

Migration, temporary expatriation and perception  
of the quality of life of the Japanese population  
in Mexico: Case of the state of Jalisco.

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# Migration, temporary expatriation and perception of the quality of life of the Japanese population in Mexico: Case of the state of Jalisco.

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the quality of life of migrants in the countries of destination, coming from developed capital-exporting countries, under the Foreign Direct Investment modality. They are highly qualified officials and technicians, temporarily expatriated, in charge of starting or giving continuity to the production operations of foreign subsidiaries in developing countries. This article focuses on the particular case of expatriate Japanese migrants who accompany their companies in the establishment of

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subsidiaries or expansion of activities, mostly manufacturing, in Mexico. Normally, the rest of the Japanese population are migrants who are characterized by their longer stay in Mexico, practically accustomed to daily life; and therefore, they are supposed to enjoy a better quality of life, although in the interviews both categories of migrants were very critical of the living conditions. Although Japanese multinational companies implement actions for the benefit of expatriate employees, in accordance with bilateral labor policies, the way in which Japanese residents conceive the comfort of living, their adaptation and main concerns have been studied a little. In addition, on this occasion, the context of an acute and extensive COVID-19 pandemic is added. Therefore, the objective of this article is to know the perception of the way of life of Japanese migrants in the case of the state of Jalisco. To carry out the analysis, information was collected from the sample from the total population of Japanese residents in the state of Jalisco whose age is 20 and over, in the month of January 2021, by members of the Mexico-Japan Studies Program (PROMEJ)<sup>4</sup>. The sample made it possible to identify and classify both expatriate employees of Japanese companies in Jalisco and employees in other local activities, mostly from the municipalities of the metropolitan area of Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco.

The questions that are applied to the questionnaire covered the perception of language barriers, gastronomy, residential conditions, medical services, public safety, political conditions, means of transportation, information technologies and telecommunications, among other aspects. Beyond the problems that migrants have in terms of local language or cultural and educational issues, the results show that there are similarities in terms of problems that most concern Japanese and Mexicans in the state of Jalisco, such as organized crime, insecurity or transport conditions and other issues. Keywords: Jalisco, Japanese Migration, Labor Expatriation, Perception, Quality of Life

Index (QLI).

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4 Questionnaire was planned and directed by Prof. Taku Okabe, Coordinator of PROMEJ.

## 1. Introduction

This study is based on a review of the literature on Japanese migration and the reasons that generate it in the current framework of globalization. Among the background there are studies by William (2004), Carrillo (2018), Campos (2013) and Hirai (2016). However, mainly, these authors limit themselves to the macroeconomic variables related to migratory flows and direct foreign investment and the adaptation of the Japanese population in the countries where they emigrate. On the other hand, the studies leave aside the problems and the perceptions about the way of life of the migrant population. The phenomenon studied in this study is of broader validity and the OECD states that labor and family immigration flows to member countries have increased since 2017 and a slight increase of 2 percent is estimated for 2018, representing in average 5.3 million new permanent immigrants<sup>5</sup>.

This study analyzes the Japanese community residing in the state of Jalisco, particularly in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA). Among the bibliographic background there are own studies, which focus on the quality of life of the Japanese in Mexico and incorporate several aspects measuring, through an index, the perception of their quality of life (Carrillo, 2018).

In this context, the objective of this article is to know the perception of the quality of life of Japanese migrants in a large city in the state of Jalisco. To do this, results obtained from a questionnaire applied via the internet, at the beginning of 2021, by the Mexico-Japan Study Program (PROMEJ), to the Japanese population of Jalisco, adult resident who mostly work in Japanese companies, are analyzed.

As part of the Asian continent, Japan plays an important economic role in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), in the context of bilateral treaties signed with different countries. An issue associated with FDI flows is that of Japanese expatriate migration by the companies where they work, due to the transfer of personnel to the countries

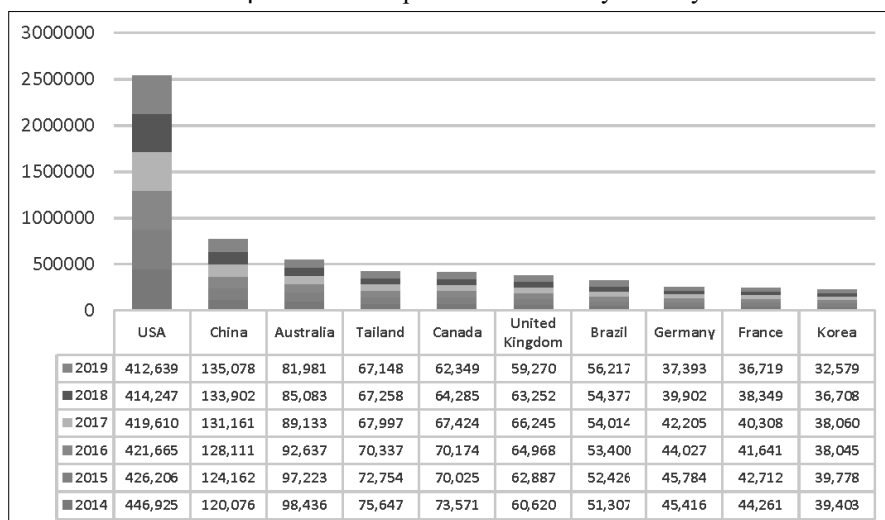
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5 Retrieved from the OECD website under “media” with the topic: Humanitarian migration decreases, while labor and family migration increases, according to the OECD. Retrieved on July 5, 2021 at: <https://www.oecd.org/centrodemexico/medios/lamigracionhumanitariasereduce.htm>

where their subsidiary companies are established to serve as managers, technicians, administrators and even as entrepreneurs or family escorts. But obviously there are other reasons for Japanese emigration, for example, the United States is notoriously the main destination country with more than 400 thousand Japanese migrants in 2019; however, China is the country that receives more than half of Japanese foreign direct investment and occupies a distant second place as a migratory destination for 135,000 Japanese (see Graph 1). Overall, at least 50 countries to which Japanese migration flows are identified. According to data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, for the year 2019 the countries with the largest number of Japanese inhabitants are: 1) United States, 2) China, 3) Australia, 4) Thailand, 5) Canada, 6) United Kingdom, 7) Germany, 8) Brazil, 9) France and 10) South Korea. It is worth mentioning that Mexico is in 19th place with approximately 11,775 Japanese inhabitants. Regarding labor migration, Australia, New Zealand and Poland are also countries receiving workers according to the OIT (2017, p. 14).

After the signing of the Mexico-Japan Economic Association Agreement on September 17, 2004, Japanese FDI increased and with it the number of Japanese global companies in different regions of the country. In the case of the Bajío and Norte regions (border states) of Mexico, the level of employment in the different entities has increased,

Graph 1. Total Japanese residents by country



Source: Data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2019.

as has the Japanese migratory flow accompanied by their families.

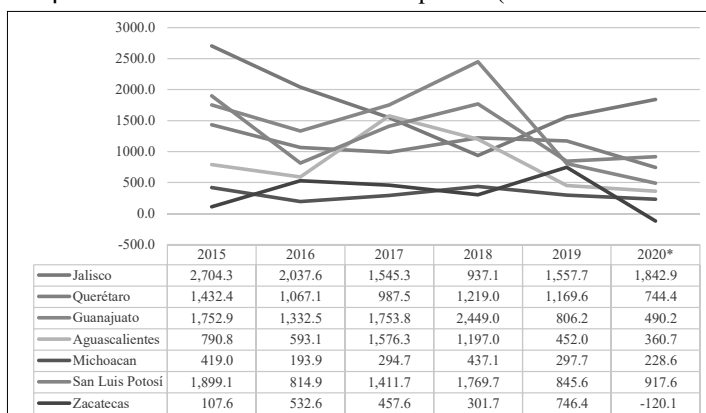
## 2. The Japanese population and FDI in Jalisco

According to the population census 2020, the number of inhabitants of foreign origin in Jalisco ranks fourth nationally with a total of 66,464 migrants, of which 77 percent are of American origin, while the Japanese represent 1% of the foreign population.

The Japanese population in the state of Jalisco tends to increase and spread to other municipalities in the state of Jalisco, such as Arenal, El Salto, Lagos de Moreno, Poncitlán and Tala. The municipalities represent positive changes in the growth of the Japanese community with the exception of Arandas and Cihuatlán. It should be noted that, in the years 2010 and 2020, Japanese immigration has greater mobility in men than in women.

The state of Jalisco, like other entities in which Japanese companies have entered, has shown a relatively moderate behavior in attracting Japanese FDI; this municipality registers 45 Mexican companies with Japanese capital. While the state of Guanajuato has 163 Japanese companies, according to data from the Ministry of Economy, Mexico. In 2018, the state of Jalisco recovered the attraction of FDI in general, while other states such as the state of Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí and Aguascalientes have reduced it (Graph 2).

Graph 2. FDI Flow 2015-2020: 3rd quarter (Millions of dollars)



Source: Elaboration with data from the Ministry of Economy, Mexico (2020)

According to the data in Table 1, the entities and cities of the Overseas Japanese Population Count of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Japanese population maintains the following behavior:

Table 1. Japanese population, according to type of permanent and temporary residence, Mexico and Jalisco, 2013-2014

	Jalisco		México		Under 20 years old
Oct 2013	525	Permanent: 191 (36%)	8,387	Permanent: 2,301 (27%)	N/D
		Temporary: 334 (64%)		Temporary: 6,086 (73%)	
Oct 2014	527	Permanent: 193 (36%)	9,186	Permanent: 2,351 (25%)	1,796 (19.5%)
		Temporary: 334 (64%)		Temporary: 6,835 (75%)	

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014-2015.

Table 1 shows the total of the Japanese community at the national level and in the state of Jalisco. In general, the population with temporary residence coincides with the labor mobility promoted by the Japanese subsidiaries in the state of Jalisco, which remained practically constant in the 2013-2014 biennium. The temporary nature of migratory residence implies normal stays of one to two years and cases of three or more years are rare. The sample study did not consider the young population under 20 years of age, who in part arrived in the country as family companions, which represented 19.5 percent in the state of Jalisco (see Table 1).

For the month of December 2020, according to the information provided by the Consulate General of Japan in León<sup>6</sup>, there were 633 Japanese in the state of Jalisco. The information does not distinguish the type of residence (permanent or temporary), but if the proportions are maintained, it would be configured as shown in Table 2.

Staff mobility is not considered a problem due to the agreements contained in the bilateral treaties between Japan and Mexico, as part of the policies in which large companies are responsible for managing temporary stays and finding accommodation

6 In the state of Jalisco, the total number of Japanese is 298, according to data from INEGI (2020a). This figure differs from the data presented by the Consulate General of Japan in León, where it indicates a total of 633 Japanese for the same year.



**Table 2.** Estimate of the Japanese population, according to type of residence in Jalisco, 2020

Dic 2020	633	Permanent: 227 (36%)	Under 20 years old: 123 (19.5%)
		Temporary: 405 (64%)	

Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from Consulate General of Japan in León, Guanajuato, Mexico

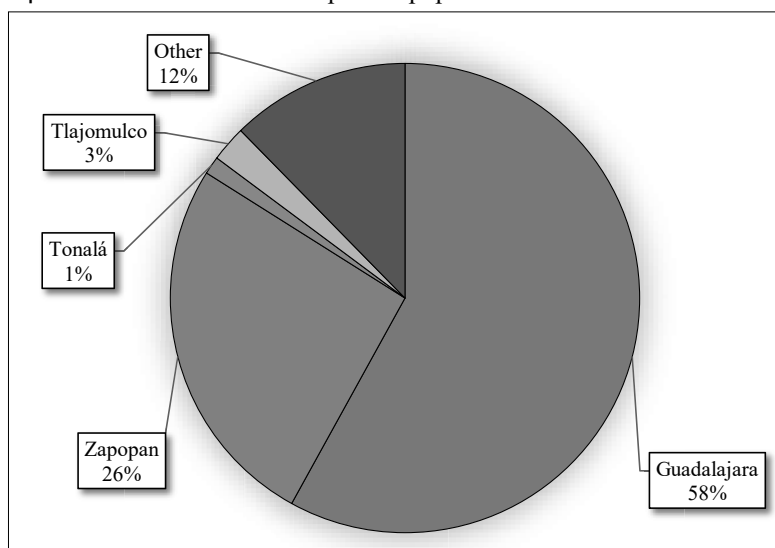
for their staff.

### 3. Quality of life of the Japanese population in Jalisco

The quality of life of particularly temporary migrants expatriated by their companies where they work, depends on the adaptation in the countries to which they are assigned, the dominant culture of the host country and their ability to socialize with other fellow migrants who might provide a space for orientation and support, as stated by Williams (2004). These factors allow expatriates to improve their quality of life. On the other hand, Japanese corporations tend to relocate their highly qualified personnel abroad, for which they receive economic and social security benefits in the country of destination, as well as installation and housing (Sordo and Doncel, 2018: 153).

The analysis of the quality of life of Japanese residents in the state of Jalisco, object of study of this work, is based on the sample provided by the Mexico-Japan Studies Program (PROMEJ) of the University of Guadalajara generated in the first month of the year 2021. The results are shown in the subsequent sections. The research is aimed at the Japanese community, adults over 20 years of age, who live mainly in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco. It was designed to know the perception of the quality of life of the Japanese residents of this metropolis of the state of Jalisco; likewise, the questionnaire was applied via internet with the collaboration of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Japan in Mexico and the Directive Committee of the Japanese supplementary school of Guadalajara. The universe of the sample was 510 Japanese adults, from which 82 valid questionnaires were obtained, which is equivalent to the sample size to guarantee a confidence level of 90 percent and

Graph 3. Distribution of the Japanese population in the state of Jalisco (%)



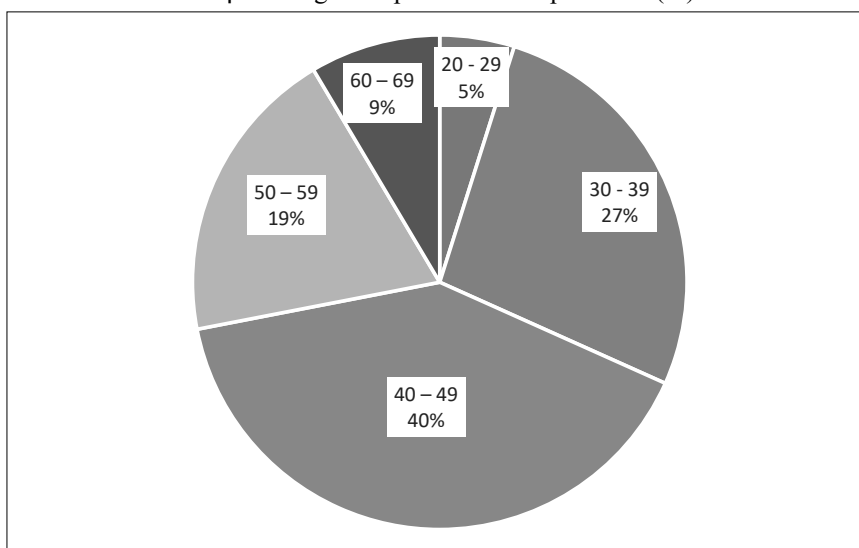
Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

a sampling error of  $\pm 8.26\%$ . As part of the results of the questionnaire, Graph 3 presents the distribution of the Japanese population in the state of Jalisco. In particular, 88% are in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara, with the municipality of Guadalajara being the most relevant destination with 58%, followed by the municipality of Zapopan with 26% of the migrants, since both locations have large areas of high-income housing residential level. In a minimal way, respectively, the municipalities of Tlajomulco and Tonalá are also destinations with 3% and 1%. The remaining 12% of those respondents live in the interior of the state of Jalisco, as noted above.

### 3.1 Personal characteristics of the respondents

**Composition by sex and age of the respondents.** There is a predominance of male migrants, 68% while women represent 32%, who, in part, come as companions (see Graph 4). This result is expected according to perceived antecedents in other countries; for example, in the case of Asian and European countries by Pardo and Dávila (2017: 158), male migration also predominates. On the other hand, it is also observed that the stay of men is much greater than that of women, without forgetting that they also represent the accompanying families of workers and director. In terms of age, the range

Graph 4. Age composition of respondents (%)

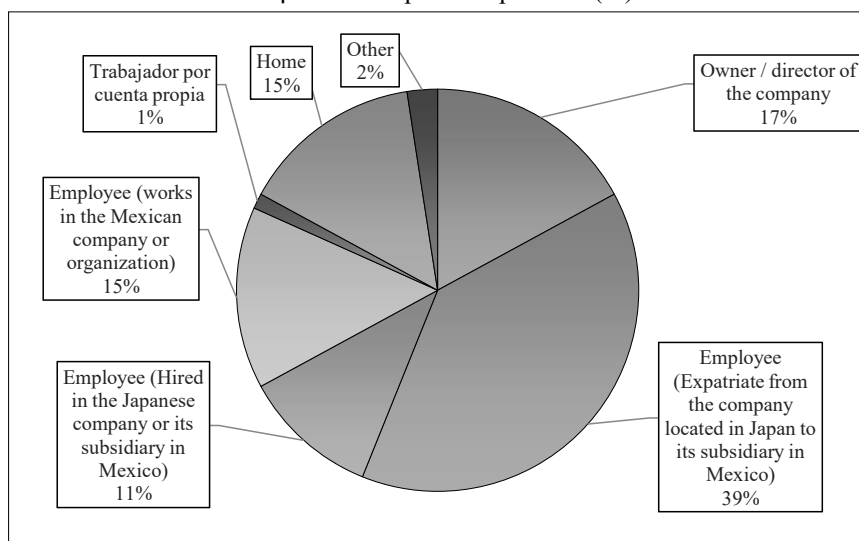


Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

of 40 to 49 years predominates, participating with 40% of the migrants, followed by the range of 50 to 59 years with 27% and in the third order of 30 to 39 years, representing 19%. Respectively, the ranges at the extremes of age from 20 to 29 years and from 60 to 69 years represent only 5 and 9% (Graph 4). This age structure does not reflect the composition of the Japanese community in the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara, but rather the statistical universe of the questionnaire, which includes only the opinion of economically active and inactive adult migrants.

***Position in the occupation of the respondents.*** In labor activity, the highest proportion of the employee classification (39%) were hired in Japan to work in a subsidiary in Mexico; this category is made up, in principle, of temporary migrants (Graph 5). On the other hand, there is the presence of the employees, who already have a residence in Mexico prior to the arrival of the Japanese company in which they work as employees, accrediting 11% of the migrants and who possibly, in part, are from permanent residence (for example, in the interviews it has been observed that they work as professionals, administrators or Spanish-Japanese translators). Next are the owners or employers of Mexican companies, which coincide with a character of permanent residents (17%), for

Graph 5. Occupational position (%)



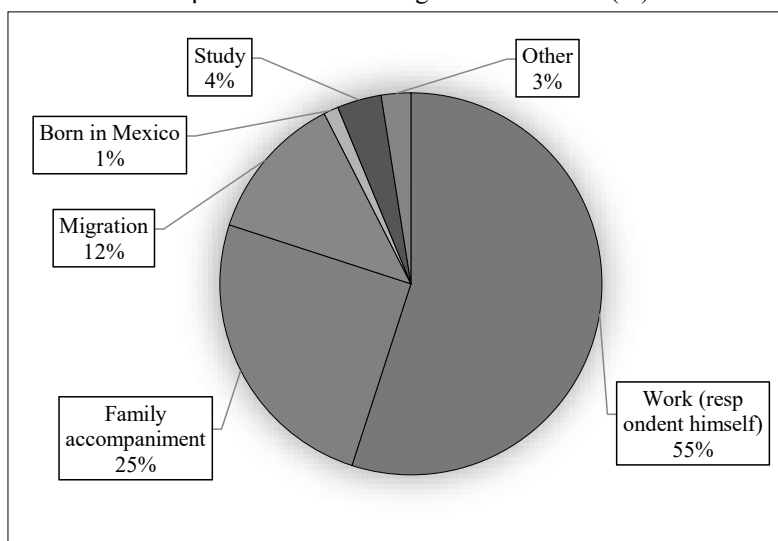
Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROMEJ 2021

the most part; likewise, those migrants who work as employees of a Mexican company or organization (15% of all migrants) are also largely part of the permanent migration class, to which the category of self-employed workers and independent professionals (1%) should also be added. In general, an approach to economically active migrants is found: a) in the category of temporary expatriates with a proportion of 39%; to which should be added the part corresponding to the relatives who accompany them; b) in the categories of employers and employees of Mexican companies most migrants are permanent residents and that add up to 44% of the respondents (Graph 5).

***Reason for the stay and family accompaniment.*** Definitely, the predominant reason for Japanese migration in Jalisco and very possibly in Mexico, is for work. This quantifies 45% of migration plus 20% accredited by family support (Graph 6).

In other studies William (2004), Carrillo (2018), Campos (2013), Hirai (2016), point out that not all migrants expatriated for their jobs are accompanied by their family, but rather are a minority. However, in the state of Jalisco, migrants who are accompanying the employee by Japanese companies and are part of his family, represent a slightly high proportion (20% of the total). Problems related to the education of the children, the

Graph 6. Reason for migration in Jalisco (%)

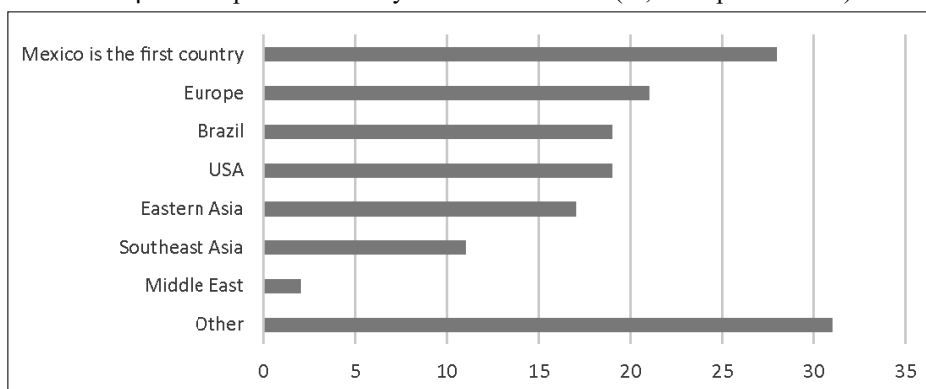


Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

language and the relatively short period of stay (on average two years) make heads of households desist from accompanying their families. On the other hand, Sordo and Doncel (2018: 155) affirm that society determines that the expatriate generally moves without his family, thus being one of the main factors of the loneliness of the Japanese migratory experience, which prevents a greater adaptation to the culture of the country of destination. Japanese corporations need to have an international presence and have done so for several decades, particularly since the 1990s, when the era of global economic networks, digital and informational technology and the large-scale production was consolidated. Large companies intensified the international transfer of their employees temporarily to launch new ventures and facilitate communication within the company. Therefore, corporations define their expatriation programs, as pointed out by Williams (2004: 1).

*The experience of the stay in other countries.* This experience can effectively influence the imaginary of migrants who are in a less developed country like Mexico, of how to comparatively conceive their quality of life with respect to other cultural patterns, according to their experience or lack of it. Regarding the respondents of

Graph 7. Experience of stay in other countries (% , multiple answers)

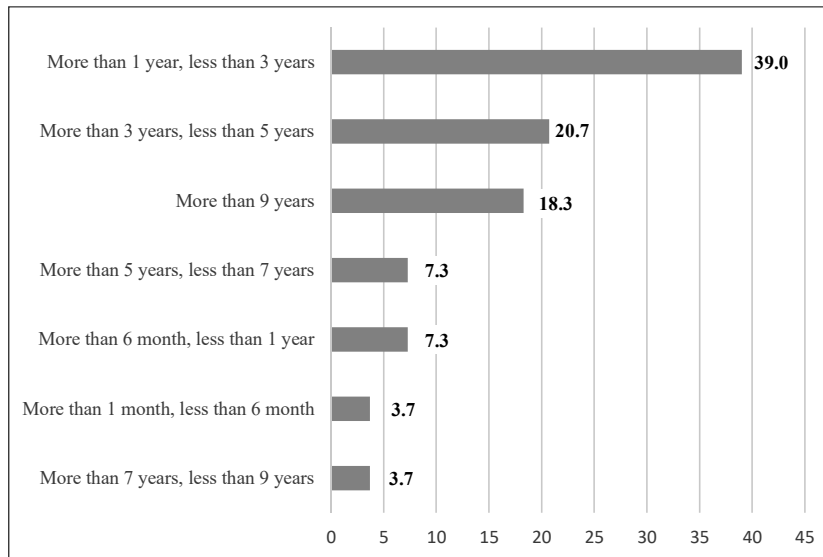


Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

migrants, most of them indicated having experience of living in other countries of the world (31% of the total). Among these countries, they cited Western European countries (21%) and the United States and Brazil (19%) most frequently. For other migrants, Mexico is the first country as part of corporate mobility, representing 28%, as shown in Graph 7. Polanco, Pantoja Y. V. (2018: 103), referring to expatriate migrants, indicates that: "...The company (transnational) must be aware that it manages a valuable resource that plays a strategic role outside the borders of the head office; due to this, the management of the expatriation process becomes a factor of vital importance and the success of the international assignment will largely depend on it". In addition, it is specified that the foreign country in which Japanese migrants have stayed more time were: Western European countries, the United States and Brazil. Definitely, these experiences constitute criteria to evaluate the quality of life that they experience in Mexico.

***Duration of stay in Mexico.*** The migration of Japanese to Mexico constitutes a mobility from a developed country to a developing one, which implies a process of adaptability in a new city of residence that raises the hypothesis of a process of adaptability to conditions that can have a negative impact on the quality of life of the Japanese migrant, particularly in the first year of stay in Mexico. This is in education, security, cultural frictions, housing and little local coexistence, which forces him to

**Graph 8. Duration of stay in Mexico (%)**



Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

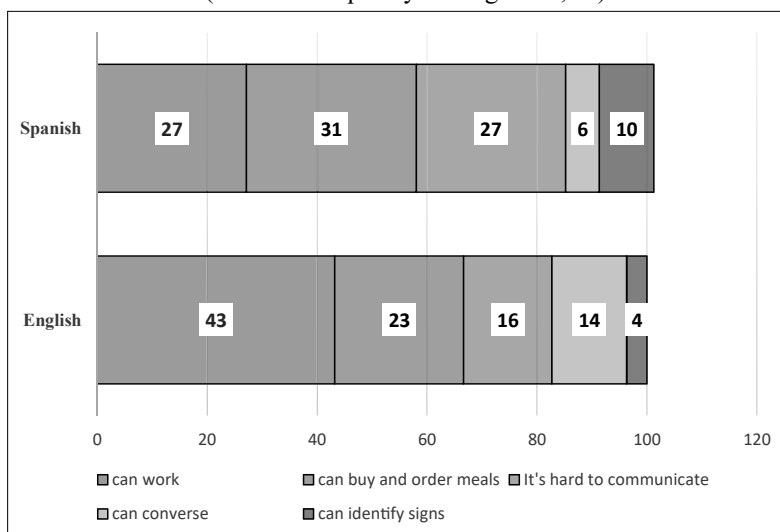
spend his free time in digital communication with its environment in Japan. Based on the results of the sample, according to the ranges established by length of stay, medium-term migrants predominate in Mexico, who have up to less than three years (50%); the migrants with more 3 years and less than 5 years (20.7%) and those with the longest stay, with more than 5 years (29.3%), follow at a distance (see Graph 8).

According to the National Migration Institute of the Mexican government, the status of “permanent resident” is obtained when the migrant has remained four consecutive years in Mexico; as long as they do not comply with such permanence requirement, foreign residents are classified as “temporary residents” who have to periodically renew their stay in Mexico, proving their employment. In this sense, legally, most of the respondents are “temporary residents”. With this category of “temporary” the Japanese employees in the subsidiaries of Japanese corporations who intermittently come and go from Japan to Mexico in the course of their career, they obtain extensive experience that can make them candidates for a higher level position, even a managerial position, as mentioned by Sordo and Doncel (2018: 153) “Each employee has two or three periods working abroad, interspersed with returns to Japan. Each displacement represents a rise in responsibilities and hierarchy in the company.”

***Lack of command of the Spanish language.*** For the migrant it represents a factor that limits communication; however, this is relative. Namely, the degree of language proficiency was questioned on 5 scales. The highest score was given to those who responded that “they can work” in the corresponding language and the lowest to those who responded that “it is difficult to communicate” (Graph 9).

Migrants with higher language proficiency responded that they can work and converse in Spanish, they represent 33%, while those who dominate English represent 57%. Thus, command of the language is better in English than in Spanish (Graph 9). At the other extreme, 27% of migrants have difficulty communicating in Spanish, which implies that this will have a negative impact on their ability to communicate with Mexican workers or in daily life in Mexico, and even more so if they have the same problem with English. This second language can be a good communication tool in various means, such as in the same company or in commercial or service establishments. Likewise, Sordo and Doncel (2018: 142) affirm that intercultural communication, beyond that mediated by language, between Japanese and Mexicans is hampered by a very strict hierarchical conception and respect in social relations in the Japanese case. As well as by nonverbal communication that is also very different

Graph 9. Degree of proficiency in Spanish and English  
(absolute frequency of migration, %)



Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROMEJ 2021

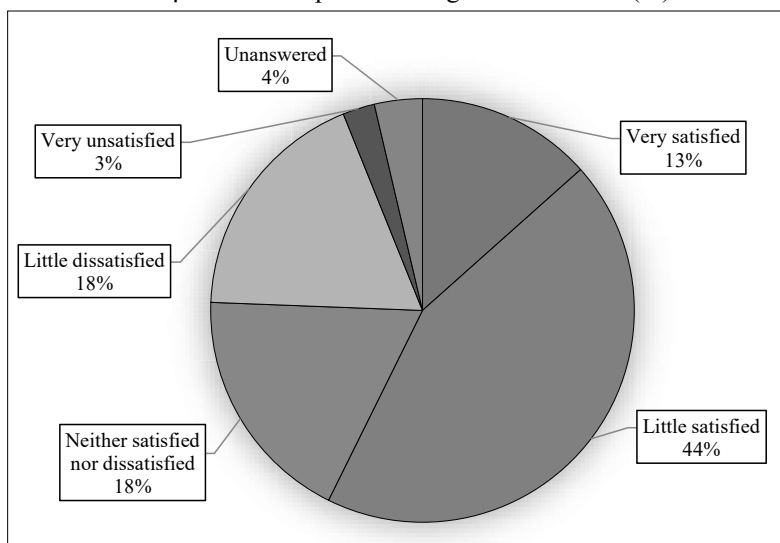


between Mexicans and Japanese (for example, in terms of physical contact, much more restricted in the Japanese case).

### 3.2 Perception of life in different areas and problems they confront.

**Perception about gastronomic life.** During the 1980s, Japanese food restaurants began to predominate in Mexico, whose popularity made it one of the most recognized cuisines in the country, especially in Mexico City. But, the central states of the country have taken care to establish food businesses to meet the demand of Japanese residents. For this, even the Japanese have taught Mexicans to prepare food for the opening of numerous businesses and restaurants. The first restaurant established in the state of Jalisco was run by Japanese migrants, first in Guadalajara and later in Zapopan, some of which have stood out for their good quality among the Japanese community. On the other hand, the acquisition of raw materials for Japanese dish at home is more questionable, due to its limited existence, quality and price. In addition, most Japanese restaurants have limited and adapted their dishes to the taste of Mexicans, to attract more customers, detracting from the taste of the Japanese, which is reflected in the assessment given in Graph 10.

Graph 10. Perception about gastronomic life (%)



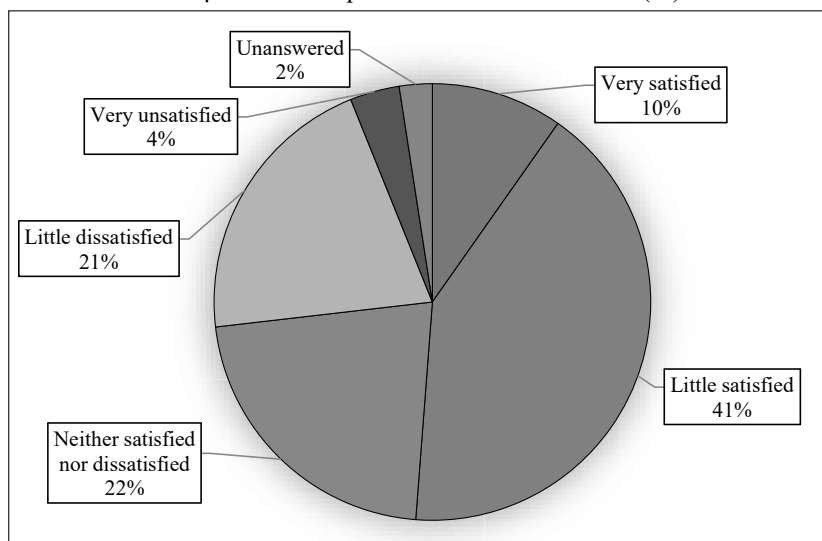
Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

**Perception of housing.** Regarding housing, an important part of the Japanese community in the state of Jalisco is not very satisfied (41%), that is, they are at least above the dissatisfied limit (Graph 11). On the other hand, Carrillo (2018: 166) assures that the size of the city is decisive to guarantee a better quality of life. Consequently, it follows that the urban areas where they are located meet their expectations.

**Possession of the house.** According to the temporality of the stay in which more than half of the migrants do not reside for more than 4 years, they prefer to get rented housing. Thus, 58% of Japanese live in rented apartments and another 15% rent a house, while 16% have their own house or apartment; finally, only 11% rent an apartment provided by the company where they work (see Graph 12).

**Problems related to residential conditions.** Japanese migrants consider that the infrastructure and services of their homes are deficient (64% of migrants think so). Among other problems is also the lack of communication with their neighbors, where there may be neighborhood committees that attend to the problems of the neighborhood (Graph 13).

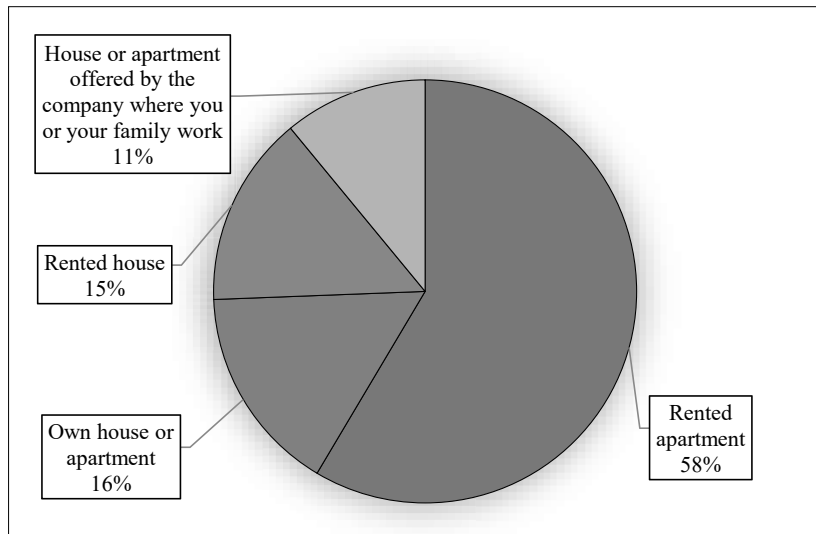
Graph 11. Perception about residential life (%)



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

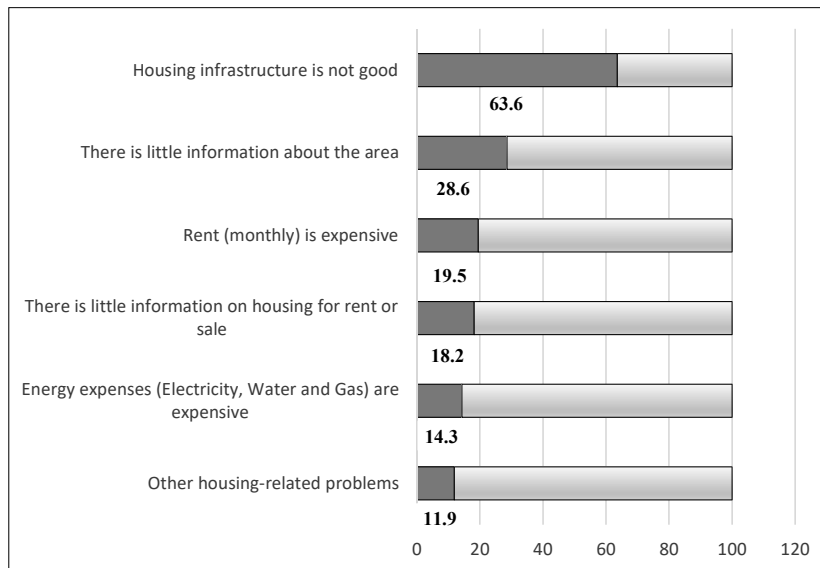
**Perception of the medical environment.** Like Mexicans, foreigners enjoy the same rights in terms of individual guarantees according to constitutional laws. They have the right to health, education and security. As company workers, they are also entitled to

Graph 12. Possession of the house (%)



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

Graph 13. Problems related to residential conditions (% , multiple answers)



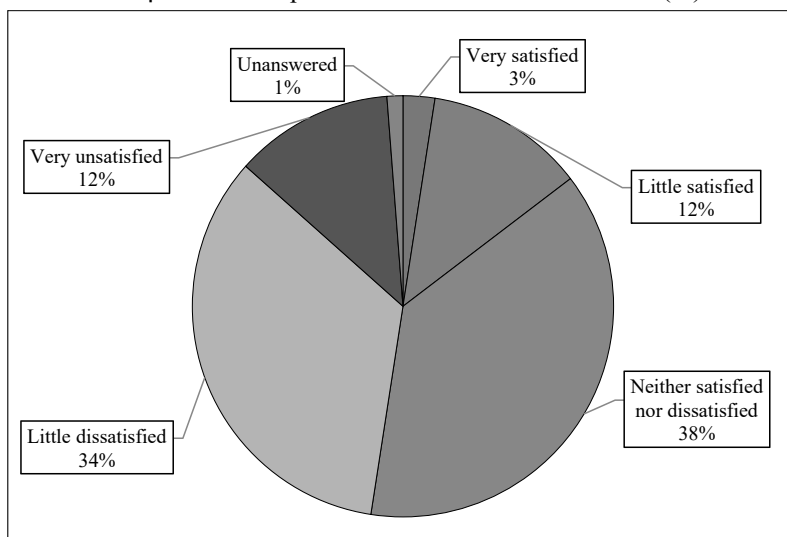
Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

the Mexican Social Security Institute. However, in the medical and hygienic environment, the Japanese show some degree of dissatisfaction, which is endorsed by almost all migrants (see Graph 14). The same was found in previous studies on the quality of life of the Japanese despite the fact that some of them have private health insurance or go to a private doctor.

**Problems related to medical conditions.** The main health-related problems suffered by Japanese migrants in the state of Jalisco are cited in Graph 15, the most relevant being the lack of hospitals and clinics that serve them in their language or in English, the high risk of contagion due to the impact of SARS-Cov 2 (Covid-19) and in general the poor hygienic conditions prevailing in the city.

**Perception of public safety.** The State, as a promoter of well-being, has its greatest commitment in public safety. However, according to INEGI (2020a), in the state of Jalisco, insecurity has increased since 2010. The number of criminal incidents in the entity was 2,980 cases in 2010 and in 2019 the cases increased to 27,293. Which shows that the measures implemented to reduce the number of incidents in the state of Jalisco

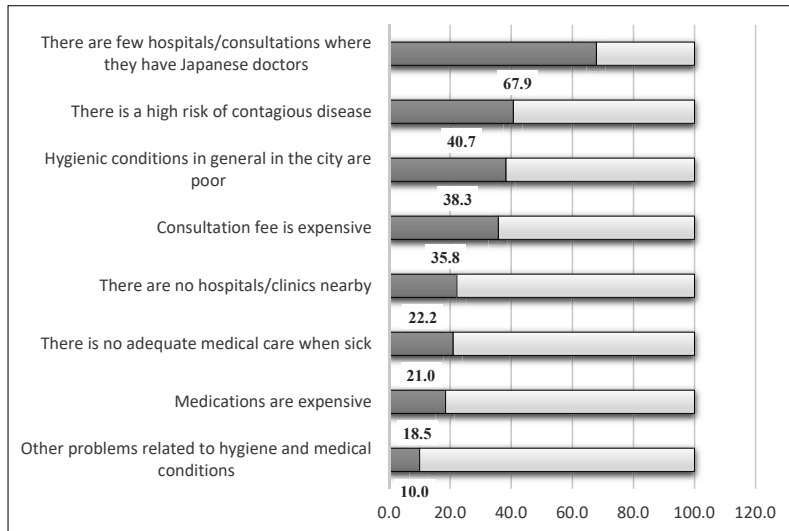
Graph 14. Perception of the medical environment (%)



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

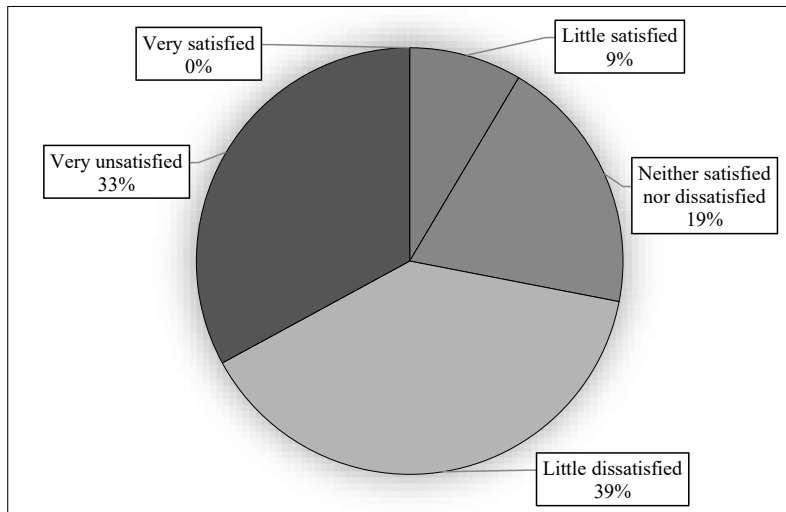
were not enough and the seriousness is evident: the state of Jalisco ranks seventh nationally, in terms of crimes. In accordance with the theme, no member of the Japanese community showed any satisfaction. Like the people of Jalisco, it is one of the issues that generates great social concern (see Graph 16).

**Graph 15. Problems related to health conditions (% , multiple answers)**



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

**Graph 16. Perception of public security (%)**



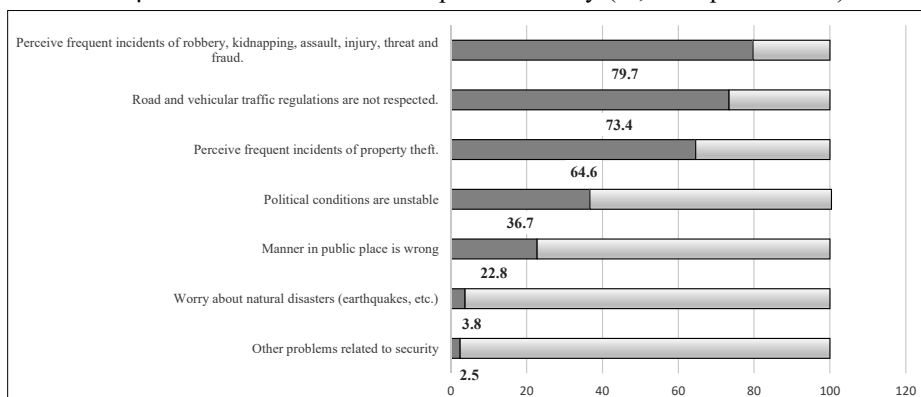
Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

In this regard, Jalisco residents responded with 30.6% that it is unsafe to live in the city, according to data from the Seventh Questionnaire of Citizen Perception on Quality of Life 2020 (Jalisco cómo vamos, observatorio ciudadano, 2020b). It is inferred that both Jalisco residents and Japanese agree on the insecurity in the GMA, but with greater concern among the Japanese, more accustomed to a better security environment in their country.

**Specific problems related to public safety.** Regarding the perception of incidents, 80% of Japanese perceive danger in the form of robbery, assault or kidnapping. On the other hand, more than 60% are concerned about property theft and only 4% have suffered damage caused by robberies and/or assaults in the last two years (see graphs 17 and 18). On the other hand, and comparatively, 21% of Mexicans live in the state of Jalisco have been affected by robberies of different kinds, injuries, extortion or fraud; but, only 41% reported the crime of which they were victims, according to the results of the Seventh Questionnaire of Citizen Perception on Quality of Life 2020 (Jalisco cómo vamos, observatorio ciudadano, 2020b) and data from National Questionnaire of Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (INEGI, 2020b).

**Perception of transport conditions.** Japanese residents have a very negative appreciation of transportation conditions. 70 percent answered: “Very dissatisfied” and

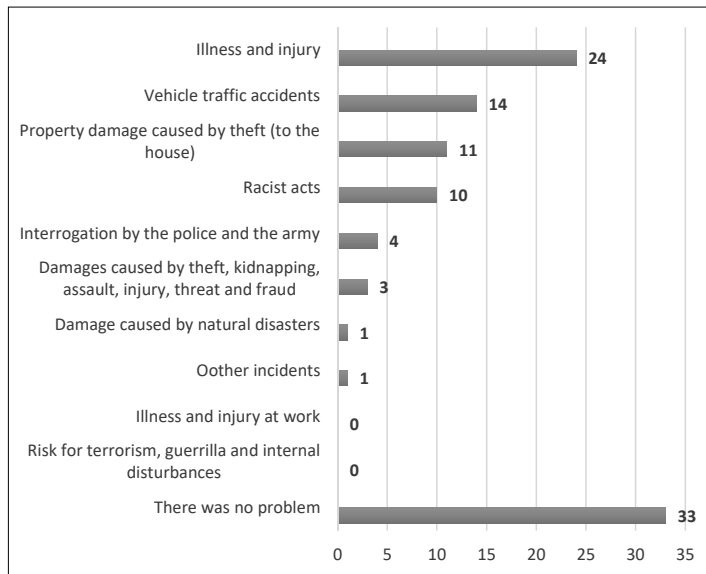
Graph 17. Problems related to public security (% , multiple answers)



Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

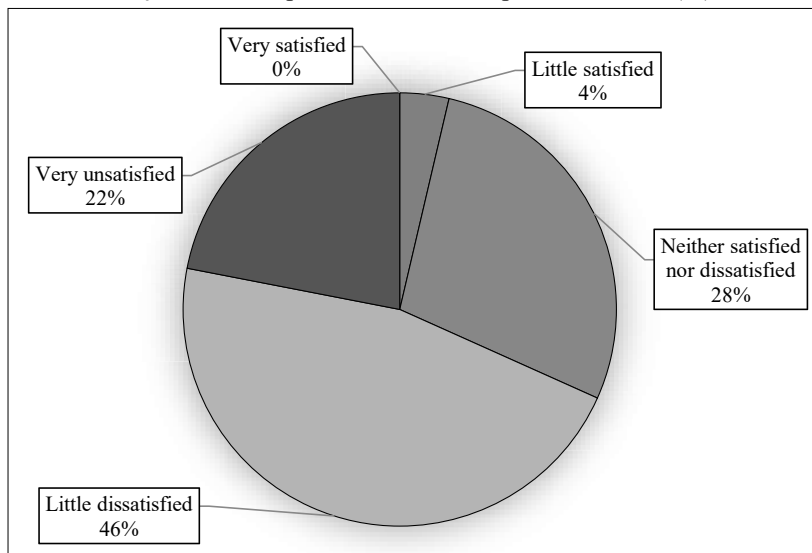
“little dissatisfied”; and there was no opinion of “very satisfied” (see Graph 19). The Jalisco observatory, *Jalisco cómo vamos*, according to the questionnaire of Move in Guadalajara 2020 (*Jalisco cómo vamos*, observatorio ciudadano, 2020a), indicates that the

Graph 18. Frequency of incidents suffered in the last 2 years (absolute frequency)



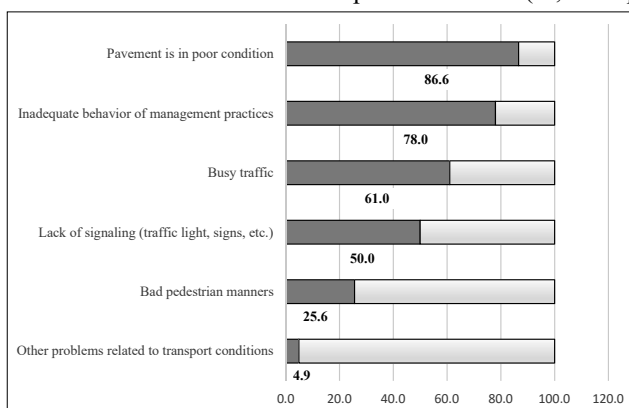
Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

Graph 19. Perception of urban transport conditions (%)



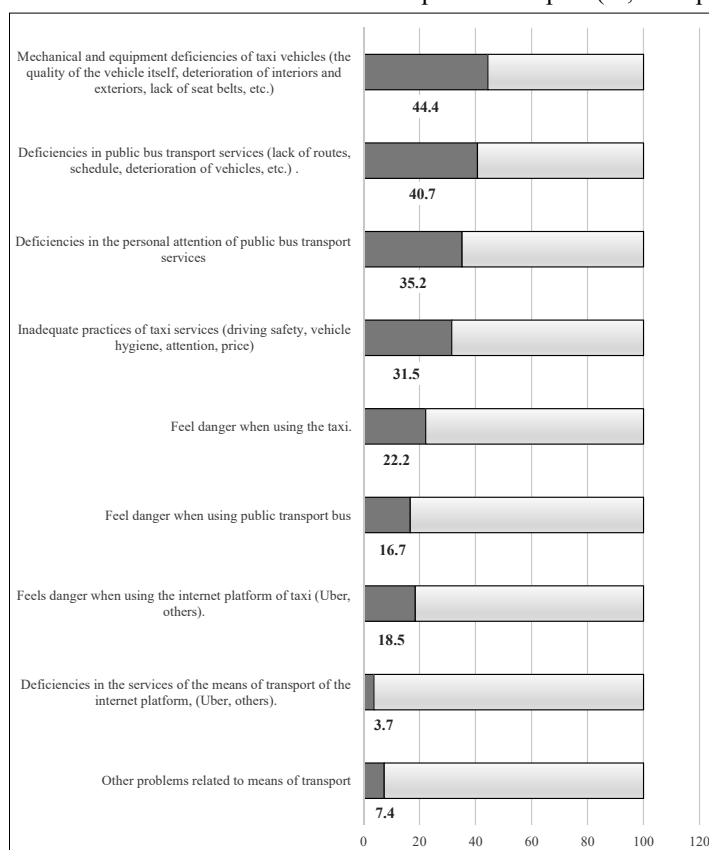
Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

Graph 20. Problems related to urban transport conditions (% , multiple answers)



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROMEJ 2021

Graph 21. Problems related to the conditions of public transport (% , multiple answers)



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROMEJ 2021



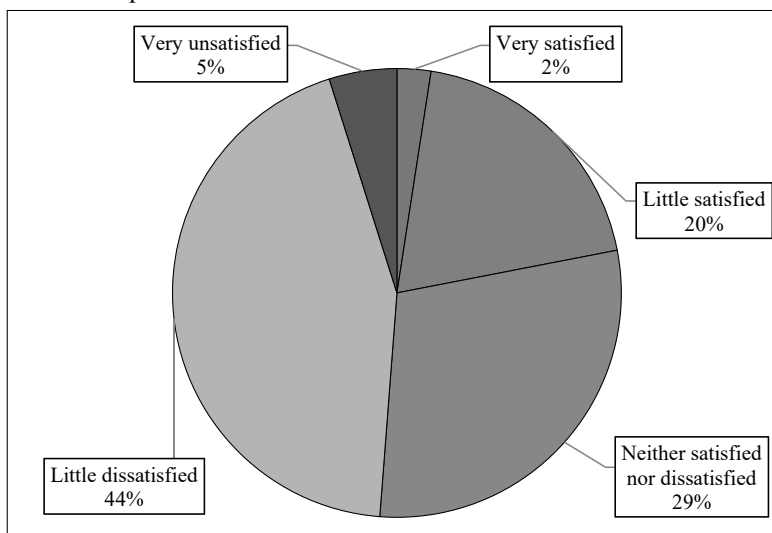
majority of people use public transport (bus, macrobus, light rail and taxi); for their part, the women pointed out that the waiting time for the buses is deficient and they do not feel safe on the way. In general, public transport passengers agree with the Japanese, who reveal the saturation conditions in which they travel and other problems (see Graph 20).

Other problems centered on the dissatisfaction in means of public passenger transportation, in particular, taxi and urban bus used by Japanese migrants, are listed in Graph 21.

### 3.3 Media environment

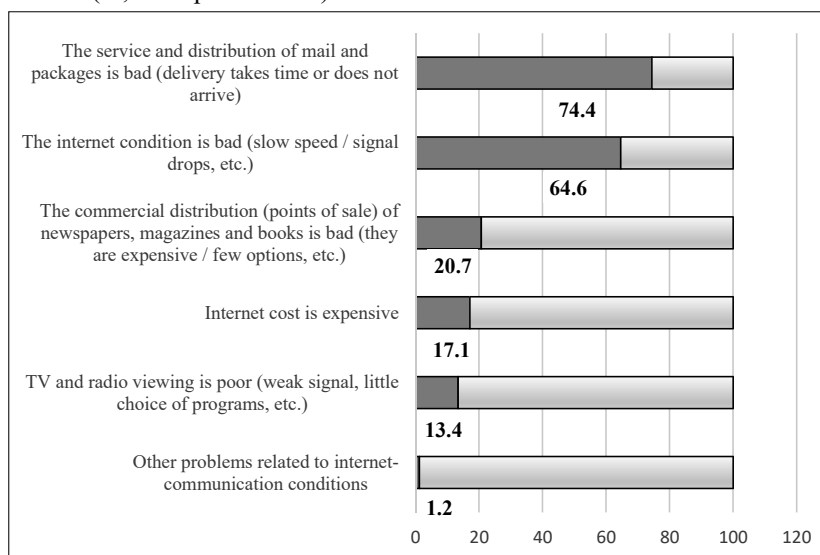
**Perception of internet conditions and means of telecommunication.** The problems refer to the following services: a) mail services, parcels and their distribution; b) Internet service; and, c) of the programs and quality of the television signal. Graph 22 shows the perception as a whole, while Graph 23 refers to the detail of specific problems. For the most part, general perceptions of regular qualification are observed, without reaching extremes, that is to say, “little dissatisfied” (44% of migrants), “little satisfied” (20%) and “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” (29%). For its part, the problems

Graph 22. Perception of internet conditions and means of telecommunication (%)



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

Graph 23. Problems related to conditions of internet and means of communication (% , multiple answers)



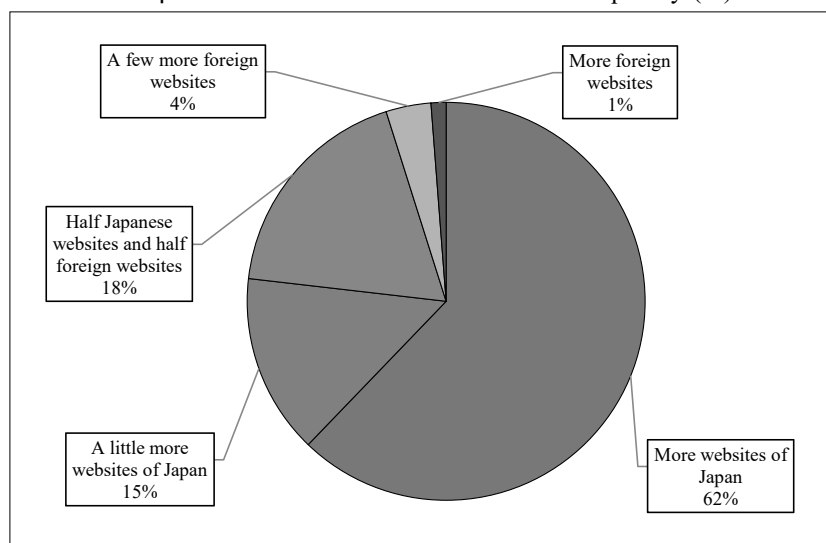
Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

are detailed in Graph 23.

More than 70 percent of those surveyed have experienced the problem of mail or packages not arriving home or being delayed. Additionally, more than 60 percent express dissatisfaction with slow Internet speeds. Along with those who responded that the internet rate is expensive, it is identified that several Japanese are dissatisfied with the internet service.

*Adaptation of Japanese residents to local life in the use of the Internet.* Graph 24 shows that 77% of respondents use Japanese sites when using the Internet. In this regard, citing Padilla (2008: 24), Nakasone states that “Japanese who live in the state of Aguascalientes tend to spend their lives with their fellow nationals and are not interested in what happens outside that community, and therefore they talk about what happens in Japan and they are always connected with Japan” (Nakasone, 2016: 62). For Nakasone (2016: 81), it points out that “men do not meet with their fellow nationals because they do so at their workplace where some Japanese could attend.” On the other hand, Sordo and Doncel (2018: 153) point out that the Japanese companies installed in

Graph 24. Content of website used most frequently (%)



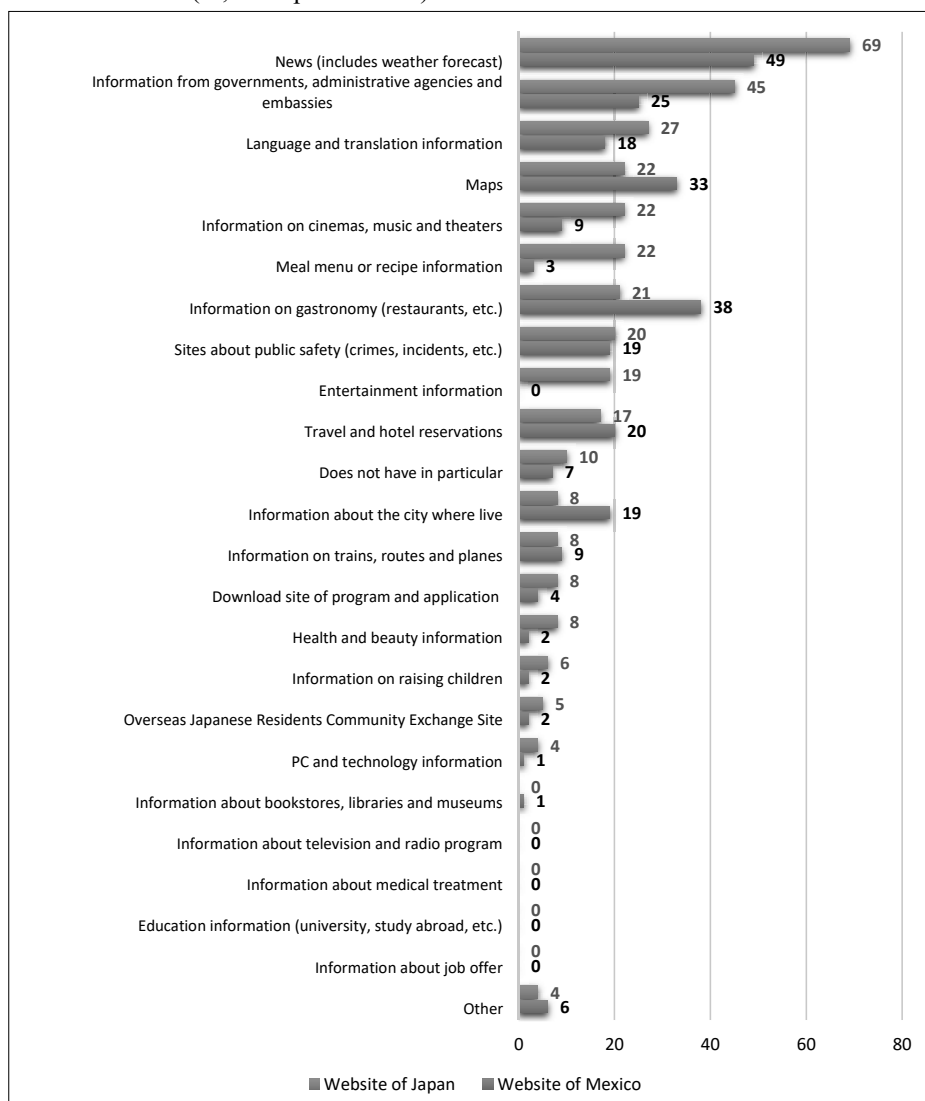
Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

Monterrey “have certain key people from Japan [...] two or three key people, nothing more, the rest are Mexicans.” In addition, they exercise strict control over them (for example, they must communicate during Japanese working hours, which makes it difficult for them to adapt to the local context), which isolates them from the rest of the staff and keeps them more attached, even emotionally, to the central office. These are two valid views since both claim to be in contact with the country of origin. Graph 24 tries to identify local life through the use of the Internet. On the other hand, this may be due to language limitations and their temporary stay. It could also be added that, regardless of language, Japanese residents always seem to have a great interest in information about Japan.

**Websites of Japan and Mexico that they use most frequently.** According to what has been pointed out, it is not only to search for Japanese sites, which are among the most used, but also video sites (Youtube), checking email, internet shopping, among others. Given the validity of COVID-19 infections, everyone secludes themselves and tries to take care of themselves, and spends free time at home. Among the sites referred to in Mexico, the sites of SNS, Messenger, chat, music downloads and sites of indicator and opinions stand out. The most consulted information is the news from both Japan (69%)

and Mexico (49%), followed by a series of information cited in Graph 25. Consultations are made for both countries, only that a higher percentage is interested in Japan. As for Mexico, what the Japanese are most interested in consulting are: news, maps (33%), restaurants (38%), travel and hotel reservations (20%) and information about the city where they live (19%) (see Graph 25).

Graph 25. Internet websites of Japan and Mexico: most used by migrants (% , multiple answers)



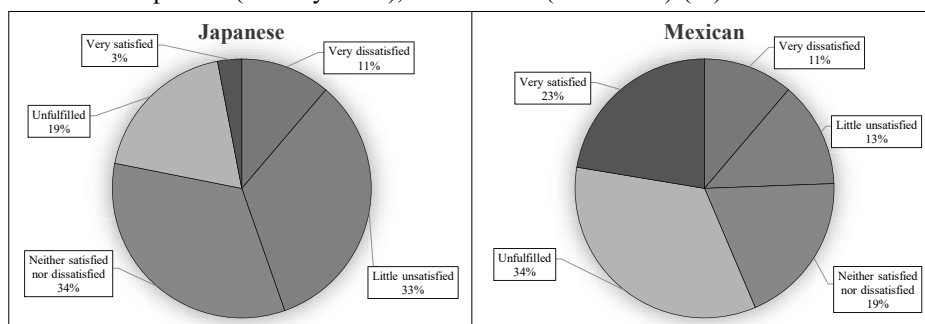
Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

**Perception about the comfort of life in Mexico.** The transfers between different countries to which some employees of large Japanese companies are target, end up adapting to the countries where they temporarily reside. This may be another reason why they do not travel with their family and are not interested in speaking Spanish in Mexico; in addition, due to the time difference with respect to Japan, directors maintain contacts with their parent companies at night, which leaves little time available for personal and family matters, affecting negatively this generic perception.

Graph 26, on the left, allows us to verify the frequency data of Japanese migrants in the state of Jalisco and compare them with the data of Mexicans also living in the state of Jalisco. From that, we get the following:

- a) Mexicans in the state of Jalisco have a more optimistic perception than the Japanese population living in the state of Jalisco. Namely, while 23% of Mexicans declare a life comfort of “Very satisfied” and 34% of “little satisfied”, add up to 57% of Mexicans with some degree of satisfaction.
- b) The Japanese population in the state of Jalisco, only indicates to have 3% of “very satisfied” and 19% of “little satisfied” which add up to 22%, relatively less than half that of the Mexicans. Difference that could be interpreted as a result of the general impact of migration, according to the generic indicator of “comfort of life”; something similar for the Japanese to an indicator of “happiness living in the state of Jalisco”.

Graph 26. Comparative perception about the comfort of life in the state of Jalisco of Japanese (January 2021), of Mexican (June 2020) (%)



Source: Author’s own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROMEJ 2021; Seventh questionnaire of citizen perception on quality of life 2020, Government of the state of Jalisco, Mexico.

- c) On the other hand, the majority of the Japanese do not live in dissatisfaction since 34% share “neither dissatisfaction nor satisfaction” with the comfort of life; that is to say, that 56% of the Japanese cope with life with some level of regular comfort or satisfaction, in Jalisco.
- d) However, 11% of Japanese and another equal percentage of Mexicans in the state of Jalisco live “very dissatisfied”; but in the case of the Japanese, 33% express themselves “a little dissatisfied” thus adding the considerable proportion of 44% of Japanese migrants with some degree of dissatisfaction in comfort with life in the state of Jalisco, while this situation among the inhabitants of the state of Jalisco is 24%. It is emphasized that these differences in satisfaction and dissatisfaction are possibly a reflection of the perception of people who emigrate from a relatively highly developed country to a less developed one.

### 3.4 Quality of life index of Japanese migrants in Jalisco

As a synthesis of all the variables described in the previous sections, the quality of life index of Japanese migrants in the state of Jalisco is presented below, beginning with the methodological process and ending with the approach of the resulting indices, by dimensions according to the aggregation of variables to related topics.

***The sample.*** As already indicated in the introductory part of this article, a survey was designed and applied on a series of basically ordinal and qualitative, subjective and objective variables, already raised throughout the previous sections that allow the elaboration of Quality indices. of Life of Japanese Migrants living in the state of Jalisco (mostly concentrated in two central municipalities of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area) in the month of January 2021<sup>7</sup>. The survey was carried out electronically through the use of the Internet and the sample size is 82 cases, with the statistical universe being the total number of migrants aged 20 years and over in the state of Jalisco, amounting to 510 people. Statistically, a confidence level of 90% was assigned to the interval estimate of

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7 Questionnaire was coordinated by Prof. Taku Okabe, member of the Mexico-Japan Studies Program (PROMEJ).

the proportion of the general QLI, resulting in a maximum sampling error of +/-8.26%.

**The method.** The method used for the construction of the index is known as the standard method of “point correspondence” (Leva, 2005). The method allows to use positive and negative indicators; likewise, it standardizes the values through the use of formulas presented in the following methodological points:

- For a positive indicator (higher value, better):  $QLI = (X_i - MIN) / (MAX - MIN) * 100$
- For a negative indicator (higher value, worse):  $QLI = (MAX - X_i) / (MAX - MIN) * 100$
- Both subjective and objective assessment indicators were used in a combined manner in an index.
- No weights were used to differentiate the weight of the variables.
- The maximum and minimum values are defined by the extreme values in the range of the response options.
- The method yields a series of dimensional quality of life indices whose variation scale ranges from 0% to 100%.

**Dimensions and dimensional quality indices.** Table 3 presents the sets of variables that serve as indicators in the construction of each of the dimensions in which the quality of life indices of the Japanese population in the state of Jalisco are classified. In turn, each variable or indicator comes directly from the questions of the questionnaire that is used.

Table 4 and graph 27 show the final results of the indices by thematic dimension. If it is considered that each index has a variation scale from 0 to 100%, the evaluation of the quality of life of the Japanese migrant population turns out to be, in general, relatively low (44.9%). The values at the lowest end correspond to Roads and Transit, Public Safety and Health and Hygiene. With low but not extreme values, are in School Education, Internet service and Recreation services; with values around the average we have: about the perception of Comfort in Life, Housing (includes housing services and rent) and Public Transport services (includes all modalities); with the highest quality perceived values are: Japanese Gastronomy and Individual Security (with relative absence of

Table 3. Sample Indicators in the construction of dimensions

DIMENSION	USED VARIABLES OR INDICATORS
1. ROADS AND TRANSIT	Degree of satisfaction with infrastructure and road and urban transit equipment; road and traffic problems.
2. PUBLIC SAFETY	Degree of satisfaction in the public security environment; perceived problems in public safety.
3. HEALTH AND HYGIENE	Degree of satisfaction with the medical service; health and hygiene problems.
4. SCHOOL EDUCATION	Degree of satisfaction with the schools of official education and Japanese education in the GMA.
5. INTERNET	Degree of satisfaction with telecommunications; deficiencies with internet and parcel.
6. RECREATION	Degree of satisfaction with recreational activities.
7. COMFORT IN LIFE	Degree of comfort living in Mexico.
8. HOUSING	Degree of satisfaction with housing and relationship with the neighborhood; possession and housing problems.
9. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	Degree of satisfaction in the public transport service; problems with the service.
10. JAPANESE GASTRONOMY	Degree of satisfaction with food; Problems of Japanese gastronomy in the GMA.
11. INDIVIDUAL SECURITY	Incidents affecting personal safety.

Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021

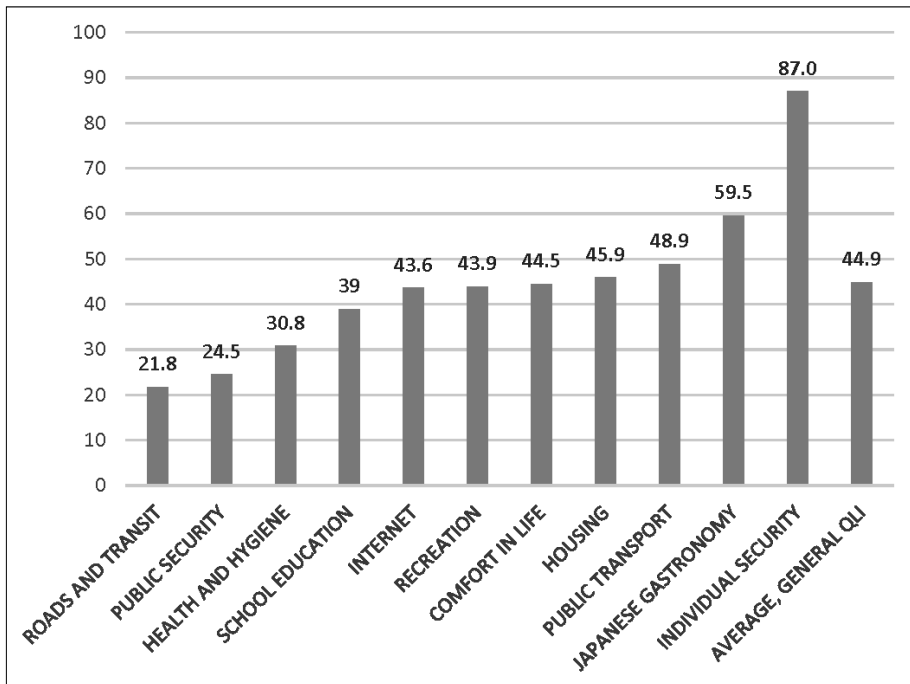
Table 4. Quality of Life Indices by dimensions, 2021

Quality of life index by dimensions	(%)
ROADS AND TRANSIT	21.8
PUBLIC SECURITY	24.5
HEALTH AND HYGIENE	30.8
SCHOOL EDUCATION	39.0
INTERNET	43.6
RECREATION	43.9
COMFORT IN LIFE	44.5
HOUSING	45.9
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	48.9
JAPANESE GASTRONOMY	59.5
INDIVIDUAL SECURITY	87.0
AVERAGE, GENERAL QLI	44.9

Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROM EJ 2021



Graph 27. Quality of Life Index of the Japanese population in Jalisco, 2021



Source: Author's own elaboration with data from the questionnaire PROMEJ 2021

incidents to the person).

## Conclusion

- Mastery of the dominant language in the place of destination of the migrants is essential to achieve social integration that helps achieve a better level of quality of life, while living outside the native country. However, a majority of Japanese expatriates by their companies find it difficult to adapt and speak the Spanish language due to lack of interest, temporary stay and difficulty in mastering it.
- In particular, the comparison of satisfaction and dissatisfaction on the Perception of the Comfort of Life in Jalisco, between the population of Japanese migrants and Mexican inhabitants, clearly reflects the effect of migration from a developed country to another in development, as well as the socioeconomic and cultural differences faced by Japanese expatriates, particularly by the transnational

companies of their country, in which they work and wish to make merits in their professional career.

Continuing with the comparative analysis, about what the Japanese population in the state of Jalisco and Mexican population in the state of Jalisco think in general, according to the sample data of the PROM EJ 2021 and the Seventh Citizen Perception Questionnaire on Quality of Life (2020), we have the following:

- Both in the description and in the quality of life index (QLI), the data of greatest dissatisfaction registered are with reference to Public Safety and the conditions of Public Transport. Even both the Mexican population of the state of Jalisco and the Japanese community agree on the poor services of urban motor transport and on the issue of Public Safety. Namely, in terms of public security, 72% answered “little or not satisfied” , while Mexican population in the Guadalajara metropolitan area consider it “not very safe” (70% of the sample). In relation to the conditions of auto transport (including the taxi), 68% of Mexican respondents who live in the state of Jalisco considered dissatisfaction with these services; in addition, women feel affected negatively in the treatment as passengers. In summary, it is observed that both the Mexican population in the state of Jalisco and the Japanese community agree on the perception of poor transportation services and public safety.
- The specific problems of these last two aspects with the greatest degree of dissatisfaction, on the part of the Japanese migrants, are: they have the sensation of the danger of theft of both movable and real property, traffic regulations are not respected, terrible paving of streets and avenues, bad car driving manners, traffic congestion and lack of signs.
- Also the majority of Mexican population in the state of Jalisco responded in the same way as the Japanese population, regarding the conditions of the internet and telecommunications.

- Regarding the results of the quality of life index, in general, the average is too low compared to what was expected (45%), since the index for the Japanese population living in the state of Guanajuato was established at 61% (based on in another questionnaire carried out by PROMEJ in 2015). Some factors that, perhaps, influenced the result for the case of the state of Jalisco, are the design of the questionnaire based on a large number of questions, whose response options were written in terms of problems, limitations and degrees of dissatisfaction, or perhaps, also due to the conditionalities and limitations imposed by the pandemic of COVID-19 which possibly hampered the result. In other words, the general quality of life index of 45% appears too low to be attributed exclusively to the difference in the levels of development of Mexico with respect to Japan or to cultural or linguistic differences. For the rest, the relatively high level of income of the Japanese population in Mexico is enough to overcome many of the limitations that normally afflict the local population of the state of Jalisco.
  
- On the other hand, although the dimensional quality of life indices are very low, this does not invalidate their analytical advantages, since they are still valid when the differences between the dimensions with respect to the general average are observed.

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