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Special Edition

Occupational Awareness and Career Guidance for Youths

Contents

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NEXT ISSUE   Summer 2006
The Summer 2006 issue of the Review will be a special edition devoted to **Current Situations of Work Hours and Vacations in Japan**

INTRODUCTION
Occupational Awareness and Career Guidance for Youths

Within the realm of conventional education in Japan, there has been a prolonged tendency to stress the importance of the career guidance approach. Under this approach, students make their choices based on academic standards of test deviation values and scholastic ability, rather than emphasizing their interests or individuality. The result has been a lack of awareness regarding the importance of encouraging self-understanding and a firm grasp of occupational matters.

In recent years, however, Japan has encountered a serious social problem in the form of growing numbers of young people who find themselves unable to determine their own future, despite entering adolescence. They continue to work at non-regular jobs after graduating (the so-called *freeter* category of permanent part-timers), or fall under the "NEET" definition (not in employment, education or training) following graduation. As this situation grows in scale and gravity, greater attention has been given to providing young people with more effective career education and guidance.

In 2002, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology released its "Learning Program Framework for Cultivating Occupational and Work Attitudes," which promotes career education from an early age (including at the elementary school level). In 2003, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Cabinet Office, the education ministry published "Youth Self-Reliance and Challenge Plan". This plan is a blueprint to promote concrete policies to carry out diversified support for youth career formation. In striving to forge genuine improvements in the problems concerning the work methods and the actual employment situation for young people, it will be particularly important to zero in on the psychological aspects of people in this age group. This means confirming the development of their understanding of self and work, while utilizing career guidance by experts and other direct approaches to effectively promoting greater occupational awareness.

With this in mind, we have decided to focus this issue of the *Japan Labor Review* on the occupational consciousness of contemporary Japanese youth. We will also compile and disseminate topics relevant to the various types of support given to career education and guidance currently in use for the purpose of inspiring occupational awareness among the young.

The first article by Shu Kimura is an introduction to recent trends in policies concerning career guidance in Japan. Within that context, the issues addressed include career guidance at schools, occupational guidance from a stable government and other career guidance concepts and schemes, with the existing problems and future themes compiled for examination. The article is effective in clearly defining the aims and the specific contents of the career guidance and counseling offered by schools and job placement agencies, as well as the career counseling services that are now mandatory at business enterprises.

The Second article by Tomoko Adachi focuses on the occupational awareness of Japanese college students. Specifically, she examines tendencies such as "faith in perceived best-fit occupations," "passivity" and "pursuit of personal preferences" as factors thought to contribute to the "career indecision" of young people today, followed by an analysis of the impact of each of these factors in a psychological light. The article also introduces the "Career Education Program," an approach comprised of seven steps designed to promote career awareness on the part of college students, and reports on the results of this program.

The third article by Tomotsugu Kawasaki examines the approaches to career services offered by universities in Japan, focusing on the example of Kansai University (with which the author is affiliated). We learn that Kansai University has detailed services with the goal of inspiring occupational awareness in its students. The key to this program is the so-called "Career Design Room." Kawasaki also notes that while there has been an increase in the number of universities and colleges that stress the importance of "career education" in recent years, the specific details of this arm of education differ widely in practice. The conventional role of college employment placement divisions has concentrated on getting students into job situations. Nowadays, however, it appears that greater demands are being made on these offices to expand their functions to also include support of the occupation development process.

While the papers by Adachi and Kawasaki deal with subjects concerning the awareness of college students and career guidance offered on university campuses, there has also been a push to enhance the career guidance programs at the junior and senior high school level as well. As such, we decided to include the following articles to address themes regarding specific guidance tools developed to cultivate the occupational awareness of students at those

educational levels.

The fourth article by Toru Ishii and Osamu Yoshida introduces the *Occupation Handbook for Youth* (OHBY), a guidance tool engineered to facilitate use of personal computers to aid in searching for job and occupation information. OHBY was designed with young people in their junior and senior high school years as the main users, and has a guidance system that searches detailed information on 430 vocational categories. The system is currently being used extensively at junior and senior high schools, as well as at occupational counseling centers set up to primarily target the needs of young people. This is an effective tool that is expected to meet an expanding sphere of applications from here on, and in doing so, will raise the occupational understanding of junior and senior high school students in Japan.

The final article by Harumi Muroyamo & Junpei Matsumoto introduces the research using answers to the Vocational Readiness Test (VRT). The VRE is an assessment which evaluates the level of occupational interests of junior and senior high school students. This paper tries to track the current status of youth occupational interest and the changes in that interest factor that have occurred over the past decade. For its interest framework, the VRT adopts the six categories of occupational interest devised by Holland, J.L. The findings suggest a decline, especially during recent years, in the level of interest and concern (particularly among high school students) in office work and other standard activities, as well as toward administration, operations and other management levels of employment.

As noted, this issue of *Japan Labor Review* presents papers that address the problems of occupational awareness and career support of young people from college age down to junior and senior high school students. In Japan, full-fledged career guidance/education services have only just gotten off the ground. This points to an obvious need to keep a close eye on how the current budding state of career guidance evolves from here on, and how the awareness of young people in this country shifts against the backdrop of the development of this guidance. In that respect, I sincerely hope that this special edition will contribute to a greater understanding of the trends among support surrounding the occupational awareness and enlightenment of young people in Japan today.

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Recent Movements in Japan concerning Career Guidance and Future Tasks

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I. Concept of Career Guidance, Applied Fields and their Nature
1. The Concept of Career Guidance and Three Fields of Application

The concept of career guidance, which was developed in the United States, was introduced in Japan after World War II. It has clearly taken root as a system, and has been applied in three fields – school education, job placement and vocational ability development. This section outlines the concept and nature of career guidance in these spheres.

(1) Career Counseling at School

The School Education Law specifies career guidance as one of the objectives of school education. More specifically, it states that junior high schools must ensure that their students develop basic knowledge and skills related to the vocations required in society, an attitude of respect for working life, and the ability to choose their future careers in accordance with their individual personalities (Clause 1-2, Article 36 of the Law). High schools must similarly see that their students make decisions concerning their future career paths based on awareness of their own obligation to society and in accordance with their own personalities, develop their knowledge and education, and acquire specialized skills (Clause 1-2, Article 42 of the Law).

The specific content of career guidance for students is stipulated in the curriculum guidelines and guidelines for career guidance published by the Education Ministry.

The current general, established definition of career guidance at schools, which used to be called "vocational guidance," is stated in the "guidelines for career guidance at junior high and high schools – guidance for students starting their working life right after graduation (1987)". Career guidance at schools is a process whereby teachers give guidance and assistance to students systematically and continuously on the basis of information concerning individuals and their intentions concerning future courses by introducing former experiences and discussions so that students themselves can make decisions and plan their future careers, find work or go on to higher education

and cultivate their ability to make progress so as to adapt themselves to their future life.

This belief has been consistently reflected in a series of revisions in similar curriculum guidelines.   More specifically, these include within activities as a whole in school education the improvement of the mechanism of guidance at school, education concerning possible and desirable life styles, and improvements in career education.

(2) Vocational Guidance in the Employment Security Administration

The Employment Measures Law, which is a basic law concerning employment policy, has a provision concerning guidance for job seekers and explains the grounds for it as follows: "By providing job seekers with employment information and the results of occupational surveys, research and the like, and by providing job seekers with guidance based on such materials with respect to the kinds of work, places of employment and other matters concerning the nature of those seeking workers and necessary skills and the like, the employment placement agencies shall make efforts to promote the selection by job seekers of employment suited to their aptitude, ability, experience, level of skill, etc., and thereby to positively achieve freedom of choice of employment (Article13 of the Employment Measures Law).

In line with this, the Employment Security Law, which regulates specific procedures and so forth of career guidance, stipulates the object of the guidance as follows: "the Public Employment Security Offices shall perform vocational guidance for the physically or mentally handicapped, those seeking to enter employment for the first time and others in need of special guidance with regard to obtaining employment (Article 22 of the Employment Security Law). Here, the law defines "vocational guidance" as guidance to those persons seeking to obtain jobs that, through practical training, courses, directions, advice, the provision of information and other methods, facilitates their choice of jobs compatible with their capabilities and increases their adaptability to those jobs (Article 4-4 of the Employment Security Law).

Although vocational guidance is currently provided not solely by the public employment security offices, but also by (free and paid) private job placement agencies, recruitment agencies and various other public and private agencies specializing in providing general and vocational guidance and job placement have always been considered as basic devices for the government to adjust labor supply and demand, and since World War II the government has

constantly been installing various related organizations and systems, updating their approaches, strengthening their functions, and actively undertaking various steps that view such vocational guidance and job placement services as the essential part of governmental measures.

(3) Career Consulting in Vocational Ability Development

The Human Resources Development Promotion Law, which is a basic law concerning vocational ability development, defines the basic concept of development and improvement of the worker's ability necessary for a job as follows: "… human resources development and vocational ability evaluations shall be conducted in close relation with each other. In this context, vocational ability evaluations shall be implemented in such a manner that the human resources of each worker may be valued properly by the chances of training, working experiences in business and the stage of skillfulness reached" (Article 3-2 of the Human Resources Development Promotion Law).

To meet this requirement, the law stipulates that employers shall provide workers with career consulting. This "career consulting" is defined in the 7th Basic Plan for Human Resources Development as "counseling provided at the request of workers to enable them to design their own vocational life in accordance with their aptitude, work experience and so on, and thus to make decisions concerning jobs and develop their own vocational ability through, for example, participating in job training courses." More specifically, it refers to the activities of employers who provide employees with information, counseling and various other types of assistance for their career development.

In providing assistance for the formation of the workers' career, the public and private sectors jointly engage in the following activities: developing the current assistance systems; improving the scheme for provision of information; establishing criteria for the mechanism of ability evaluation; and securing opportunities for job education and training. The nature of career consulting that employers offer to their workers is, literally, one type of career guidance for workers.

2. The Consistent Features of Career Guidance

Career guidance is definable in various ways, but in this article is defined in accordance with the features commonly observed in various types of guidance provided in educational, employment and industrial circles, as: a process whereby assistance is given to individuals so that they can make

decisions for themselves concerning jobs and career paths, prepare themselves for the job-search process and eventually find employment and start working, realize their self-image, and grow and develop their abilities. This process goes on throughout the worker's lifetime and includes activities to help an individual or a group of individuals face the problems and conflicts that may arise during this process.

So, what specific kinds of supportive processes are included in career guidance? As I see it, judging from previous studies and action taken in the past in Japan and elsewhere, concepts recognized in educational, labor and industrial circles in Japan and other factors, career guidance includes the following six elements:

  (i)   Self-understanding: helping the subjects to understand themselves in relation to career paths, professions, and career building
  (ii) Understanding of vocations: helping them understand the types and natures of career paths, professions, and career routes
  (iii) Enlightening experience: encouraging them to "try" before making a choice or decision
  (iv) Counseling: counseling them in making a choice or decision, or in resolving problems and conflicts
  (v)   Moving into action: assisting them to put into action their choices and decisions on whether to proceed to higher education or seek employment, or a career route
  (vi) Follow-up guidance and assistance for adaptation: evaluating guidance and counseling provided in the past, and helping them cultivate adaptability, achieve personal growth, and develop their abilities.

Counseling is provided by different methods based on different theories, and counseling given in accordance with the abovementioned six types of guidance is career counseling. This is called "career education at school" if addressed to pupils and students, "vocational guidance" if addressed to job seekers, and "career consulting" if given to individuals who are actually employed.

II. New Moves related to Career Guidance in Recent Years

This chapter gives an account of selected recent moves directly related to career guidance for students, job seekers and workers, and analyzes the current state of affairs.

1. Encouragement of Career Education at School

In December 1999, the Central Education Council published a report on "improvement in the connections between primary and junior high school education, and high school education," in which the council suggested that it is necessary to conduct career education (education to instill in children desirable views on vocation, working life, and knowledge and skills concerning particular jobs; understand their own personalities; and acquire the ability to decide their own career paths voluntarily) from the primary school stage, while keeping in step with their growth."

Conversely, in January 2004, the Council of Cooperation for a Comprehensive Survey and Study of the Promotion of Career Education within in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) gave a detailed account of the necessity of career education, the significance and nature of career education, the basic direction and steps to promote career education, development of the necessary conditions for career education, and so on. The council in its account emphasizes that both the traditional career guidance for students and vocational education together constitute the core of career education.

As shown in the increase in the number of "freeters" and "NEETs," young people are not forging adequate views on vocation and working life during the transitional period from school to the workplace, and lack or are slow in acquiring the social skills and ability to construct proper personal relationships with others. Career education can help with these problems by systematically and continuously providing young people as early as the primary school level with opportunities to acquire proper views on vocations and working life, together with social skills.

The first specific step is to present the framework for a program to foster desirable views on vocations and working life.

In 2002, MEXT (via the National Institute for Education Policy Research) published a "framework for a learning program to foster views on vocations and working life," and called for the educational field to implement it at various levels. The program defines elementary school as the stage where the foundations for seeking and choosing career paths are shaped; lower secondary school as the stage where students are required to seek for and provisionally choose realistic career paths; and upper secondary school as the stage where students are required to seek out and tentatively experience realistic career

paths in preparation for entering adult society, and aims systematically and continuously at training pupils and students concerning four particular abilities in accordance with their stages of growth – (i) ability in forming human relations; (ii) ability in making use of information; (iii) ability in future planning; and (iv) ability in decision-making. Modeled after the "career education" conducted in the United States. In the 1970s, it was newly created program taking into account the current state of social, economic and educational affairs in Japan.

The second step is to put the program into practice in actual fields of education.

In 2004, MEXT launched the "Project to Promote a New Plan for Career Education", designating 45 regions across the country as special regions for the promotion of career education, where the program is now activated. The implementation of the program has also stimulated discussion of the new ideal of school education, which is now required to be associated with the mechanism of students' transition to adult society; employment policy; and cooperation with enterprises.

The third step is to further enrich integrated study classes at school.

Integrated study classes, launched in schools in 1998 (in 1999 at high schools), when the official curriculum guidelines were revised, are designed to reflect individual localities so as to provide students with unique education together with opportunities to acquire a strong will to live and the ability to adjust themselves to changing surroundings. Curriculum guidelines revised in 2003 advocate the further improvement of this course. Providing students with opportunities to experience nature, participate in volunteer activities, and visit companies and experience practical training in workplaces forms the core of the course, and thus is identical with career guidance.

This section has highlighted the present situation of career education among various new developments seen in school education. The author believes that the basic concept and approach is in accord with one of the legally defined "objectives of education" (in Articles 36 and 42 of the School Education Law): "to return to the starting point of career guidance at school and to promote such guidance afresh."

2. The Action Plan for Young People's Independence and Readiness to Challenge Difficulties

In June 2003, in its "Basic Policy for Economic and Financial Management and Structural Reform", the government formulated an "Action Plan for Young People's Independence and Readiness to Challenge Difficulties." Since then, MEXT, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Cabinet Office have jointly taken various positive measures in regards to this.

Young people in the present day suffer from a lack of appropriate skills and unstable employment, as seen in the high unemployment rate, an increasing number of NEETs and freeters, the high rate of people who quit their job, and the regional gaps in the job markets for young people. This may well undermine competitiveness in society as a whole and lead to social instability. The plan was launched as a national project to reverse the recent trend of increased unemployment among young people by stimulating their will to work and heightening the vocational independence of all who are motivated.

Its principles are (i) to reform educational, human resource and employment systems; (ii) to direct all feasible policies intensively towards human resource measures; and (iii) to call on business circles to take action voluntarily through three basic approaches, namely (i) strengthening interaction among their policies; (ii) respecting initiatives and diversification of individual regions; and (iii) making use of the strengths of the private sector.

Most of the specific steps to be taken under the plan are devoted to the systematic provision of career guidance using a variety of approaches, and the subsequent development of appropriate systems and schemes, as summarized below:

(1) Assistance in career development and job-search activities for students at school until they become settled in their workplace:

    (i) Promotion of education concerning proposed career, preliminary experience in proposed jobs, etc. (forging appropriate views on particular vocations and working life through organized, systematic provision of work experience for children as early as primary school

    (ii) Adoption of a human resource development system (Japanese-style dual system) whereby working practices and education are closely linked (a system for fostering mature working individuals, whereby, for

example, trainees in practice work three days a week and attend training courses two days a week)

(iii) One-on-one assistance by job-finding advisors

(iv) Training of experts specializing in job counseling for young people (career consultants for young people), and their allocation to various areas

(2) Improvement of the labor market for young people:

(i) Development of varied job-placement systems corresponding to the diversification of job-search methods (i.e., commonly accepted hiring throughout the year, active use of trial hiring, etc.)

(ii) Clarification of the qualifications that firms require of young workers

(iii) Development of a mechanism whereby the practical capabilities of new graduates and other young people are appropriately assessed and officially approved

(3) Enhancement of the abilities of young people and the expansion of employment choices:

(i) Development of educational programs at universities, graduate schools, technical schools and various other educational institutes for the retraining of mature persons

(ii) Strengthening of the training of highly specialized professionals by encouraging the establishment of graduate schools for them

(iii) Any steps that will contribute to improvements in the quality of university education (advanced human resource development, on-the-job entrepreneurial education)

(4) Creation of job opportunities for young people:

(i) Large-scale training of those people who wish to become entrepreneurs (provision of comprehensive assistance to would-be entrepreneurs and practical internship opportunities at local venture firms for business-startups)

(ii) Intensive training of young workers who will be able to contribute immediately to their companies (systemization of abilities required and development of criteria for their assessment, practical curriculums and learning materials for human resources in high demand – in, for example, information technology, technical management, business rehabilitation, etc.)

(iii) Expansion of new business markets with particular reference to the service sector

Currently, the Action Plan for Young People's Independence and Readiness to Challenge Difficulties is being carried out as an intensive measure in line with educational, employment and economic policies; it is schoolteachers, the staff of job placement agencies, counselors, and career consultants of the public and private sectors that actually put the plan into practice. In reality, what is provided is career guidance. No dramatic results can be expected from the plan simply by making budget allocation to create an organization or build facilities. The author believes that top priority should be given to nurturing those people who have an established philosophy, knowledge and experience concerning working life, and are able to lead young people in their career development.

3. Assistance for job seekers at the Public Employment Security Offices in accordance with the individuals' circumstances

The Public Employment Security Offices (*Hellowork* offices) are a national administrative body established under the provisions of the Employment Security Law, providing job placement and career guidance services; information concerning industries and employment; employment management services; and services pertaining to the procedures and payment of employment insurance benefits. Among these, the job placement and career guidance services are recognized as the core operation of the office.

The method of providing services over the counter and the basic concept of the *Hellowork* offices were substantially revised in 1975 and again later when the Japanese economy was hard hit by the oil shock. *Hellowork* offices across the nation made various efforts to improve services, and as a result they currently offer, via the medium of expert staff, job introduction services matched to the job seeker. The features of the new concept of *Hellowork* offices can be summarized into three aspects, which are:

    (i) Separation of job placement services and services related to employment insurance payments: different sections or groups of staff members take responsibility for the job placement and career guidance services that require expertise in career guidance and counseling, and services related to employment insurance

    (ii) Job placement services according to type of job seeker: the method of providing services over the counter and the content of the services are clearly distinguished among different types and needs of job seekers, so

that carefully differentiated services can be provided

(iii) Such job introduction and career guidance are provided via highly advanced specialists (career guidance officers) only. On the other hand, other specialists (employment officers) are in charge of service provision to employers. At the same time, a training system for these specialists is to be strengthened in line with their specialties.

In 2004, new guidelines for job introduction were drawn up, though the traditional, basic stance was maintained. These new guidelines were launched to take into account the changing relationship of labor supply and demand in the Japanese industry over thirty years, and to deal with changes in the outlook and needs of job seekers and firms looking for workers as well as the increase in and growing complexity of information. Among the new features of the guidelines, this section sheds light on and gives an account of the aspects closely linked to the theme of the paper, "counseling and assistance in accordance with the circumstances of job seekers."

The latest revision, while continuing to put special emphasis as before on respect for self-decision by job seekers, provision of counseling services concerning work and specialized assistance, is swiftly and thoroughly aimed at providing more varied and accurate services until he or she has found a job or solved their problems. This is on based on flexible judgments and in accordance with the job seeker's particular situation

The specific flow of service provision can be summarized as follows (refer also to the Table):

(i) Sorting of job seekers at the time they visit a *Hellowork* office (for the first time);

(ii) Providing the basic knowledge required for job-seeking activities, and an account of the services offered by the *Hellowork* offices (making use of leaflets, etc.)

(iii) Determination of the nature of the assistance to be given, and acceptance of applications for assistance in job-seeking activities, or creation of a serial number for individual job seekers

(iv) Provision of actual assistance services: conducting personal interviews and so forth, pinpointing problems that make it difficult for the job seekers to find employment, and providing appropriate assistance in solving associated problems

(v) Providing outplacement services: assisting job seekers who reveal no

particular problems in the process of assistance to find employment

(vi) Providing specific advice for the preparation of job applications; reviewing of curriculum vitae, work experience records and so on; gathering of information on firms; holding mock interviews and so forth

(vii) Job placement

(viii) Monitoring the results of job-seeking activities, and follow-up

The latest revision has expanded the scope of the services to include not only individual-targeted services, but also services corresponding to changes in the situation of each job seeker during the process of counseling, personal counseling, group work, seminars and various others. Meanwhile, concerning elderly persons, persons with disabilities and various other job seekers who need special assistance, the nature of career guidance has remained the same as before, that is focusing on heightening the employability of such job seekers, development of job openings, assistance to successful job seekers in adapting to the workplace, assistance via the casework method, and so on.

4. Strengthening of the Adjustment of Labor Supply and Demand via Collaboration of the Public and Private Sectors

The system of labor supply and demand adjustment in Japan comprises the Public Employment Security Offices (including schools assigned to engage partially in the duties of the Public Employment Security Office), paid job placement agencies, free job placement agencies (schools, special public corporations, local public organizations, etc.), worker dispatching and supplying agencies, and ordinary job advertisements.

Job placement services – both paid and free – have been available for certain occupations since the enactment of the Employment Security Law; however, in 1999 the law was revised to permit job placement services in almost all job categories other than certain fields (harbor transportation, construction, etc.). In addition, since 2004 a series of deregulation measures have been put into effect as shown below:

(i) Certain types of public bodies (chambers of commerce and industry, societies of commerce and industry, Japan Agricultural Cooperatives, etc.) are authorized to engage in free job placement services provided they provide prior notification.

(ii) Local public bodies are authorized to engage in free job placement

services provided they provide prior notification.

(iii) Permission is now given to business proprietors, rather than individual business establishments.

(iv) Regulations related to simultaneous engagements in other businesses have been relaxed, and the guarantee system has been abolished.

The worker dispatching business was established as a new labor supply-demand adjustment system in 1986, when the Worker Dispatching Law was enacted in order to ensure proper operation of the business and establishment of suitable working environments for dispatched workers. Since then, the system has been revised repeatedly, extending the range of occupations where worker dispatching is permitted.

In 2004, the following steps were taken to relax regulations and protect workers.

(i) The maximum contract length for dispatched workers was extended from one year to three years.

(ii) Employers are now obliged to make an employment agreement if they wish to continue hiring dispatched workers after the maximum contract period is over.

(iii) If a business establishment intends to hire a worker for a certain post that has already been held by a dispatched worker for more than three years, and if the duties of the post are not subject to restriction on the maximum contract length, it must give priority to that dispatched worker in filling the post.

(iv) Employers are now allowed to have dispatched workers engage in manufacturing work.

(v) The procedure pertaining to permission and reports now centers on business proprietors, rather than individual business establishments.

(vi) The legal status of dispatched workers must be clarified, and workers currently dispatched are now able to make use of job placement services before the contract term for the current dispatch comes to an end.

These developments show that the public and private sectors are making efforts to play their respective roles effectively and appropriately, bringing into play their own vitality and originality as entities adjusting labor supply and demand. This has generated the following effects in recent years:

(i) Strengthening of the role of the Public Employment Security Offices in

providing information: a comprehensive job information system whereby *Hellowork* offices across the country are linked online; "*Hellowork* Internet information"; "*Shigoto* (jobs) information on the Net"; self-conducted job searching used by computer; Industrial Employment Information Centers; "*Hellowork* information plazas," and so forth.

(ii) Joint promotion by the public and private sectors of counseling and assistance: allocation and effective use of job-searching advisors and other experts; implementation of career consulting; implementation of job-searching seminars; provision of opportunities to experience work environments, such as a trial employment scheme for young workers; the Japanese-style dual system; a "Young Job Spot," and so on.

From a social and economic viewpoint, the trend towards strengthening public and private collaboration in the labor supply-and-demand adjustment mechanism is a consequence of a recent series of deregulations that have facilitated the shift from "public to private." What is important here is the fact that the specific nature of the deregulations is closely associated with the roles and partnership of the public and private sectors in job placement, vocational guidance and career guidance.

5. Implementation of Career Consulting in Vocational Ability Development

With the outlook of workers diversifying, labor mobility intensifying, and the methods of corporate human resource management changing, employers have been called on to commit themselves more closely to the career development of workers. Accordingly, as stated above, the Human Resources Development Promotion Law was revised in 2001 to stipulate that employers must provide their employees with career consulting. Career consulting in this context is defined as "counseling provided upon the request of workers so that they can plan their vocational life in accordance with their aptitude and work experience, choosing a job and developing their vocational ability in an effective manner by, for example, attending training courses." The specific nature of career consulting is exactly identical to that of career counseling at school and vocational guidance conducted within the framework of the job introduction services. According to the author, the difference among them lies in to whom such counseling is addressed: pupils and students, job seekers, or those who are actually employed. In other words, career consulting is a

combination for workers of career guidance and counseling.

Then, what is it that must employers do concerning the career development of workers? A "guideline on measures that employers should take" (notification from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) stipulates this as shown below:

(i) Career consulting (that is, provision of information, counseling, and assistance concerning the content of jobs, the required abilities, the positioning of human resources, human resource development, etc.)

(ii) Consideration of the positioning of workers and other matters pertaining to employment management (securing of opportunities for them to gain experience in business, provision of opportunities and jobs that enable workers to demonstrate their potential, etc.)

(iii) Granting paid leave for education and training, and various other types of leave (clear statement in labor contracts and working rules; technical skill examinations to be conducted upon request of workers and in accordance with their aptitudes; various kinds of leave, such as leave for career consulting)

(iv) Securing the time for workers to receive education and training (changes in the starting / ending time of office hours, restrictions on overtime, etc.)

(v) Others (appropriate designation and use of promoters of vocational ability development, effective use of subsidies, information provision to job seekers, etc.)

Concerning the career consultants in charge of assistance in the career development of workers, questions immediately arise about what they should know and can do, how to nurture them, and what qualifications to require of them. In line with this, in 2002 the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare launched an examination scheme for the assessment of competency as career consultants. The ministry designates private organizations to take responsibility for the examination, training and authorizing of official career consultants so as to increase the number of such consultants to 50,000 in five years. For this scheme, "details of criteria in the examination for assessment of competency as career consultant" have been drawn up as follows:

I. Understanding of the social significance of career consulting

1. Awareness of social and economic trends and the necessity of assistance in career formation

2. Role and positioning of career consulting

3. Scope of duties (general duties, confidentiality obligation, and ethics) of career consulting

II. Basic knowledge and skills necessary for career consulting

1. Basic knowledge (theory of career consulting, personality theory, understanding of and information concerning work, information concerning ability development, employment management, labor market, labor-related laws and regulations, mental health, life stages, handling of crucial junctures)

2. Basic skills (their necessity, creation of career sheets, counseling skills, group-counseling skills, management of counseling process)

III. Skills necessary in process of actually conducting career consulting

1. Setting the scope of counseling (understanding by counselors of physical backgrounds, rapport with clients, proactive career formation, target setting, clarification of the scope of services)

2. Assistance in self-understanding (self-analysis and understanding, skills in assessing subjects)

3. Assistance in understanding job (effective use of information concerning individual professions, the labor market, up-to-date technology)

4. Assistance in having enlightening experiences

5. Assistance in decision-making (creation of a career plan, specific target setting, ability development)

6. Assistance in the implementation of strategies (motivation, management of strategy implementation)

7. Assistance in adaptation to a new job

8. Overview of the counseling process (conclusion and assessment of counseling)

IV. Ability in conducting efficient career consulting

1. Making society aware of the importance of career formation

2. Recognition of networks (importance of networks, formulation of network, experts to refer to, introduction to experts in different fields)

3. Self-training and supervision (necessity of self-training and acceptance of supervision)

A glance at the contents of career consulting shows that the term "career

consulting" that is used in Japan is exactly the same as "career guidance and counseling for workers" commonly used elsewhere in the world.

III. Future Tasks for Promotion of Career Guidance
1. Integration of Career Guidance and Counseling

The previous sections have shown that in Japan career guidance is provided at school as "career guidance for students," at organizations responsible for labor adjustment as "vocational guidance," and in the framework of vocational ability development as "career consulting." Each type of guidance has its own legal grounds and a clear definition. However, the nature of career guidance is shared by all of them, the essence being that all provide services related to six points – self-understanding, understanding of vocations, enlightening experience, counseling, implementation of own strategies, and follow-ups. These are generally called the six services of career guidance.

Incidentally, the questions of which among the six services take priority, and whether all of them should be given attention in career guidance depend on the situation and needs of individual subjects. However, counseling as such is indispensable for all subjects. In any case, services other than counseling such as those related to self-understanding, understanding of vocations, enlightening experience, implementation of own strategies, and follow-ups are all provided for within the sphere of counseling services.

With rapid progress in information technology, assessment tools for self-understanding, information for helping to understand vocations, the medium of information provision, and tools for searching for information are now systematically computerized. At the same time, guidance is provided more frequently by means of computer simulation and visual images. This trend is observable worldwide, and is not itself something that should be criticized as a sign that the world is heading towards an information-oriented society. Nevertheless, guidance tools are, after all, no more than tools. The important thing is to make full use of them in counseling services. It is important to integrate all the elements – interpretation of the findings of counseling, explanation to subjects, acceptance of the findings by clients, and implementation of measures designed in accordance with counseling – into the process of the services.

Therefore, those people using these guidance tools should be qualified as counselors who are prepared to listen to clients. In the meantime, there are

Public Employment Security Offices are officially qualified professionals; however, in a broader sense they are qualified as specialists in school education and employment administration respectively, and are not especially trained and qualified as counselors. The qualification for career consultants for private firms mentioned earlier is based on a private certification system whereby the private agency provides training and conducts examinations in accordance with detailed guidelines set by the government. This has a substantial impact on the maintenance and improvement of the quality of those who are engaged in career guidance and counseling, and in turn on their social comments and the dissemination of their effect.

This section will now, by confining itself to career consulting at private firms, list unsolved problems with reference to annual reports published in recent years by study groups established in the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, in the hope that this will help to highlight the kind of problems that remain.

(1) Survey Research on Abilities and Other Factors that are Essential for Implementation of Career Consulting (2002):

Essential abilities are classified in a system. The report cites as future tasks the following: (i) effective use of the system; (ii) questions related to the level of abilities; (iii) classification of abilities in terms of particular fields; and (iv) the necessity of constant reviews of the system.

(2) Survey Research on Examinations for Career Consultants (2002):

Items for use as criteria for the examination, standard curriculum, and procedures to be taken by organizations responsible for the examination have been determined. A scheme for the training of career consultants and the qualification examination were launched by the private sector on the basis of this report. Future tasks pertaining to this report include: (i) the targeted level of career consultants according to the training program (standard level); (ii) development of specific curriculums; (iii) maintenance and improvement of the quality of qualified consultants as per the examination; (iv) scheme for updating the qualifications; (v) training of persons in charge of making questions for the examination and judges of the examination; and (vi) the necessity for constant review of examination questions.

(3) Study on Effective Methods for Expanding the Use of Career Consulting (2003):

The study clarifies the mechanism of the role of career consultants, the

abilities required to conduct standard career consulting and to supervise career consultants, the nature of training programs for career consultants, the necessity for maintenance of quality in the examination to assess the level of ability, and support for career consultants. Future tasks cited in this report are: (i) promotion at the initiative of the private sector; (ii) coordination and classification of joint work conducted by individual examination organizations; (iii) establishment of a council comprising organizations in charge of the training program of career consultants and their qualifying examination; (iv) training of supervisors of career consultants, and collaboration with universities and graduate schools in training supervisors.

(4) Study on the Improvement of Qualifications of Career Consultants (2004):

The study clarifies the role, required abilities and training methods of supervisors of career consultants, classifying ability in supervision into four elements: ability in conducting career consulting; ability in group facilitation; ability in training consultants; and ability in approaching organizations. Future tasks cited in the study are how to clarify and specify methods of increasing the number of career consultants and deepening their experience.

(5) Panel on Securing Qualification as Career Consultants (2004):

The panel proposes establishing a liaison conference comprising organizations in charge of the training program of career consultants and their qualifying examination to consider a backup system for trained career consultants and the maintenance of their quality.

(6) Study Group on Career Consulting for Young People (2004):

The study group presents requirements for conducting career consulting for young persons, together with specific examples of model curriculums and additional model curriculums. The future tasks cited are (i) consistency with the standard curriculum; (ii) development of techniques for career counseling for young people; and (iii) the necessity of constant revision of the requirements.

(7) Survey Research on Experienced Career Consultants (2005):

This examines the definition of experienced career consultants, the ideal model, and their characteristics with specific case studies, and presents them as pointers for less experienced career consultants. Future tasks cited are: (i) activities to make the public familiar with the idea of experienced career consultants and to enlighten career consultants; (ii) incorporation of "special

various kinds of theories and approaches concerning counseling, such as those of a emotional, cognitive, and behavioral approaches. However, the author believes that a comprehensive approach is most effective in career counseling due to its special features, which are shown below:

(i) The emphasis of counseling is placed on assistance in achieving better adaptation and growth, and development of individuals, rather than on removing problems or providing remedies for such problems

(ii) Counseling is aimed at achieving specific objectives, such as decisions to progress to higher education or find employment, career formation, and so forth.

(iii) Counseling follows a systematic approach: self-acceptance, understanding of problems, setting of targets, decision on and execution of strategies, and assessment by the counselor and client

(iv) Counseling is provided without adhering to any particular counseling theory or approach, but rather relying more on a compromising, comprehensive method

(v) Counseling is closely linked to, or integrated with guidance

(vi) Counseling is provided together with consultation, coordination and education

Those placed in charge of guidance must be career counselors with highly advanced specialties, rather than simple counselors. Furthermore, it is a crucial task for educational, administrative and industrial circles to launch a system whereby such career counselors are properly trained and progressively improve their qualities.

2. Improvement of the Quality of Persons in charge of Career Guidance, and Effective Methods of making such Guidance Widely Available

The second task concerns, on the one hand, how to improve the quality of persons responsible for career guidance – counselors engaging in career counseling at school, vocational guidance at organizations adjusting labor supply and demand, and career consulting at firms; and on the other hand, how to make society aware of such career guidance and counseling.

Currently in Japan there is no official certification system for counselors in the same manner as that for doctors and lawyers who are required to pass the relevant national examinations and thus are authorized to monopolize such duties. Of course, schoolteachers and civil servants engaged in duties at the

features of experienced career consultants" into the training program and assessment of career consultants; (iii) development of a system whereby internships, supervision and training are provided under a partnership of public and private sectors; (iv) improvement of networks enabling career consultants to refer to appropriate experts; and (v) methods of assessing career consultants (whether to exclude unqualified persons or to recognize the exceptionally able).

3. Collaboration among School Education, Employment Administration, Industry, Households and Local Communities

The third task is for career education at school, vocational guidance provided by the employment administrative agencies, career consulting in the private sector, and education at home and in local communities to share the same beliefs and cooperate with one another within the shared framework. The author believes that, essentially, their collaboration points to the implementation of career guidance and counseling.

It has been argued in recent years that people, in particular young people, in Japan have lost some of their "human power" and their enthusiasm for learning and working hard. The "human power" is definable as a general, spiritual toughness in living as a member of society or an independent individual. For example, this decline in "human power" is observable in the following:

(i) The fall in basic scholastic standards and will to learn: some surveys show that only 20 – 40 percent of pupils like to study, and that some 40 – 60 percent do not understand classroom lessons

(ii) Lack of special knowledge and skills as seen in the fact that around 60 percent of firms claim that newly hired employees lack sufficient skills and techniques, and show lower abilities in writing and theoretical ways of thinking and communication compared to ten years ago

(iii) A fall in the eagerness of young people to work and participate in activities in local communities, as seen in an increase in the number of NEETs, freeters and those who quit their jobs within a short time span

(iv) A fall in the eagerness to achieve objectives

Numerous attempts have been made by academics to highlight the factors behind this decline in "human power." However, this paper is not concerned with the causes, but rather with the remedy for the decline. The author believes

that the best step to be taken is for schools, firms, households and local communities, as well as the government in its employment policy, to provide more career guidance and counseling services, and for all those responsible to cooperate with one another while focusing on this issue.

Obviously, the decline in "human power" can be halted through career guidance and counseling in the fact that it is far more attributable to various macro factors, such as society and economy, laws and institutional framework, administrative organizations and their operation, and culture and social climate. Nevertheless, it is the persons providing career guidance and counseling, as well as the individuals themselves, who will raise the levels of "human power".

In line with this, the following matters are cited as tasks for various circles in present-day Japan – education, employment policy, industry (firms), households and local communities. Only tasks involving career guidance and those closely related to such guidance are outlined here. (According to the Cabinet Office, Study Group on Strategy for Human Power, 2003, partially modified.)

(1) School education: Establishment of schools that are open to society and quality education to satisfy various needs, such as:

(i) active promotion of career education; (ii) diversification of paths to higher education and revision of the entrance examination system; (iii) strengthening of incentives for university students to study; (iv) introduction of learning topics relevant to social life; (v) strengthening of collaboration between high school and university; (vi) provision of information helping appropriate decision making on career paths; and (vii) establishment of schools with particular unique features and highly specialized technical schools

(2) Employment policy: establishment of working environments enabling workers to bring their human power into play, including the following:

(i) comprehensive assistance for young people in finding employment (establishment of "career centers" in various regions); (ii) an expansion in employment opportunities for young people (dispatching young workers to firms and "trial employment" with an eye to their being hired on a regular basis in the future); (iii) assistance in starting businesses (information centers, network for human resource assistance); and (iv) assistance in career development (career consulting system, reform of the ability assessment scheme)

(3) Industry and firms: reduction in labor mismatch via cooperation between industrial circles and schools as follows:

(i) clarification of demand for specific workers; (ii) assessment and treatment (clarification of requirements and provision of various career paths); (iii) nurturing of independent-minded workers; (iv) participation of firms in career education; (v) participation of firms in integrated classes at schools; (vi) dispatch of corporate personnel to schools

(4) Households and local communities: active participation in education through the following ways:

(i) assistance in home education (understanding of the basic rules for citizens and the meaning of working); (ii) active participation in school and local activities (participation in PTA, events on campus, volunteer activities); (iii) development of working environments the facilitate home education (leaving the office on time, paid holidays, "family-friendly" corporate management); (iv) assistance for activities in local communities; and (v) participation of children in local educational programs.

References:

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Kimura, Shu. *Sangyokai ni okeru Career Consulting no Naiyo to Kongo no Kada*i (Career Consulting in the Industrial World: its Nature and Future Problems), Nihon Rodo Kenkyu Zasshi, No. 517, 2003.

Flow of Services for Job Seekers

Job Seekers

27

Every job seeker must go through steps (i) - (iii), when he or she visits their local Hellowork office for the first time (recepients of unemployment benefits are also eligible for an induction lecture.) the section to visit is determined according to situations concerning the reception desk, counseling desk for first visitors, ordinary counseling desk for vocational guidance, and so on.

Visit Hellowork office (first time)

(i) Sorting of visiting job seekers

(ii) Providing basic knowledge required for job-seeking activities, and an account of services offered by Hellowork (about 5 mins) using leaflets and other relevant material.
1) Clarification and explanation of the process of re-employment (self-analysis, understanding of the labor market and setting of desired conditions, job searching, creation of application documents, interviews).
2) Clarification and explanation of assistance offered by Hellowork at each stage of the flow in 1).
3) Explanation on ways of receiving assistance given in 2). (A method whereby discussion is made to specify necessary assistance at the counseling desk, and a method whereby assistance is provided upon the request of job seekers); and on where to apply for assistance if job seekers have such requests.
4) Explanation on how to check job opening sheets, how to search and select vacancies and so forth (except for those who already have had a Hellowork card issued).
5) Issuance of an application form for job searching, and explanation on how to fill in the form (except for those who already have had a Hellowork card issued).

(iii) Determination of the nature of assistance to be provided, and acceptance of application for assistance in job-seeking activities, or creation of a serial number for individual job seekers.
· Confirmation of conditions requested, and hearing to make conditions rich and flexible and so forth.
1) Cases where any problems are already detected in counseling and discussions are held concerning desired conditions for jobs
2) Cases where job seekers have some requests concerning assistance after completing the process from steps 1) to 4).
3) Cases where job seekers have no particular problems, and wish to start their search and apply for job openings.

<Outplacement services>

Assistance services to solve problems <asssitance services>

acceptance of revisits (second time and onwards begins with this stage)

· Confirmation of knowledge required for job applications: CV, work experience record, application documents, interviews, and so forth (compulsory stage - the timing of confirmation is flexible).

· Selection of job openings
· Job placement services
Selection of job openings by job seekers themselves
(Use of self-service searching machine)
Assistance for the selection of job openings
Confirming the aptitude of job seekers for openings chosen
Contact to firms with job openings
Job introduction via phone, mail, etc.
Job introduction by summoning job seekers
Management of job openings chosen
Group Interviews
Opening of job seekers' information
Job introduction upon request
Individual activites to search for job openings

Cases where some problems have arisen with job seekers while selecting job openings: e.g., a job seeker is unable to select vacancies suitable for his or her work experience or other factors. or a job seeker fails to pass any of the examinations listed in the right-hand column.

Counseling to find the reason for the inability to select job openings suitable for aptitude.

Problem exists: seminar, personal guidance, etc.

· Checking the enthusiasm and common sense in society

Problem exists: personal guidance, seminar, books, etc.

· Checking to see if there are any psychological problems

Problem exists: counselling (hearing, etc.)

· Checking on the depth of self-analysis

Problem exists: personal counseling, seminar, giving tasks, etc.

· Checking whether the conditions desired are realistic.

Problem exists: personal counseling, seminar, instruction to attend lessons to learn the correct way of job searching, etc.

· Specific preparation to apply for jobs: Correction of CVs and work experience record, collection of corporate information, mock interviews, etc.

· Understanding of the results

Counseling to clarify necessary assistance based on the reasons of failure in getting job.

Labor market analysis based on discussions concerning conditions provided when job seekers are promised jobs

Successfully find employment

Unable to find employment

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, "Guidelines for General Job Placement Placement," p.18.

"The Career Consciousness among Youth and Career Development Support: A Study Focusing on University Students[1]"

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1. Introduction

The problem of career decision among Japanese university students has become increasingly serious in recent years. The job placement rate for university students who graduated in March 2005 was 59.7%. The figure shows a sign of improvement, but it still remains at a low level. Moreover, 17.8% of them did not find employment or did not have any plan to receive further education at the time of graduation. In other words, roughly one out of every five students is facing graduation without having any future plans. The career decision problem goes beyond the time of graduation. According to a study by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the proportion of new university graduates hired as regular employees who quit their job within the first three years has been staying high at around 30% since 1995. About 30% of those students who manage to find a job will quit it within the first three years, and this situation presents another serious problem.

Behind these problems is the fact that the overall opportunities for new university graduates have been diminishing amidst a wave of employment adjustments carried out by companies in response to the prolonged recession. Even if young people manage to secure employment in the difficult job market, it has also been pointed out that few professional positions now offer them a sense of personal growth or professional fulfillment (Genda, 2001). There is also the problem of an oversupply of university graduates. According to the *School Basic Survey*, the ratio of those who enter university or junior college reached an historic high of 51.5 % in 2005. The increase in university entrants has created a glut of university graduates causing an increasing number of students to be squeezed out of the regular recruitment path for university

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graduates. Under such circumstances, university students can no longer make career choices as smoothly as they once did in the past.

However, the inability or unwillingness of young people to work cannot be attributed entirely to these environmental factors. As many researchers point out, the psychological characteristics of young people, such as immature career consciousness and lack of pro-activeness, are also linked to the problem. In other words, the mentalities and attitudes characterizing today's Japanese youth, such as inability to relate to society in a proactive manner and tendency to equate personal interest with career, seem to lie at the base of the problem of career indecision. Bearing the theoretical considerations above in mind, this article will examine the factors hindering the career decisions of young people from a psychological perspective and explore the direction of career assistance toward resolution of the problem.

2. Career Consciousness among Japanese Youth: Recent Trends and Analysis

Through the ages, career choice has always been a challenging problem, and young people have tried to overcome the problem through various efforts. In Japan recently, however, there is a widely shared concern that young people have a weak sense of career consciousness and underdeveloped attitudes toward work. Such concern also applies to the highly educated, and many adults criticize what they see as the underdeveloped career consciousness of university students. It is suggested that the career consciousness of young people today is marked by the following tendencies: "*tekishoku shinko* (belief in the idea of a perfect vocation)," "*ukemi* (passivity)," and "*yaritaikoto shiko* (inclination toward personal interests)." Do young people today really have such career consciousness?   Moreover, does such career consciousness really contribute to the problem of career indecision? This article will address these questions based on the results of a survey.

The survey targeted 405 university students, 62 junior college students, and 121 vocational school students without any work experience as a regular employee. They were all Japanese nationals. The male/female breakdown was 352/333 (2 unspecified), and their average age was 19.66 (SD = 1.05). The questionnaire for evaluating career consciousness consisted of 38 items. Respondents were asked to give a score for each item using a five-point rating scale ("Completely Agree/5 points" – "Completely Disagree/1 point"). Table 1

shows the lower structure of their career consciousness derived by a factor analysis. Let us examine the characteristics of their career consciousness by each factor.

Table 1: Results of Factor Analysis on Career Attitudes of the Japanese Youth

	I	II	III	IV	Mean	(SD)
I. Career Indecision (α=.93)						
1. I cannot make a decision about my future	.91	-.05	.05	-.01	2.60	(1.16)
2. I cannot decide what my goal should be	.91	-.10	.01	-.02	2.84	(1.20)
3. I do not know which occupation I should choose	.90	-.01	.06	.02	2.80	(1.24)
4. I do not know what I want to do clearly	.84	-.01	.02	-.07	2.65	(1.24)
5. I need more time before I make a career decision	.79	-.08	.17	.00	3.47	(1.12)
6. I cannot have any outlook on my career	.78	-.10	-.01	.04	3.04	(1.05)
7. I do not know what type of occupation I am suited for	.77	-.07	-.07	.06	2.99	(1.07)
8. I cannot have a future goal	.69	.14	-.08	-.03	2.49	(1.15)
9. I have not been able to start working toward my future occupation	.65	.09	.03	.07	3.12	(1.16)
10. I want to postpone choosing a career if I could	.48	.16	.05	.10	2.82	(1.21)
II. Passivity (α=.87)						
11. I can think about my future when that time comes	-.07	.85	.01	.04	1.94	(0.89)
12. There is no use in worrying about the future from now	-.10	.74	.14	-.04	2.04	(0.99)
13. I believe that my future will be fine somehow	-.05	.70	.07	.10	2.64	(1.16)
14. I believe that my future career will be fine somehow	-.12	.68	.20	-.05	2.45	(1.09)
15. How my future will turn out is contingent upon circumstances	.04	.65	.07	.09	2.71	(1.11)
16. I try not to think much about my future	.10	.62	-.05	.06	2.19	(1.02)
17. I do not think about taking any special actions for my future	.06	.61	-.10	-.04	2.16	(0.92)
18. It is a nuisance to take special actions now for my future	.19	.51	-.17	.16	2.32	(1.06)
19. I do not have any future vision	.32	.48	-.02	-.13	2.15	(1.03)
III. *Tekishoku Shinko* (α=.82)						
20. I have a feeling that I will encounter some big chance in the future	.08	.03	.91	-.12	3.50	(1.04)
21. I might come under the spotlight for some reason in the future	.07	.04	.87	-.09	3.34	(1.04)
22. I believe that I have a talent I am still unaware of	.17	-.08	.75	-.07	3.60	(1.01)
23. I am thinking of accomplishing something big in the future	-.04	-.15	.55	.12	3.47	(1.11)
24. I will find a good job someday	.04	.41	.51	.04	2.89	(1.03)
25. I will encounter a work which will make me say "This is it"	.01	.26	.50	.09	3.29	(1.03)
26. I feel that my dream will come true if I go at with determination	-.09	.07	.48	-.01	3.23	(1.12)
27. I have an ambition to realize my personal goal	-.15	-.26	.45	.13	4.02	(0.87)
28. I can think about what to do then if my dream does not come true	-.06	.32	.37	.16	3.41	(1.10)

	I	II	III	IV	Mean	(SD)
IV. *Yaritaikoto Shiko* (α=.82)						
29. I want to be in an environment where I can do what I want to do	.13	-.21	-.10	.76	4.23	(0.73)
30. I just want to do only the things I like	.04	.19	-.12	.68	3.33	(1.04)
31. I want to live a free lifestyle without being constrained too much	.11	.18	-.18	.67	3.79	(0.85)
32. I want to value my time and world	-.03	.08	.04	.61	3.64	(0.91)
33. I want to make a career out of what I like	-.01	-.20	.08	.54	4.19	(0.79)
34. It is my life so I think I should live it the way I want to	.03	.14	.03	.52	3.63	(1.00)
35. I give the top priority to my personal goal in my career decision	-.07	-.09	.12	.52	3.89	(0.88)
36. I want to be very uncompromising about my personal goal	-.13	-.07	.20	.51	3.84	(0.89)
37. I want to maintain my character in doing my job	.04	-.20	.09	.50	4.07	(0.76)
38. I don't have to do the things I don't want to do	-.07	.22	-.01	.32	2.73	(0.94)
Eigenvalues	9.55	4.16	2.56	1.73		
Mean	2.88	2.29	3.42	3.73		
(SD)	(0.91)	(0.73)	(0.67)	(0.54)		
Factor correlation	1.00					
	.52	1.00				
	-.43	-.33	1.00			
	-.22	-.21	.49	1.00		

2.1 Career Indecision

Factor I is career indecision, which is a tendency to be unable or unwilling to make a decision about the future career. Finding a job is a decision based on economic and social considerations. In contrast, Factor I is concerned with measuring the psychological dimensions of decision-making. It is measured by ten variables, and the overall mean was 2.88 (SD=0.91), a figure slightly below the theoretical median of 3.00. Variables for assessing how the respondent needs time before making a decision, such as "5. I need more time before I make a career decision" or "9. I have not been able to start working toward my future occupation" tended to have a high mean score. In contrast, variables assessing extremely negative states of the respondent, such as "4. I am not certain about what I want to do" or "8. I cannot have a future goal" had a low mean score. The indecisiveness of the respondents, therefore, can be interpreted as a tendency to procrastinate and require time before making a decision rather than a fundamental inability or refusal to make a decision.

2.2 Passivity

Factor II is passivity. Students with passive attitudes will not treat career choice as their own problem while entertaining such thoughts as "My future

will be okay somehow" or "There is no use in worrying about the future." A survey by the Japan Institute of Labour[2] (2000) on *freeter*[3] also collected many responses reflecting the passive career attitudes of *freeter*. Students with passive attitudes toward the future cannot be expected to explore, contemplate, or plan their future career, and hence they end up distancing themselves from career decision. Nine variables were used for measuring passivity. The overall mean was 2.29 (SD = 0.73), which was far below the median. In other words, it is not that the respondents have decided not to take any action while entertaining highly optimistic and nonchalant attitudes toward their career. In particular, the mean for "11. I can think about my future when the time comes" was 1.94, and the mean for "12. There is no use in worrying about the future now" was 2.04. They both had a very low mean score. As these figures clearly show the students are far from being indifferent toward their career or optimistically leaving everything to fate. Rather the unexpectedly low scores seem to signify how uncertain and concerned they are about their future.

2.3 *Tekishoku Shinko* (Belief in the Idea of Perfect Vocation)

Factor III, *tekishoku shinko*, was measured by nine variables. Those with this tendency will wait for an encounter with the perfect vocation while entertaining hope and optimism about their future and believing that they will somehow find a suitable job and their natural calling. While such a tendency among the youth should not be dismissed altogether, it is true that many students become incapable of bridging the gap between their idea and reality because they have too much faith in the idea of finding the perfect vocation. Such students will end up overlooking job advertisements right under their nose, becoming unable to consider alternatives, or ceasing their job search altogether if they cannot have their first-choice or second-choice jobs (Tsubaki, 2002).

Moreover, believing in the idea of a perfect vocation excessively can also cause university graduates to quit their current job prematurely because they feel that their job is not the right fit and believe that they will be able to find a more fulfilling vocation. Among the nine variables for measuring *tekishoku*

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[2] Currently, the Japan Institute of Labour Policy and Training.
[3] Young people between the ages of 15 and 34 (excluding students and housewives) who are working as part-time workers or temporary workers (including dispatched workers) or who are unemployed but willing to work.

shinko, "24. I will find a good job someday" was the only one which received a mean below the median of 3.00. The overall mean was 3.42 (SD = 0.67). Such results indicate that a substantial portion of the students believe they will be able to encounter a job that is a perfect fit some day. "27. I have the ambition to realize my personal goals" received a very high score of 4.02, followed by 3.60 of "22. I believe that I have a talent I am still unaware of." The results clearly indicate a tendency among the students to be fixated on something that is special.

2.4 *Yaritaikoto Shiko* (Inclination toward Personal Interests)

Factor IV, *yaritaikoto shiko*, is a tendency to link career with favorite activities or personal interests. This tendency is often discussed in studies on *freeter* (Shimomura, 2002 and Aratani, 2004). In the survey by the Japan Institute of Labour cited above, respondents frequently made such comments as "I believe everything is fine as long as I am doing what I enjoy," "I do not care whether I am a *freeter* or regular employee as long as I can do the kind of work I like," or "I will do what I enjoy regardless of what others might think." *Yaritaikoto shiko* seems to characterize the career attitude of young people who work as *freeter* in particular. *Yaritaikoto shiko* was measured by ten variables, and nine of them received a mean above 3.00, the median. The overall mean was 3.37 (SD = 0.54), a very high figure. Moreover, "33. I want to make a career out of what I like," "29. I want to be in an environment where I can do what I want to do," and "37. I want to maintain my character in doing my job" all had a mean that was above 4.00. Such inclination conceptually resembles "privatism" which is cited as the social consciousness widely shared among the Japanese youth today (Kuse et al., 1988). It reflects their tendency to want to fill their life, including their career, with what they enjoy or what suits their sensibility.

2.5 Passivity, *Tekishoku Shinko*, and *Yaritaikoto Shiko*: Their Links with Career Indecision

Do the career attitudes which are said to characterize today's youth, such as passivity, *tekishoku shinko*, and *yaritaikoto shiko* really contribute to career indecision? This section will address this question. Figure 1 shows the results of a path analysis which treated the three career attitudes (passivity, *tekishoku shinko*, and *yaritaikoto shiko*) as independent variables and career indecision

as a dependent variable. What do the results indicate? *Yaritaikoto shiko* did not show any statistically significant path (male   =-.032, ns; female   =-.033, ns) or demonstrate either negative or positive influence on career indecision. It seems that linking career with personal interests per se does not lead to career indecision. Many studies in Japan suggest that the simplistic attitude of linking personal interests with career leads to career indecision, but the results of this analysis do not substantiate such a direct correlation between the two. Shimomura (2002) points out that an inclination toward doing what one enjoys characterizes the career consciousness of *freeter* and also notes that such an attitude is widely supported by half of the non-*freeter* of the same age group. In other words, the tendency to link career with personal interests is widely shared among the youth in Japan, and it does not necessarily lead to career indecision.
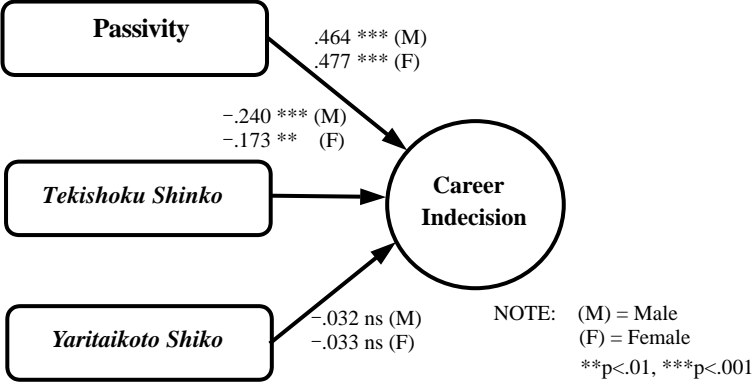
Figure 1. Relationships between Passivity, *Tekishoku Shinko* (Belief in the Idea of Perfect Vocation) and *Yaritaikoto Shiko* (Inclination toward Personal Interest) and Career Indecision.

Let us look at *tekishioku shiko*, a belief in the idea of being able to encounter the perfect vocation someday. Interestingly, it showed a negative path (male   = -.240, p<.001; female   = -.173, p<.01), and it was functioning as a constraining factor on career indecision. Why did such results come about? Both *tekishoku shinko* and career indecision were measured by a psychological indicator. *Tekishoku shinko* is a positive outlook in which one expects to encounter some perfect vocation in the future. Career indecision is a negative psychological state in which one is unable to make any decision, know what to do, and set any goals. Therefore, it is not too difficult to

understand the fact that there is a negative correlation between the two. In other words, those who have a positive future outlook tend to score low on career indecision while those who cannot entertain such an outlook tend to score high. Based on these results, it can be concluded that *tekishoku shinko* is functioning as a constraining factor on the psychological indecision among the youth rather than having a negative influence on their career decision.

Which of the career attitudes does contribute to psychological career indecision then? In the present analysis, "passivity" showed a positive path (male   = .464, p< .001; female   = .477, p< .001). Having a passive attitude such as "Things will work themselves out," "Things are all up to the circumstances of that moment," and "There is no point in worrying" leads to indecisiveness. Having a passive career attitude, that is, refusing to engage the problem of career decision proactively and treating it as something psychologically and temporally distant, has a high potential of leading to career indecision. Students cannot expect to see any change, let alone find a job, if they decide to be passive and do not take any action in the face of a difficult job market. In order to change the passive attitudes of young people, we need career education that will encourage young people to engage career development as their own issue in a proactive manner.

3. Implementing Career Education Programs and Evaluating Their Effectiveness

Career assistance for university students in Japan has been mostly provided by university job placement sections (*shushoku-ka*). It has focused mostly on the practical aspects of job search such as providing job postings, holding job-search seminars, and providing tips on how to handle interviews and fill out job applications. Lately, however, schools are making efforts to support individual career development at an early stage instead of just assisting student job search right before graduation. In addition to the traditional educational and research functions, facilitating the school-to-work transition of students is becoming an increasingly important function of universities.

However, career assistance programs offered at many schools are often a mere amalgam of disparate activities because Japanese universities have not sufficiently accumulated research data on career education. Some schools have imported career counseling theories and techniques from the United States, but it has been pointed out that their career assistance programs are not functioning

effectively because programs are being introduced without any principles or conceptual underpinnings (Watanabe and Herr, 2001). In addition, methods for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of career education programs are yet to be developed. In the first place, a career is something each individual creates and strives for. There is no single right answer or textbook solution concerning career, and the effects and goals of career education are multiple. At the same time, however, career education should accomplish more than self-satisfaction for those who provide it. It is necessary to develop guidelines for evaluating and improving career education efforts at universities and a basic system for sharing information about the goals and problems in implementing programs. The next section will discuss a career education program introduced in a small class at a university. The goal of the program was to raise the awareness of students about career decision by having them engage the three basic elements of career choice.

3.1 Implementation of the Program

The program focused on the three elements of career choice: 1) self-understanding, 2) understanding of the professional world, and 3) summary and review (　decision-making). Twenty-three third-year university students participated in the program. The outline of the program is shown in Table 2.

3.2 Self-efficacy and Outcome Expectations

How does participation in such programs change students? In this study, pre-program and post-program changes in self-efficacy and outcome expectations of the participants were measured as indicators for evaluating effects of career education programs. Self-efficacy is an individual's self-assessment about his or her capabilities to take the actions necessary for accomplishing a given goal (Bandura, 1977). It has been pointed out that self-efficacy can influence the actions of individuals in many ways. It can influence how much effort individuals are willing to make, which areas individuals will choose to invest their efforts in, and how resilient individuals will be in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1995). Starting with Urakami (1993), who focused on the concept of "career decision-making self-efficacy," many other researchers have also been producing research using the concept of self-efficacy in the career development research field in Japan. An outcome expectation is a personal projection which

Table 2: Overview of the Career Education Program

Session 1	"Goals and Program Outline"
	Approaches to career are introduced and the program is outlined to students in order to clarify the goals of the program.
Session 2	"Gender Equal Society"
	Students study the theme of "gender equal society" by exploring such topics as the difference between sexual (biological) and gender (psychological and social) differences, traditional gender roles and their changes, and diverse ways of living and working.
Session 3	"Self-Understanding 1"
	Students take the Vocational Preference Inventory（Japan Institute of Labour）test and interpret test results.
Session 4	"Self-Understanding 2"
	Students learn about representative career development theories such as Super (1957), Holland (1985), Lent, Brown & Hackett (1994, 1996) and interpret VPI test results based on these theories.
Session 5	"Understanding the Professional World 1"
	Student presentations:　Group A on "career paths and career choices of university students" and Group B on "*freeter*".
Session 6	"Understanding the Professional World 2"
	Student presentations: Group C on "changes in the professional world" and Group D on "gender equal society".
Session 7	"Summary and Review"
	Students study the social cognitive theory on school-work transition (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994) and complete a worksheet exercise for reviewing and reinterpreting their understanding of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and process of how occupational interest develops and changes

Note: Each session is 90 minute-long

an individual holds about the outcome of a given action (Bandura, 1977). In conjunction with self-efficacy, outcome expectations are considered to have a positive influence on motivations and actions. This study focused on two of the three elements of career choice, self-understanding and understanding of the professional world, and measured the changes in self-efficacy and outcome expectations in relation to the two elements.

3.3 Changes in Self-efficacy and Outcome Expectations

This study compared pre-program and post　program changes in self-efficacy and outcome expectations of students by using the t-test. Self-efficacy showed a significant increase in score in relation to both self-understanding (from 3.17 to 3.77) and understanding of the professional world (from 3.32 to 3.55) [Figure 2]. By evaluating these figures in connection with the content of the

program, it can be concluded that the program boosted the confidence of participants in handling these two aspects of career decision. By taking the VPI (Vocational Preference Inventory) and analyzing the session 3 and 4 of the program, the students were able to experience a sense of personal accomplishment that they had deepened their self-understanding by exploring their personal interests. Luzzo and Day (1999) also confirm that taking the VPI and analyzing its results can boost self-efficacy. The very act of engaging in exercises related to career decision can generate a sense of accomplishment among students that they have completed a task and boost their self-efficacy. The fifth and sixth sessions consisted of group presentations by students on the workings of the professional world. The students experienced a sense of accomplishment by gathering and organizing career-related information which in turn positively influenced their self-efficacy about their abilities to understand the professional world. The review worksheet exercise implemented in the seventh session probably had the effect of allowing the students to reinterpret their experiences (Lent, Hackett, and Brown, 1999), and this process brought about a change in their self-efficacy.

In contrast, outcome expectations did not show any significant change in score. It was not that the program consciously provided the students with positive information in order to positively influence their outcome expectations. On the contrary, a significant portion of the students who participated in the program were probably forced to look at the hard reality by beginning to explore and think about the professional world. Especially in the student presentations in the fifth and sixth sessions, they discussed such issues as the decline in the job placement rate, the pre-graduation job offer rate for Japanese university students, the trend among companies to set highly selective recruitment standards, the rise of meritocracy, and the fluid employment market. In short, the program offered a significant amount of information that was discouraging for students who were about to enter the professional world. This is perhaps why participation in the program did not boost their outcome expectations while it was able to enhance their self-efficacy in relation to self-understanding and understanding of the professional world. As pointed out by McWhirter, Rasheed, and Crothers (2000), however, the purpose of career education is to guide students so that they will be able to develop a realistic career plan, not to raise their outcome expectations. In this sense, the overall effectiveness of the program should not be negated by the fact that the program

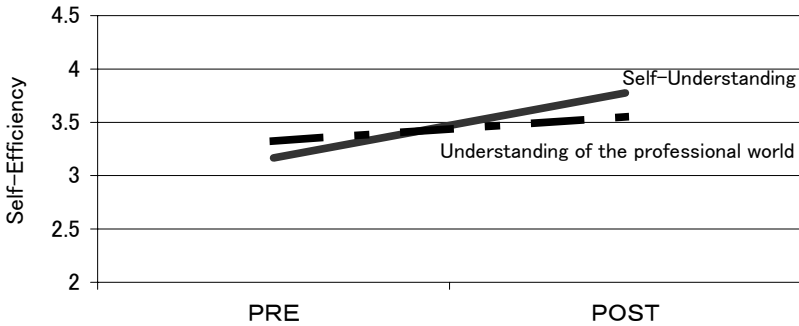did not result in an increase in the score of outcome expectations.

Figure 2   Pre-program and post-program changes in self-efficiency

3.4 Role of the Program

Let's see how the kind of career education discussed in this study can be characterized in relation to the other numerous career support program. The program was based on a method in which the instructor guided students through prepared steps rather than that of providing individual counseling. Another unique feature of the program is its utilization of group dynamics through group activities where students exchange opinions and stimulate one another. The program, in short, fits the conceptual framework of career education discussed by Law (1996).

The overall purpose of the program is to provide students who have never considered their future and career seriously and carefully before with opportunities to contemplate their past and future, to direct their attention to the professional world, and deepen their understanding about career development by linking self-understanding and knowledge of the professional world. Given the above intents of the program, it should be utilized as an orientation targeting students who still have a significant psychological and temporal distance from career decision such as recent university entrants. By approaching such students at an early stage, universities can offer them opportunities to think about the meaning of studying at the university level and how they should spend their four years at university in addition to the problem of career decision. An increasing number of universities and junior colleges are in fact integrating career education into their orientation programs for new

students and seeking to foster career consciousness among them at an early stage before providing support at the job search stage. By offering systematic career education which targets all student groups at an early stage, universities can prevent students from polarizing into one group who are able to make successful career choice and another who are not much of the support currently offered by university job placement sections, such as job search seminars, internships, counseling, and other support programs, require voluntary participation by students. Under such circumstances, students are likely to divide into those who can act proactively and those who do not participate in programs at all. As pointed out by Kosugi (2001), there has been an increase in university students who do not engage in job search activities in recent years, and many of them end up without a job or secure regular employment because of their inaction. In order to provide support for these students, it is hoped that universities will integrate career education into regular curriculums and reach out to all types of students

4. Conclusion

The present study has addressed the problem of career decision among Japanese youth and examined the psychological factors behind the problem. It has reached the following conclusions. Young people today tend to believe that they will encounter something that is right for them in the future and desire a career which will allow them to do what they enjoy and like doing. These tendencies should not be rejected immediately as they do not contribute to psychological career indecision. However, there is no guarantee that that all young people can find their natural calling to enjoy self-realization or find an occupation of their choice. Students with such tendencies perhaps will be unable to make a successful transition to the professional world when they continue to make misguided efforts, fail to take necessary actions for finding positions that suit them, or do not establish some middle ground between their career and what they enjoy doing. It is important to encourage students to envision a career path in which they first establish themselves as a member of the professional world and only then begin exploring or creating their perfect occupation and new personal interests while trying to establish some middle ground between their given professional roles and personal goals and values.

The second half of the essay discussed a career education program for university students. The program broke down the process of career decision

into three components (self-understanding, understanding of the professional world, and summary and review), and seven sessions were held. By participating in the program, students were able to experience a sense of personal accomplishment and transform their self-efficacy in a positive fashion. In summation, providing students who have never engaged their future and career with a sense of immediacy with opportunities to understand themselves, pay attention to the professional world, and integrate their self-understanding and understanding of the professional world can positively influence their consciousness and attitudes.

Until recently, the majority of Japanese university graduates followed a linear career path. They were recruited directly from universities at once to work under the system of lifetime employment. The main aim of career assistance was to help students find jobs at corporations, and career development after graduation was left to training programs provided by corporations. Today, however, about 30% of university graduates quit their job within the first three years, and finding employment at a corporation is no longer the goal of career decision. In other words, even if universities match students with stable jobs, many of them will either leave or switch jobs. Moreover, more and more companies are shifting from the traditional pattern of recruiting new university graduates at once to mid-career recruitment in recent years (Recruit Works Institute, 2004). In the coming years, it will not be sufficient for university students to simply find a job through standard job search activities before graduation, and they will be required to have the capabilities necessary to develop their career on their own. In supporting the career decision of students, universities must foster the capabilities that young people will need for developing their career – capabilities to understand themselves, understand the professional world, and make decisions on their own – instead of focusing on securing employment at corporations for students.

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Problems in Career Services at Japanese Universities: A Case Study of Initiatives at Kansai University

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Introduction

Career services for students at Japanese universities have been undergoing major changes, particularly in the past several years. Universities have different ideas about career services, but there are similarities among the changes that are taking place at many universities, including Kansai University. Firstly, the main unit for providing career services is now referred to as the "career section" instead of the "job placement section" at many universities. Secondly, universities are targeting students in lower grades and are providing career services at an early stage. Thirdly, universities are shifting their focus from the support of student job search activities to assistance in career development. Fourthly, universities are developing career education curriculums, and career-related issues are discussed in class. These changes are summarized in Table 1.

Career assistance primarily used to be provided by job placement sections that offered information and assistance for job search activities, with the aim of matching targeted students in the third year or above with jobs. Nowadays, universities are providing career development assistance to students in their first year and above mainly through career centers. These centers cooperate with faculty members to enable students to independently make decisions about their future career and lifestyle. These changes indicate how Japanese universities are beginning to emphasize the concept of careers. It is often pointed out that behind this shift are problems related to school-to-work transition among youth, such as the increase in *freeter* and school graduates who quit their jobs prematurely or fail to find employment altogether (Kawasaki, 2005a). Recently, the concept of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is becoming popular and, as pointed out by Hirai (2005), we are entering an era in which universities are also required to fulfill their social responsibilities, such as improving career services. Universities are the final stage of education and thus have an important mission to nurture and create talented individuals who can contribute to society throughout the entire educational process (Kawasaki, 2005b).

Table 1: Changes in Career Services at Japanese Universities

	PAST	PRESENT
MAIN BODY FOR PROVIDING SERVICES	Job placement section	Career center
TARGET GROUP	Students in the third year and above	Students in the first year and above
SERVICES	Job search assistance	Career development assistance
COOPERATION WITH FACULTY MEMBERS	None	Yes

The degree of improvement in career services should not be measured solely by an increase in the job placement rate. Some private universities are seeking to improve career services as part of their business strategy. However, it is necessary to foster the ability of individual students to independently develop their career and support their efforts towards realization of their goals. Even though the concept of careers has started to be emphasized in Japan, it has yet to be fully understood. At some universities, career education consists of courses aimed at providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for job search activities. Although this type of assistance is necessary, what is really important for universities in providing career services is to consider how they can shape student's attitudes towards the concepts of work and career, as well as foster a "career consciousness".

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science and Technology published a report for promoting career education in 2004, and this year is hence referred to as the "First Year of Career Education." The report defined career education as "education that supports the career development of each student based on the concept of careers, and fosters the determination, attitude and capabilities necessary for individual students to develop their career" (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science and Technology, 2004). Characterizing career education more directly as "education fostering each student's concept of work and career," the report put forth a policy of promoting systematic and continuous career education through elementary, junior and senior high schools. Unfortunately, there are many problems surrounding career education. Only recently, Japanese schools began to offer career services and career education based on the concept of careers, and as a result students currently enter universities without having received any

career-based guidance and training in primary and secondary education. Universities are now offering various types of support under the rubric of career services, and this is creating some confusion.

This essay will address the current status and problems of career services at Japanese universities through a case study of how career education is practiced at Kansai University. The phrase "career services" was created in the Untied States, and it is used in place of the phrase "career guidance." (Watanabe and Herr, 2001) This essay refers to career guidance systems at universities, including career-based services and education courses offered by career offices.

1. V-Step Procedure for Career Assistance

Kansai University is a private school that was founded in 1886 originally as a law school. It was later granted status as a university in 1926. In November 2006 the university will celebrate the 120th anniversary since its foundation. Over the years it has evolved into a comprehensive university featuring seven departments (Faculty of Law, Faculty of Letters, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Faculty of Sociology, Faculty of Informatics, and Faculty of Engineering), the Institute of Foreign Language Education and Research, and eight graduate school departments. Two professional schools have been established recently. The School of Law was established in 2004, and the School of Accountancy was established in April 2006. 28,578 students(26,675 undergraduates and 1,903 graduate students) are enrolled in the school as of May 1, 2005.

Kansai University has developed a career education system called the "V-Step Procedure for Career Support" (Table 2). The scope of the program extends beyond just providing support for finding employment; the program seeks to encourage the all-round personal growth of students throughout their school life.

The program is a system of career services that integrates the regular school curriculum and extracurricular educational programs offered by the career center. The program seeks to promote the career development of each student and create useful members of society.

Table 2: V-Step Procedure for Career Assistance

STEP I (spring of the first year)	STEP II (fall of the first year-the second year)	STEP III (spring and summer of the third year)	STEP IV (fall of the third year)	STEPV (the third- the fourth year)
Promotion of Career Consciousness	Career Education	Pre-internship Orientation & Summer Internship	Post-internship Program	Invitation to Job searches
Pre-internship Education		Core Program	Post-internship Education	
Career Counseling				

STEP I "Promotion of Career Consciousness" involves distribution of the "Career Development Booklet" during matriculation in order to provide basic guidance on career choice, finding employment and skill development. The purpose of the booklet is to encourage students to contemplate their future career and lifestyle. In April and May, the first step program called "Basic Career Planning Seminar Series" will be held. The series consists of four sessions – "Know Your Vocational Interest and Aptitude," "Know the World of Work," "Know Your Personality," and "Develop Your Career Plan" – which will be held multiple times. In 2005, approximately 4,500 students participated in this seminar. STEP I aims to raise the students' awareness of future career choices at a very early stage following matriculation.

STEP II "Career Education" is a program that is integrated into the regular curriculum. Three courses have been created in order to foster student awareness about the concept of work and career, and foster the students' ability to develop plans concerning "working and living." In 2005, 205 students attended these three courses. .

STEP III and IV consist of internship programs. Various types of internships are offered; however they can be roughly divided into business internships and school internships. Most business internships provide third year students with practical training at companies and various organizations over a period of two weeks or so during the summer break. In 2004, 721 students participated in internships at 349 organizations. Of these, 406 were business internships at 226 organizations, and 315 were school internships at 123 elementary, junior and senior high schools. As for 2005, 692 students have participated in internships (excluding the pre-internship program which is

scheduled to be implemented) at 344 organizations so far. STEP III and IV consist of pre- and post-internship orientation and practical training. The pre-internship orientation offers four units of instruction on self-analysis, industry research, business etiquettes and communication. The post-internship orientation includes a presentation on internship experience and a seminar to encourage students to further develop the "new awareness" that they experience about themselves and the concept of work and career through such internships. In order to help students reach this awareness and utilize it in their career planning, the post-internship orientation of STEP III and IV as well as the career education courses and seminar of STEP I and II are important. The key is to develop a systematic program.

Building on the previous steps of promotion of career awareness, practical training and the review of results, STEP V "Invitation to Job Search" offers a variety of job-search assistance programs to help students realize their individual goal. There are nearly 200 various programs for supporting student job search activities offered on a continual basis, including career choice guidance programs, orientations on the civil service examination and teacher examination, and various thematic sessions. On campus job fairs are organized each year by inviting to campus representatives from nearly 1,000 companies.

Career counseling is being offered in conjunction with these steps. At Kansai University, six professional counselors provide career counseling services at the "Career Design Office", which was established in 2001. During 2004, about 3,156 students visited the office to browse through information, participate in advisory sessions for those wishing to pursue a career in teaching, or participate in small group seminars. Some 273 students received approximately 323 sessions of career counseling.

The V-step Procedure for Career Support has some unique features. First, the program is systematically designed to progress in accordance with the school year of students. Internship training is the core program. STEP I and II serve broadly as pre-internship education, while STEP IV and V provide post-internship career education. Second, while the career center assumes a leadership role in running the program, it does so through cooperation with the faculty members. Third, the program provides individualized support by linking career counseling with each step of the program to ensure that students can advance through them independently. Incidentally, the author has been serving as the director of career development at the university since 2001, and

has been involved in the career services and career counseling provided in STEP I–IV of the program. The section below presents a more detailed discussion of career education, internship programs, and career counseling, which are the key elements of career services. The current status and problems of career services at Japanese universities will also be addressed through comparing and contrasting the efforts of other universities with that of Kansai University,

2. Career Education

Today, we are entering an era in which "individuals" matter (Kawasaki, 2004). In the workplace world, individuals have to distinguish themselves by their own abilities, personal interests and values. In order to participate in such a world, it is necessary for students to be able to independently plan their career and personal life. Kansai University is providing career education courses with the goal of helping students acquire "life skills" – the ability to plan their future, collect information, make decisions and develop human relationships – as well as developing their own concept of work and career. Table 3 provides an overview of the courses on offer.

"Career Design I" seeks to establish a foundation for career planning and providing students with opportunities to examine their approach towards career and life. The goal of "Career Design II" is to improve the ability of students to collect and utilize information, further their understanding of industries, occupations, and companies, and expand their "world of work." "Career Design III" aims to help students improve their ability to design and plan a career based on an understanding of themselves, as well as improve their self-presentation skills and prepare them for future job search activities.

Faculties and career counselors of the "Career Design Office" serve as instructors for these courses, with three instructors assigned to each course. By engaging in course assignments, including essay writing, presentations, group discussions, self-assessment exercises, communication skills training and various group exercises, students have many opportunities to analyze their relationship with society and contemplate their future as they deepen their understanding of themselves and society.

The issue for career services at Kansai University is how to develop a mechanism to increase the number of students who enroll in career education

Table 3: "Career Education Courses"

Course Title	Year	Themes
Career Design I: Working	Fall, the first year	Thinking about different styles of working Knowing the world of work Thinking about your lifestyle
Career Design II: World of Work	Spring, the second year	Knowing the occupations Knowing the industries Knowing the companies
Career Design III: My Job	Fall, the second year	Knowing yourself Expressing yourself Thinking about your future

courses. The number of students who take career education courses is not very significant due to the fact that only one department lists career education courses as a requirement. I do not believe that all students should be required to take career education courses; however, generally students with a high degree of motivation tend to take these courses. It is necessary to provide adequate academic advisory services and to reevaluate how the career education courses should be positioned within the school curriculum, in order to promote the enrollment of students who need career education courses and whose career awareness can be raised by taking such courses.

Looking at other universities, it is noted that the content of career education is diverse although the same phrase "career education" is used (Kawasaki, 2005c). On one hand, there are schools such as Kansai University where career education courses cover the entire process leading up to actual career planning. In these courses, students are encouraged to think about the meaning of work and develop their own concept of work and career based on an understanding of themselves and occupations in general. On the other hand, other schools offer the same type of job search assistance programs that traditionally have been provided job placement departments, such as industry seminars hosted by corporate representatives and workshops on how to complete job applications, under the rubric of career education. Both types of activities are necessary, and the problem is not so much whether one type is better than the other. Rather, it is the fact that different types of support activities are offered under the same rubric of "career education," and this is creating some confusion about career education. While job search-related guidance provides information on how to proceed when leaving university, career education aims to provide guidance on the process itself. In career education, it is crucial to promote career awareness within each student based on a developmental approach. There is no consensus

on what constitutes career education, and as the concept of a career is not fully understood, universities must start from building such a consensus. In order to do this, it is important for each school to hold discussions on career education involving all related parties, including both faculty members and administrative staff.

Moreover, universities have different approaches towards the assignment of instructors and operation of career education courses. Only a few schools rely on faculty members; most schools utilize external human resources in some form or another. There are four patterns in which schools use external human resources: 1) adjunct instructors are assigned specifically for career education courses 2) professionals and outside experts serve as instructors on a rotation basis 3) guest speakers are invited occasionally 4) faculty and outside experts instruct as a team (Kawasaki, 2005d). Kansai University follows the fourth pattern. In Kansai University's case, outside experts are counselors of the "Career Design Office," and the arrangement has the benefit of facilitating close cooperation among instructors. Some schools completely outsource career education courses to external experts. Even if these courses are based on an excellent curriculum, the course content and teaching methods must be adjusted to meet the needs of students at each school. In light of this, it is perhaps preferable that faculty members and administrative staff serve as coordinators, even in the case of universities that rely on external human resources.

3. Internship Programs

The core portion of the business internship program offered at the Kansai University Career Center takes place during the summer break of the third year. There are two methods for selecting candidates for these internships: screening by the school and selection by the host organizations themselves. In addition to the ordinary business internship program, there is the long-term internship program, the international internship program, and the pre-internship program. The long-term internship program targets third-year students and provides them with practical training one day a week over a period of about six months. The international internship program is maintained through cooperation with Kansai University's partner schools. The program offers either one month internships at corporations in Missouri mediated by Webster University, or two-week internships at corporations in Hawaii mediated by Kapiolani

Community College, the University of Hawaii. The pre-internship program mainly targets second-year students, and it is offered during the spring break right before they become third-year students. In addition, there are internships offered independently or mediated by companies and local government bodies, and these are referred to as external internships.

The challenges thus far for internship programs at Kansai University have been finding host organizations and keeping them throughout the pre/post-internship training. The problem of finding hosts is common among other universities, and it is particularly acute among large universities. At Kansai University, the career center has been working hard to find more hosts; however, currently only about 50-60% of those students wanting to participate in these internship programs can be matched with suitable host companies and organizations. Therefore, internship applicants are screened by the school through a series of interviews. While the screening process itself gives students a valuable opportunity to experience an interview, there are many students who do not make it to the selection process. At the same time, it would also be problematic for the school to let students become interns too easily. It is important that each student has a clear goal. "The most important thing in an internship program is to participate with a sense of purpose about what you want get out of it. I believe what each person can get out of the program in such a limited amount of time is up to that person." "Many people might think that I want to be a civil servant when they hear I am interning at a city office, but I decided to do my internship there because I wanted to find out who I am through local government work, not because I wanted to become a civil servant." These are excerpted comments from a report compiled by students who participated in internship programs, and show that these students had a very clear sense of purpose. The student who made the first comment came out of the internship with a realization of the importance of the three steps of "planning, doing, and evaluating." The other student achieved his goal of knowing himself better by finding out first-hand what he is good and not good at. These examples indicate that internships have a greater impact when students participate with a clear goal and sense of purpose. In order to maximize the effectiveness of practical training, it is important that students reexamine the "new awareness" that they discover through these internships and verbalize it in post-internship program, as well as clarify their goals through pre-internship orientation. Students seek to participate in internships

for a variety of reasons. Another important task is to improve pre- and post-internship program so that students with different goals can participate with a clear sense of purpose, find "new awareness" through practical training, and utilize the experience for planning their future career.

Now let us consider the status of internships at universities across Japan. According to a survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Technology and Science, the proportion of universities that maintain internship programs as part of their educational curriculums is increasing each year. In 2004, the proportion reached 59.0% (418 schools) (Figure1.). The most commonly targeted grade for internship programs was the third grade (75.7%), and the most common time for internships was during the summer break (82.7%). The most common duration of internships was between one to two weeks (49.8%). These figures provide us with a portrait of an average university internship program in Japan today. The total number of student interns for 2004 was 39,010. While this is an increase of 4,885 since 2003, it is by no means a large number. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare estimates that about 120,000 students participated in internships, including extracurricular ones, in 2004: however the figure does not amount to 20% of the average total number of students in one grade. There is no estimate of the total number of those students who wanted to participate in internship programs. Securing host organizations for internships is a national problem. A survey by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (2005) highlighted that internships bring some degree of benefits to host companies. Specifically, the
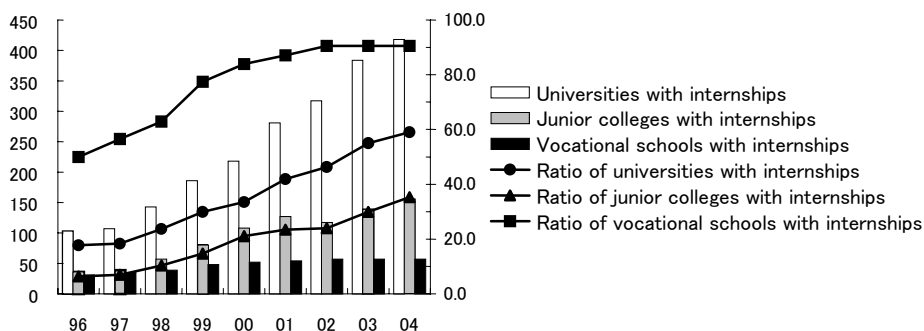

Figure 1: Number & Ratio of Schools Offering Internship Programs

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Daigakuto ni Okeru Heisei 16-nendo Intanshippu Jisshi Jyokyo Chosa Kekka*
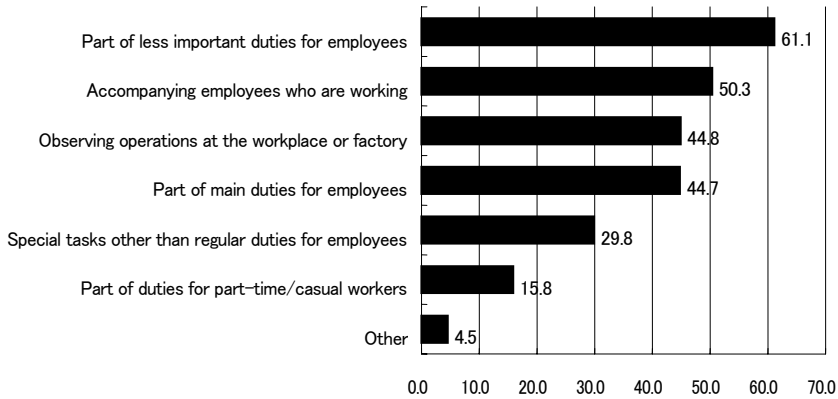
Figure 2: Duties Host Companies Assign to Student Interns

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, *Intanshippu Suishin no Tame no Chosa Kenkyu Iinkai Hokokusyo*

following benefits have been identified: 1) the growth of young employees who supervise the interns 2) an improvement in the recognition of these organizations among universities and students 3) revitalization of the organization. Therefore, universities should actively advertise these benefits.

According to the survey by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (2005), duties for interns are becoming increasingly diverse (Figure 2). Of the surveyed companies, 15.8% have interns involved in "some of the duties assigned to part-time workers." While the figure is not too high, it still raises some concern. Students often complain about the tasks they are assigned as interns, and therefore universities that provide them with these internships must accurately grasp the real nature of the duties involved.

Some of the unique types of educational internship programs are: 1) the "problem-solving type", which requires interns to propose projects 2) the "long-term type", which allows students to familiarize themselves with their duties 3) the "international type", which features a short-term study abroad program 4) the "alternation type", which requires students to alternate between internship and on campus classes (Kawasaki, 2005e). Kyoto Sangyo University has been operating a Japanese-style co-op program since 2003 in which students repeat the process of alternating between university classes and internships from the first year to the fourth. This is a program based on the

"alternation type" of internship. It is also referred to as the "Sandwich Method" and is widely recognized in Japan. The program should be highly regarded for its systematic design that enables students to make progress towards self-development and goal realization as progressively challenging tasks are assigned to them. Universities cannot expect significant effects from developing unique internship programs if these programs are merely isolated, unsystematic efforts. It is therefore necessary to effectively incorporate internships into the entire career services program covering a four-year period.

4. Career Counseling

The "Career Design Office" at Kansai University deals with a wide range of issues related to the planning of students' futures, such as graduate school applications, studying abroad and school transfers, in addition to job searches. The office offers career counseling by appointment. One session is 50 minutes per person, but it often goes over this time limit. Students who make an appointment are asked to provide detailed descriptions of any concerns they would like to discuss, along with their school life and occupations they aspire to. This process is extremely important, as verbalizing their concerns can help students to clarify their problems, and this process itself can often lead to the resolution of these problems. Many students participating in the career-based programs at Kansai University experience difficulties and anxiety as they go through the steps designed to raise career consciousness and support job search activities. The purpose of counseling is not to solve their problems and worries; rather it is to foster the independence of students so that they can find their own way and solution. Therefore, counselors in principle do not make decisions for students, although they might provide relevant information and guidance. Counseling is very effective not only in responding to the problems of individuals, but also in encouraging them to utilize their "new awareness".

Common concerns dealt with during counseling can be divided into the following groups: 1) "I don't know what I really want to do" and "I don't know which occupation I am suited to" 2) "Which preparatory school is the best for the qualifying examination that I will be taking?" and "How can I become a Japanese language teacher?" 3) "I am wavering between going to graduate school and finding a job" and "I am debating whether I should become a nursery school teacher or not." The first type involves the inability to define a specific goal, while the second concerns the inability to find

information independently. Questions in the third group stem from an inability to make decisions independently. When counseling students, I also notice a lack of communication skills, which has been widely pointed out as a major problem. If we add this problem to the above three problems, they correspond with the four skill areas that are considered necessary for students to develop through career education in elementary, middle and high school: 1) ability to make plans for the future 2) ability to utilize information 3) ability to make decisions 4) ability to develop relationships with others. These are also the skills that the career education courses at Kansai University aim to help students acquire. Students who receive counseling constitute only a portion of the entire student population, but the issues cited above probably reflect on the whole the concerns of university students of today.

The challenge for schools offering career counseling is to figure out how to employ counseling in conjunction with other methods of assistance. Counseling cannot solve every problem. For example, students who lack communication skills need to develop these skills. Kansai University offers small group seminars for improving communication skills, and counselors can recommend to students to attend. However, these seminars are not offered all the time. Moreover, seminars for developing other skills will not necessarily be available. The skills and abilities of students are developed incrementally from the time they are in elementary school. Training at university cannot develop their skills and abilities overnight. Of course, there is discussion as to what degree universities should be responsible for assisting students; however, universities need to consider possible ways to link counseling with other methods, including the use of external support groups.

5. Future Problems

The concluding section will discuss problems concerning the university career services as a whole while touching on the themes discussed in the individual sections of the essay.

5.1. Systematic Program and Learning Process

Kansai University has designed a systematic career services program by integrating career education into a broad system of career development assistance. However, systematizing the program does not guarantee that students will learn in a systematic and continuous fashion. As is illustrated by

the number of students who participate in career services programs , students take credit courses on career education or participate in internships voluntarily. Especially at large universities, the process of making career programs compulsory will no doubt be at most times a challenge. Moreover, given that one of the purposes of career services is to foster the independence and self-help of students, making participation in all career assistance programs compulsory does not necessarily solve all the problems. However, schools still need to explore methods for systematizing the learning process for students, and this is a challenge that is faced by all universities.

Not all students need career services, and even those who need them require different programs according to their level of career development. Schools should be aware that they could end up presenting too many problems for students to overcome, and as a result raise the bar of entry into the labor market too high for some students by setting up a comprehensive four-year career development program. It would be difficult to achieve this in reality; however, if possible, universities should provide career assistance programs based not on school year, but on the individual situation of each student. At the very least, they need to offer career services suited for individual students.

5.2. Cooperation with Faculty Members

Finding ways to cooperate with faculty members is a challenge faced by almost all university career centers. At Kansai University, the career center cooperates with the faculty members in both designing and operating the program; however, a more wide-ranging cooperation is needed. In principle, universities should try to provide career services through all facets of their educational activities. Primary and secondary schools offer career education across the boundaries of academic subjects without establishing specific courses or a time-frame for career education. At the university level, it is considered effective to establish a career education curriculum that becomes a base for providing career education. However, there are other opportunities for providing such education. For example, it is possible to develop communication skills through academic seminars. Similarly, it is possible to offer career services through a wide range of academic courses. To this end, all faculty members should understand the concept and role of career services, and it is important to construct an environment in which administrative staff can actively become involved in educational activities. Furthermore, it is important

for faculty members and administrative staff to cooperate with each other over a wide range of issues.

5.3. Follow-up after Job Offer

Career services, including career education, are initiatives to support a lifelong process of career development.   At many Japanese universities, the focus of career services has shifted from the support of job search activities to the assistance of career development, and career services are now offered at an earlier stage than previously. However, many career education and assistance programs run up to the time students receive a job offer. Universities are frantically trying to raise their job placement rate. Through an agreement between universities and the Japan Business Federation, Japanese companies currently start to give job offers after April 1. Those students who receive job offers at the earliest time possible receive them more than a year before the specified time to actually commence employment. This is an extremely extraordinary situation. Only new university graduates can receive a job offer one year in advance. Some of the students who have received a job offer early often start to have some doubts about whether the offer still stands, and so start a new job search in the fall. Others might decline their job offer right before graduation. Although Kansai University offers guidance for students who have received early job offers, it is by no means adequate. The time after they receive job offers is when students really need pragmatic career development assistance. The reality is that every school is overwhelmed by the task of assisting students without job offers.   However, how universities should approach students with early job offers as part of their career service intiatives will be an important issue in the future.

5.4. Evaluation of Effects

It has been only a short while since career services based on the concept of a career started in Japan, and therefore there are only a few studies that examin which career services are affecting the career development of university students, and in what way. The same can be said about career education at the primary and secondary school levels. Career development of university students is built on primary and secondary education, and it continues to evolve through a life-long process. What is the time span that should be covered by an analysis examining the effects of university career services?

This is a very difficult question, but it is a necessary one, at least to measure the effects on students while they are in school and follow up their career paths for a period of several years after graduation. Various opinions and debates are currently being presented with regards to career education and career services. However, analyses based on empirical data are also necessary in order to provide effective career services.

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Occupation Hand Book for Youth (OHBY) Profile and Use

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Introduction

Against the backdrop of the current severe employment situation, major changes in the industrial economy and its employment style and other trends in Japan over recent years, efforts to provide career and vocational guidance to the younger generation has become increasingly essential. Within this environment, occupational information plays an extremely important role in supporting the vocational-based education of young people who have yet to develop awareness about the future, and encouraging them to think in terms of personal career development. The Occupation Hand Book for Youth (OHBY) was developed in 2002 as a PC-based guidance system to help empower young people from junior high school to college age launch independent and productive searches for occupation-related information. It is designed for use in combination with psychological testing to facilitate effective career-based education. By targeting these goals, the OHBY has emerged as one of the leading occupational information tools available in Japan today.

In this article, we profile the policy behind the development and design of the OHBY. We also provide guidelines to serve as a reference for group counseling, individual use or other applications of the system at the junior and senior high school career education classes, counseling centers, which serve as the primary venues for its use.

1.1 Career Counseling and Occupations

In the midst of the rapid changes in today's economic, industrial and social fabric, Japan has entered an era in which individuals require the ability to independently select and pursue life-long careers. When choosing a lifestyle for the future and thinking of life as a type of "stage drama", the selection of one's role (occupation) in that "play" is the most important factor destined to influence that person's life. Furthermore, to develop and achieve one's chosen occupational career requires adaptation, self-enlightenment and adjustments to

deal with the constantly changing environment and conditions.

The action of selecting and developing an occupation or career follows a process that consists generally of the six steps outlined as follows:

[Six Steps]
- A Understanding personal desires and traits
- B Understanding the content of various occupations
- C Trial occupational experience
- D Counseling by experts
- E Scrutiny, selection and implementation of options
- F Adaptation, self-enlightenment, career development

This process does not conclude when one graduates from school. Rather, it is repeated continually during the promotions and reassignments that take place at companies, transitions in technology, career changes, retirement and other occupational career processes that occur throughout one's lifetime. For younger people, whether or not they thoroughly experience and master this career determination process is a factor that will impact their occupations for life.

Among the steps outlined in this process, Japan lags far behind in "B" (understanding occupations). This poor understanding of occupations is a major reason why students lose sight of study goals at the junior and senior high school level, and is also linked to the increasing occurence of changing jobs, a shift away from working, unemployment among graduates, the recent rise in the percentage of permanent part-time workers known as "freeters", and other concerning trends.

1.2 The Importance of Occupational Information in Career Counseling
1) Within the realm of career counseling, occupational information is of primary significance in enabling individuals to independently pursue their own potential and determine their unique course in life.

In other words, occupational information gives visible shape and form to future careers when devoting thought to "one's own career," a concept that normally conveys a somewhat abstract and strange impression. In conducting career counseling, such information fulfills the following functions:
① Providing basic information for correctly determining one's future.

② Indicating career achievement goals to generate volition and interest.
③ Indicating concrete goals and directions necessary for achievement to encourage understanding of the connections between studies and occupations.

2) In addition to this, occupational information fulfills the following development functions through the search for such information at all school levels, starting with identifying occupations of interest to the individuals involved.

● Elementary school:
　　Learn about the existence and role of various types of occupations
　　Understanding of social significance and functions, develop occupational interests

● Junior high school:
　　Expand occupational interests, promote self-understanding　　Select further schooling (employment) directions linked to one's own future

● Senior high school:
　　Select occupations based on self-understanding　　Select employment or further schooling directions appropriate for oneself

● College:
　　Deepen self-understanding and narrow down occupation focus
　　Securing employment and selecting occupation based on future career choice

1.3 Defining Occupational Information Demanded in Career Counseling

The need exists for the following types of occupational information within the realm of career counseling.

① Reliable information with full occupational-based content.
② Information capable of generating occupational interest and volition from readers.
③ Efforts to provide various types of occupational information to stimulate readers to think about possible careers

Leading examples of such information in the United States include the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) and Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), while in Japan there is the Occupational Handbook (Adult Edition: 1998). Regarding well-known computer-assisted self-career guides (CACG), there is Discover, SIGI and O*net in the U.S., the CD-ROM version of the aforementioned Occupational Handbook, Career Insight and other systems.

However, as all of these systems were developed for the use of college students and adults in mind, they are complex and time-consuming to fully utilize.

1.4 Distinguishing Characteristics of the OHBY

The OHBY was developed to address this situation, and contains the following distinguishing characteristics.

① Developed from the results of many years of occupational research in vocational awareness and other areas.
② A simple computer assisted career guidance system (CACGS) containing occupational information, various types of search systems, psychological tests and other features.
③ Primary targets are junior and senior high school students, but also able to support the needs of both college students and upper grade elementary school students.
④ Facilitates the understanding of 430 titles of occupations with abundant photographs, illustrations and moving images, along with statement and brief summaries.
⑤ Utilizes insights from frontline education and counseling to facilitate flexible use linked to class schedules, teaching methods and other parameters.
⑥ Designed for self help-based use by students and other target users, enhancing both vocation- and self-understanding and assisting in the selection of occupations.

The OHBY (CD-ROM) is categorized into occupational information and occupation search sections. If the conventional Occupational Handbook (printed booklet version) can be considered as an encyclopedia focusing on statement, this OHBY can considered as an electronic illustrated reference filled with useful visual images.

2.1 Composition of the OHBY
1) The OHBY Occupational Information

The occupational information contained in the OHBY is designed to generate interest and knowledge in various occupations among young people from early in life (during their junior and senior high school years), inspire occupational awareness and support career counseling.

To this end, the number of occupations listed in this resource has been expanded from the 300 titles in the conventional Occupational Handbook to 430 titles. In addition, the statement on these occupations is now more concise in content, while visual information has been improved from the previous photographs to also include illustrations and moving images.

The OHBY occupational information is organized into the following framework.

[Occupational Information Composition]

"What types of occupations are available?"
    Statement on work content.

"Let's have a look using photographs!"
    Use of four photographs and two illustrations in total to explain work content and situations.
    Moving images used for certain occupations.

"How to enter certain occupations"
    Use of charts and statement to show the academic career, credentials and other background conditions required to enter certain fields of work.

"Finding out more"
    Statement on working conditions, locations, persons engaged in certain jobs, etc.

"What occupations are similar?"
    Examples of occupations that resemble each other in certain aspects

"Asking seniors in the field"
    Talking with graduates of the same school who are now working or other people engaged in certain occupations about their work motivation and satisfaction.

2) The OHBY occupation search system consists of the following features:
Occupation Panorama
    Occupations are divided into 12 fields by industry, profession, workplace traits and other categories. This classification reflects the actual image,

atmosphere and other aspects of these occupations in a format that is easy to understand.

Job Town Search

Industries and business establishments, as well as the occupations therein, are displayed using an occupation map divided into nine separate regions. This enables users to locate various types of occupations encountered in their daily life or in their communities.

Keyword Search

Occupations can be researched using words related to things, people, data and other areas. Enables easy search of occupations via words of interest or concern to users.

Work Discovery Test

Use of vocational interest or aptitude tests to look up occupations deemed as appropriate for the individual.
Also functions as a tool for self-discovery and analysis.

Syllabary Index

Direct searches of vocational categories by occupational title.

3) My Note

The "My Note" function allows users to record the details of how they utilized the OHBY following actual use of it. Personal-use records in personal computers are used to grasp the progress made to date, and highlight the points that should be focused on in the future. This is a useful function for recording and evaluating the use of the OHBY for school teachers career counselors, as well as enabling them to provide follow-up guidance.

In this regard, the OHBY offers various methods of use, such as personal use (self-use) with PCs, man-to-man use in career guidance by counselors and others, group-based learning in schools and other environments, collective training or group counseling using liquid-crystal projectors and other support methods.

2.2 Developing Occupational Understanding, Career and Occupational Learning

Understanding and interest in occupations evolves through a growth process according to the school level and other factors.

The OHBY has not been designed with elementary school children (fifth and sixth graders) as targets. Even so, elementary school students do possess interest and a certain degree of understanding in regards to occupations. There are numerous different occupations recorded in the OHBY, with elementary school students also expressing interest and ample understanding of occupations and occupation visuals (photos, illustrations and moving images) that they observe on an everyday basis. In the occupation search systems in particular, use of Job Town Search, Keyword Search and other functions facilitates the exploration of occupations from illustrations or familiar matters, thereby providing strong guidance.

At the junior high school level, students experience a rapid increase in the knowledge and information they have regarding occupations, although biases are also identified. Due to this, it is initially important for children in this age group to come into contact with and observe various types of occupations, and learn about occupations in a well-balanced manner. Meanwhile, a thorough awareness of the different occupations available based on experiences to develop this awareness, field trips and other methods should nurture spontaneous self-understanding of those occupations.

For senior high school students, focusing on a certain degree of occupational understanding and critical awareness toward career issues, it is important to instill direction about their own futures based on self-understanding. Regarding occupational understanding in terms of their own career decisions, it is vital to achieve deeper and more detailed knowledge of occupations as barometers of the careers toward which they will eventually aspire.

2.3 Systematic Understanding of Occupations

In "Occupation Panorama," vocations in the 12 occupational fields are consolidated and categorized. These are not occupational classifications designed for the sake of compiling statistics or other purposes. Rather, they are classifications that reflect the reality of industries, workplaces and other contributing factors. With regard to representative occupations in each major vocational field, it is vital to learn not just the names, but also the primary

contents of the work as well. This serves to nurture the ability to view vocations systematically, and is an effective means of making comparisons with occupations in other fields, surmising about occupations in the same field and so forth. In this way, Occupation Panorama not only teaches the user how to categorize and systematize occupations, but also provides an important occupational search menu in an analytical context.

For junior high school students, there is a considerable increase in the volume of memories concerning the occupations and work that they observe in daily life or through various media. However, at the same time there is a tendency not to consolidate or be aware of such memories. Moreover, in many cases the impressions or memories of occupations are not accompanied by knowledge of the actual job names. Therefore, it is important for students at this age level to use places or situations as clues for stimulating thoughts and awareness of the work and occupations that they have observed in life to date.

The "Job Town Search" supports this. First, an occupation map is used to search out occupations (indicated by illustrations) from frequently visited places, districts, establishments or companies. In hospitals, for example, in addition to physicians and nurses, users will become aware that technicians perform tests and other types of medical treatment and various other people are also employed at those facilities. Proceeding from that stage, investigations are made into what types of workplaces and occupations exist in regions and locations that users have either visited or not visited. This fosters understanding of the existence of regions and places (locations) suitable for the functioning of certain industries and occupations, and an increasing grasp of the corresponding connections between business categories and occupations and other relations between industry and occupation.

2.4 Specific Occupation Searches

Even if the students posses a knowledge of the many occupations and types of work that exist in the world, at first most will be attracted to areas in which they have personal strengths or interest. Therefore, learning about and discovering oneself will assist in fostering an interest in and understanding of occupations, as well as in selecting specific occupations or careers. Providing support on this front is the "Work Discovery Test." This is a simplified version of the "Vocational Readiness Test" developed by the Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training by reducing the number of questions in the original

version. It is structured to enable junior and senior high school students to easily grasp the distinguishing features of their own interests and aptitudes, and then search for occupations that are in line with those traits. For carrying out complete examinations and diagnoses, use of the aforementioned "Vocational Readiness Test" (for junior and senior high school students), the "Vocational Preference Inventory" (VPI) system (for college students and above) and other helpful tests are recommended.

"The Keyword Search" enables occupations to be easily researched from words linked to interests or other related matters. This search is comprised of linkage to things (T), people (P), data (D) and other quantities. These things, people and data are the fundamental standards used to classify occupations. This is why the occupations searched through the use of keywords resemble those displayed in the Occupation Panorama. This function is suitable for elementary schools students and first- and second-year junior high school students as a search menu for use at prior to the Occupation Panorama. These are age groups in which systematic knowledge and understanding of occupation names and content and other vocational-based development has yet to occur.

The "Syllabary Index" searches for occupations by occupational title, and compiles lists consisting of the occupations on file and related vocational fields. This index facilitates simpler and faster searches when the name of the specific occupation is known. While this menu is necessary for conducting searches, it is not so effective in terms of providing occupational understanding or guidance.

2.5 Understanding of Industrial Society and Occupation Selection
* "Learning About Occupations"

With regard to occupational knowledge, relying only on everyday life and experiences (and failing to learn about occupations in a systematic fashion) tends to result in fragmented and biased information. The goal here is to use occupation search systems and occupational information to learn about various vocational matters in a balanced fashion, and develop a comprehensive grasp of the "overall world of occupations." For junior and senior high school students, it is preferable to read such information after conducting occupation searches and browsing through occupational information, or around the time the students take field trips to visit actual businesses. Such tours and other visits are used to promote information gathering, thus raising overall

understanding and evaluation skills with regard to occupations. It is possible to utilize career guidance, vocational-related briefings and other forms of group training to introduce or explain about the "the world of occupations."

* "Occupation Selection Guide"

Efforts to encourage occupation searches, information gathering and self-discovery are not limited to the time frameworks available for career counseling and learning sessions. Sooner or later, all students will encounter the need to make concrete selections about their future careers. To prepare for this, it is vital to learn about the sequences and the essentials of career and occupation selection. For junior and senior high school students, examining these materials based on a certain degree of progress in career learning and vocational readiness will enhance such effects.

At this stage, career guidance, employment briefings and other group training sessions may also be used to explain the basic steps of "occupation selection."

2.6 Key Points in Using Occupation Information in Career Guidance and Learning

Let us now summarize the goals and key points of the use and application of OHBY by specific school level.

1) Use by Age and Development Stage

Elementary school students (fifth and sixth graders):

Rather than "occupations" as such, students in this age group become aware of important work or activities in society through their daily lives or informative experiences. With the OHBY, elementary school students are also provided with easily understood images and visual information about work in general. In terms of occupation searches, they begin by using "Job Town Search" and "Keyword Search."

Junior High School Students:

This is the most fertile period for the learning of occupational information. Systematic occupational knowledge and experiences are used to promote self-understanding. Fast-paced occupational development is encouraged each academic year, with care taken to guard against gender-based biases in

occupational aspirations. At this stage, repeated use is made of all the OHBY functions and information.

Senior High School Students:

At this level, it is important to instill direction in one's own path in life, based on self-understanding. This extends beyond just information concerning occupations, careers and other areas. Along with this, improvements are made in selection skills. Also used to gain more detailed occupational information about careers or preferred vocations are the Occupational Handbook (Adult Edition) and various other information sources concerning industries, companies and so forth.

College students (first and second year):

For students with inadequate career awareness (particularly pertaining to occupations) and self-understanding, use of the OHBY during their first and second years in college is recommended. Following this, it is useful to supply more detailed occupational information and related information, as well as offer individual career counseling sessions.

2) Uses Linked to Situations and Targets
Schools:

Use of the OHBY in social studies classes and other learning situations. Use of the OHBY for career counseling and education. Effective for group use in computer rooms.

Individuals:

Use of the OHBY by students themselves at school or at home (self-use).

Group Training:

Use at employment seminars and other occasions. Format favors use by multiple PCs and an instructor to provide guidance. If possible, set up liquid-crystal projectors or other equipment in advance for screen displays and explanations.

Career Counseling Rooms:

Ready access for self-use at counseling room resource corners or PCs.

Guidance provided upon request from users.

Career Counseling:
    For individual consultations use with counselor guidance. In group counseling sessions use to coordinate with group applications.

3) Use Adapted to Career Counseling Plans and Programs
    It is important for career counselors to adapt the abundant information and functions of the OHBY to the specific contents and planning of the guidance used at the school.

4) Contents of Occupational Information Supplied
    ① The number of occupations, list composition and other aspects of the information supplied vary according to vocational development, needs, regions and other parameters of the target users.
    As the OHBY lists over 400 occupations, it is capable of responding to a wide range of needs and applications.

    ② Number and types of occupations
Core occupations: 50~100 occupations (representative occupations within the occupational classifications)
    Core occupations are essential for systematic learning of occupations in general.
Related occupations: Occupations with connections to the core occupations Approx. 200~300 occupations (including major occupations within smaller grouping of occupations)
    Helpful for further expanding preferred occupation choices.
New occupations: Occupations with future potential that is emerging through technical innovations and other professionalization.
    Occupations for which demand in recent years has increased, both socially and economically.
Occupations of interest: Occupations that junior and high school students are able to form mental images of, and want to learn about or experience.
    Other: Local industry occupations based on regional districts, traditional skill vocations, etc.

③ Occupational Information Contents

Basic information:

In the OHBY, based on the categories "What type of occupations are available?" and "How to enter certain occupations," together with visual data, information is supplied along the lines of "Finding out more," "Asking seniors in the field" and "Similar occupations."

Detailed information:

There are limits to the categories and the contents of the information that can be supplied through the OHBY. As a result, the following types of detailed information are needed to instill greater knowledge about the final stage of the occupation selection process and occupations preferred for employment. The Occupational Handbook (Adult Edition), various types of statistics, books and materials about credentials and licenses, psychological tests and numerous other information resources and tools will be used in such cases. In the United States, most of the information categories listed below have been processed into database form, and are available for viewing on websites.

(Detailed Information Category Examples)

Labor conditions: Wages, working hours (holidays), work environment, etc.
Number of workers and worker attributes
Employee growth rate, occupational outlook
Vocational aptitude, interest and characteristics
Credential and license test subjects, training facilities
Related information: Recruiting and job-hunting information
Industry and trade information
Company and management information
Region-specific industry and occupation information
Education and training information, training facility information

5) Use via Linkage with Psychological Tests or Diagnostic Systems

The OHBY is equipped with simple tests that, along with other occupational information, enhances the understanding of efficiency in search methods, occupations, aptitude and other qualities. This is based on the administration of thorough psychological tests, and the analysis of the test results.

The results of and occupations indicated by the simple tests contained in

the OHBY conform to the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) and Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI) systems, but are not identical to those systems. The OHBY tests take into consideration the fact that junior and senior high school students are still developing and are therefore flexible in their attitudes. The tests are thus set up to flexibly express the personal type and work direction of each individual. In other words, they are designed to avoid excessively narrowing down occupation types, and instead extend across a number of different types (depending on the individual's answers) presenting a broad range of related occupations. The activity of checking occupations best suited to individuals from among the categories displayed is important and significant in terms of fostering self-understanding and occupational understanding in each student.

6) Use with Set Practice Themes

Enhanced effects of career education are achieved when the OHBY is not used in its original form, but rather when the OHBY occupational information and search functions are utilized to implement career education themes that are elaborated through independent skills and resources.

One of the career education themes used widely at junior high schools and other levels is "Occupation Investigation." This is quite similar to the method of collecting and coordinating occupational information with the Occupation Handbook.

The outline of this approach is as follows.
Theme Practice Example: "Occupation Investigation"

- Theme aims:

Nurturing skills to collect, analyze and utilize occupational information.
Understand the social role of occupations.
Learn about the links between occupations and oneself, and consider one's own lifestyle.

- Theme contents:

1. "Investigate Occupations"
   ① Refer to various different occupations from the OHBY Job Town Search (investigate by location) and Occupation Panorama (investigate by occupational classification).

② Learn more about occupations of interest by accessing the "JobJobWorld" occupational information website (http://www.shigotokan.ehdo.go.jp) supplied in "The Vocational Museum" and examining the moving images.

③ Select the occupations to be researched.

2. "Depict Persons in Specific Occupations"

① Visit and interview persons engaged in selected occupations, and use that information in combination with sketches of the work scenes to investigate the social role of these occupations and compile the results in writing.

② Present personal creations in class.

3. "Compile in Newspaper Format"

① Compile the results of the interviews for presentation in school newspapers, booklet form or other formats.

② Don't forget to thank and report back to all cooperating interviewees.

Another useful reference of examples by academic year or school level is the "OHBY User Guide" (a standard attachment to the OHBY package).

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The Change of Vocational Interests among Junior and High School Students

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1. Introduction

Our institute has been engaged in developing and supporting the Vocational Readiness Test (VRT), which for the past 30 years has been widely used as a career-guidance tool in junior and senior high schools nationwide. The first version was developed in 1972 by the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Research, an organization affiliated with the Ministry of Labour (today the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare). It was subsequently revised in 1991, but no major reviews have been undertaken since then. However, in the more than 15 years since the last revision, the environment related to young people's career and occupational choice has changed greatly.

The first change was a rise in matriculation rates and the longer period of time spent in school. According to the 2005 edition of the *School Basic Survey*, 97.6 percent of all students who graduated from the compulsory junior high educational curriculum in March 2005 enrolled in senior high or other schools, while the matriculation rate for university or other higher educational institutions was 47.3 percent. Both of these were the highest figures on record. Considering that the rates were 94.7 percent and 30.7 percent, respectively, when the VRT was last revised in 1991, the number of young people entering employment upon high school graduation these days has gradually declined, while the number moving on to higher education has steadily increased (MEXT, 2005).

A second change that can be cited is the rise in the unemployment rate for young people. The percentage of completely unemployed young people rose abruptly among males and females alike from the mid-90s, climbing to 12.8 percent for the 15 to 19 age range by 2002 and 9.8 percent for those aged 20 to 24 by 2003. There have since been slight signs of improvement, but unemployment rates among the young remain at high levels compared to other

age groups. The growing number of *freeters*, young people who remain informally employed after graduation or quit after brief periods of company employment, has also become a problem (MHLW, 2005).

The current situation is such that continuing onto senior high from junior high school has become a matter of course and over 40 percent enroll in university. However, at the same time the likelihood of not being able to enter the work force after graduation is higher than before. In this context, how have the vocational interests of junior and senior high school students changed compared to 15 years ago? If the quality and level of their interest in work have changed, their vocational interests cannot be accurately measured by criteria devised with data collected more than a decade ago.

According to testing standards set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA) 1999, tests need to be reviewed every 10 to 15 years to maintain high reliability, as social conditions change with the passage of time and it is likely that the basic data collected for standardization purposes has also changed. Particularly for assessments such as the VRT, which use profession-specific job content, professions themselves vanish over time and in some cases job content changes substantially even within the same employment category.

With this in mind, in 2003 we began research into revising the VRT, collecting data on young people from the perspective of their vocational interests. In 2005, we gathered data from a total of 27,000 junior and senior high students from around Japan and verified the data's reliability and appropriateness as a standard group (Matsumoto, Muroyama, 2005; Muroyama, Matsumoto, 2005). In a parallel study, we collected VRT data from the past 10 years and analyzed changes in the vocational interests of this age group. By looking at their vocational interests, we could clarify what types of work they currently found interesting, as well as how the work-related interests of students today had changed compared to previous junior and senior high students.

The purpose of this paper is to review the current situation regarding junior and senior high school students' vocational interests, using replies regarding their interest in work from data collected with the VRT.

2. Content of Vocational Readiness Test

The VRT is a vocational interest assessment developed primarily for junior

students can chose one of three possible responses that best fits their situation. There are 18 questions. Test C has the same 54 questions as Test A, but the responses concern whether one has the confidence to be a success at each choice in the future, and the answers are divided into three levels. Table 1 provides examples of items from each test.

The results of Tests A and C are tabulated with points allocated according to the 1992 Holland theory describing six categories of vocational interest (RIASEC). For Test B, points are computed according to three orientations: data, people or things-oriented.

3. Standardization Survey Overview
(1) Objectives

We conducted research into standardization with the goals of reviewing the assessment categories used up to now, revising portions of the criteria, and creating standards based on new data.

(2) Assessment questions

We added 18 new questions to the 54 items in the current version of Tests A and C, for a total of 72 questions. Furthermore, we used DPT similar to the current version to get basic orientation frameworks for Test B, but changed the style of the replies, having the students answer whether descriptions of activities in daily life were accurate or not. We prepared 96 questions for Test B. We also asked students to answer questions included at the end of the questionnaire for the purpose of examining correlations with their perceptions of employment, asking about the courses they liked and how much they were thinking about their future career paths.

(3) Methods
i. Selection of number of schools to participate in survey

We divided Japan into six regional blocks based on the 2004 *School Basic Survey*. We additionally divided junior high schools into two groups by type—300 or more students and less than 300 students—and determined the number of schools after considering the sizes of the schools in each block around the country. High schools were divided into seven types based on curricula, considering the numerical distributions of the schools and students in determining the number of schools from each block around the country. We set

and senior high students (National Institute of Employment and Vocational Research, 1989). The assessment involves reading a questionnaire and filling in an answer sheet in pencil.

The test is composed of three subordinate criteria: In Test A, answers regarding whether one would like to engage in specific types of work are supplied in response to written descriptions of job content, indicating one of three levels of interest. There are 54 questions in all. For Test B, responses regarding descriptions of various activities in daily life are provided, and

Table 1. VRT Criteria Overview and Sample Questions

	Interest themes	Concepts	Sample VRT questions
Tests A and C (using Holland's six interest categories)	1. Realistic	Interested in practical, realistic work and activities, such as operating machines and equipment, making things, and caring for plants and animals	Design furniture, lighting and other facets of a room's interior
	2. Investigative	Interested in research, pondering matters logically, and engaging in investigative work and activities	Scientific research at a university or research lab
	3. Artistic	Interested in music, art, literature, and creative, artistic work and activities	Act out various roles in films or plays
	4. Social	Interested in caring for and assisting people, services and sales, and work and activities involving contact with people	Perform hotel customer services such as reception desk work or providing information
	5. Enterprising	Interested in activities involving planning new enterprises and programs and operating and managing organizations	Manage one's own store
	6. Conventional	Interested in work and activities involving handling matters accurately and properly, according to a set methods	Organize documents using a word processor or PC
Test B (DPT)	Basic Orientation		Q: When you think of travel, you first:
	1. Data	Individual character traits oriented toward handling of various kinds of knowledge, information and concepts	A: Buy and read a travel guide
	2. People	Individual character traits mainly oriented toward activities involving direct contact with people	B: Seek friends to accompany you
	3. Things	Individual character traits oriented toward directly handling "Things" such as machinery, tools and devices	C: Organize the things you will take with you

our data collection targets at a minimum of 6,000 junior high and 8,000 senior high students.[1]

ii. Selection/recruitment of schools to participate in survey

Based on the numbers of schools by block and type, we first obtained assistance from the ministries of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in recommending schools that fit the profiles. Then we asked the recommended schools if we could conduct the survey, with all the members of one class from each grade participating, in principle (Table 2).

iii. Testers

Questionnaires, reply forms, and instruction manuals were sent to participating schools and the surveys were conducted primarily by the career counseling departments at participating schools.

iv. Survey period: June to August 2005

Table 2. Distribution of Surveyed Schools

School/curriculum type		Junior high schools (38)		Senior high schools (58)						
		Less than 300 students	300 or more students	General studies, atriculation rate less than 70%	General studies, matriculation rate 70% or more	Agriculture; fisheries	Industrial arts; information science	Business	Home economics; nursing; social welfare	Other integrated studies
Region	Hokkaido/Tohoku	3	3	5	4	0	0	0	1	0
	Kanto	4	6	6	6	1	1	1	2	0
	Tokai/Chubu/ Hokuriku	4	4	4	2	1	2	1	0	1
	Kinki	2	4	4	1	0	1	1	1	0
	Chugoku/Shikoku	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Kyushu/Okinawa	1	3	4	2	1	1	0	1	0
Total		17	21	25	16	3	5	3	5	1

[1] The six years of elementary school (ages 7-12) and three years of junior high (13-15) are compulsory under Japan's education system. Enrollment in three-year senior high schools (ages 16-18) involves choosing a school (curriculum) and sitting for an entrance exam.

(4) Results

i. Current vocational interests of junior and senior high students

Table 3 provides the numerical data gathered by type of school and curriculum. We used the questions in Test A, which gauges vocational interests, to calculate the mean and standard deviation as a way of examining the level of interest in Holland's six scales. Note that for the purposes of comparison with the standardized data from 1991, the same 54 questions as in 1991 were used from among the 2005 data to calculate points by scale. The data tabulation process involved deriving the total points for each of the six scales by scoring two points for "Interested," one point for "Neither," and zero for "Not interested" for the nine questions pertaining to each of the six scales. The point distribution range was 0 to 18. Table 4 provides each scale's average points by school attributes.

Based on school size, there was no large difference in the average of each vocational interest theme among junior high students. However, there appeared to be a slightly larger disparity between areas of high and low interest in schools with 300 or more students compared to those with less than 300. Points also tended to approximate senior high students' inclinations—lower for the realistic, investigative, and conventional themes and higher for the artistic, social and enterprising themes. That fact that interest in themes diverged between high and low itself illustrates the differentiation in interests, as well as the indication of a tendency for individualism to be more pronounced among students the larger the size of the school, was a particularly interesting point.

Table 3. Number of Students from Which Data Was Collected for Standardization Survey

Schools	School attributes		Total	Male	Female
Junior high (10,966)	Size	Less than 300 students	2,677	1,394	1,283
		300 or more students	8,289	4,202	4,087
Senior high (16,717)	Curriculum	General studies, matriculation rate under 70%	8,259	3,935	4,324
		General studies, matriculation rate 70% or more	4,441	2,210	2,231
		Agriculture/fisheries	786	429	357
		Industrial arts/information sciences	1,818	1,566	252
		Business	331	52	279
		Home economics/nursing/social welfare	778	8	770
		Other/integrated courses	304	91	213

Table 4. Test A Interest Theme Averages/Standard Deviations by School Attributes

School Attributes	Junior high (by size)		Senior high (by curriculum)						
	Less than 300 students (2,677)	300 or more students (8,289)	General studies; matriculation rate under 70% (8,259)	General studies; matriculation rate 70% or more (4,441)	Agriculture; fisheries (786)	Industrial arts; information sciences (1,818)	Business (331)	Home economics; nursing; social welfare (778)	Other; integrated courses (304)
Categories	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
R	6.18 (3.93)	5.90 (3.99)	6.09 (4.24)	5.34 (3.94)	6.90 (4.14)	8.18 (4.25)	5.57 (3.86)	5.58 (3.72)	4.69 (3.75)
I	5.00 (4.67)	4.73 (4.70)	3.61 (4.21)	5.24 (4.94)	3.98 (4.37)	4.90 (4.65)	2.90 (3.59)	2.78 (3.73)	2.39 (3.62)
A	6.30 (4.65)	6.41 (4.65)	5.77 (4.47)	5.83 (4.52)	5.30 (4.05)	5.33 (4.50)	7.44 (4.62)	6.99 (4.44)	5.87 (4.53)
S	6.72 (4.42)	6.80 (4.46)	6.98 (4.36)	6.62 (4.32)	6.47 (4.21)	5.36 (4.12)	8.95 (4.34)	8.76 (4.33)	6.72 (4.26)
E	6.37 (4.35)	6.43 (4.38)	5.91 (4.36)	6.61 (4.58)	5.86 (4.12)	6.21 (4.51)	7.38 (4.18)	6.76 (4.36)	5.80 (4.15)
C	5.08 (4.43)	4.94 (4.37)	4.86 (4.37)	5.05 (4.40)	4.55 (4.12)	4.88 (4.46)	7.64 (4.98)	5.45 (4.61)	4.89 (4.40)

For senior high students, on the other hand, it can be seen that vocational interest theme averages differed substantially depending on the rate at which students in general studies moved on to higher education and curricula. Industrial arts/information sciences scored highest, 8.18, in the Realistic scale, followed by agriculture/fisheries, 6.90. For the Investigative scale, general studies with a matriculation rate of over 70 percent had the highest average, 5.24, followed by industrial arts/information sciences, 4.90. In the artistic/social/enterprising/ conventional categories, and business and home economics/nursing/welfare curricula ranked high, in first and second respectively.

The link between the content of what was studied at school and vocational interests was substantiated by the results: Vocations in the Realistic scale — involving handling machines and objects and outdoor activities—were popular among those in industrial arts, information sciences, agriculture and fisheries courses. Interest in investigative themes, which had a low average overall, was high among those in general studies with a high matriculation rate, industrial

arts, and information sciences. The average for the Creative scale, which similarly had a low overall average, was conspicuously high among those in business courses related to white collar, business professions. This could also perhaps be a reflection of students' choices regarding the type of school in which they would enroll, based on their original vocational interests at the time they selected a high school.

The overall averages for junior high students based on school size were R 5.97, I 4.79, A 6.38, S 6.78, E 6.41, and C 4.98, with the social category the highest, followed by E, A, R, C, and I. On the other hand, the overall averages for senior high students based on matriculation rates and courses were R 6.09, I 4.12, A 5.81, S 6.80, E 6.19, and C 4.98. The social category was the highest, followed in order by E, R, A, C, and I. Other than A and R, which were in reverse order compared to junior high students, the order was the same. Junior and senior high students appeared to be interested in professions that incorporate categories S and E and not very interested in those involving C and I.

ii. Comparison of 1991 averages and 2005 data

Table 5 shows the basic data gathered nationwide for standardization purposes at the time the currently commercially available VRT was devised in 1991 along with data collected in 2005, summarizing the averages and standard deviations for Test A's six interest scales for junior and senior high students. The differences in the averages for interests among junior and senior high students then and can now be compared because the same questions were used to score the 1991 and 2005 data.

First, let us look at how interest rankings have changed. According to the 1991 junior high student data, the averages were E, S, A, C, R, I from top to bottom, and E, S, C, A, R, I for senior high students. In 2005, the ranking was S, E, A, R, C, I for junior high students and S, E, R, A, C, I for senior high students. Scales E and C ranked lower compared to 1991 and scales S and R rose in the standings.

Next, looking at overall point trends, it can be noted that 2005 averages declined overall compared to 1991. Even for scale S, which ranked first in interest compared to 1991, the score was lower than in 1991. Further, looking at scale E, which dropped noticeably lower, the scores were 7.75 and 8.65 for junior and senior high students, respectively, in 1991, but fell substantially to 6.41 and 6.19 in 2005. The declines for scale C were striking, from 6.69 to

4.98 for junior high students and 7.10 to 4.98 for senior high students.

Because the interest averages also serve as indicators reflecting students' feelings regarding work they would like to do, that scores tended to fall in the period of over 10 years from 1991 to 2005 is cause for concern. Interest in enterprising themes, reflecting interest in operating and managing organizations, planning and formulating ideas, and conventional themes related to standard types of professions such as white collar work declined in particular, demonstrating a flagging orientation toward devoting one's self to working in a company or organization. This is conceivably due to the effects of the corporate restructuring and disintegration of the lifetime employment system that occurred at the beginning of the 1990s.

In the following section, we will verify whether this drop in the averages was a trend peculiar to the 2005 data or, on the other hand, whether gradual changes over the past period of more than a decade led to these kinds of results.

Table 5. Comparison of 1991 and 2005 Data for Vocational Interest Test A

	1991		2005	
	Junior high students (4,752)	Senior high students (8,489)	Junior high students (10,966)	Senior high students (16,717)
Interests	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
R	5.87 (3.72)	6.32 (3.91)	5.97 (3.98)	6.09 (4.20)
I	4.96 (4.83)	4.74 (4.81)	4.79 (4.69)	4.12 (4.51)
A	6.99 (4.70)	7.09 (4.72)	6.38 (4.65)	5.81 (4.49)
S	7.19 (4.46)	7.36 (4.40)	6.78 (4.45)	6.80 (4.37)
E	7.75 (4.47)	8.65 (4.59)	6.41 (4.38)	6.19 (4.43)
C	6.69 (4.76)	7.10 (5.04)	4.98 (4.39)	4.98 (4.42)

4. Overview of Previous Data Accumulated Over 10 Years
(1) Objectives

Our goals were to gather data from the current VRT version conducted over the past 10 years, 1995 to 2004, investigate the changes in criteria related to vocational interests, and study changes in junior and senior high students' vocational interests over the years.

(2) Survey questions

The questions were used from the currently commonly-used Vocational Readiness Test published in 1991.

(3) Methods

We obtained the data for the VRTs conducted from 1995 to 2004 from the organization responsible for processing the VRT scores. At that point, school and individual names had been deleted so that the data could not be used to identify individuals. School attributes (junior or senior high and general studies, business or industrial arts courses), gender and grade appeared for the purposes of data tabulation. It should be noted that these data differed from data gathered for the purposes of standardization and did not always reflect the nationwide distribution of size and courses offered by junior and senior high schools, but we conducted the analyses thinking they could serve as useful references in reviewing the changes in points over the 10-year period. Table 6 shows the composition of the data covered by this analysis.

Table 6. Data Composition (Number of Subjects) by Fiscal Year

FY	Junior high students			Senior high students								
				General studies			Business			Industrial arts		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1995	11,145	10,201	21,346	16,623	16,366	32,989	3,880	8,372	12,252	59,548	47,387	106,935
1996	8,404	8,335	16,739	14,780	13,592	28,372	3,766	8,898	12,664	52,756	41,830	94,586
1997	8,862	8,628	17,490	11,260	11,618	22,878	3,236	7,193	10,429	49,542	38,662	88,204
1998	8,284	7,457	15,741	11,992	10,655	22,647	2,847	5,855	8,702	47,204	36,043	83,247
1999	4,907	4,206	9,113	6,190	6,174	12,364	1,234	2,947	4,181	25,876	19,939	45,815
2000	7,235	6,428	13,663	10,920	9,015	19,935	2,318	5,740	8,058	40,932	32,971	73,903
2001	6,651	6,137	12,788	9,403	7,956	17,359	2,483	4,944	7,427	39,774	30,153	69,927
2002	7,016	5,978	12,994	8,108	7,194	15,302	2,306	5,110	7,416	37,450	28,634	66,084
2003	5,701	4,915	10,616	8,685	6,366	15,051	1,884	3,627	5,511	38,441	25,143	63,584
2004	8,124	7,372	15,496	9,237	8,227	17,464	1,376	3,466	4,842	39,857	29,362	69,219

(4) Results

1. Year-by-year comparison of vocational interest

The results of Test A, which measures vocational interest, are rendered as graphs showing annual transitions from 1995 to 2004 for junior and senior high (general studies, business and industrial arts) students in Figures 1 to 4. The disparities among individual themes were fewer among junior high students compared to senior high students and the divergence of interests appeared not to be as advanced as among senior high students. Moreover, there were no noticeably consistent changes such as particularly large declines or increases in the figures when viewed in yearly trends (Fig. 1).

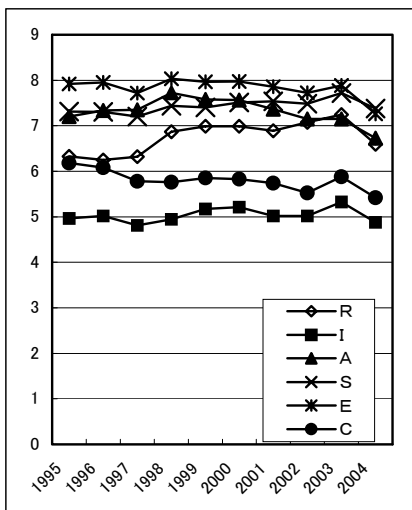**Fig. 1 Junior High Students'**
Vocational Interest Trends

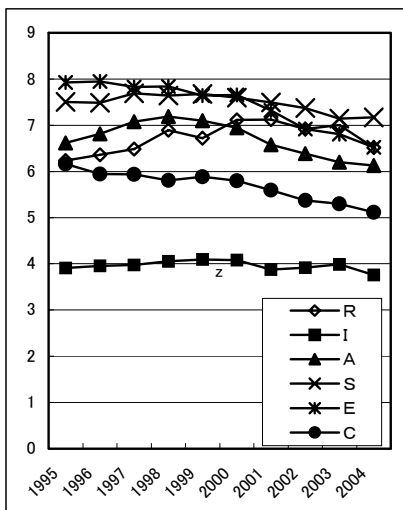**Fig. 2 Senior High Students'**
Vocational Interest Trends
(General Studies)

Fig. 3 Senior High Students'
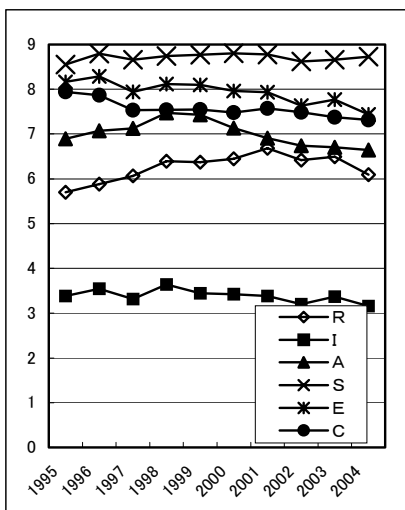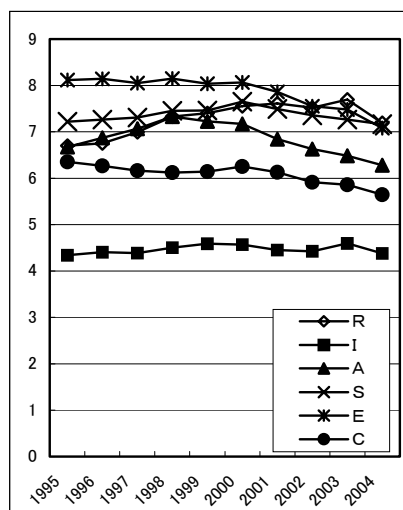**Vocational Interest Trends**
(Business)

Fig. 4 Senior High Students'
Vocational Interest Trends
(Industrial Arts)

On the other hand, compared to junior high students, there were clear divisions in the interest scales senior high students liked or did not like. Interest levels particularly varied according to the course of studies. The ranking for general studies in 1995 was E, S, A, R, C, I from top to bottom, but S, E, R, A, C, I in 2004 (Fig. 2). Interest in scales E and C consistently declined when seen by yearly trends. Interest in scale R steadily climbed up to 2001, but has been declining somewhat in recent years. After peaking in 1998, interest in scale A has been falling bit by bit. The smaller disparity between the averages for scales of high and low interest in 2004 compared to 1995 was another tendency that was observed.

With no change in the 1995 and 2004 ranking for business studies, S, E, C, A, R, I, there were few yearly changes compared to general studies and industrial arts courses (Fig. 3). Among these, it could be seen that scale R showed a rising trend, interest in scale A had declined since peaking in 1998, and scale E has been on a gradual downturn. It was noteworthy that the averages for scales S and C were markedly higher for business studies compared to general and industrial arts courses, while lower on the other hand for scale I.

The ranking for industrial arts courses was E, S, R, A, C, I in 1995 and R, S, E, A, C, I in 2004 (Fig. 4). Quite similar to general studies courses, interest in scales E and C fell each year. Interest in scale R rose up until 2003, then fell slightly in 2004. Scale A has gradually fallen since peaking in 1998. Industrial arts courses were characterized by higher averages for scale R compared to general studies and business courses, while interest in the rest of the scales did not differ greatly from general studies courses. Another trend similar to general studies courses was that the averages for scales with high interest levels gradually fell compared to 1995, and the disparity with scales with low figures diminished.

Finally, observing annual changes in vocational interests, the overall downward trend for the averages seen in the data collected in 2005 appears to have been the tendency over the previous one to two years. However, we were able to confirm that interest in scales E and C had gradually fallen since a decade ago.

ii. Comparison of ranks of professions in which interest was high

The VRT's Test A has students answer whether they would or would not like to do jobs whose content is specifically described and was designed so that

Table 7. Comparisons of Top 10 Professions by Degree of Interest
- 1995, 1999 and 2004

General studies	1995		1999		2004	
Rank	Total number of students	32,989	Total number of students	12,364	Total number of students	17,464
1	Store owner	47.63	Store owner	42.32	Pre-school teacher	44.30
2	Pre-school teacher	37.74	Pre-school teacher	41.60	Clothing designer	37.70
3	Hotel front desk clerk	37.02	Clothing designer	40.50	Store owner	35.05
4	Trading company sales staff	36.54	Interior designer	36.83	Interior designer	33.86
5	Interior designer	32.95	Barber/hairdresser	34.12	Barber/hairdresser	27.79
6	OA equipment operator	31.07	Trading company sales staff	32.93	Gardener	27.29
7	Sales clerk	30.71	Musician	32.04	Machinery assembly line worker	26.84
8	Computer operator	30.48	Sales manager	31.67	Musician	26.53
9	Sales manager	30.43	Computer operator	30.88	Trading company sales staff	26.52
10	Clothing designer	30.36	Hotel front desk clerk	30.67	Composer	26.23

Business	1995		1999		2004	
Rank	Total number of students	12,252	Total number of students	4,181	Total number of students	4,842
1	Hotel front desk clerk	46.34	Pre-school teacher	48.51	Pre-school teacher	53.08
2	Pre-school teacher	45.45	Clothing designer	48.24	Clothing designer	47.23
3	Store owner	45.26	Interior designer	45.87	Interior designer	41.84
4	OA equipment operator	43.01	Store owner	43.65	Hotel front desk clerk	40.87
5	Computer operator	41.66	Computer operator	42.19	Cashier	40.36
6	Trading company sales staff	38.92	Barber/hairdresser	41.76	Computer operator	38.74
7	Interior designer	37.59	OA equipment operator	40.83	Store owner	38.54
8	Sales clerk	36.30	Hotel front desk clerk	40.76	Sales clerk	38.41
9	Sales manager	35.37	Sales manager	38.99	Barber/hairdresser	36.25
10	Clothing designer	35.08	Sales clerk	38.22	OA equipment operator	35.98

Industrial arts	1995		1999		2004	
Rank	Total number of students	106,935	Total number of students	45,815	Total number of students	69,219
1	Store owner	47.74	Store owner	44.43	Pre-school teacher	42.04
2	Trading company sales staff	37.26	Clothing designer	40.62	Clothing designer	37.07
3	Pre-school teacher	34.40	Interior designer	38.87	Store owner	36.91
4	Hotel front desk clerk	34.30	Pre-school teacher	37.97	Interior designer	36.05
5	Interior designer	33.83	Trading company sales staff	34.76	Machinery assembly line worker	33.55
6	Computer operator	33.23	Sales manager	33.78	Carpenter	29.91
7	OA equipment operator	33.04	Machinery assembly line worker	33.78	Computer operator	29.56
8	Machinery assembly line worker	30.93	Computer operator	33.74	Trading company sales staff	29.23
9	Sales manager	30.81	Barber/hairdresser	33.67	Gardener	28.44
10	Store manager	30.52	Broadcast director	32.86	Broadcast director	27.69

job content corresponded to respective, specific professions. With this in mind, we revised the 54 questions, giving them the names of specific professions, and ranked them in order of scores for high interest. Table 7 provides the top 10 professions that scored high in interest based on data for senior high students by curriculum for 1995, 1999, and 2004. Although the top 10 rankings fluctuate a bit depending on the year and curriculum, generally, the same sorts of professions appear and the popularity of different professions did not change very much. Pre-school teacher, store manager, clothing designer, and interior designer were very popular regardless of course of studies. However, looking at variations between individual professions, pre-school teacher (social scale), clothing designer (Artistic scale), and interior designer (Realistic scale) were on upward trends while store manager (Enterprising scale) declined in rank with each passing year. Additionally, the rankings of trading company sales staff (Enterprising scale) and office equipment operator (Conventional scale), among others, also fell.

   To identify the changes in the number of professions pertaining to each interest scale, we classified the top 10 professions by scale and Table 8 provides the number of professions pertaining to each by year. Definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from a small sampling of 10 professions, but as trends noted whichever the curriculum, in contrast to the high concentration of professions related to E, S, and C in 1995, we believe that there was a progressive divergence in interests up to 1999 and even more so up to 2004. For general studies, there were numerous R and A professions, R professions increased among industrial arts classes, and there was also increasing interest in scale A jobs. Themes R, I, and A include many specialized, technical professions whereas themes E, S, and C contain many types of work one ordinarily often sees in everyday life. Seen by averages, it was clear that interest in type E and S professions always ranked high among the six scales,

Table 8. Interest scale Breakdown for Top 10 Professions

scale	Curriculum	'95	'99	'04	Curriculum	'95	'99	'04	Curriculum	'95	'99	'04
R	General studies	1	1	3	Business	1	1	1	Industrial arts	2	2	4
I		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0
A		1	2	4		1	1	2		0	1	1
S		2	3	1		3	4	3		2	2	1
E		4	3	2		3	2	1		4	4	3
C		2	1	0		2	2	3		2	1	1

whatever the curriculum. Interest in types E and C professions has become relatively lower in recent years and this might conceivably be due to the impact of increasingly broader interest in specialized professions.

5. Conclusion and Future Issues

The preceding describes how we used two sets of data derived from the VRT to study the vocational interests of junior and senior high students. Collating data obtained using the six Holland vocational interest scales as frames of reference, we observed that junior and senior high students alike had an overall high interest in social and enterprising scales and low interest in conventional and investigative scales. However, a comparison over a period of years demonstrated that while the social scale continues to be as popular now as in the past, interest in the enterprising scale has followed a steadily declining trend. Interest in the conventional scale has also tended to decline little by little each year. The artistic scale rose up until 1998, but has subsequently fallen somewhat and the realistic scale is on a rising course. Interest in the investigative scale has not changed to any extent, either in the past or today.

There was little divergence between the interests of junior high and senior high students and their replies showed that their interests were comparatively equal regarding any scale. As with senior high students, a declining tendency was noted in their overall vocational interest with regard to changes over a number of years, but the degree of change was small.

Vocational interests corresponded to curriculum characteristics among senior high students. It was observed that the content of what was studied at school was linked to vocational interest. There was also a possibility that existing vocational interests influenced the choice of school and curriculum. Seen by type of school, there was no significantly noticeable change between 10 years ago and today in the vocational interests of business students. There did not appear to be much difference in the quality of students enrolling in business courses, either, even though matriculation rates have increased in recent years. The disparities between high and low levels of interest among general studies and industrial arts students have gradually diminished.

The overall decline in the scores of senior high students, especially striking in the past one or two years, was a point of concern regarding their overall interests. The decline in the desire to undertake—the interest and curiosity

in—various professions could be interpreted as a diminished enthusiasm for working life. The downturn in interest in enterprising and conventional scales in particular shows that interest in professions characterized by independent, orderly behavior within an organization has become less strong than among students in the past. It is possible that changes in society and industry have been accompanied by an increase in the number of students more interested in and curious about highly specialized professions rather than company sales or office work. However, although a slight rising trend was noted in the realistic scale related to technical professions, none of the other scales exhibited particularly conspicuous upward trends. Developments should be watched closely to see whether the decline in interest and curiosity continues from here on or if new trends will be observed.

We need to note that while we studied the current situation and changes related to junior and senior high students' vocational interests, we were not able to sufficiently investigate background factors such as the types of circumstances that led to the occurrence of the changes. Unearthing the main factors to elucidate some sort of explanation and interpretation for the reasons for the declining interest levels in 2005 data compared to 1991 and the reasons behind the downward trends in enterprising and conventional scales will be a subject for the future.

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What Influences Workers in Deciding to Support Unions?: Evidence from Japan
– Focus on Workers' Understanding of Their Rights –

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Introduction

This paper, as an empirical study, aims to clarify the factors affecting a non-union worker's decision to support unions. In particular, attention is paid to the influence of workers' understanding of their legal rights in supporting unions. This support that is shown from workers[1] means that they regard unions as a necessity.

The estimated union density[2] in Japan was 19.6% in June 2003, the first time since the start of the survey in 1947 that it fell below 20% (Trade Union Membership Survey, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare). Cited factors behind the drop in union density include a decrease in the number of union members caused by redundancies occurring within unionised companies, and changes in the industrial structure and employment patterns that lower the rate of new union density[3].

However, the decline in union density is not solely attributable to the abovementioned externals factors. It has been suggested that internal factors, such as low support for unions among workers employed in a non-unionised company (The Japan Institute of Labour, 1993: Chapter 3) and the lack of effort on the part of unions to unionise workers who do not yet belong to any union (Freeman and Rebick, 1989: 581-584). In other words, it can be argued that not only factors on a macro or company level, but also factors on a micro

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[1] In Japan, a minimum of two persons is required in order to form a labour union: they simply hold a conference concerning the formation of the union, approve regulations, and elect a union executive.

[2] The estimate union density is computed as the number of union members divided by the number of employees recorded in the Labour Force Survey of the Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and multiplied by 100. However, note that because the number of employees includes executives and other workers who do not normally belong to unions, an estimated union density computed using as the denominator the number of employees eligible for union membership will be slightly greater than one computed in the way just cited.

[3] The rate of new union density is computed as the number of workers who have newly joined unions divided by the number of employees, and multiplied by 100.

level (individual worker's support for the unions) are of significant importance in the determination of union density.

There have been environmental changes since the 1990s which have influenced the employment life of workers besides the decrease in union density, such as an increase in the variety of employment patterns, the enforcement of a new employment law and the development of employment system based on individual contracts. This suggests that there is a growing need for each worker to have a thorough understanding of the law to protect their individual employment rights.

For instance, the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law regards child-care leave as the right of any worker who is a parent; however quite a few small and medium-sized companies do not accommodate child-care leave within their work rules. As a result, some workers employed in such companies mistakenly believe that they are not allowed to take child-care leave. However, with a correct understanding of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law, it is possible to enforce the right to receive child-care leave despite the lack of such provisions within the company's work rules. Therefore, even in the case where workers are employed at non-unionised companies or where human resource management is inadequate, it is possible for them to protect their rights provided that there is a solid understanding of these rights. This is also applicable to workers who are already members of a union, since it is only they who can check whether their workplace actually conforms to employment laws.

When workers have an understanding of their employment rights, it is only natural that they would like to enforce these rights when necessary. However, in reality it is quite common to encounter difficulties when attempting to enforce one's rights by oneself. It is at such times that workers are likely to understand the necessity of unions and as a result starts to consider becoming a member[4]. On the other hand, even the case where a worker is not a member of a union or is employed at a non-unionized company, they will not feel the need to become a member if these rights are able to be enforced on their own.

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[4] Studies of the situation in Western countries have also revealed that workers opt to join labour unions when they are dissatisfied with working conditions and wages but have neither the formal means, such as individual negotiation with employers, or the informal means, including quitting, absence without permission and so on. See Kochan (1980, 149-150), Maxey and Mohrman (1980, 331-332).

Hence, it can be said that an understanding of workers' rights carries the possibility not only of enabling protection of these rights individually, but also of making workers conscious of the necessity of unions as a means to protect their rights. In short, workers' knowledge of their rights can be seen as influencing their decision to support unions as well as enhancing the ability and possibility of protecting their own fundamental rights. However, in Japan there are reports that suggest a decline in workers' level of understanding of their rights. (Hara and Sato 2004, and NHK 2003).

Along with the decline of union density in Japan, there has been numerous research conducted on the factors that determine union density on a macro-level. Cited factors behind this decline in union density include those of a macro economic, political, sociological and environmental nature, as well as changes in legislations (Freeman and Rebick 1989; Itoh and Takeda 1990; Tsuru 2002: Chapter3). However, in Japan there have been only a few analyses conducted of the factors that determine workers support for unions, whereas in Europe and the US many previous studies of this area exist (Hartley, 1992). Furthermore, even in Europe and the US no studies have been conducted on whether workers understanding of their employment rights influences their decision to support unions. Therefore, this paper will verify whether the factors that influence support for unions as indicated by previous studies conducted abroad are the same in Japan, and will also analyse the influence of workers knowledge of their rights in relation to their support of unions.

The paper is organized as follows. In Chapter II, following an explanation of the theoretical framework of this paper, previous studies are outlined and hypotheses are presented and verified. Chapter III deals with the explanation of data and the analytical framework. Chapter IV offers arguments concerning the results of the empirical analysis . Lastly, in Chapter V conclusions are presented and comments are made on the future tasks of unions concerning unionisation.

. Theory
Previous literature

A considerable number of studies, both theoretical and empirical, have been conducted on workers' support for unions, and Hartley (1992) offers a detailed survey of such papers. He surveys research, mostly dealing with the situation in western countries, on various academic areas such as economics

(Disney 1990; Farber and Saks 1980), social psychology (Premack and Hunter 1988) and management (Brief and Rude 1981; Youngblood *et al*. 1984). These previous studies confirm that there exist common factors that influence workers in supporting unions. They include: dissatisfaction with pecuniary working conditions – namely wage levels – and non-pecuniary working conditions, such as the nature of the job, the work environment and employer-employee relationships; appreciation by and attitudes towards unions of surrounding parties such as family, colleagues and union leaders; and failure to find a means to resolve dissatisfaction with working conditions. The paper concludes that, among these factors, a positive evaluation of unions in particular encourages workers to support unions.

Some outstanding previous studies include Kochan (1980), Farber and Saks (1980), Premack and Hunter (1979), and, recently, Charlwood (2002). The following section presents outlines of these four articles and confirmation of the position of this paper within the series of studies on workers support for unions.

This paper could be viewed as being in line with Farber and Saks (1980) in two aspects. Firstly, both studies carry out empirical analyses on a theoretical framework, where a worker makes a rational decision on whether or not he or she should support unions in order to maximise their expected utility. Secondly, the two articles make the common observation that variables, such as perceived union instrumentality and dissatisfaction with working conditions, play a central role in determining the decision of a worker on whether or not he or she supports unions. On the other hand, the two papers are different in the sense that while this paper makes use of a "hypothetical propensity to unionise" as a dependent variable, that is a variable concerning the opinion of the worker concerning whether he or she regards unions are necessary or not, Farber and Saks (1980) use an action actually observed, that is voting in an election for union representatives in National Labor Relations Board in the US.

On the other hand, the dependent and explanatory variables used in this paper are similar to those in Kochan (1980) and Charlwood (2002). Dependant variables analyse a variable focusing on the individual's propensity to unionise. More specifically, Kochan (1980) uses answers to the question, 'Would you vote for union representation if an election were held in your workplace?' as a dependent variable, and similarly Charlwood (2002) uses 'If there were a trade union at your workplace, how likely would you be to join?', both of which

highlight the outlook of workers regarding their support of unions. Secondly, as for the explanatory variables, Charlwood (2002) and Kochan (1980) focus on the role of the psychological process in which a worker comes to the conclusion to support unions, in particular the role of a positive evaluation of unions; these viewpoints are shared by this paper.

Finally, the social psychological study of Premack and Hunter (1988), is a meta-analysis of previous US research on decision-making by individuals concerning whether they support unions. This study is identical to previous studies in the way that it has shown various factors, such as the degree of satisfaction with wage levels and other financial working conditions, non-economic conditions such as work environment and employer-employee relationships, and the effectiveness of unions – that is, their perceived instrumentality in helping workers to obtain outcomes – to be determinants of whether or not workers support unions. Nevertheless, Premack and Hunter (1988) are different from this article in that the former is unique in its analytical framework where these factors have interactive impacts on one another.

In the meantime, surprisingly few studies have been conducted on an individual's decision-making process concerning the support of unions with particular reference to the situation in Japan (Boyles 1993; Nakamura *et al.* 1988: Chapter 7; The Japan Institute of Labour 1993). Among the limited number of such studies, Boyles (1993) reports findings that an affirmative assessment of the effects of unions has a positive impact on workers decision to support unions, as is the same with the findings of cases in Europe and the U.S.

Similar to Farber and Saks (1980), this paper employs an empirical analysis with an expected utility maximisation model, and examines whether or not factors such as workers assessment of the effectiveness of unions – factors found to be influential in supporting unions in western countries – have a similar influence in Japan. It also sheds light on the possible influence of workers' knowledge of their rights on the decision-making process of whether or not to support unions, which no other studies have yet sought to clarify. The empirical analysis adopted in this paper gives as much consideration as possible to "simultaneity." In summary, we believe that this paper makes a new contribution to this field of study in two aspects: it has incorporated knowledge of workers' rights into its analytical framework; and has attempted to avoid simultaneity as much as possible.

Analytical framework

We'll explain the framework of an econometric model used in this paper in accordance with Maddala (1983, 46-49). Now consider a variable, s_i representing the support of a worker i, to unions. s_i takes the value of 1, 2, 3, or 4: when $s_i = 4$, the worker thinks that unions are necessary at any cost; when $s_i = 3$, they think that it is better to have one union; when $s_i = 2$, they think that it does not matter either way; and $s_i = 1$, they think that it is better without any union. In other words, s_i is an ordinal variable indicating the degree of support shown towards unions: the greater value it takes, the stronger the support of unions by the worker. It is reasonable to believe that a person who finds unions more necessary is apt to support them more strongly.

Next, let us think about a worker i, who does not belong to any labour union. Assume that the expected utility that the worker i thinks they will be able to obtain by joining a union when they announce that they support unions, is $EU_{s,i}$. Although $EU_{s,i}$ is unobservable, the choice of the worker, s_i, is observable. The worker i expresses his intention to support the union according to the degree of s_i when the expected utility exceeds a certain level and the utility level is greater than any utilities which the worker could obtain when they expressed intent to support other unions. Set the expected utility that satisfies all these conditions at EU^*_i. Now, if

$$EU^*_i = EU_{s,i} > Max\ EU_{k,i} \quad k_i = 1, 2, 3, 4 \quad k_i \neq s_i$$

and,

$$\alpha_{s_i-1} < EU^*_i \leq \alpha_{s_i} \quad s_i = 1, 2, 3, 4,$$

then worker i expresses their intention to support unions at the degree of s_i. Here the variable α_{s_i} is an arbitrary constant satisfying

$$\alpha_0 < \alpha_1 < \alpha_2 < \alpha_3 < \alpha_4,$$

$$\alpha_0 = -\infty, \quad \alpha_4 = +\infty.$$

In other words, worker i expresses their intention to support the union at the degree of s_i so as for the expected utility to be greater than α_{s_i-1} but the same as or smaller than α_{s_i}. It is natural for a worker to stand strongly by a union that will provide a greater expected utility if they join.

Now, assume that EU^*_i consists of a linear part described as explanatory

variable $\beta'x_i$ and a probabilistic error term u_i. Then the formula showing worker i's support of the union can be expressed as:

$$EU^*_i = \beta'x_i + u_i \quad i = 1, 2, \cdots, n$$

$$
\begin{aligned}
s_i &= 4 &&iff\ \alpha_3 < EU^*_i \\
s_i &= 3 &&iff\ \alpha_2 < EU^*_i \leq \alpha_3 \\
s_i &= 2 &&iff\ \alpha_1 < EU^*_i \leq \alpha_2 \\
s_i &= 1 &&otherwise
\end{aligned}
\quad (1)
$$

This paper, assuming that the error term u_i in equation (1) has a standard normal distribution, applies the ordered probit model with support of unions as a dependent variable.

Factors that influence support of unions
(a) Knowledge of workers' rights

What is the influence of workers knowing their own rights in making a decision to support unions?

If workers have some knowledge of their rights, they naturally wish to exercise them. Since these are their legitimate rights, if they could exercise them without belonging to a union or even if they worked for a non-unionised company, they would not see it necessary to join any union, and therefore the expected utility obtained from joining a union would be small. However, in many few cases it might be difficult in practice for individual workers to exercise their rights on their own. Due to this, the expected utility to be gained through collective bargaining – that is, joining labour unions – is likely to increase, and workers are more apt to support the idea of organizing individual workers. Kochan (1980: 149-150) also presents a theoretical hypothesis that workers' determination to join a union becomes stronger where they are dissatisfied with their working conditions or wages and other financial aspects, and where they cannot find a means (such as negotiations with their employer, turnover, or absenteeism) to overcome this dissatisfaction by themselves. Therefore, it is unforeseen whether the possession of knowledge of workers' rights may have an impact on workers' decision-making concerning support of unions, and if so, whether it is positive or negative.

Hypothesis 1: One cannot tell whether the possession of knowledge of workers' rights may have a positive impact on workers' decision-making

concerning support of unions or whether it may have a negative impact.

(b) Perceived union instrumentality

As clarified by Charlwood (2002), Farber and Saks (1980), Premack and Hunter (1988) and Youngblood *et al.* (1984), if workers have a favourable impression of the unions as useful or for other reasons, the expected utility will rise and workers will show stronger support for unions. Therefore, a positive remark on the effectiveness of unions can be expected to exert a favourable impact on the workers support of unions.

On the other hand, in the case where workers have a negative impression, they are likely to set their expected utility at a low level. Therefore, this negative impression can be expected to have an unfavourable impact on workers' support of unions.

> **Hypothesis 2**: If workers have a positive impression of unions as useful or for other reasons, they will show stronger support for unions.

> **Hypothesis 3**: If workers have a negative impression of unions, they will stop supporting them.

(c) The presence of a union in the workplace

It is conceivable that if there is a union in the company, the workers of that company may show strong support for unions because they may feel close to their own union or have easy access to it. On the other hand, workers who do not appreciate the activities of their unions may well decline to support unions in general, even if there is one available at hand. Accordingly, it is considered that the presence of a labour union in the workplace, depending on whether or not the union functions properly, could have a positive or a negative impact on workers' expected utility to be realized by joining the union.

> **Hypothesis 4**: The presence of a union in the workplace may have a positive or negative impact on workers' decision-making process concerning whether or not they should support unions.

(d) The influence of close persons

Several studies, including Gomez *et al*. (2002) and Youngblood *et al*. (1984),

have clarified that information concerning unions from, and comments by family members, friends, colleagues in the workplace and other close associates have an impact on the decision-making process of workers themselves concerning whether or not they should support unions. In this regard, this paper will use a variable indicating whether or not the spouses of workers belong to unions is a proxy representing the general attitude of such close persons towards labour unions. That the spouse of a worker has an approving opinion of labour unions and makes favourable comments concerning them is likely to raise the worker's subjective views on unions, and have an affirmative impact on the expected utility from joining a union. In the same fashion, if the spouse has a disapproving opinion and provides information about unions accordingly, these comments and information will have a negative impact on the expected utility that the worker may obtain by joining a union. Consequently, it is theoretically unclear how the situation of a worker's spouse belonging to unions affects the worker in their support of unions.

Hypothesis 5: A spouse being a member of a union may have a positive or a negative effect on a worker's support for unions.

(e) Voice or exit?

In the case where a worker feels anxious about the nature of their job or a deterioration in their working conditions, their expected utility to be gained by joining a union will not rise, so long as they can relieve their anxiety via individual negotiation with superiors or employers on their own initiative, or has an exit option as suggested in Freeman and Medoff (1984). However, if it proves difficult to solve these problems in such ways, the expected utility to be gained by joining a union seems likely to rise. Thus, it is not theoretically clear what influence a worker's anxiety as such has on their decision concerning whether or not to support unions.

On the other hand, concern over losing their job may be counted among the personal problems that individual workers face. However, it is not theoretically certain either how this concern affects the decision-making process regarding whether or not to support unions in the sense that this depends, as in the cases of concerns arising from daily work, on the availability of an exit option.

Hypothesis 6: It is not certain whether a worker who has work-related concerns or feels anxious about a deterioration in their working conditions will always decide to support unions.

Hypothesis 7: It is not certain whether a worker who is anxious about losing their job will always decide to support unions.

(f) The influence of employment status

The more a worker is committed to their workplace, the higher their expected utility to be gained by joining a union will be (Kochan 1980 145). In other words, if a comparison is made between full-time permanent workers (hereinafter referred to as typical workers) whose term of employment contracts are until retirement age, and other types of workers (i.e. atypical workers)[5], the former are likely to show stronger support of unions..

Hypothesis 8: Typical workers are more likely to show stronger support of unions than atypical ones.

(g) Other variables

In addition to the variables explained so far, various other variables will be incorporated into the estimation model: those controlling individual attributes, such as age, gender, educational level, and occupational type; those controlling attributes of the workplace, such as industry and company size; and those controlling pecuniary working conditions, such as annual income. We'll pay attention to wages and company size. It is conceivable that workers with lower incomes will have less favourable working conditions, and that the expected utility to be obtained by joining unions will be higher.

Where company size is concerned, a worker employed at a larger company is likely to have a greater expected utility since it seems that it is more difficult for employees at larger companies to tell their dissatisfaction with the job and working conditions directly to their employers, so that they feel more strongly the need for a union as a negotiation device.

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[5] Atypical workers means full-time workers whose contract terms are until their retirement age; part-time workers, and dispatched workers.

Hypothesis 9: A worker with a lower annual income will show stronger support of unions.

Hypothesis 10: A worker working for a larger company will show stronger support of unions.

Arrangements to avoid simultaneity

The possibility of simultaneity cannot be denied in the empirical analysis conducted in this paper. Simultaneity means the problem of an opposite causal relationship: a worker may know their legitimate rights as a worker because they support unions. For example, in some cases a worker supports unions because they have a certain serious problem in the workplace, or because of some personal concerns, such as possible reallocation or transfer to a section with less favorable working conditions, and possible dismissal from the current job. In such circumstances, it is possible that the worker will investigate all available means to protect their working life and as a result gain knowledge of workers' rights. This paper has made every effort to prevent such simultaneity by taking such situations into account and removing the impact of such factors by incorporating explanatory variables representing work-related concerns, such as those regarding losing one's job.

Data and Analysis

Data

The analysis to be conducted hereinafter will use micro data on workers from the 5th Questionnaire Survey on Work and Life of Workers (the RIALS Survey) by the Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards. The RIALS Survey, conducted in April 2003, was addressed to employees in their 20s to 50s working for private firms and living in the Tokyo Metropolitan area, Kansai area or other ordinance-designated cities across the country[6] [7].

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[6] These are the cities of Sapporo, Sendai, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Fukuoka and Kita-Kyushu.

[7] Concerning the extraction of samples, the criteria for sample allocation taking into account the population of employees in the private sector in each area, and the distribution of workers in terms of gender and age recorded in "the 1997 Employment Status Survey," are available for the Tokyo Metropolitan area, Kansai area and other ordinance-designated cities. Based on the sample allocation, 1,000 workers living in the Tokyo Metropolitan areas or Kansai area, and 1,000 workers living in other ordinance-designated cities – 2,000 workers in all – are extracted from monitors (approximately 160,000 persons across the country) registered at a monitoring company, and questionnaire sheets are distributed by post. Effective returns in this case totalled

The analysis of this paper will make use of data concerning full-time employees whose contract terms are until their retirement age and atypical workers, neither of whom belong to any labour unions. Workers in executive posts are excluded from the scope of the analysis on the grounds that the analysis is concerned only with workers for membership of labour unions[8].

Dependent Variable

In this empirical analysis, the dependent variable is a variable indicating whether or not workers support unions. The RIALS Survey asks the question, "do you think that unions are necessary," and provides four choices of answer: "absolutely necessary," "necessary, if anything," "does not matter either way," and "not necessary." The answers will be used as an index in gauging the degree of workers' support for unions[9].

Measures

This section gives an account of three summative scales that will be utilised as explanatory variables in this analysis: the degree of understanding of workers' rights; recognition of the effectiveness of unions; and the negative impressions of unions (see table 1). First, we'll explain the degree of understanding of workers' rights.

The RIALS Survey asks whether six given items are included in legitimate workers' rights: "to form a labour union," "to take child-care leave until the time a child reaches the age of one," "to call for premium wages in the case of overtime," "to receive a wage equal to or above the minimum wage set by the government," "to call for at least 10 days of paid-leave per year," and "to call for unpaid salaries even if the firm goes bankrupt." The respondents score a point when they give a correct answer, and the sum of the points earned is viewed as the degree of understanding of workers' rights (hereinafter referred to as "the degree of understanding of rights" (See Table 1). The degree of understanding of rights is scored from "0" to "6": a worker scoring more points has a greater knowledge of these rights. The degree of understanding is a summative scale, and the scale's internal validity as indicated by Chronbach's

1,792, with a rate of effective returns of 89.6 percent. For further details, see The Research Institute for Advanced of Living Standards (2003).

8 Proviso No. 1, Article 2 of the Trade Union Law
9 Boyles (1993) also uses the same approach.

Table 1　Main Explanatory Variables (summative scales)

Names of variable	Questions	Options	Methods of creating variable	Signs of coefficient to be expected
Degree of understanding of workers' rights	What do you think are legitimate workers' rights?	1:to form a union; 2: to take child-care leave until the time a child reaches the age of one; 3: to call for premium wages in the case of overtime; 4: to receive a wage equal to or above the minimum wage set by the government; 5: to call for at least 10 days of paid-leave per year; and 6: to call for unpaid salaries even if the firm goes bankrupt.	A point is given if a respondent gives a correct answer. The sum of the points earned is viewed as the degree of understanding of workers' rights	?
Recognition of the effectiveness of unions	What influence do you think union activities have on union members?	1: employment stability; 2:maintaining of and improvement in wage levels; 3: maintaining of and improvement in bonus payments; 4: maintaining of and improvement in retirement allowance; 5: useful in time of necessity (e.g., when a firm goes bankrupt etc.); 6: allowing workers to obtain information concerning corporate management; 7: making it easier to take paid holidays; 8: reducing responsibility in the workplace; 9: reducing unpaid overtime; 10: rectifying unequal working conditions; 11: fair judgment of the performance of members; 12: helping to reflect the will of members on management; 13: making it easy to convey dissatisfaction or complaints to management; 14: others	Each respondent is given 14 items, and asked in which items unions play an effective role. The total number of items chosen – divided by 14 for standardization – serves as the variable.	+
Negative impressions of unions	What is the disadvantage of becoming a member of a union?	1: it may give an unfavorable impression to managers (affecting promotion, up-grading, disrupt the shuffling of members etc.); 2: expensive membership fees; 3: time-consuming union activities; 4: obligation to support election activities; 5: alienating members from co-workers in the workplace; 6: extra duties and responsibilities; 7: subject to prejudice on account of their ideological leanings; 8: others	Each respondent is given eight items, and asked to choose items that they believe represent the disadvantages in joining a union. The total number of items chosen – divided by 8 for standardization – serves as the variable.	−

Source: "The 5th Questionnaire Survey on Work and Life of Workers," Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards.

alpha was 0.61.

Second, the variable indicating recognition of the effectiveness of unions is formulated in the following fashion: the workers surveyed were given 14 items as listed in Table 1, and asked in which items unions played an effective role. The total number of items chosen – divided by 14 for standardisation – serves as the variable. It shows, therefore, whether unorganised workers believe that unions are effective in maintaining and improving labour conditions. In other words, it shows what kinds of advantages the workers surveyed consider unionisation has. Chronback's alpha takes the value of 0.7119, exceeding 0.7 point.

Third, the variable indicating a negative impression of unions is formulated in the following fashion: the workers surveyed were given the eight items listed in Table 1, and asked to choose items that they believed represented disadvantages in joining a union. The total number of items chosen – divided by 8 for standardisation – serves as the variable. Chronbach's alpha is somewhat low, at 0.5652. To deal with this, another estimation will be conducted with a dummy variable that takes "1" for workers who have chosen at least one out of the eight items, and "0" for those who have chosen none.

Both the variable indicating a negative impression of unions and this dummy variable, as is obvious from the choices given, such as "the need to pay an expensive membership fee" and "union activities consume time," are variables indicating the degrees of disadvantage that the unorganised workers surveyed believe they might suffer if they joined a union. In other words, these variables represent hurdles that unions need to overcome when organising workers.

Apart from the three variables explained above, two more dummy variables will be built into the model: the presence of a union in the workplace; and the participation or otherwise of spouses in the labour unions (see Table 2).

Apart from the analysis described above, this paper will also verify the Exit and Voice model presented in Freeman and Medoff (1984), making use, as explanatory variables, of a dummy variable representing work-related concerns and another representing concerns over losing one's job, at the same time making every effort to avoid simultaneity. These two variables will be outlined in detail later.

As shown in Table 2, a dummy variable is formulated so as to represent a situation where a worker faces certain difficulties in the workplace. More specifically, the variable takes "1" for the respondents who answered that they

Table 2   main explanatory variables (dummy variables)

Names of variable	Questions	Options that are defined to be '1'	Options that are defined to be '0'	Signs of coefficient to be expected
The presence of a union	Is there a union at work?	Yes	No	?
The membership of a spouse	Is your spouse an employed worker? Does the spouse belong to a union?	Yes and he/she does.	Others (including those who do not have a spouse.)	?
Work-related worries	Do you feel anxious about work or any deterioration in working conditions?	Feel strongly, or feel slightly	Do not feel very much, or feel little	?
Worries about losing one's job	Do you feel anxious about losing your current job within the year?	Feel strongly, or feel slightly	Do not feel very much, or feel little	?

Source: "The 5th Questionnaire Survey on Work and Life of Workers," Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards.

"feel strongly" or "feel slightly" concerned about the work itself or working conditions in the companies they work for; and "0" for those who answered that they "do not feel very much" or "feel little" such concern.

Another dummy variable, representing problems that workers personally face, covers concerns about losing one's job (see Table 2). More specifically, this variable takes "1" for respondents who answered that they "feel strongly" or "feel slightly" concerned about the possibility of losing their current job within one year; and "0" for those who answered that they "do not feel very much" or "feel little" such concern.

In addition to the variables explained so far, various other variables will be incorporated into the estimation model: those controlling individual attributes, such as age, gender, educational level, occupational type and form of employment; those controlling attributes of the workplace, such as industry and company size; and those controlling pecuniary working condition, such as annual income. Here "occupational type" defines respondents who answer "managerial post" as "workers in managerial posts"; those who answer "specialised or engineering post," "clerical post," "sales," or "services" as "white-collar workers"; and those who answer "security and guard," "carrier or telecommunication," "production technique, construction or other labourer" as "blue-collar workers." Table 3 illustrates the sample distribution to be used for the estimation.

Empirical Results

An ordered probit analysis has been conducted in accordance with equation (1) with the degree of support of labour unions as a dependent variable. The result of the estimation is shown in Table 4 (descriptive statistics in Table 5). In estimated equation (i), the variable indicating recognition of the effectiveness of unions and the variable indicating negative impressions of unions are removed. This has revealed that an understanding of workers' rights has a positive, statistically significant effect on the support of labour unions, with a coefficient of 0.1568. Estimated equation (ii) is an equation incorporating the variables representing recognition of the effectiveness of unions and negative impressions of unions in equation (i), and equation (iii) has the dummy variable showing negative impressions of unions instead of the variable showing negative impressions of unions.

Table 3　Distribution of Samples

The presence of a union at work		
Yes180 (25.3%)	No　530 (74.7%)	
Industries		
Manufacturing　182 (25.6%)	Industries other than manufacturing　528 (74.4%)	
Company size		
Less than 100 employees　351 (49.4%)	100 or more but less than 1,000 employees　211 (29.7%)	1,000 or more employees　148 (20.8%)
Gender		
Males　432 (60.8%)	Females　278 (39.1%)	
Age		
20s　172　24.2　　30s　155 (21.8%)	40s　192 (27.0%)　　50s　191 (26.9%)	
Educational level		
Junior high school/ high school graduates 289 (40.7%)	Higher vocational school / two-year college graduates　153 (21.5%)	University / postgraduate graduates　267 (37.6%)
Occupational type		
Managerial post124 (17.4%)	White-collar　493 (69.4%)	Blue-collar　93 (13.1%)
Employment status		
Typical workers　519 (73.0%)	Atypical workers　191 (26.9%) Of whom, part-time and *arubaito* workers　135 (19.0%)	

Source: "The 5th Questionnaire Survey on Work and Life of Workers," Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards.

Note: The figures are the number of observations, those in parentheses being the proportions. The sum of the proportions is not necessarily 100%. The total number of samples is 710.

Table 4 Results of estimations by the ordered probit model concerning support of unions

Dependant variable support of unions absolutely necessary=4, necessary if anything=3, does not matter either way=2, not necessary=1

Explanatory variable	(i) Coefficient	(i) pseudo t-value	(ii) Coefficient	(ii) pseudo t-value	(iii) Coefficient	(iii) pseudo t-value
The presence of a union	0.3050 **	2.44	0.3772 ***	2.97	0.3766 ***	2.96
The membership of a spouse	0.1130	0.69	0.0936	0.56	0.1059	0.64
Understanding of workers' rights	0.1568 ***	5.59	0.0785 ***	2.58	0.0791 ***	2.60
Manufacturing sector dummy	0.2629	0.27	0.0443	0.44	0.0460	0.46
Companies with 100 or more but less than 1,000 employees	0.2895 ***	2.79	0.2648 **	2.52	0.2696 ***	2.57
Companies with 1,000 or more employees	0.3061 **	2.24	0.2631 *	1.90	0.2781 **	2.01
Reference group: companies with less than 100 employees						
Age	0.0127 ***	2.71	0.0086 *	1.80	0.0086 *	1.80
Male dummy	0.2109 *	1.91	0.1560	1.39	0.1525	1.36
Higher vocational school / two-year college graduates	0.0493	0.42	0.0524	0.45	0.0547	0.47
University and postgraduate graduates	-0.0102	-0.10	0.0668	0.62	0.0788	0.73
Reference group: junior high/ high school graduates						
Managerial posts dummy	-0.3854 **	-2.04	-0.3049	-1.59	-0.3199 *	-1.67
White-collar dummy	-0.0147	-0.11	0.0077	0.06	0.0019	0.01
Reference group: Blue-collar						
Typical worker dummy	-0.0047	-0.04	-0.0570	-0.45	-0.0487	-0.39
Work-related concerns	0.3108 ***	3.37	0.3139 ***	3.36	0.3175 ***	3.40
Concerns about losing one's current job	0.0315	0.31	0.0215		0.0240	
Annual wage: 1,000,000 yen or more but less than 500,000 yen	-0.2330	-1.44	-0.2980 *	-1.82	-0.2913 *	-1.78
Annual wage: 5,000,000 yen or more but less than 10,000,000 yen	-0.2032	-0.98	-0.2436	-1.16	-0.2438	-1.16
Annual wage: 10,000,000 yen or more	-0.4648 *	-1.67	-0.4528	-1.61	-0.4362	-1.55
Reference group: annual wage: less than 1,000,000 yen						
Recognition of the effectiveness of unions			2.1661 ***	7.73	2.1016 ***	7.64
Negative impressions of unions			-0.5358 *	-1.96		
Negative impressions of unions (dummy)					-0.2857 **	-2.40
_cut1		-0.8404		-0.9996		-1.1216
_cut2		0.6786		0.5869		0.4703
_cut3		2.2858		2.2896		2.1753
Number of observations		710		710		710
LR Chi-square		94.14		155.70		157.64
Prob > Chi2		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000
Pseudo R-squared		0.0608		0.1005		0.1018

Source: "The 5th Questionnaire Survey on Work and Life of Workers," Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards.
Note: ***, **, and * denote significance at the levels of 1, 5, and 10%, respectively, for the two-sided test.

A comparison of the findings of the estimations by equations (ii) and (iii) with the findings of the estimation by equation (i) suggests that the positive effect of an understanding of workers' rights does not disappear when the variable indicating recognition of the effectiveness of unions is included in the estimated equation, even though the latter has a strong effect, as revealed in various previous studies. This means that the possession of knowledge of workers' rights has a strong effect on the support of unions. On the other hand, there is little difference in estimate results between equation (ii), which has the summative variable showing the negative impressions, and equation (iii), which has a dummy variable instead. Therefore, in the following section interpretations and implications are given with reference to equation (ii) (Row 4 of Table 4).

First, the estimation has revealed that a higher degree of understanding of workers' rights means the stronger support among workers for labour unions at a statistically significant level (with a coefficient of 0.0785). A worker cannot judge whether the current working conditions around them are acceptable or not unless they are informed of workers' rights. Without such knowledge, they will not know what to do to avoid problems even if faced with an infringement of these rights, and it will not be able to even come up with any idea of accessing some means or other to avoid such problems. On the contrary, familiarity with workers' rights will stimulate workers to make efforts to improve their working conditions, and prompt them to access the means to do so. Moreover, in the case where a worker who wishes to have their working conditions improved has the chance to negotiate with their employer on an individual basis and exercise their legitimate rights as a result of the negotiation, they will not be interested in labour unions. Even, so the results of the estimation shown above have shown that a worker better informed on workers' rights tends to show stronger support of labour unions. This can be interpreted as an indication that workers are aware of the difficulty in exercising workers' rights on their own, and naturally tend to seek a collective voice and negotiations, provided that they understand workers' rights correctly.

The interpretation made above further suggests that it is not necessarily true that the diversification of employment statue, the diversification of workers' views, and the increasing trend of systems towards individual wages on an individual basis have all suppressed workers' expectations of labour

unions as the traditional system of collectively reconciling interests[10].

Second, the analysis has also revealed that workers who have more favourable opinions of unions, or have less negative impressions, tend to show stronger support of them (coefficients of 2.1661 and -0.5358, respectively). This suggests that expectations of labour unions in Japan, as in western and other countries, have a positive effect on a worker's decision to support them. In the meantime, the absolute value of the coefficient for approving recognition of the effectiveness of unions is greater than that of the coefficient for negative impressions of the unions. This implies that an approving impressions on unions has a stronger, positive effect on the support of unions than negative impressions.

Third, the analysis has made it clear that the unorganised employees of firms where there are unions support unions at a statistically significant level (with the coefficient of 0.3772). In other words, it can be said that unorganised employees of firms with no unions are not interested in participation in a union.

Fourth, the fact that their spouses belong to unions does not have an effect on workers' decisions to support unions. This may be attributable to the fact that the unions to which the spouses belong do not function properly, or that the workers do not talk about union activities at home. Either way, this result suggests that no externalities of union activities occur.

Fifth, it has been shown that workers with greater work-related concerns, such as employment insecurity and deterioration of working conditions, tend to show stronger support of unions (with a coefficient of 0.3139). If a worker has a choice to either alleviate their concerns through individual negotiation or to quit the job, their support of unions will be lower. Accordingly, the results of the estimation suggest that even nowadays labour unions can be expected to serve as a device of collective negotiations.

Sixth, it has been found that workers with lower incomes tend to show stronger support of unions (with a coefficient of 0.2648). Behind this lies the fact that workers with less favorable working conditions are more eager to join

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[10] Furaker and Berglund (2003, 585-587) shows that in Sweden vocational life is highly individualised, but many employees still think that labour unions, as a means of collective bargaining, are necessary for successful labour-management negotiations. Similarly, Sverke and Hellgren (2001, 174-177) point out that many Swedish employees do not find individual negotiations necessary, as they benefit considerably from collective bargaining.

a union. At the same time, workers at larger firms tend to show stronger support of unions (with a coefficient of 0.2631). This is perhaps attributable to the fact that it is likely to be more difficult for employees in larger firms to complain about the job or working conditions directly to the management, and thus they recognize the necessity of labour unions as a means of giving more power to negotiations. On the other hand, the fact that the coefficient for age takes a positive value, 0.0086, implies a tendency among younger workers to be less interested in unions.

Finally, where the coefficient for the dummy variable representing full-time employees with long period contract terms is concerned, it has been shown that there is no statistically significant difference between such full-time employees and atypical workers concerning their support for unions, even when disadvantages arising from joining unions, such as membership fees, are controlled. As clearly shown in Table 3, part-time and *arubaito* workers account for 70.6 percent of all the sample atypical workers used for the analysis. Although there is no difference between full-time employees and atypical workers concerning their support of unions, no substantial progress is currently observed in the unionisation of the latter type of workers. This seems attributable, as suggested by the estimation, to the facts that quite a large number of existing unions do not accord atypical workers eligibility for union membership, and that the unions do not make sufficient efforts in organizing workers.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has made use of micro data on workers to conduct an empirical analysis of determinants in unorganised workers' decision-making concerning whether or not to support unions. This section summarises the findings of the analysis and suggests tasks necessary for the unions to expand their membership. We have conducted an empirical analysis, shedding light on workers who do not belong to labour unions, and revealed that workers who understand workers' rights better tend to show stronger support of unions. However, various studies report that understanding among workers in Japan concerning workers' right has been declining (Hara and Sato 2004; NHK 2003). Efforts to encourage a deeper understanding can be considered to be a fundamental condition for unions to increase their membership.

The analysis has also found that unorganised employees in firms with no unions tend to pay no attention to unions. On the other hand, workers who have made approving comments on unions and those who have work-related concerns or are more anxious about a deterioration in working conditions tend to show stronger support of unions. All this suggests that, while there is a great potential for incorporating unorganised workers into unions, they are not sufficiently informed of the significance of being a member of such a union. Or it is possible, perhaps, that the existing unions do not make sufficient effort to organize such non-member workers and to provide information concerning union activities. It is the unions' own engagement in gaining publicity for their activities and encouraging unorganised workers to join unions that is most certain to obtain their support for the unions.

It has also been found that there is no difference between atypical workers – in particular, part-time workers – and full-time employees, whose contract terms are until their retirement age, in their support of unions, even if the factor that has been considered in general to be a disincentive for part-time workers to join unions – that is, the disadvantageous effects, such as membership charges – which are believed to arise when joining unions, have been removed. Despite this, the unionisation of part-time workers has not made any progress at the moment. This implies that unions are not making adequate efforts to incorporate part-time workers, as well as failing to accord them eligibility for the membership. In other words, it is highly possible to unionise part-time and other atypical workers, provided that unions address the issue in an appropriate manner.

Finally, we would like to suggest two tasks that this paper has not dealt with and where there is room for further investigation in the future. First, although the empirical analysis employed in this paper has attempted to avoid simultaneity as much as possible, it is undeniable that it has not succeeded in doing so completely. Therefore, it is essential to design a survey that includes items that can be used as instrumental variables.

Second, the low value of the coefficient of determination (Table 4) suggests the possibility that there are many more determinants affecting the support of unions other than the variables used in this analysis. Furthermore, further investigation is necessary on what kind of factors have an impact on workers' decision-making concerning whether or not to support unions.

**Table 5   Descriptive statistics of the ordered probit model
concerning support of unions**

	Number of observations	Average	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Support of unions	710	2.829	0.726	1	4
Presence of a union	710	0.253	0.435	0	1
The membership of a spouse	710	0.077	0.267	0	1
Understanding of workers' rights	710	2.619	1.565	0	6
Manufacturing sector dummy	710	0.256	0.436	0	1
Companies with less than 100 employees	710	0.494	0.5	0	1
Companies with 100 or more but less than 1,000 employees	710	0.297	0.457	0	1
Companies with 1,000 or more employees	710	0.208	0.406	0	1
Age	710	40.235	10.954	20	59
Male dummy	710	0.608	0.488	0	1
Junior high school/ high school graduates	710	0.407	0.491	0	1
Higher vocational school / two-year college graduates	710	0.215	0.411	0	1
University / postgraduate graduates	710	0.376	0.484	0	1
Managerial posts dummy	710	0.174	0.379	0	1
White-collar dummy	710	0.694	0.461	0	1
Blue-collar dummy	710	0.13	0.337	0	1
Typical worker dummy	710	0.73	0.443	0	1
Work-related worries	710	0.685	0.464	0	1
Concerns about losing one's current job	710	0.276	0.447	0	1
Annual wage of less than 1,000,000 yen	710	0.112	0.316	0	1
Annual wage of 1,000,000 yen or more but less than 5,000,000 yen	710	0.574	0.494	0	1
Annual wage of 5,000,000 yen or more but less than 10,000,000 yen	710	0.246	0.431	0	1
Annual wage of 10,000,000 yen or more	710	0.066	0.248	0	1
Recognition of the effectiveness of unions	710	0.226	0.177	0	1
Negative impressions of unions	710	0.226	0.162	0	1
Negative impressions of unions dummy	710	0.843	0.363	0	1

Source: "The 5th Questionnaire Survey on Work and Life of Workers," Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards.

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JILPT Research Activities

(International Workshop)

1. On February 17, 2006, JILPT held the "Workshop on International Migration and Labour Market in Asia" in Tokyo, an event organized with support from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). This workshop, which is convened once each year, is a vehicle used to pool statistical data on "migration" in the Asia region in one year and government policy responses to these trends, in seeking to share that information, study feasible policy directions and examine other issues. In support of that goal, participation in this year's gathering included experts and policymakers from China, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia and Japan.

    The workshop holds a session on a specific topic each year, with the subject chosen for this year's get-together consisting of the need for "bilateral agreements" that have come to be signed between countries for acceptance of foreign workers from Asia. The OECD and the ILO presented reports on this theme, with case studies from Malaysia, Korea and Taiwan also examined and further explored in the discussion session. The papers submitted to the workshop, along with other pertinent data, will soon be posted on the JILPT website.

2. On February 21, 2006, JILPT hosted "The 8th JILPT Comparative Labor Law Seminar" in Tokyo, an event used to address the theme of "Decentralizing Industrial Relations and the Role of Labor Unions and Employee Representatives." Invited to take part in the gathering were researchers from Britain, Germany, France, Italy, the United States, Australia, Korea and Taiwan, who joined in discussions of the key issues with their Japanese counterparts. The submitted papers will be published and are scheduled to be posted on the JILPT website.

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