In this case, the Japanese government’s ideas can construct people’s thinking. It is shown by the Shoushika phenomenon, which causes a decrease in the birth rate in Japan because people prioritize individual careers over having a family (Karo M. T., Hikmatullah, Puteri, Aulia, & Shafira, 2021).

This article was prepared using qualitative research methods. Quoted (Creswell, 2017), qualitative research is carried out by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data without making field observations. The literature review is done by the author to be interpreted personally. The data collection method is carried out by studying various literature (library research), namely by searching, collecting, and processing documents with the keyword shoushika from various literature sources and previous scientific research works. The data used in this study is secondary data sourced from various books, scientific articles, official government websites, and literature from various online media related to the issues being analyzed and can be accounted for academically (Melfianora, 2019). The library screening system is carried out by selecting the sources obtained based on their level of credibility. Literary sources were selected based on their publication period, which was updated for the past ten years for books and the past five years for journal articles. As a reference complement, the online sources used are selected based on publishers prioritized by official government websites, regulations, government agencies, or credible primary media pages. In particular, the results of this research will reveal the economic challenges of shoushika conditions that occur in Japan.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Factors Influencing the Emergence of the Shoushika Phenomenon in Japan

Several factors make the shoushika phenomenon occur in Japan, such as the low number of marriages in Japan because many couples postpone marriage, high infertility and high divorce rates in Japan, and the high cost of raising children in Japan to koreika shakai (Tokuhiro, 2017). Theories regarding the shoushika phenomenon and explanations regarding the factors that cause the shoushika phenomenon are explained as follows:

1) Bankonka (晩婚化)

According to Koujien’s dictionary (広辞苑) 晩婚化とは、年をとってからの結婚。根気を過ぎてからの結婚。 Can be interpreted literally which means marriage at an old age after going through perseverance/hard-hearted (hard-hearted: do not give up easily and will not stop working before your goals are achieved). According to Yoko Tokuhiro (Tokuhiro, 2017) the notion of bankonka is a marriage done late due to changes in modern life and attitudes towards marriage. Based on the explanation above, the writer can conclude that what is meant by bankonka is the tendency of Japanese people to postpone marriage due to changes in social life in Japanese society towards a more modern one.

In 1970-1974, there were over 1 million married couples in Japan. The number of married couples that year was the highest in Japanese history. However, since then, there has also been a decline in the number of married couples until now. In 2020, the number of registered marriages in Japan decreased by 12.3%. There are only 525,490 married couples of Japanese nationality, which is the lowest number in current
Japanese history (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2022). This is because more couples are postponing marriage and starting a family amidst a global pandemic. The Mean Age of First Marriage (MAFM) or the average age of first marriage for Japanese people in 2020 for men is 31 years and 29.4 years for women. The average age of first marriage or MAFM of the Japanese population from 1955 to 2020 can be seen in the following graph.

Based on the data above, the age at first marriage for both women and men continues to increase. In 1955 the average age of first marriage for men was 26.6 years and for women 23.8 years. In 2005 there was a significant increase in the average age of first marriage for both men and women. In that year, the average age of men's first marriage increased by 3.2 to an average of 29.8 years, while for women, it increased by 4.2 to an average of 28 years. From 1955-2020 the increase in the average age of first marriage for men was 2.2 years, while for women, it was 2.4 years. This shows that the increase in the average age of first marriage for women is higher than for men and that Japanese women are more likely to delay marriage. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the increasing participation of Japanese women in the world of work. Suppose more and more Japanese people postpone marriage. In that case, Japan will continue to experience a decline in the number of births and an increase in the old population (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2022).

2) Koreika Shakai (高齢化社会)
According to Miyagi, 高齢化社会とは、1955年以降に日本社会の生活に現れた高齢化現象を表す用語です。Meaning: koreika shakai is a term used to describe the phenomenon of an aging population that appeared in Japanese society after 1955 (Tokuhiro, 2017). According to Suartini (Suartini, 2019) Koreika shakai is a condition of the social dynamics of Japanese society about demographic problems caused by an increasing number of elderly people. Based on the explanation above, the authors can conclude that what is meant by koreika shakai is the demographic problem experienced by the country of Japan due to instability in the old age population which dominates compared to the number of people of productive age.

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Based on the above data (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2022), in 1985, the percentage of the population aged 65 years and over in Japan was 10% more, but in 1950 the United States and other European countries had experienced an earlier population aging. From Japan with a percentage already exceeding 10%. Then in 2015, the percentage of Japan's elderly population aged 65 years and over increased to 26.6%. This number exceeds the percentage of the elderly population in other countries, namely the United States, with a percentage of 14.6%, France (18.9%), Sweden (19.6%), Germany (21.2%), and Italy (21.2%). This shows that the elderly community in Japan is growing faster than in the United States and other European countries.

3) High Infertility in Japan
Infertility can be known as one of the leading causes of difficulty getting offspring. In general, infertility is a fertility disorder that can occur in both men and women. One of the factors that cause infertility in men is thyroid hormone levels that are too low, whereas, in women, it is increasing age. The increasing number of ages delaying marriage in Japan causes many couples to marry late. The resulting impact of this condition is infertility, which befalls couples who marry late. In recent years about one in 5.5 couples experience infertility due to late marriage. This has caused Japanese births to decline (The Japan Times, 2021).

4) The Expensive Cost of Having Children
In Japan, raising a child requires much money. Japan is one of several countries in Asia with the title of the country with the most expensive child-rearing costs in the world. The factor that causes the cost of raising children in Japan to be prohibitive is the cost of education and the availability of care when the child is small or requires a large amount of money. Therefore, many married couples in Japan choose to delay having children and even choose not to have children because raising children requires high costs and couples need sufficient economic preparation (Tokuhiro, 2017).

5) High Divorce Rate in Japan
Japan's divorce cases have been increasing over the past few decades. However, it has only been a real boom in Japan since the introduction of the pension law or *kouseinenkin no bunkatsuseido* (厚生年金の
Divorce caused by these factors affects productive age couples and older generations of couples (BBC News, 2017).

The reason for the boom in divorce cases since the enactment of the pension law is that the pension law contains a clause whereby the ex-wife of a retired husband can get up to half of the ex-husband's pension. The purpose of enacting this law is so that the wife can support herself and will not experience a shortage even though she is divorced. Because of this, many wives file for divorce from their husbands (Tokuhiro, 2017).

The Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare released divorce statistics from 2017 to 2019. There were a total of 629,084 divorce cases during the 3 years. Then, in 2020 from January to June, divorce statistics in Japan increased by 9.8%, and there were an additional 100,122 divorce cases. The increase in divorce cases in Japan is due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic or "Corona Divorce" (Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2022).

![Figure 5](https://www.doi.org/10.22303/pir.1.1.2021.01-10)

**b. The Influence of the Shoushika Phenomenon on the Japanese Economy**

Behind Japan's superior economy, there are challenges in the form of demographic conditions experienced by this country. Since the 1990s, the number of babies born in Japan has decreased, leading the government to form a term called shoushika. Shoushika itself ultimately means a low population of births or children. Amid the shoushika phenomenon, families in Japan are trying to look after and raise their children into adulthood. The leading cause of this phenomenon is the limited time given to oneself and the family. Thus, as a formed effort to overcome the shoushika phenomenon, the Japanese government implemented various policies entitled “family-friendly”. The purpose and focus of this policy are to make it easier for workers to carry out their work by being balanced with the role of parents for children in their respective families (Widarahesty & Ayu, 2014).

Japan has experienced stagnation in the field of societal growth and productivity, so which has affected Japan's economic situation itself. Japan is increasingly experiencing lower growth than its true potential. This non-maximization of potential is increasingly occurring in various sectors, including the manufacturing industry sector, which is one of the spearheads of the Japanese economy. It is predicted...
that Japan's workforce will shrink from 79 million in 2012 to 71 million in 2025 (Widiandari, 2016). Of course, this will significantly affect the smooth running of a country's economy, including Japan.

The statistical data shows that in 1950, the Japanese population pyramid had a standard shape with a broad base. However, the pyramid changed significantly over time. In 2018, the elderly population reached 28.1% of the total population. Not only that, it is even projected that in 2060, the number of elderly people will reach 38.1% of the total population in Japan (Statista Research Department, 2022). This "shoushika" phenomenon will be a challenge for Japan, considering its high economy in various sectors, especially technology-related. At the same time, it requires successors from the younger generation as spearheads for Japan's future progress. The statistical data from the historical context and the present projections related to population numbers in Japan can be supported by the table below:

![Figure 6. Changes in the Japanese Population Pyramid](source: Statistics Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

Under the conditions described in the second pyramid, Japan is still surviving, and this is because the proportion of the productive age population is more significant than the non-productive age population. However, considering the tendency for the number of births to continue to decline, it is feared that conditions that occur in the future will get worse, as seen in the third pyramid (Statista Research Department, 2022).

If elaborated with Japan's economic advantage, it can be seen that the "shoushika" phenomenon will be a challenge for individuals, companies, and the Japanese government, where Japan will need a high number of workers to support its economy in the future. Thus, the need for workers in the high economic sector, also faced with "shoushika" challenges, will make Japan a country that needs workers outside its territory. This need will then trigger international migration in Japan (Yamada, 2018).

The lack of local labor, which is in line with Japan's high demand for labor to develop its economy, can be seen from the facts of the 2018 survey (Eksy, 2018). The survey stated that over 80% of companies reported that they projected that the labor shortage in Japan would require them to limit the number of services that can be offered over the next several years. An obvious example is what Japan Post did, where this company plans to stop Saturday Mail delivery (Japan Post, 2018). Not only that, in 2018, Teikoku Data Bank also conducted a survey of 10,000 Teikoku Data Bank companies, revealing that as many as 50% of companies reported labor shortages (Japan Broadcasting Corporation, 2019). 70 other companies were reported bankrupt due to a lack of manpower (Handayani, 2019). With the data
presented, it can be proven that the existence of the *shoushika* phenomenon will undoubtedly exacerbate the condition of the lack of labor experienced by Japan, where economic development and employment will be critical to the long-term economic sustainability of Japan's future. With economic conditions, the *shoushika* phenomenon, and a perceived lack of manpower for the future of Japan, it is necessary to move people from one country to another, which can be called international migration (Widiandari, 2016).

c. The Efforts of the Japanese Government in Responding to the Problem of the Shoushika Phenomenon

Japan's birth rate is reported to be at a record low in 2022. This is believed to have exacerbated Japan's shrinking population and led the government to call it a crisis. From January-September 2022, Japan's birth rate reached 599,636 babies. This figure decreased by 4.9% compared to last year, which previously broke the lowest birth record. Referring to the birth rate so far, the total number of babies born in Japan in 2022 is expected to be below last year’s record low, which reached 811,000 babies (Hakim, 2022).

The *shoushika* phenomenon is very influential on human resources that are considered productive and have an essential role in supporting the pace of the Japanese economy itself. Seeing this, the Japanese government is making various efforts to overcome the problem of birth rates, such as providing incentives for the birth of each child, known as “cash for kids”, where each child will receive an allowance of 26,000 yen or around 280 US$ each month (Widiandari, 2016).

The goal of “economic strengthening”, which was proclaimed through the “Yoshida doctrine”, has brought Japan a “miracle economy” that makes Japan one of the essential actors in the international world. Its glory places Japan in a critical position. It has attracted attention from various circles both from academics, politicians, and statesmen who want to learn about Japan's success, such as the appearance of the book “Japan as Number One” by Ezra Vogel, which reveals the success achieved by Japan in the 80s, but again, of course, the journey of development that brought Japan's progress has confronted Japan with various significant challenges that have left work to be completed for all levels of society in Japan (Yamada, 2018) —mainly related to declining birth rates which has an impact on various aspects, both economic, social, and cultural, in Japan. Various efforts have been made by multiple parties, from observing, tackling, and criticizing the root causes of this phenomenon which certainly attracts the attention of all groups, both inside Japan and outside Japan. Various views that try to uncover the causes of this phenomenon vary by using various approaches (Widarahesty & Ayu, 2014).

The government has made various efforts in line with the increasing number of declining births which is worrying for various parties. Nevertheless, more than the various efforts made by the government have been needed to improve the condition of the population in Japan, which continues to decline. On the other hand, various shifts in traditional values that modern values have replaced continue to develop in Japanese society. Meanwhile, declining birth rates have added to the variety of “modern social phenomena”, such as the emergence of an increasing number of elderly people in Japan, which requires much attention from the people and the Japanese government.

In response to the booming elderly population, the Japanese government is opening jobs for the elderly. The working environment will be improved, allowing workers to demonstrate their full abilities well into old age. The retirement age, which was previously 65 years, will be extended to 70 years. At that time, Shinzo Abe wanted to prevent the population from falling below 100 million by 2060. Shinzo

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Abe's policies of raising the retirement age and easing the re-hiring of retirees provided significant incentives in several fields. In the field of employment, one of which is the extension of the retirement age provides relief for companies to no longer start the recruitment process from scratch (Rachmawati & Khoiraiti, 2019).

In 2017, the government announced a spending package of 2 trillion yen ($18 billion) to expand free preschools for children aged 3 to 5 – and for children aged 2 and under from low-income families – and cut waiting times at centers childcare. The increasing number of elderly shows that Japan has the highest life expectancy. Meanwhile, the low number of children in Japan indicates that the government must quickly deal with the problem of declining birth rates which will cause problems for the Japanese population in the future (Jozuka, Yeung, & Kwon, 2019). Other policies that are being pursued to address demographic problems in Japan are opening opportunities for foreign workers to become skilled workers in Japan. With the presence of foreign workers, job positions that are not in demand by Japanese residents will be filled by foreign workers and will continue to help the economy in Japan. In addition, the arrival of foreign workers can help increase the population only by providing convenience in settling in Japan. So far, the regulations are that foreign workers can settle in Japan if they have lived for 10 years (Karo M. T., Hikmatullah, Puteri, Aulia, & Shafira, 2021).

During the Shinzo Abe administration (2012-2020), the policy taken to address the low working-age population encouraged women’s participation in the world of work. This policy is called “Womenomics”, in which incentives encourage companies to employ more women and provide more leadership positions to female employees (Pletcher, 2020). Prime Minister Abe, under his leadership, overcame this crisis by supporting young couples in raising children, for example, by making preschool education accessible. The Japanese government has set a target to increase the rebirth rate to 1.8 by 2025 – it is unlikely that this will be achieved in such a short time, considering that the birth rate was only 1.43 in 2017 (Walia, 2019).

Another case is with the current Prime Minister of Japan, Fumio Kishida, who in mid-September stated that he would form 2 important positions, namely “human rights” and “economic security”, in his cabinet. In contrast to the “Abenomics” policy, Fumio stated that there would be no increase in sales tax in the next 10 years. He stressed the need to distribute wealth to households, which is in direct contrast to the focus of the ‘Abenomics’ policy. The policy originated with former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to increase corporate profits in the hope that the benefits would flow to wage earners. Fumio Kishida promised to create a growth cycle that strengthens and improves economic distribution to increase income under the economic policy of “new capitalism” (Karo M. T., Hikmatullah, Puteri, Aulia, & Shafira, 2021).

If analyzed, the Japanese government uses policies based on economic interests rather than social and cultural threats. Even though this demographic crisis can pose a threat of extinction to Japanese citizens if it occurs continuously over a long period and goes unnoticed (Buzan & Hansen, 2013). There is a high possibility that the ethnic and cultural identities of the Japanese people will fade and even become extinct in the next few centuries if Japan continues to be filled with immigrants that are increasing every year while the population of Japan itself continues to decrease.

5. CONCLUSION

Shoushika is a term used in Japan to describe a phenomenon of declining birth rates and the number of children. The shoushika phenomenon is a demographic condition in Japan where population instability
is caused by the continuing decline in the number of births at a lower rate than the number that should be needed to maintain population stability. Several factors trigger the shoushika phenomenon in Japan, such as many Japanese people who postpone marriage because many women are more focused on their careers. Then, high infertility or fertility disorders are caused by the old age of marriage. The high rate of divorce, the high cost of having children, and the koreika shakai are also factors that affect the decline in the number of births in Japan. It can be said that with the existence of Shoushika, Japan's economic growth in the last ten years has experienced a slight decline due to the declining number productive age population and the increasing number of elderly workers.

The shoushika phenomenon will be a challenge for individuals, companies, and the Japanese government, where Japan will need many workers to support its future economy. Thus, the need for workers in the high economic sector, also faced with shoushika challenges, will make Japan a country that needs workers outside its territory. This need will then also trigger international migration in Japan. The shoushika phenomenon will certainly exacerbate Japan's labor shortage, where economic development and employment will be critical to the long-term economic sustainability of Japan's future.

To overcome the impact of the shoushika phenomenon, the Japanese government is exerting various efforts to solve it and starting from efforts to solve the economic aspect of the whole. A government panel on Japan's economy and fiscal policy discussed specific long-term measures to increase the population. The Japanese government carried out a policy strategy to overcome shoushika. Efforts made by the Japanese government are similar to issuing policies that aim to increase public awareness of having offspring. In addition, the Japanese government is trying to provide policies aimed at Japanese people who are married and have children. The policies made by this government are so that Japanese people feel facilitated by the government when they have children.

However, there are no definite measurable results from all the efforts made by the Japanese government to overcome the impact of the shoushika phenomenon. However, the efforts made by the Japanese government were sufficient to overcome some of the impacts of the shoushika phenomenon, such as the energy crisis, high spending, and declining income of the Japanese government. In addition, developing Japanese government policies to support births can also help overcome the continuous decline in births.

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