

Career Analysis of Today's Japanese from Different Angles: Dramatic Change of the Japanese Society and Workers' Way of Life

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1. Objective and Background of the Research

The Japanese society today has come to accept much of the notion that a person's professional life is a continuous process of career formation. It is now not rare for firms to introduce the concept of career formation assistance in employment management of employees. On the other hand, many firms in recent years are reviewing the systems and practices of long-term continuous employment of workers, which have traditionally been a feature of Japanese firms. For these reasons, it has been pointed out that the importance is increasing for workers to voluntarily engage in developing their own occupational abilities for their professional career formation. One of the future challenges facing the Japanese society as regards individuals' professional career formation, therefore, is not only to wait for firms to make further improvements in employment management, but also to implement some form of an abilities development mechanism that workers can utilize even outside of the firms they are working for.

The objective of this research is to closely examine individual workers' long-term career formation spanning over 35 years to clarify which social systems workers have used for their professional career formation and consider measures that are effective in workers' career formation.

2. Research Method and Subjects

Research Method and Selection of Subjects

In this research, we conducted an interview survey on those who were subjects of career follow-up surveys of youth that the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Research¹ conducted for some ten years starting in 1970 on their life courses and professional careers after finishing junior high school, and analyzed the results of the interview survey. Although 25 years

¹ The National Institute of Employment and Vocational Research was a specialized research institute on labor administration and was a forerunner of the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training.

have already passed since the career follow-up surveys were concluded, we asked the subjects' cooperation in the interview survey, and those who agreed were made the subject of this survey.

Characteristics Concerning the Subjects

The career follow-up surveys mentioned above were carried out on 2,820 students in the third year of junior high school in 71 junior high schools in 7 prefectures; the students were born between 1953 and 1955. The surveys tracked the subjects from the time they were 15 to 26, and the results were compiled in 1988 as a theoretical demonstration of occupational adaptation of Japanese youths from ages 15 to 26 (Occupational History and Occupational Perception of Youth: General Report on Follow-up Research on Occupational Adaptation of Young Workers, National Institute of Employment and Vocational Research [1988]).

There are four characteristics concerning the subjects of this research. First, we can have a more precise grasp of their careers because we can refer to the results of the past surveys. Second, although it is a case study, it is a panel survey tracking the subjects' careers over a period of 35 years. Since there are hardly any long-term panel surveys in Japan, we can obtain data that cannot be obtained from other surveys. Third, as the subjects already have an experience of cooperating in the survey for 10 years, it is easier to obtain their understanding about and active cooperation in the survey that also deals with their psychological aspects. Fourth, the subjects, who were at the ages of 49 to 51 at the time of the survey, have now fully matured in terms of their profession.

Survey Method and the Number of Subjects

We conducted an interview survey on the subjects, using interview sheets and life history calendars. For the interviews, the interviewer met the subject in a place designated by the subject. Two types of interview sheets were prepared: one for men and one for women. Interview sheets for men contained questions on their occupational activities. For interview sheets for women, questions about marriage, childbirth, and parenting were also included, and questions about their occupational activities included community welfare activities and other social activities. This was because more women than men left their jobs after marriage, etc.

Because 25 years have already passed since the last survey was concluded

and some of them changed addresses, we could not reach about half of the respondents to the past surveys. Even when we could reach the respondents, some of them could not cooperate in the survey for one reason or another. In the end, 66 people (47 men and 19 women) agreed to cooperate in this survey.

3. Contents of the Survey and Method of Analysis

In this survey, we tracked middle-aged adults to see what life experience and professional careers they had during 35 years after finishing junior high school. In other words, while our main topic was related to occupation, we examined, from a broader perspective, how they carved out and built their careers in 35 years. More specifically, we focused on major life events (changes in their relation with their parents, marriage, health, etc.), career history, major events in their careers, and their response to those events that they experienced in 35 years. Through this, we analyzed how professional careers and occupational abilities were developed over the long term. Based on the results, we considered how social systems for assisting individuals' professional career formation and occupational abilities development should be.

We analyzed the subjects' professional careers and occupational abilities development behaviors from four viewpoints as shown below, and then comprehensively examined the results of the analyses on the four viewpoints. The first viewpoint involved the transition from school to occupation and included the importance of the period from days in school to beginning of first jobs and social and economic effects. The second was behaviors related to job change (including unemployment), which is a major event in career formation. The third was the relation between men's professional qualification and off-the-job training on one hand and career formation on the other, considered from the perspective of occupational abilities development and abilities certification. Our analysis on the first to third viewpoints was limited to male subjects. The fourth was women's career formation. On the fourth viewpoint, we analyzed not only women's professional careers, but also their life courses, because women can be observed to take different occupational behaviors from men, such as leaving a job after a childbirth, etc. The outline of the results of each analysis is shown below.

4. Results and Discussions

(1) Transition from School to Occupation

First, we checked how the subjects of our survey went into their first jobs by examining the results of the career follow-up surveys. The results showed that their transition from school to occupation was governed to a large extent by the social and economic environment surrounding them at the time. The subjects of our survey lived through a historical period where they were educated during the period of post-war high economic growth and where they went into employment before or after the first oil crisis. It was a time when the percentage of students going on to study at a senior high school rose substantially, with about 80% of their contemporaries attending a senior high school, and when the percentage of students going on to junior colleges and universities also rose. Moreover, the subjects went into employment during the 1970s during which time the oil crisis drastically changed the economy and the situation in the labor market. The situation in the labor market was very much different depending on when during the 1970s the subjects went into employment. In other words, in accordance with the last school the subjects attended, those who completed junior or senior high school went into employment before the effect of the oil crisis was felt, and those who completed junior college or university went into employment after the labor market deteriorated in the wake of the oil crisis. This macroeconomic environment at the time of entry into occupation and each person's microeconomic circumstances influenced each other in creating a dynamic process of selection of their first jobs.

We then compared the results of our survey with the results of a national survey² (JGSS). From JGSS, we used samples of 475 subjects born between 1953 and 1955, who were selected to accurately represent the nation. In the career follow-up surveys, records about schooling from the time of entry into first jobs until the age of 26 changed in only 5% (62 subjects) of all samples. Of these changes, 60% were changes from completion of junior high school to completion of senior high school, and 31% were from completion of senior high school to graduation from university. From both of these surveys, it became clear that it was difficult for the cohort born between 1953 and 1955 to improve

² The survey was taken as part of a joint research project conducted by Osaka University Commerce Institute of Regional Studies and the University of Tokyo Institute of Social Science from FY 1999 to 2003, and is called the Japanese General Social Surveys (JGSS).

their schooling once they left school and entered the labor market and that there was no social infrastructure for improving schooling and a second chance was not given to them (Table 1).

Table 1. Schooling-employment patterns and percentages

	Survey at 26	JGSS
Junior high, employment	13.6	12.3
Junior high, vocational school, employment	1.8	1.5
Senior high, dropout, employment	1.2	1.5
Senior high, employment	37.8	42.8
Senior high, vocational college, employment	4.5	6.6
Senior high, junior college (polytechnic), employment	2.0	15.7
Senior high, university, dropout, employment	1.6	0.6
Senior high, university, employment	29.4	18.2
Senior high, university, graduate school, employment	1.4	0.8
Others*	6.7	-
Number of subjects	1220	475

Note: "Others" are those who went from junior college to university and those who returned to school after being employed. Of the figure for "Others," 5% are those whose schooling records changed. In JGSS there are no subjects in this category, because all subjects were classified according to the last school attended.

On the timing of entering into occupation, about 90% of the subjects at all educational levels had transferred to the world of work by June after finishing school. On the channel of entry, we can see from the results of the analysis that by the time the subjects born between 1953 and 1955 went into employment, the method of recruiting new graduates who were selected and recommended by the schools the students attended was widely established. On the employment status and job type of the first job of the cohort born between 1953 and 1955, the large majority of them were in regular employment, and only 6% of all subjects were in non-regular employment. As regards job type, it was highly probable that a person could be employed in a white-collar clerical job if he or she had graduated from a senior high school; this was particularly the case for girls. Compared with graduates of senior high schools of recent years, those graduating from senior high schools in those days could have occupational aspirations, plan their future, and select their careers, as the types of jobs open to them were different from today.

Third, it became clear that planning done by students while they were still

in school, their positiveness about employment, and collection of information on occupational selection had a major impact on early career formation.

The subjects were employed in the mid-1970s. Unlike today, there was a system in those days where schools and employment security organs worked in concert to place new graduates and allow seamless, smooth transition from schools to the workplace. Even with this system in place, however, there was still a strong need for increasing students' knowledge about and interest in occupation and providing concrete information, and this was a key to smooth transition from the academic world to the world of work. Among our subjects, some had deep "regret" or "remorse" engraved on their hearts about their selection of their first jobs, even after 30 years of employment. This shows that in a person's long professional career, the process of transition from school to occupation has a significantly important meaning.

Fourth, the situation of the labor market at the time of completion of one's school education had a major impact on the process of transition from school to occupation. The subjects went into employment in the 1970s, a decade in which the economy and the state of the labor market underwent dramatic changes every several years. Depending on when the subject went into employment as a new graduate, the situation of the labor market was very different. For those entering into an occupation after finishing a junior or senior high school, the recruitment market was exceptionally favorable for them as the economy was at the peak of high growth before the oil crisis. In contrast, for those who graduated from a junior college or university, the period in which they were newly employed or, in other words, in which they had to select their first jobs, was the period of economic recession in the wake of the oil crisis and degeneration of the labor market. In reflection of these differences in the labor market, the percentage of those who quit their first jobs, which is usually lower among university graduates than among junior and senior high school graduates, was not significantly different at all educational levels among the cohort of our survey.

In addition to the situation in the labor market, the situation in the subjects' own homes was another factor that could not have been controlled by the subjects. At the time, it was not exceptional for a new graduate to give up further study at a higher school in consideration of the financial means available to his or her family or other circumstances of the family or to give up employment at a firm offering better working conditions in order to help the family business.

Obviously, this does not mean that they would be at a disadvantage regarding conditions of all of their subsequent employment or the quality of their professional life. They may carve out a lively professional career based on their talent and effort, and they may, in 35 years time, equal or surpass those with more schooling in terms of income, employment status, job satisfaction, assets earned through such a career, and happiness in family life. Such cases are not exceptions either. However, when it happened that there were adverse economic conditions at the time of employment after graduating from a school, it did affect their first employment and, as the effect of their first employment, the subsequent jobs that might become available to them. This shows that there is an incidental factor (luck) that is beyond one's control in career formation. It suggests that existence of a mechanism for overcoming the "unluckiness at the starting point," at birth or at employment, has a significantly important meaning for career formation of each member of society.

(2) On Job Change, Unemployment, and Career Formation and Occupational Abilities Development

We focused on job changes that occurred to the subjects up to around the age of mid-20s, which corresponded to a period from the 1970s to early 1980s, and considered factors for a "good job change."

As favorable conditions for a "good job change," we assumed five criteria related to the period of unemployment and professional life after reemployment, as follows: (a) a shorter period of unemployment is more favorable, (b) long-term employment stability after a job change is more favorable, (c) it is more favorable for the reemployed to be able to utilize his or her capabilities at the new workplace and for his or her income to rise as a result, (d) it is more favorable for the working conditions of the reemployed to improve, and (e) it is more favorable for the level of satisfaction about professional life and life in general to rise. We examined factors that had an effect on fulfillment of the above criteria from seven different angles as shown below.

First, we examined the effect of the economic environment at the entry into first jobs and of the economic conditions at the time of job transfer up until the age of around 25 by educational level. For those who were employed after finishing senior high school or prior to that, the economy was booming at the time of their employment, and many of those who found jobs through their schools' offices were employed by large firms or went into civil service. Many

of those who were employed not through their schools' offices started work as a part-timer or in other types of non-regular employment, and, in often cases, changed their jobs subsequently. There was hardly any period of unemployment during a job change, and their working conditions improved through a job change.

For many of those graduating from schools of higher education, it was difficult to find employment as the economy was in recession in the wake of the oil crisis. Those who changed jobs after being newly employed after graduating from a university had been employed not by firms that they "really wanted to work for" but by firms that they "did not mind working for." Some of them were employed not as a regular employee. After a job change, many of them stayed in the new job for ten years or longer. Early job change after finding a job during the recession was in some way like reselecting their first job. In these cases, a "good job change" was "good" both for the subject and the country as a whole.

Second, with regard to the relation between working conditions, such as wages and working hours, and job change, many of those who were employed without their schools' offices were in unstable employment as a part-timer or were employed in a workplace with long working hours and other unfavorable working conditions. In these cases, a job change saw improvement in working conditions, but improvement was only relative as the original working conditions had been bad. In such cases, the subjects changed jobs more than once. Improvement in working conditions was good, but frequent job changes had a negative effect on satisfaction about one's professional life and life in general.

Third, on the relation between occupational abilities before and after a job change, a job change done with a sense of direction about one's career resulted in abilities development and utilization and a higher level of satisfaction after a job change. Setting of a direction about one's career did not necessarily had to be done consciously by the subjects.

Fourth, with respect to social networks that contributed to a job change, we found that formal information was mainly used for job changes. The existence of such formal information was sometimes learned through personal networks. Young people with not enough social experience were sometimes not capable of sufficiently utilizing the information on jobs even when the information was presented to them. In some cases, they could not utilize general information because they did not know where to find such information.

Fifth, we considered in which career stage a job change was deemed to have happened. According to Super (1956, 1980)'s career development theory, a job change at one's youth has a significance as career exploration. This was confirmed in the career follow-up surveys that our subjects cooperated in for 10 years starting 35 years ago.

In our survey, however, we could not observe outward exploratory behavior by the subjects who went into stable employment at a large firm, etc. after graduating from a university. It appears that a reason for this is that they had already established a sense of values that gave priority on stability and that they planned to stay with their firms in the future. Moreover, it was considered as social norm at that time that new graduates should be "kept on rails" in their transition to occupation, which was one feature of the period in which the subjects lived, and it was probable that they did not need to think anything about a "career." If one was employed by a large firm, there was also a possibility that one would find a job best suited to him or her through redeployment within the firm.

Sixth, with regard to the relation between one's role in life and professional career, many of our subjects had a strong awareness about their filial role. This was particularly the case with subjects who were the eldest son to a parent who was self-employed. This awareness was also strong and felt early when the subjects had family business or farmland to inherit. This awareness could suddenly come to the surface as a factor of a job change when, for example, the parents became ill. Parents also weighed the stability and prospects of the organization that employed their child against the family business or assets, and told their child about their wishes.

Seventh, on the relation between awareness of long-term career and values at one's youth and job change, there were, among our subjects, those who were and those who were not aware of their "career" in their youth. Many of those who stayed in fixed employment without a single job change were not aware of their "career." Among those who changed jobs, there were those who changed jobs with the awareness about a "career" and those who did not have such awareness in changing jobs. Even if one was not aware about a career design at a time of a job change, one could have derived stability and satisfaction from a job change, and therefore awareness about a career was not an absolute condition for a "good job change." Many of those who graduated from a school of higher education had awareness about their "career." All those subjects who were a

graduate of a university and who changed jobs thought they changed jobs in search of a career.

(3) On Occupational Qualification, Training, Self-development and Other Activities away from the Workplace, and Career

First, as could be expected, individual workers who thought education and training was effective were mostly those who stayed in the same employment without any job change. For blue-collar workers, education and training was mainly provided by firms, but for white-collar workers, there were cases where individual workers exercised initiative in taking education and training while firms paid the costs of such education and training. Among white-collar workers, individual workers had a high level of autonomy in education and training.

Second, while OJT naturally was at the core of occupational abilities development, off-the-job training (Off-JT) functioned as substantiating experience gained from OJT. For example, while Off-JT for different occupational abilities did not in itself allow workers to perform work, it gave them “theoretical understanding” of the work. Similarly, study of law through a correspondence course, for instance, gave workers the “foundation” for performing their work. This way, Off-JT functioned effectively in the sense that it partially supported performance of their work. In the case of clerical work, however, the effectiveness of Off-JT was not strongly recognized.

On the other hand, not a few subjects had doubts as to the effectiveness of training designed and provided for different strata of employees. As mentioned by Fujimura (2003), “clarification of objectives” should help to increase such training’s effectiveness.

Third, there were a number of cases where a white-collar worker took the initiative in receiving education and training away from work but convinced the firm the worker was working for to bear the cost of such education and training by stressing the effectiveness of such education and training. Such examples indicate that Off-JT started at the individual worker’s own initiative is highly effective and that such education and training has potential. Self-development activities such as learning the use of a computer had a certain effect on our subjects’ occupational abilities development, even though they had certain limitations that could not be avoided considering the times in which they learned such skills. In the case of blue-collar workers, however, it was more likely that firms would continue to provide education and training

required for workers to perform their work, and such education and training was occupationally effective for individual workers as it was directly linked to increased productivity of workers and to securing and increasing remuneration and other benefits that workers received.

Fourth, for those in clerical and management jobs, qualifications that could be used as effective proof of their occupational abilities were limited. It was also rare that such workers would receive more remuneration or other benefits within their organizations because they acquired certain qualifications. This suggests that rather than improving the qualification system, there is social significance in developing and spreading ways to properly identify and sort out workers' experience in education and training activities, including occupational experience a worker has accumulated, training experience, and correspondence courses taken. In the case of blue-collar workers, too, although obtaining certain qualifications was a minimum requirement for a promotion and served as a measure of occupational abilities development, it was not directly linked to promotion. In any case, as long as one was to belong to a single organization without a job change, the effectiveness of occupational qualification on promotion was limited. Moreover, with respect to occupational qualification required for one to start a business as an independent business owner, many subjects considered management skills as a more important requirement for those starting a business and making it a success, and here too the role of occupational qualification was limited.

(4) Relation between Women's Life Courses and Occupation:

Responsibilities in the Homes and Parenting

First, we analyzed the life courses of 19 women, over a period of 35 years, in relation to their response to major life events and professional activities, and found that they shared common traits in how they related to their occupation, regardless of whether or not they stopped working after marriage or childbirth. These traits were that women, in the final analysis, compared professional activities and parenting and concluded that parenting and household management arising from that to have a greater priority. They also considered the options open to them at the time of marriage or childbirth and selected the option that was closest to their sense of values or their way of life. In this case, the options were not either to take parenting or employment. It was to take the option with the greater priority while leaving room for the other option if it was possible to

exercise that option without making life impossible. And those women who could realize both options at the same time were those who continued in employment.

Therefore, it can be surmised that if there were sufficiently favorable conditions with respect to the place of employment, working hours, working style, and other working conditions and with respect to wishes of the husband and support that could be provided by other female members of the family, many women would not have stopped working.

On the employment of married women, the merits of the childcare leave system have often been stressed recently in relation to families' need for parenting support. However, the results of our survey show that women's employment after childbirth was promoted not by the system of childcare leave but by the availability of daily working conditions that allowed women to strike a balance between work and the role of parenting that women positively perceived as being part of their way of life. In other words, it was suggested that the place of employment, working hours, and other working conditions had a major impact on women to continue working. This obviously does not mean that women hoped to find non-regular employment. In making an overall judgment on whether or not to continue in employment, women considered the social significance of the work together with other factors such as commuting, overtime, leave, and the working environment. They were not necessarily looking for work entailing short working hours or work that was easy to perform. And once they decided to continue in employment, they made great efforts in carrying out their duties at the workplace. All of them, including those who started to work again after leaving their original jobs at childbirth, were sufficiently earnest and enthusiastic about their work, and saw value in the challenges the work offered and in the social significance of the work.

In sum, the important questions for women regarding work were whether or not the work and the workplace allowed them to "work while raising their children" during a period they saw as a parenting period and whether or not working while parenting during this period raised the value of their life, as judged from their own sense of values, as opposed to not working during this period. In some respects, women made judgment about continuing to work not based on the circumstances they were in at that particular time but chose their way of life over the long term. Even though the social environment surrounding women or cultural and historical background might be an underlying factor in

women's decisions, it was nonetheless true that they decided for themselves what action to take at that time. In actuality, many women temporarily stopped working. But they did so with the hope that they would realize broader social participation through work or other activities in the future and would later realize their hope of social participation.

Second, all subjects returned to professional activities (including community activities) at a certain point, even though some of them might have stopped working at one point. They were all positive and eager to do a good job. Because they had stopped working in their youth, their past work experience did not particularly figure in their selection of jobs and in their treatment as employees. Educational background was also irrelevant. Licensed or registered qualifications did figure in the decision, but it is doubtful if it can be universalized as a determining factor (Table 2).

In addition, women who returned to work through various paths and in various forms were not dissatisfied about having done that. It appears that the reason was that criteria that were important to them in their selection of jobs were not related to job type or social status. Social participation was their inner motive for returning to work.

At any rate, the most important finding was that even though women might stop working at one point, they would eventually return to work. As Japan has entered an era of a declining population, the government and society as a whole must address the issue of allowing energetic female labor force to exercise their full potential. There is a considerable social significance in guaranteeing the realization of women's specific intention of and actions for exercising their potential. It is important that we research more than before on what will constitute conditions that will facilitate more women to engage in work, regardless of whether or not they stop working after marriage or childbirth.

Third, when the subjects were bereaved of or separated from their husband, women's burden was too great to bear. From the viewpoint of the subjects involved, assistance provided for such bereavement or separation was not enough considering the burden they faced.

Table 2. Long-term professional careers and education background of women

Work experienced and educational background	
F1	Type I (nurse-teacher) with the possibility of regional transfer. Junior college.
F2	Multiple types, including nurse, insurance saleswoman, family worker, supermarket salesclerk, etc. Worked in four different prefectures as a nurse. Junior college.
F3	Type II. Clerical work and telephone operator. Worked as a telephone operator for a long time. Left work after childbirth and became a full-time homemaker. Returned to work when the youngest child was three years old. Telephone operator (contract worker). Vocational college after graduating from a senior high school.
F4	Type IV. Kindergarten teacher. Part-timer at a tofu shop, nurse's aid at a municipal hospital, director of a cooperative. Junior college.
F5	Type IV. Clerical job in a gallery→Type II clerical job in bank-related work (telephone operator for telephone banking services; responding to inquiries from corporate clients). Worked as a part-timer with the exception of the first work. University.
F6	Type III. Employed only in the first job (secretary of the president of a large firm). Family worker of a liquor store, manager of a convenience store. University.
F7	Type VI. Regular employee of a securities firm (sales and clerical)→piecework at home after marriage→part-timer at a bank (collection, sales of products)→part-timer helping a friend's store→part-time cleaner of a bank during daytime, insurance saleswoman at night→leader of part-timer salesclerks at a supermarket. Senior high school.
F8	Type IV. Accounting job at an apparel firm→part-timer at a hotel restaurant→at the same time, clerk at a bar→part-time cleaner of a restaurant attached to a bank. Became mentally stable after marriage and gained weight. Consider herself as the so-called <i>freeter</i> . Dropped out of a graduate school.
F9	Type I. Primary school teacher at six different schools (in Osaka and Hyogo), woman director of a labor union for about three years from ages 47 to 50. Dropped out of a university (night school).
F10	Type V. Sewing (first and second job)→farming (family business)→sewing (part-time) while helping in farming→farming and cleaning (for two different firms, one then the other)→farming and assembly of office supplies. Junior high school.
F11	Type V. Sales→clerical job→(left the job when the husband was transferred)→piecework at home (electronics parts, etc.)→at the same time, water meter reader (part-time)→water meter reader and part-timer at a florist (about twice a week) after stopping piecework at home. Senior high school.
F12	Type II. Helped the family business by sewing→nurse in a public school (including working as a part-timer at first). Worked in three schools as a result of transfers within the same city. Junior college (correspondence course).
F13	Type IV. Clerical work at a food company (rice crackers) for three years→clerical work for a trading firm dealing in ready-built houses (three years)→full-time housekeeper, then reemployed; the working hours were irregular at first to suit the firm's needs (about three years)→part-time work manufacturing electrical parts. Full-time employment at a firm offering challenging work, leader of part-time workers. Currently in the same position. University.

F14	Type I. After graduating from school (vocal music course), became a piano teacher. Currently in the same work. Longed to meet the teacher who taught her. Found the teacher's address two or three years ago and met the teacher for the first time in 30 years. Junior college.
F15	Type II as a regular employee, Type I as family worker, Type I as a director, and part-timer in a variety of work. General clerical work at an accounting firm (year and a half)→clerical work at a resort development firm that recruited her (two years)→left the job after becoming pregnant and married→helped in clerical work for her father's construction business (had been helping the family business from before)→the husband obtained a real estate business license and started a business, and she became a director of that firm. Currently in the same work→even after the husband started business, she earns the money she spends by working at home and as a part-timer. Senior high school.
F16	Type III. Clerical work at a bank→clerical work at a licensed tax accountant's office run by her uncle→director of a firm selling agricultural machinery run by her husband (however, she considers herself mostly as a full-time housekeeper). Junior college.
F17	Type III. Clerical work at an apparel firm (regular employee; the work was not challenging; three months)→part-timer in a medical school laboratory(cleaning instruments and devices, English typewriting, assistant in experiments and examination and treatment of outpatients (the work was interesting and wanted to stay in that work for always))→senior high school teacher (the income stabilized but was always troubled by interpersonal relations), worked in four high schools within the same prefecture. A superior at the medical school advised her that if she passed the teacher's exam, she should become a teacher. He was convinced that she was "suited to fostering students' talent" and told her, "becoming a teacher would be more interesting (than become a pharmacist that she aspired to be when she was in a senior high school) so she should definitely become one." University.
F18	Type I (practitioner of acupuncture and moxibustion; currently runs a clinic). After graduating from a vocational college, apprenticed under a master practitioner for two years and came to Tokyo to become a live-in worker for no pay to learn about "food and nutrition." Started own practice at the age of 28. Soon after, went to study in China through WHO. After returning to Japan, studied further to acquire more qualifications. Was then entrusted with the running of a school by the vocational college she graduated from and again began her own practice. Currently in the same job. University and vocational college.
F19	Type II. Clerical work for a shipping agent (general administrative affairs and accounting; the firm paid the fees for her to attend a seminar on accounting)→part-timer for posting fliers. When she was working as a part-timer (at around the age of 48), her eldest son was seriously injured, and with the death of her father-in-law, she could not continue working. Her mother has been in need of nursing care for the past ten years, which requires her to visit her mother irregularly, and she has not been able to find work. Vocational college after graduating from a senior high school.

5. General Discussions

The home background at the time of one's birth and the economic environment of society as a whole at the time of one's entering into employment have a direct impact on one's selection of the first job. And the selection of the first job, as a starting point of career formation, has a major influence on the subsequent professional career formation. Therefore, a social mechanism for overcoming any "unluckiness at the starting point" becomes crucial. Giving young people a "second chance" by allowing them to graduate from a higher level of schools after employment or providing them with education and training for acquisition of new skills is one of the effective measures for that, but such measures cannot be implemented singly by individual firms they work for. Rather than relying on OJT and other internally conclusive type of training for career formation of youth, we need to build a system for actively supporting young people that goes beyond the boundaries of individual firms they work for.

Examining the situation regarding job change up until the age of around the mid-20s after the selection of the first jobs, we found that for those entering the labor market at a time of recession, the job change had an aspect of reselecting their job, and as economic conditions improved subsequently, their working conditions also improved through a job change. While a job change can be considered positively as one of the activities in the process of professional career development, those changing jobs were not able, in not a few cases, to fully utilize the information that could help them in the job change. Therefore, there is a need to provide some kind of professional assistance, such as guidance on the use of information, to young people who lack job experience.

For the subjects of our survey, the traditional values based on long-term continuous employment (lifelong employment) made up the foundation of their career design. As social trends began to change in their middle age, most of them were forced to make a revision of these traditional values, which they did by readjusting their careers based on their past professional experience. Today's young people, however, are surrounded by different sets of values, and also the prevailing values of the times quickly change. As a result, it is difficult for them to prepare a detailed career design. Therefore, it is important to create and further improve a system for adjusting the labor supply and demand of those who decide to make a change in their career design and a system for providing information on occupations.

The traditional values observed among the subjects of our survey also corresponded with the idea and actions where it was not the individuals who designed their personal careers for career formation but it was their firms that set a plan for long-term utilization of workers and carried out abilities development of their employees. This was the reason that the mechanism of occupational abilities development combining the company initiated OJT and Off-JT was readily accepted by workers. The findings of our survey show, however, that while the effectiveness of Off-JT was well recognized among those in technical jobs, it was hardly felt among white-collar workers. The latter, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of abilities development through practical job experience and career formation through accumulation of such practical experience. Some white-collar workers, however, did recognize the effect of Off-JT on career formation, when, based on the assumption of long-term employment, Off-JT was proposed at an individual worker's initiative to meet an objective that the worker felt it needed to be met and such Off-JT was paid for by the company. As for company initiated training designed and provided for different strata of employees, some subjects did not remember the contents of such training as it often lacked a clear objective. It suggests that regardless of whether Off-JT is initiated by a company or an individual worker, Off-JT is effective when it respects the wishes of individual workers and when its objectives are clear. Among white-collar workers in our survey, the effectiveness of occupational qualifications was limited both within and outside the organization they worked for.

Women decided their actions relating to work not within the context of parenting as an addition to working but within the context of working as an addition to parenting. Not a few men designed their careers by giving top priority to the possibility of living in their hometowns and living near to their parents in the hope of gaining their support in parenting. Up until now, the prestige of an occupation or the organization one worked for and the size of one's paycheck have been a measure of a successful career, and in this framework a fast-track career was considered the ideal. There is a gap, however, between this "framework of objective thinking" and the "framework of the thoughts of the parties concerned," a gap that cannot be ignored. Career research is needed where this decision-making framework of the parties concerned is not made to suit the "framework of objective thinking," but where individual workers' subjective views are properly taken into account.

For formation of careers based on the framework of individual workers' thoughts, there have to be jobs that allow such formation of careers in regions in which individual workers live. Based on the assumption that people living in various parts of Japan have respect for the nature, culture, history, and tradition of the region they live in, there have to be jobs and workplaces that provide a favorable working environment for people living there. By closely examining the results of our survey, we find that formation of a career based on the framework of the thoughts of the parties concerned does not equate simply to each individual living one's life in whatever way one pleases or choosing an easy way of life. It can more aptly be expressed as manifestation of an effort to shoulder the family that one derived one's present life from, one's own family, and regional history and to pass such heritage to the future generations. Each individual made his or her own judgment as to who should do what to support their regional community and families constituting the community and took action. Therefore, for continuous efforts in such career formation, measures for stimulating regional job creation, with a particular focus on job creation in areas where individuals live, and regional efforts in assisting individuals' career formation are needed.

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