

Concluding Statements

Yasuhiro Kotera & Dean Fido

Across all chapters, we have explored the potential role of ikigai in the areas of health, leadership, education, creative expression, and crime.

In his forward, Nicholas Kemp outlined the origins of how the concept of ikigai made its way into the West via the misinterpretation of the work of Andrés Zuzunaga. The idea that ikigai is comprised of themes pertaining to making money, what the world needs from you, what you're good at, and what you love was challenged, and he described how ikigai might instead be considered a far deeper and more personal concept.

In chapter 1, Kotera, Kaluzeviciute, Garip, Mcewan and Chamberlain explored contemporary approaches to ikigai in the areas of wellbeing and clinical practice. Drawing upon a series of meta-analyses and longitudinal studies, an argument was made for a relationship between developing ikigai and physical health and mortality. Moreover, potential mechanisms for how one might develop their ikigai—and hence their ability to solve wider problems and attain goals—were outlined within the context of healthcare workers and wellbeing professionals.

In chapters 2 and 3, Mayer and Vanderheiden provided empirical and theoretical evidence of the benefits of including contemporary perspectives on ikigai into both existential executive coaching and adult education. They found that such an approach might allow individuals to explore their life's worth on a deeper level, with evidence suggesting that ikigai might provide a useful basis for coaches to direct focus within their executive coaching sessions. Further, they also suggest that ikigai could be implemented as a means of supporting one's educational development through a reflexive approach.

In chapter 4, Russo-Netzer drew upon the theoretical perspectives of positive psychology and meaning in life as a means of constructing a qualitative understanding of how ikigai is experienced and expressed. Benefits of one's experiences of ikigai were explored using creative methods, such as those through the paths of metaphors, photographs and images. These mechanisms, he argued, reflect the personal human experience by which ikigai is experienced and felt.

Finally, Fido and Snape explored the potential utility of ikigai within the realm of forensic psychology across the dimensions of assessment, formulation, and treatment of offender populations. The authors highlighted the lack of empirical research bridging ikigai and forensic psychology but theorised the applicability of ikigai as a result of contemporary models of intervention (e.g., the Good Lives Model) being built around the need to recognise positive supports mechanisms and one's ability to overcome barriers. However, logistical barriers might prevent the successful implementation of ikigai within forensic practice, and that further evidence is required in this sphere.

Taken together, we hope that this book has been able to deliver a novel outlook on the concept of ikigai; one which both generates wider interest and discussion about it, and spurs researchers, clinicians, and policy makers to explore the use of ikigai in their areas of expertise. Because ikigai has only recently been gaining recognition in the West, as well as the conflicting viewpoints of how one might understand the niche manifestations of ikigai in their lives, much of what has been proposed within this book has by necessity been theoretical in nature. As such, the authors call upon interested parties for future collaborations to further improve our understanding and experiences of ikigai.