

A Report on Changes in the Values of Japanese Female Managers Before and After the Corona Outbreak

Hiromi Ariyoshi* and Kiyoshi Yoshimizu

Department of Occupational Health, Wayo Women's University,
Ichikawa, Japan

*Corresponding Author

Hiromi Ariyoshi, Department of Occupational Health, Wayo Women's University, Ichikawa, Japan.

Submitted: 2024, Sep 09; Accepted: 2024, Sep 24; Published: 2024, Sep 27

Citation: Ariyoshi, H., Yoshimizu, K. (2024). A Report on Changes in the Values of Japanese Female Managers Before and After the Corona Outbreak. *J Huma Soci Scie*, 7(9), 01-02.

1. Introduction

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the number of women in the labor force is 31.24 million, their proportion of the total labor force is 45.1%, and the number of non-regular workers is 53.6% (in 2023), with an increasing trend. The percentage of women in managerial positions is 13.2% (in 2021), and although it is on a long-term upward trend, it is still low internationally, ranking last among the seven major countries¹).

In addition to clarifying the causes of this trend, we examined and studied changes in the values of female managers before and after the spread of the Corona infection.

2. Research Methods

2.1 Literature Review

2.2 Case Study

2.3 Ethical Considerations

This study will be conducted with the consent of the individual in writing, in such a way that the individual cannot be identified, and with the approval of the Ethical Review Committee of WAYO Women's University (Approval No. 2230).

3. Results

3.1 Literature Review

First, we could not find any studies on the employment status of women in Japan as far as we could find. Therefore, we report on a national summary of the dynamics in Japan. The number of female workers in Japan is 30.02 million (Cabinet Office 2021), an increase of 3.4 million over the nine years since 2012. The number of male workers was 37.11 million; the female employment rate for those aged 15-64 was 71.3%, the female employment rate for those aged 25-44 was 78.6%, and the male employment rate for those aged 15-64 (Cabinet Office 2021) was 83.9%. The female employment rate for the working-age population (15-64 years) of 70.6% (Cabinet Office 2020) is higher than the OECD average

of 59.0% (OECD Stat 2020), ranking 13th among 38 OECD (Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation) countries. However, there were 14.13 million (53.6%) women and 6.52 million (21.8%) men who were part-time workers. The number of women has been increasing for seven consecutive years from 2014 to 2021 (Cabinet Office 2021).¹

The percentage of women entering graduate school, university, and special training school was 5.8%, 50.1%, and 26.2%, respectively (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2018), all of which showed an increasing trend. The salary level of female general workers was 75.2% of that of male general workers, and the salary level of female regular employees/regular workers was 77.6% of that of male regular employees/regular workers (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare 2021) when the male regular workers/regular workers were set at 100.2). Although there is a gap with men, the salary level of women is gradually increasing. The lifetime unmarried rate for women (at age 50) was 17.8% and for men 28.3% (Cabinet Office 2022). The rate has been following an increase in recent years³).

3.2 Case Study

Case 1

Female in her 50s, President of Company A, living with her parents. Due to the Corona disaster, she started working from home and no longer met with people. At the same time, her parents decided to move into a facility due to their advanced age. For the first time, she had to spend time at home alone. She had never interacted with people outside of work, as she had always worked hard and never had a day off. She felt an unusual sense of loneliness. Feeling anxious about her future (old age), she began to seriously consider marriage. She started marriage activity and met her marriage partner.

Case 2

50s, female, section chief, lives alone.

She started working at home due to the Corona disaster, and she no longer meets people. I have more time to spare again. After her divorce, she had been working hard, but due in part to menopausal symptoms, she felt abnormally lonely and began to have insomnia. In addition, when she learned the amount of pension payments from the age of 65, she began to feel financially insecure in her old age due to the fact that it was so small. This led her to seriously consider marriage. Since she was dating a man, she decided to live with him and prepare for her old age.

Case 3

Female, in her 50s, section chief, lives alone.

She developed menopausal symptoms such as general malaise due to the coronary dermatitis. Because she worked from home, she somehow managed to continue working. Gradually, she began to feel anxious about her retirement, including financially, so she registered with a marriage counselor and started marriage activity. She has not found a partner yet. However, she would like to consider continuing her work as soon as she finds a partner.

4. Considerations

Significance and importance of this study; Japan has a rapidly aging society with a declining birthrate, which is unprecedented in the world. For this reason, the female workforce has become indispensable⁴).

The female advancement rate was 5.8% for graduate schools, 50.1% for universities, and 26.2% for special training schools (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2018), all of which were on the increase. The male enrollment rate was 14.8% for graduate school, 56.3% for university, and 19.3% for special training school (MEXT 2018), all of which remained unchanged⁵). However, the reality is that the percentage of men in full-time employment and management positions is lower than that of men.

The lifetime unmarried rate for women (at age 50) was 17.8% and for men 28.3% (Cabinet Office, 2022)⁶). This figure has been on the increase in recent years. For this reason, we conducted a survey targeting female managers who are at an age when they are more likely to develop menopausal disorders and lifestyle-related diseases, and who are also in positions of social responsibility. The three cases had in common a sense of loneliness and anxiety about financial matters in their old age.

In particular, in Case 1, the women worked without weekends and found that they had no interaction with others outside of work other than with their families. Once again, this study raised issues regarding the work-life balance of Japanese workers and women's health care. From the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's "Survey on Working Women's Health Promotion 2018," regarding whether or not they had experienced problems with women-specific health issues and symptoms at their workplaces, 51.5% of

respondents reported having experienced problems, meaning that more than half of the women had some kind of problem. The main specific health issues and symptoms were menstruation-related symptoms and illness (71.7%), PMS (premenstrual syndrome) (42.9%), menopause (19.2%), and mental health (19.2%). Approximately 40% of female employees have "experienced having to give up something at work" due to health issues specific to women. The most common specifics were "working as a full-time employee" and "getting a promotion or taking on a job with more responsibility"⁷). This was also made clear in Case 3

As Cases 2 and 3 showed, the salary level of female general workers was 75.2% of that of male general workers, and the salary level of female regular and permanent employees was 77.6% of that of male regular and permanent employees (MHLW 2021), when the male regular and permanent employees were set at 100.2). Although there is a gap with men, the salary level of women is gradually increasing. The monthly pension payments for company employees were 103,159 yen for women and 164,770 yen for men, showing a gap between men's and women's payments, especially for those insured under Category 23). Thus, the amount of pension payments that will sustain them in retirement is also low. This study confirms these findings. In Japan, women account for an overwhelming 14.7% of housework-related hours for those aged 15 and older, while men account for 3.8%. Housework-related time for married couples with preschool children (under 6 years old) has a significant impact on women, with a high burden (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2021)⁸). The literature number women's burden of housework and improvement of the working environment, reaffirming the challenges they face.

References

1. Cabinet Office. White Paper on Gender Equality 2022.
2. Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Average annual income of men and women 2022.
3. White Paper on Health, Labour and Welfare. Trends in unmarried rates by age 2020.
4. Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Status of Working Women 2022.
5. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Female enrolment rate in higher education 2020.
6. Cabinet Office. Lifetime unmarried rate 2022.
7. Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Survey on Health Promotion of Working Women 2020.
8. Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Trends in Housework-Related Time of Husbands and Wives 2021.

Copyright: ©2024 Hiromi Ariyoshi, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.