



Title	Academic Yarigai, Assemble! Uniting Engagement, Motivation, Enjoyment, Well-being, and Ikigai under Academic Yarigai
Author(s)	Kanazawa, Yu
Citation	言語文化共同研究プロジェクト. 2025, 2024, p. 17-25
Version Type	VoR
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.18910/102277">https://doi.org/10.18910/102277</a>
rights	
Note	

*The University of Osaka Institutional Knowledge Archive : OUKA*

<https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/>

The University of Osaka

# Academic Yarigai, Assemble! Uniting Engagement, Motivation, Enjoyment, Well-being, and Ikigai under Academic Yarigai

KANAZAWA, Yu

## Abstract

This paper introduces the concept of Academic Yarigai as a novel, comprehensive framework that integrates essential motivational and emotional constructs such as engagement, motivation, flow, enjoyment, and well-being in applied linguistics and educational psychology. Despite extensive research on these concepts individually, a holistic framework capturing their interconnectedness and collective impact in educational contexts remains absent. To address this gap, the interdisciplinary concept of *ikigai*, a life purpose that contributes to overall well-being, is first discussed. Building upon *ikigai*, this paper further introduces the narrower, situationally targeted construct of *yarigai*, or the worth and fulfillment derived from meaningful activities, specifically contextualizing it as Academic Yarigai. A newly developed Academic Yarigai-9 Scale (AYS) comprising nine items is proposed based on Ikigai-9 and new empirical findings from Japanese undergraduate learners of English, which includes factors such as intrinsic fulfillment, intellectual stimulation, personal growth, social contribution, and overcoming challenges. The paper argues that Academic Yarigai uniquely compensates for gaps within existing motivation frameworks, such as the L2 Motivational Self System and emotional concepts like flow and enjoyment, by emphasizing learners' immediate, meaningful experiences and real-world relevance of academic activities. Implications for future studies, including validation and further integration of Academic Yarigai into language education and well-being research, are also discussed.

## 1. Introduction

In applied linguistics, key concepts such as engagement, motivation, flow, enjoyment, and well-being have received considerable attention from researchers and educators. Each of these concepts significantly contributes to understanding and enhancing learners' experiences; however, these frameworks are often used without an integrative approach that can comprehensively account for their dynamic interconnectedness and collective impact in academic contexts. Consequently, there is a gap in applied linguistics and educational psychology for a comprehensive concept capable of integrating these interrelated constructs, providing educators and learners with deeper and operationalizable insights into the dynamics of engagement, motivation, flow, enjoyment, and well-being in educational contexts. In an attempt to address this gap, this paper starts by interdisciplinarily introducing a widely recognized concept from the field of well-being research, *ikigai* (García & Miralles, 2017).<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Ikigai

Ikigai (生きがい), a Japanese concept broadly defined as a “reason for living” or a “purpose in life,” embodies one's sense of meaningful existence, characterized by optimistic and positive emotions towards life, proactive and hopeful attitudes toward the future, and recognition of one's personal value within society (Imai et al., 2012). It encapsulates the sense of purpose that gives an individual's life meaning and direction, and it has increasingly drawn attention in psychological and health-related research due to its associations with positive mental and physical health outcomes. According to research by Imai et al. (2012), *ikigai* is operationalized through a scale known as Ikigai-9, comprising nine items grouped into three primary dimensions: optimistic and positive emotions toward life, active and positive attitudes toward the future, and acknowledgment of one's existence as meaningful within social contexts. This scale has demonstrated high reliability and validity in Japanese populations, indicating that it reliably captures the psychological state related to experiencing purpose and meaning in life. It includes dimensions such as optimism about one's current life circumstances, a proactive attitude toward future possibilities, and a recognition of one's existential significance within social contexts (Imai et al., 2012).

In an effort to extend research on ikigai to international contexts, Fido, Kotera, and Asano (2020) translated the Ikigai-9 into English and examined its validity among participants based in the UK. The English validation study found that a single-factor model of ikigai provided the best statistical fit, suggesting that ikigai may manifest as a more unified psychological construct rather than distinct dimensions. Ikigai was found to have significant associations with psychological well-being. Fido et al. (2020) reported that higher levels of self-reported ikigai correlate with increased mental well-being and reduced depression symptoms, suggesting ikigai serves as a protective psychological factor. Interestingly, ikigai did not show significant relationships with anxiety or stress, implying its role might specifically relate to a broader sense of well-being and protection against depressive symptoms rather than situational acute stress reactions. Ikigai represents a meaningful psychological construct that encapsulates purpose, motivation, and life satisfaction. The validation of the Ikigai-9 scale in both Japanese and English-speaking populations supports its use as a reliable measure of this concept.

### 3. Ikigai and Foreign Language Learners

Applying ikigai to foreign language learning can significantly enhance learners' motivation, engagement, and overall educational experience. According to Kanazawa (2023c), the concept of ikigai, understood as “what makes life worth living,” is closely linked to higher cognitive functions and self-actualization. When integrated into foreign language education, ikigai serves as a psychological foundation that encourages deep, meaningful engagement rather than superficial rote learning. The Deep Positivity Hypothesis (DPH), a concept closely associated with ikigai, suggests that positive emotional valence can enhance the deep semantic processing crucial for language acquisition, particularly for vocabulary retention (Kanazawa, 2020). Learners with a stronger sense of ikigai are expected to engage more deeply and positively with language learning tasks, facilitating higher retention rates and more effective communication skills. Kanazawa (2023c) suggested that learners who approach language learning tasks with an ikigai-oriented mindset show increased motivation and resilience, particularly when faced with challenges such as language anxiety or academic setbacks. This positive emotional engagement aligns with the harmonious passion described in positive psychology, characterized by voluntary engagement and joy in learning activities.

Furthermore, Kanazawa's (2023a) study targeting Japanese undergraduate learners of English revealed that ikigai, as a trait, correlates positively with multiple intelligences, including emotional and existential intelligences. These intelligences allow learners to better understand cultural contexts, interpret emotional nuances, and effectively use language in social interactions based on deep contemplation. Consequently, incorporating ikigai into language teaching may not only enhance linguistic skills but also foster broader personal and social development.

### 4. Yurigai, the Situational Ikigai

Although applying ikigai to foreign language learning can be beneficial due to its capacity to foster deep, intrinsic motivation and positive engagement, ikigai, as a broad and deeply existential concept, may not directly address specific motivational challenges in language learning contexts. This calls for an applied concept that situates ikigai to more specific settings: *yurigai*. Yurigai (やりがい), a Japanese concept defined as “something worthwhile doing,” embodies a sense of intrinsic satisfaction, fulfillment, and personal growth derived from actively engaging in specific meaningful tasks or roles (Shoji et al., 2014). Unlike ikigai, which is broadly defined as one's purpose in life or existential fulfillment, yurigai is narrower, specifically applied to particular activities or occupations. It focuses on the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction derived from engaging deeply with work that aligns closely with one's skills, personal values, and immediate motivations (Nishigori et al., 2024).

According to Shoji et al. (2014), yurigai can be understood through various components that include knowledge acquisition, meaningful interactions, and a sense of personal growth. In their study on community pharmacists, they found that yurigai was significantly related to pharmacists' ability to provide patient counseling, improve their clinical knowledge, and enhance their personal growth through professional experiences. This demonstrates that yurigai emerges notably when professionals perceive their work as directly impactful and personally meaningful, reinforcing their professional identity and commitment.

Further elaborating on yurigai in professional contexts, Nishigori et al. (2024) conducted a narrative inquiry exploring how physicians experience yurigai in their medical practices, particularly within teaching medical professionalism. Their findings indicated that physicians found yurigai when

they could derive positive meanings even from challenging patient-care situations, recognize the inherent strength and resilience of their patients, or develop meaningful relationships with patients and their families. This intrinsic reward was notably different from traditional measures of job satisfaction or monetary compensation, as it emphasized relational and existential dimensions—such as experiencing profound gratitude from patients or witnessing patients’ renewed vitality after treatment.

Moreover, research involving community pharmacists highlights *yarigai* as a multifaceted construct that includes knowledge application, interpersonal communication, and personal growth. Pharmacists reported experiencing *yarigai* through patient interactions that effectively reduced patients’ anxiety about medications and fostered meaningful interpersonal relationships (Shoji et al., 2014). The notion of *yarigai* is particularly important for community-oriented professions, where success and satisfaction are deeply interwoven with interpersonal relationships and perceived social contribution.

Furthermore, Yoshida (2014) explored *yarigai* among professionals in interpersonal support roles, specifically clinical psychotherapists and nurses. Yoshida identified that *yarigai* in these occupations emerges prominently when professionals perceive their actions as positively impacting their clients or patients, fostering strong relational connections, contributing meaningfully to others’ well-being, or gaining recognition and validation from others. The study highlighted *yarigai* as a critical motivational factor that helps professionals cope with emotional and occupational stress by fostering a sense of self-worth, meaningful interpersonal connections, and acknowledgment from clients or colleagues. Importantly, the findings emphasize that feeling *yarigai* helps these professionals sustain their emotional resilience and commitment to their demanding roles.

In educational contexts, *yarigai* is equally relevant. For example, Hamano and Urata (2016) found that junior high school students’ *yarigai* was closely related to school-based activities, social interactions, and achievements, suggesting that *yarigai* plays a critical role in motivating students toward sustained engagement in their studies and broader educational activities. By nurturing a targeted sense of worth derived from specific academic experiences rather than broader existential purposes, *yarigai* could significantly enhance motivation and fulfillment in learners.

Applying the broader concept of *ikigai*, *yarigai* provides a more targeted and contextually relevant framework for understanding motivation and fulfillment in various professional and educational domains, suggesting practical implications for enhancing job engagement, professional growth, and overall life satisfaction. In foreign language classrooms, *yarigai* can more precisely capture students’ sense of accomplishment and intrinsic reward from engaging successfully with language learning activities. Thus, integrating *yarigai* into language teaching, or academic activities and instructions in general (i.e., Academic *Yarigai*), may provide educators and learners with a more practical, focused, and adoptable framework for enhancing task-specific motivation and achievement.

## **5. Study on Academic *Yarigai***

This study explored the concept of Academic *Yarigai* among Japanese undergraduate learners of English, involving 74 participants. Students responded to open-ended questions about experiences and common characteristics associated with feeling *yarigai* (a sense of worth or fulfillment) in academic activities, including but not limited to language learning. The responses can be categorized into at least nine key factors, each accompanied by illustrative examples paraphrased and translated into English.

The first factor is Intrinsic Fulfillment. Students frequently reported activities as intrinsically rewarding due to personal enjoyment and satisfaction derived directly from engaging in the tasks (e.g., “Because it’s enjoyable and directly connected to my future.” ; “Because I felt a clear sense of growth and satisfaction from achieving goals through persistent effort.”).

The second factor is Curiosity & Intellectual Stimulation. Engagement was driven by curiosity and opportunities for intellectual exploration (e.g., “I could investigate what I wanted to know extensively using various resources.” ; “Because I encountered new discoveries and intellectual competition with peers.”).

The third factor is Personal Growth & Self-Development. Activities contributing to noticeable personal growth and self-improvement provided *yarigai* (e.g., “I could feel my own growth; my skills clearly improved over time.” ; “The success experience raised my self-esteem and further motivated me.”).

The fourth factor is Social Contribution. Students valued experiences where they could perceive tangible impacts on society or others (e.g., “Because I could take action directed toward the world.” ;

“I felt my learning was benefiting others; being able to use my knowledge practically was fulfilling.”).

The fifth factor is Engagement & Flow. A deep level of immersion and absorption in the activity led to experiences of flow (e.g., “It was something I was deeply interested in, allowing me to become fully absorbed.” ; “Because it wasn’t forced; I voluntarily engaged in tasks out of genuine interest.”).

The sixth factor is Recognition & Appreciation. Being acknowledged, appreciated, or praised by others significantly enhanced the sense of *yarigai* (e.g., “Because our group’s efforts were recognized highly, and we received an award.” ; “Because my hard work was recognized positively and praised.”).

The seventh factor is Overcoming Challenges. Successfully facing and overcoming significant academic challenges generated a strong sense of accomplishment (e.g., “Because I overcame difficulties and achieved what initially seemed impossible.” ; “Because completing a difficult experiment and writing a lengthy report gave me deep satisfaction.”).

The eighth factor is Application & Real-World Relevance. Students emphasized the practical use and real-world applicability of their academic learning as highly motivating (e.g., “Being able to apply what I learned in real life made my learning meaningful.” ; “Because practical language use in daily life feels more rewarding than just achieving good test scores.”).

The ninth factor is Sense of Purpose in Learning. Having clear goals and understanding the purpose behind their academic activities significantly contributed to *yarigai* (e.g., “Because the goals were clear, and it directly connected with my aspirations.” ; “Because I recognized that what I was learning was directly linked to my future career.”).

To sum up, it was found that Academic *Yarigai* is strongly linked to intrinsic motivation, personal growth, social relevance, and practical applicability. Experiences where students actively engage with intellectually stimulating tasks, receive recognition, and clearly perceive the meaningfulness and purposefulness of their efforts foster heightened motivation and deeper engagement in their academic journeys.

## **6. Academic *Yarigai*-9 Scale (AYS)**

Based on the findings, the Academic *Yarigai*-9 Scale (AYS) was newly developed. AYS consists of nine items specifically designed to measure students’ sense of fulfillment and motivation in academic contexts. Each item of the AYS captures a distinct aspect of *yarigai*, derived from qualitative research findings on Japanese undergraduate learners of English. This scale reflects critical motivational and psychological dimensions central to effective learning experiences. In the following paragraphs, *Ikigai*-9 item numbers are based on Imai et al. (2012) and Fido et al. (2020). The English translation of *Ikigai*-9 is publicly available online albeit numbered differently (Kemp, 2020).

Item 1, “I feel personally fulfilled when I study,” measures Intrinsic Fulfillment, highlighting internal satisfaction and emotional happiness students experience through academic engagement. This aligns closely with *Ikigai*-9 item 1, “I often feel that I am happy,” indicating the fundamental connection between emotional well-being and intrinsic motivation in learning contexts.

Item 2, “I enjoy learning new things and find it intellectually stimulating,” addresses Curiosity and Intellectual Stimulation. This dimension emphasizes learners’ excitement and eagerness to explore new knowledge. It aligns with *Ikigai*-9 item 5, “I am interested in many things,” underscoring a broad intellectual curiosity essential for sustained engagement and motivation.

Item 3, “Studying helps me grow as a person and develop my abilities,” targets Personal Growth and Self-Development. It reflects how academic activities foster a sense of progress and self-improvement, corresponding directly with *Ikigai*-9 item 8, “I would like to develop myself,” emphasizing continuous self-improvement as central to Academic *Yarigai*.

Item 4, “I believe that my academic learning can contribute to society in the future,” captures the dimension of Social Contribution. It illustrates learners’ recognition of their academic efforts’ societal relevance and potential impacts. This correlates closely with *Ikigai*-9 item 3, “I feel that I am contributing to someone or society,” reinforcing the importance of perceiving academic pursuits as meaningful and socially beneficial.

Item 5, “When I study, I feel deeply engaged and lose track of time,” reflects Engagement and Flow. This item assesses the deep absorption learners experience, potentially aligning with *Ikigai*-9 item 4, “I have room in my mind,” suggesting readiness for a relaxed yet deeply engrossed cognitive state associated with optimal academic performance.

Item 6, “I feel motivated when my academic efforts are recognized by teachers, peers, or family,” assesses Recognition and Appreciation, highlighting the motivational significance of external acknowledgment. This closely corresponds with Ikigai-9 item 6, “I think that my existence is needed by something or someone,” indicating how external validation reinforces learners’ sense of purpose and value in academic settings.

Item 7, “I feel a sense of accomplishment when I overcome difficult academic challenges,” addresses Overcoming Challenges. This reflects the satisfaction derived from successfully navigating academic difficulties, mirroring Ikigai-9 item 7, “My life is mentally rich and fulfilled,” which captures the broader emotional fulfillment stemming from overcoming life’s various challenges.

Item 8, “I can see how my academic knowledge can be applied in real-life situations,” emphasizes Application and Real-World Relevance. It assesses learners’ perception of the practical applicability of academic learning, aligning with Ikigai-9 item 9, “I believe that I have some impact on someone,” thus highlighting how real-world applicability enhances the perceived value of academic activities.

Finally, Item 9, “I understand how my academic studies align with my long-term life goals,” measures learners’ Sense of Purpose in Learning and goal alignment. It corresponds with Ikigai-9 item 2, “I would like to learn something new or start something,” suggesting how clearly articulated academic goals connect meaningfully with broader life ambitions.

While these items comprehensively capture Academic Yarigai, further validation studies are essential to confirm the reliability, validity, and applicability of the Academic Yarigai-9 Scale across diverse student populations and educational contexts. Such studies will be crucial for establishing this scale as a practical tool for psychological and educational research.

## **7. Engagement and Academic Yarigai**

The concept of Academic Yarigai enriches current understandings of second language (L2) engagement by addressing specific motivational aspects missing in existing engagement models. While L2 engagement typically emphasizes behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004), it often overlooks the broader, intrinsic sense of worth and meaningfulness learners attribute to academic tasks. By contrast, extending the concept of the agentic engagement (Reeve & Tseng, 2011), Academic Yarigai explicitly captures students’ intrinsic fulfillment, curiosity, personal growth, social contribution, and sense of purpose—dimensions vital to fostering deep and sustained motivation in academic contexts.

Unlike traditional engagement constructs, which predominantly measure observable participation, effort, and emotional reactions, Academic Yarigai emphasizes learners’ subjective experience of meaningfulness and intrinsic satisfaction from specific academic tasks. Thus, Academic Yarigai is not reducible to engagement; rather, it complements existing constructs by providing a nuanced, motivational perspective crucial for understanding learners’ sustained commitment to language learning. By capturing what current L2 engagement studies often omit—specifically, the intrinsic value and existential satisfaction derived from academic tasks—Academic Yarigai offers a richer, contextually sensitive approach to fostering and assessing motivation in education.

## **8. Motivation and Academic Yarigai**

Academic Yarigai provides a novel lens through which to examine L2 learning motivation, compensating for limitations found in traditional motivational frameworks. While existing L2 motivation studies typically focus on different types of motivation as well as theories like Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009), they often overlook the experiential, immediate satisfaction learners derive from specific academic tasks (Dörnyei, 2019).

Academic Yarigai addresses this gap by explicitly capturing a more situational sense of fulfillment, curiosity, and real-world applicability experienced during educational activities. It compensates particularly for what the L2 Learning Experience component within the L2 Motivational Self System has historically underrepresented: a learner’s intrinsic perception of task value and immediate fulfillment (Dörnyei, 2019). Academic Yarigai thus fills a critical gap by emphasizing the lived experiential quality of academic tasks, which traditional motivational theories often inadequately address.

Overall, Academic Yarigai represents an essential conceptual advancement, addressing motivational dynamics currently underexplored by traditional L2 motivation frameworks and significantly enhancing how researchers and educators conceptualize and foster motivation in language learning contexts.

### **9. Flow, Enjoyment, and Academic Yarigai**

Academic Yarigai complements emotional concepts in L2 learning research, such as flow, enjoyment, and directed motivational currents (DMCs). Flow, characterized by deep involvement and challenge-skill balance (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), emphasizes immersion and the loss of self-consciousness but may neglect learners' broader existential or purpose-driven motivations. Similarly, DMCs (Dörnyei & Muir, 2013), i.e., sustained and long-term flow, emphasize vivid, future-oriented goal-directed actions and self-relevant visions, yet they may overlook the situated, everyday intrinsic satisfaction and micro-level emotions that learners experience during specific tasks (Kanazawa, 2016).

Enjoyment focuses on the immediate, positive affective experiences in the classroom, often arising from interpersonal interactions and teacher support (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), but it does not explicitly capture learners' long-term goal orientations, the perceived meaningfulness of tasks, and social contribution. Academic Yarigai specifically addresses these gaps by emphasizing immediate intrinsic fulfillment, personal growth, social contribution, and real-world relevance, thus integrating emotional and motivational experiences that flow, enjoyment, DMC, and vision only partially address.

### **10. Well-being and Academic Yarigai**

The concept of Academic Yarigai can also contribute to existing frameworks of well-being in education, particularly addressing gaps identified in models such as PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment; Seligman, 2018) and the E4MC model (Empathy, Emotions, Emotional Intelligence, Engagement, Motivation, and Character Strengths; Alrabai & Dewaele, 2023). While PERMA broadly outlines dimensions of general psychological well-being, focusing primarily on subjective happiness, relationships, and accomplishments (Seligman, 2018), Academic Yarigai specifically emphasizes the immediate experiential fulfillment and meaningful engagement derived from academic tasks. Overcoming the vulgarized glorifications of positive emotions (Kanazawa, 2019), it captures both hedonic elements (pleasure and comfort) and eudaimonic aspects (personal growth, excellence, authenticity) which are crucial for well-being (Huta & Ryan, 2010).

Likewise, Academic Yarigai also resonates with the E4MC model of language learner well-being, which integrates empathy, emotions, emotional intelligence, engagement, motivation, and character strengths but lacks explicit factors on personal growth, self-development, and real-world relevance (Alrabai & Dewaele, 2023). Academic Yarigai explicitly captures immediate, task-specific experiences and clarifies the motivational significance of immediate achievement and real-world applicability, thus effectively bridging theoretical concepts with practical learner experiences.

Moreover, Academic Yarigai is not reducible to concepts like engagement or positive emotions alone, as it uniquely integrates intrinsic satisfaction, social contributions, intellectual stimulation, and overcoming challenges into its framework. It thereby serves as a comprehensive motivational construct, operationalizing and deepening the understanding of well-being beyond mere subjective happiness or generic engagement.

### **11. Epistemic Emotions and Academic Yarigai**

Academic Yarigai offers promising contributions to the Deep Epistemic Emotion Hypothesis (Kanazawa, 2023b; 2024a; 2024b; in press) by emphasizing how intrinsic satisfaction and purposeful engagement in learning activities can evoke and sustain epistemic emotions—such as intellectual surprise, curiosity, and wonder—that are pivotal for deep active learning and knowledge acquisition. Academic Yarigai uniquely conceptualizes the immediate, task-specific sense of fulfillment learners experience, which aligns closely with the conditions that foster epistemic emotions. Specifically, the factors of curiosity, intellectual stimulation, and overcoming academic challenges inherent in Academic Yarigai directly engage learners in epistemic exploration and deeper cognitive processing, crucial aspects described by the Deep Epistemic Emotion Hypothesis (Kanazawa, 2024b).

Additionally, Academic Yarigai helps clarify practical pedagogical implications for triggering epistemic emotions by offering concrete, task-based contexts that can systematically induce

intellectual surprise and curiosity through emotional and cognitive incongruities (Kanazawa, 2023b). By situating epistemic emotions within specific academic tasks, Academic Yarigai could significantly enhance understanding of how such emotions influence learning effectiveness and knowledge retention. Thus, future studies on Academic Yarigai, integrated with epistemic emotional frameworks, could substantially advance insights into the psychological mechanisms underlying deep learning and provide effective strategies for educational practices aimed at fostering sustained intellectual engagement.

## 12. Conclusion

In conclusion, Academic Yarigai offers an expanded, multidimensional perspective on learner engagement, motivation, and well-being, enhancing existing theoretical frameworks by explicitly addressing the motivational and experiential dimensions specific to educational contexts, including enjoyment, curiosity, and a meaningful sense of achievement. Just as one cannot enjoy a symphony by listening to each instrument in isolation, understanding students' educational experiences requires integrating these interconnected emotional and motivational melodies into one coherent harmony. Academic Yarigai not only captures the missing notes but orchestrates them into a composition educators can actually use, turning theoretical complexity into practical classroom harmony. Future validation and exploration promise to illuminate pathways for creating genuinely inspiring learning experiences—reminding us all that the best education is, ultimately, one worth doing.<sup>2</sup>

## Notes.

1. It is worth noting that the famous Ikigai Venn Diagram with four components (that which you love, that which the world needs, that which you are good at, and that which you can be paid for) is not so much what ikigai really means in Japan as an misunderstood Western interpretation (Kemp, 2019); hence the four-component conceptualization is not adopted in this study.
2. Further relevant resources and updates pertaining to Academic Yarigai can be found at the following webpage. <https://researchmap.jp/yu-kanazawa/yarigai>

## References

- Alrabai, F., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2023). Transforming the EMPATHICS model into a workable E4MC model of language learner well-being. *The Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 5(1), e5112723. <https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/5/1/5>
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper and Row.
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(2), 237–274. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2014.4.2.5>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 Motivational Self System. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2019). Towards a better understanding of the L2 learning experience, the Cinderella of the L2 Motivational Self System. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(1), 19–30. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2019.9.1.2>
- Dörnyei, Z., & Muir, C. (2013). Directed motivational currents: Using vision to create effective motivational pathways. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 3(3), 357–375. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2013.3.3.3>
- Fido, D., Kotera, Y., & Asano, K. (2020). English translation and validation of the Ikigai-9 in a UK sample. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 18(5), 1352–1359. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-019-00150-w>
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59–109. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>
- García, H., & Miralles, F. (2017). *Ikigai: The Japanese secret to a long and happy life*. Penguin Books.
- Hamano, S., & Urata, Y. (2016). The relationship between YARIGAI and meaning in life of junior high-school students. *The Japanese Journal of Personality*, 25(3), 244–247. <https://doi.org/10.2132/personality.25.244>
- Huta, V., & Ryan, R. M. (2010). Pursuing pleasure or virtue: The differential and overlapping well-being benefits of hedonic and eudaimonic motives. *Journal of Happiness Studies: An*



- Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being*, 11(6), 735–762. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-009-9171-4>
- Imai, T., Osada, H., & Nishimura, Y. (2012). The reliability and validity of a new scale for measuring the concept of Ikigai (Ikigai-9). *Japanese Journal of Public Health*, 59(7), 433–439. [https://doi.org/10.11236/jph.59.7\\_433](https://doi.org/10.11236/jph.59.7_433)
- Kanazawa, Y. (2016). Micro-level emotion as a factor of L2 vocabulary memory: The effect of lexical emotional valence on incidental recall performance. *Language Education & Technology*, 53, 23–52. [https://doi.org/10.24539/let.53.0\\_23](https://doi.org/10.24539/let.53.0_23)
- Kanazawa, Y. (2019). Beyond positive psychology: Philosophical insights to avoid the potential dangers of vulgarized appreciations of positive emotion. *Kokusaigaku Kenkyu-Journal of International Studies*, 8(1), 109–118. <http://hdl.handle.net/10236/00027520>
- Kanazawa, Y. (2020). Micro-level emotion in shallow/perceptual processing: Testing the Deep Positivity Hypothesis on the valence-dependent difference for LX incidental lexical memory. *Language Education & Technology*, 57, 1–30. [https://doi.org/10.24539/let.57.0\\_1](https://doi.org/10.24539/let.57.0_1)
- Kanazawa, Y. (2023a). Ikigai as a personality trait: Its correlations with other multiple intelligences. *International Journal of Psychology*, 58(S1), 853. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.13058>
- Kanazawa, Y. (2023b). Lexical and contextual emotional valence in foreign language vocabulary retention: An experimental study and the Deep Epistemic Emotion Hypothesis. *The Mental Lexicon*, 18(3), 339–365. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ml.23001.kan>
- Kanazawa, Y. (2023c). What do the deep positivity hypothesis and ikigai imply to Positive Education? *International Journal of Psychology*, 58(S1), 1007–1008. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.13081>
- Kanazawa, Y. (2024a). Emotional epistemicity: Epistemic emotion as an affective dimension. *Japanese Journal of Research on Emotions*, 32(Supplement), OS15. [https://doi.org/10.4092/jsre.32.Supplement\\_OS15-01](https://doi.org/10.4092/jsre.32.Supplement_OS15-01)
- Kanazawa, Y. (2024b). The free energy principle and its implications to language learning and education: 4E cognition, prediction, accuracy-complexity trade-off, intrinsic motivation via epistemic emotions, 4 skills. *Memoirs of the Graduate School of Humanities, Osaka University (The University of Osaka)*, 1, 135–158. <https://doi.org/10.18910/94802>
- Kanazawa, Y. (in press). Emotion, positivity, and beyond: Three hypotheses on micro-level emotions in foreign language learning. *Second Language*.
- Kemp, N. (2019, July 23). Ikigai misunderstood and the origin of the Ikigai Venn Diagram. *Ikigai Tribe*. <https://ikigaitribe.com/ikigai/ikigai-misunderstood/>
- Kemp, N. (2020, June 9). 012 – Dr. Dean Fido on the Ikigai 9. *Ikigai Tribe*. <https://ikigaitribe.com/podcasts/podcast12/>
- Nishigori, H., Shimazono, Y., Busari, J., & Dornan, T. (2024). Exploring yarigai: The meaning of working as a physician in teaching medical professionalism. *Medical Teacher*, 46(11), 1486–1493. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2024.2316227>
- Philp, J., & Duchesne, S. (2016). Exploring engagement in tasks in the language classroom. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 50–72. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190515000094>
- Reeve, J., & Tseng, C.-M. (2011). Agency as a fourth aspect of students' engagement during learning activities. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36(4), 257–267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2011.05.002>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Seligman, M. (2018). PERMA and the building blocks of well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 13(4), 333–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1437466>
- Shoji, M., Onda, M., Okada, H., Arakawa, Y., & Sakane, N. (2014). A study about “YARIGAI”: What makes work worth doing for the community pharmacists who participated in a workshop of the COMPASS project. *Japanese Journal of Social Pharmacy*, 33(1), 2–7. <https://doi.org/10.14925/33.2>
- Yoshida, S. (2014). Fulfillments obtained through works and important principle on the job: For clinical psychotherapists and nurses. *Bulletin of Center for Clinical Psychology, Tokyo Kasei University*, 14, 39–56. <https://tokyo-kasei.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/10091>

**Appendix**

*Academic Yarigai-9 Scale (AYS)*

Item	Factor
1. I feel personally fulfilled when I study.	Intrinsic Fulfillment
2. I enjoy learning new things and find it intellectually stimulating.	Curiosity & Intellectual Stimulation
3. Studying helps me grow as a person and develop my abilities.	Personal Growth & Self-Development
4. I believe that my academic learning can contribute to society in the future.	Social Contribution
5. When I study, I feel deeply engaged and lose track of time.	Engagement & Flow
6. I feel motivated when my academic efforts are recognized by teachers, peers, or family.	Recognition & Appreciation
7. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I overcome difficult academic challenges.	Overcoming Challenges
8. I can see how my academic knowledge can be applied in real-life situations.	Application & Real-World Relevance
9. I understand how my academic studies align with my long-term life goals.	Sense of Purpose in Learning

*Note.* 1 = Not applicable; 5 = Highly applicable. Scale based on Ikigai-9.

**Acknowledgment**

This work was partly supported by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science KAKENHI Grant Number JP22K00806.

**ORCID iD**

Yu Kanazawa    <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1398-5913>