

# IV

## Diverse Needs for Mature Adult Career Guidance in Japan— Focus on the Three Topics of Segmentation, Delivery, and Cost

### 1. Awareness of the Issue

#### 1) Current status of research on career guidance for mature adults in Japan

In Japan, sufficient attention has not been paid to the issue of career guidance for people in their 30s and 40s. For the past approximately 20 years, since the late 1990s, attention has been directed toward the problem of insecure employment among young people, including those categorized as “freeters” (underemployed people working non-regular jobs) and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). For this reason, career guidance research in Japan has been focused on this younger group, and there is an extensive body of research on career guidance for younger people but a dearth of studies on career guidance for their mid-career counterparts. The latter have been more or less ignored as a result of concern for the younger generation.

This does not mean, however, that there is not a considerable need for career guidance for mid-career workers in Japan. This group is in the prime of their working years, while at home they are having and raising children and bearing a wide range of social responsibilities. Due to these responsibilities, people in this age group tend to be extremely busy and lack the time to step back and consider their occupations and career paths, as they are constantly striving just to maintain their day-to-day lifestyles. They have long been considered a group with relatively little need for career guidance, but today, people in their 30s and 40s do not necessarily fit the conventional picture of steadily employed workers with families at home.

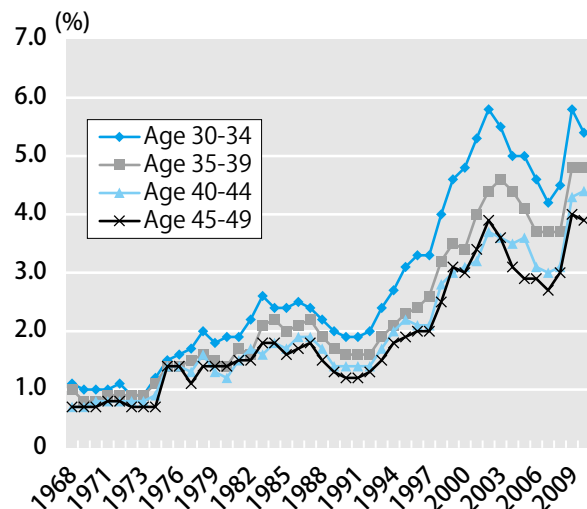
As Figures IV-1 to IV-3 illustrate, unemployment among this age group is on the rise. In fact, the labor force participation rate is falling among men, while among women it is increasing. In addition, the percentage of people aged 30-49 who are married and have children is gradually declining. These figures indicate that the employment and household paradigms for this age group are gradually shifting,

and it is no longer appropriate to view its members simply as snowed under with work and household duties. Rather, they should be viewed as a group with increasingly diverse and fluid career paths.

The following three key points are evident from Figures IV-1 to IV-3: (1) Among people in their 30s and 40s, the unemployment rate is rising, the percentage of people in this age group leaving jobs or changing jobs is growing, and there is a need for career guidance for people who are leaving or changing jobs and for currently employed people considering making these moves. (2) The labor force participation rate among men is dropping, meaning there is a growing need for career guidance for unemployed men (those without occupations or who have lost jobs). Meanwhile, the labor force participation rate is rising among women, and there is new demand for career guidance for working women

**Figure IV-1 Unemployment Rate among Employable People Aged 30-49**

Unemployment rate by age group (men and women combined)



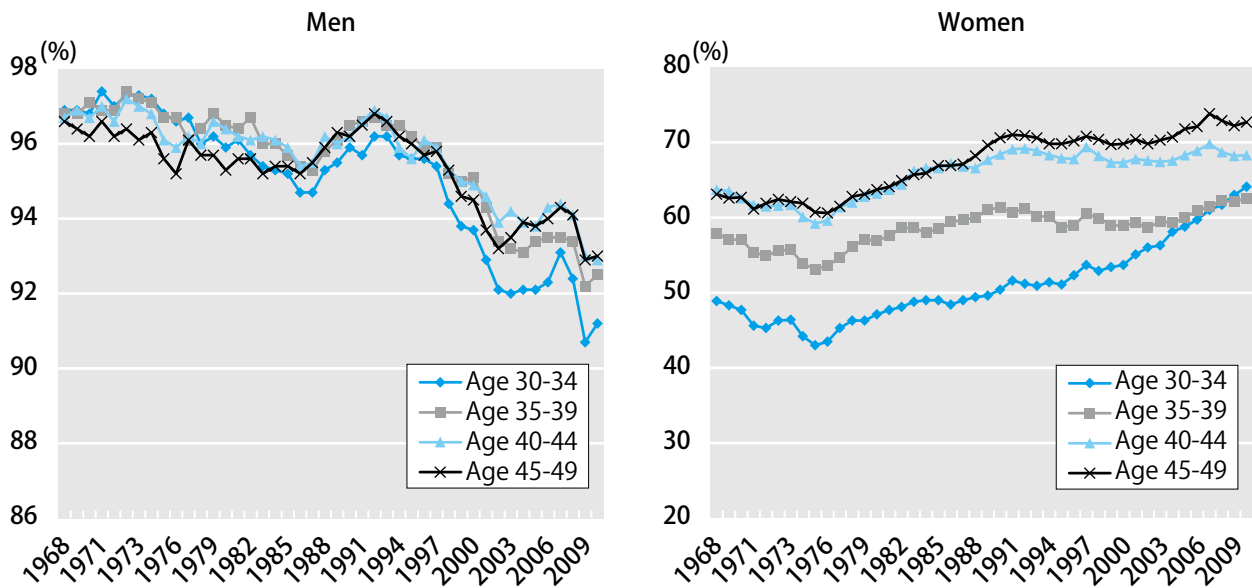
From the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Labour Force Survey"

(both regular and non-regular employees). (3) When considering career guidance for people in this age group, family-related factors such as marital status and family composition are of vital importance, but it can no longer be taken for granted that today's 30- to

49-year-olds are part of a family at all, and it is necessary to consider the career guidance needs of single, unconnected people in this age group.

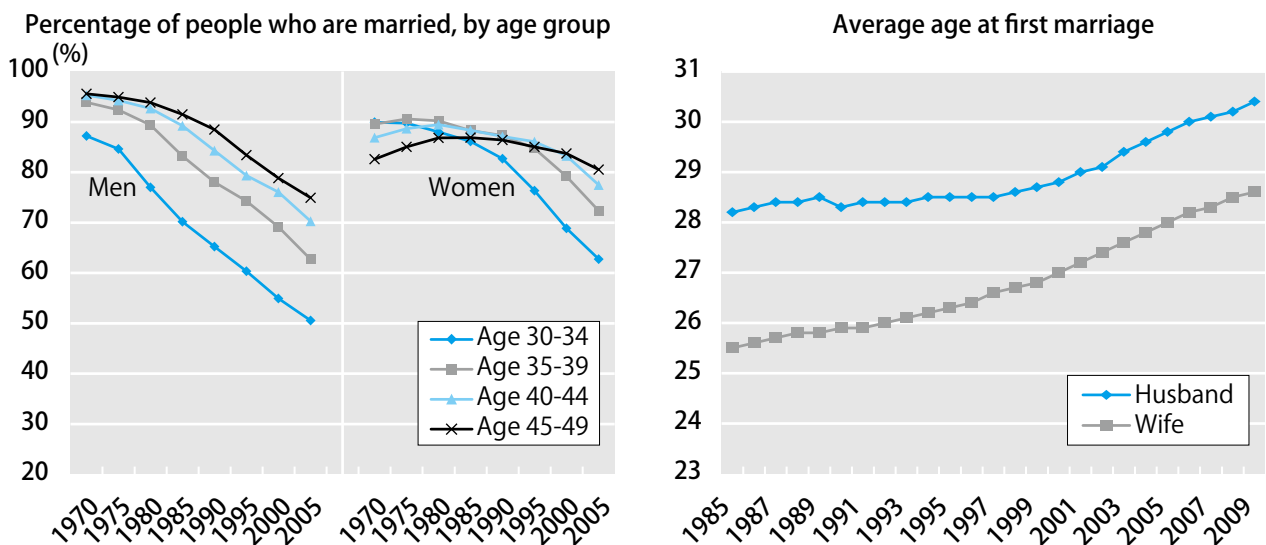
The changes in the work and household environments of people aged 30-49 over the past few

**Figure IV-2 Labor Force Participation Rate (Left: Men, Right: Women)**



From the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Labour Force Survey"

**Figure IV-3 Percentage of People Aged 30-49 Who Are Married (Left), Average Age of First Marriage among Men and Women (Right)**



From the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Population Census"

From the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare "Vital Statistics of Japan"

decades may have generated new, unrecognized career guidance needs. For this study, a survey focusing on this area was conducted. In particular, it addressed the possibility that career guidance needs for this age group have undergone a quiet shift that went unnoticed, because the issue has been overshadowed by employment issues facing younger people. Shedding light on and examining this issue is an important and meaningful task.

## 2) Comparison with career guidance for mid-career individuals in Europe, etc.

Career guidance for people in their 30s and 40s is an area of great concern outside Japan, as well, in developed nations and particularly in Europe. Since the 2000s, international organizations such as the OECD, the EU, the ILO, and the World Bank have released a large number of reports and other publications on career guidance. These often note that career guidance services in developed nations are essentially directed only at unemployed persons and offered through public employment agencies. As a result, there have been calls to expand career guidance services to meet the needs of employed people, and to offer them at mature adult education institutions and vocational training facilities (OECD, 2004).

In recent years, the OECD and EU have produced a notable amount of literature on the connections between lifelong learning/vocational training and career guidance. This literature has a common thread. First, it notes that developed nations are moving in the direction of a global knowledge-based society. This means that education in schools is insufficient, and learning needs to be a lifelong process. In a society built on lifelong learning, career guidance has a crucial role to play. This argument is set forth in much of the relevant literature.

For example, the OECD report *The Relationship of Career Guidance to VET* (OECD, 2009) focuses directly, as the title suggests, on the relationship of career guidance to vocational education and training (“VET”). The report states that for VET to be more effective, career guidance needs to be incorporated into VET programs. Another OECD report, *Learning for Jobs* (OECD, 2010), dedicates a chapter to career

guidance, which notes that “in the field of VET the expectation that initial vocational training would prepare students for one occupation for their entire working life has increasingly been replaced by a sequence of complex choices and changes over a lifetime of learning and work” (p.77). As a result, “career choices, and thus career guidance, are becoming both more important and more demanding” (p. 77).

Meanwhile, the CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) report *Guidance Policies in the Knowledge Society* (2011) points out that career guidance is “one of the key components of national strategies of implementing lifelong learning policies” (p.13). An earlier CEDEFOP report, *Professionalising Career Guidance: Practitioner Competences and Qualification Routes in Europe* (CEDEFOP, 2009), also suggests that it is necessary to boost the professional qualifications of staff engaged in career guidance.

All of these publications discuss the relationships between lifelong learning and vocational training, and labor, jobs and occupations. It is evident that especially in Europe, career guidance research is broadening its scope to address lifelong learning, vocational training, and career guidance for mid-career people around 30-49 years of age.

This paper takes the above-described overseas research trends into account in considering mature adult career guidance issues in Japan. In particular, the trend toward examining lifelong learning and vocational training for people in their 30s and 40s from the vantage point of career guidance is an extremely significant and advantageous one.

## 3) Addressing new career guidance needs arising from changes in the environment of mid-career individuals in Japan

This paper focuses in particular on the three topics of segmentation, delivery, and cost, discussed in European career guidance research (OECD, 2004; CEDEFOP, 2011). Specifically, these topics raise the questions: How should career guidance recipients be segmented (i.e. classified)? How should career guidance be delivered? How much of the cost of

career guidance can be borne by the recipients? All of these questions go beyond the scope of the content of career guidance, and address logistical issues related to career guidance programs and their administration.

In the past, discussions on career guidance have generally focused on the content of career guidance itself: what manner of information should be delivered, what sort of testing should be administered, and what sort of counseling should be provided. However, simply discussing career guidance in general terms, without raising the question of who its recipients are, and how to deliver it, results in insufficiently effective guidance.

When delivering career guidance, it is necessary to recognize the characteristics of recipients that require particularly extensive services. It is also necessary to identify recipients that require only simple and speedy services such as provision of information. This is why segmentation (the question of “How should career guidance recipients be segmented (i.e. classified)?” is one of the areas of focus in this paper.

There has also been a tendency to neglect the question of how career guidance services should be delivered, due to an excessively blinkered focus on the content of guidance. As long as career guidance is a person-to-person service, the questions of where it is delivered, in what time frame, by whom, and in what manner, remain important ones. With this in mind, this paper focuses as well on delivery (“How should career guidance be delivered?”)

The fact that segmentation and delivery are critical issues when examining career guidance is related to the issue of cost. Currently, in all countries, career guidance is covered by public funds, largely coming out of national budgets. However, all countries are facing financial difficulties, and there are stark restrictions on the funding available for career guidance. Under these circumstances, attempting to envision the future of career guidance without taking cost into account is an empty exercise. When addressing this issue, we are faced with the question of what sort of “price tag” is affixed to career guidance. This paper approaches this question by surveying mature adults from the general public and asking how much they would be willing or able to

pay for career guidance. The paper focuses on the question “How much of the cost of career guidance can be borne by the recipients?” for the foregoing reasons.

As described above, this paper examines career guidance for mature adults in Japan with a focus on the three areas of segmentation, delivery, and cost, and seeks to offer insights into the future of career guidance for mature adults in Japan.

## 2. Survey

For this paper, a survey was conducted on the kinds of career guidance needs that regular employees, non-regular employees, unemployed individuals, job seekers, and full-time homemakers aged 30-49 have. By taking into account relationships between career guidance needs and current employment status, career thus far, and psychological traits, the survey aimed to amass materials that could point the way to the future path of career guidance for mature adults in Japan.

The survey was conducted in March 2011. A survey form was distributed by post to monitors through a research firm, with the survey target being 4,000 members of the general public in their 30s and 40s. These were divided into four cells (aged 30-39 and aged 40-49, male and female) with 1,000 respondents in each cell. The respondents in each cell were broken down as follows, based on percentages in official Japanese statistics.

- Men aged 30-39 1,000 people (90% regular employees, 10% non-regular employees, unemployed, job seekers, and others)
- Men aged 40-49 1,000 people (90% regular employees, 10% non-regular employees, unemployed, job seekers, and others)
- Women aged 30-39 1,000 people (40% regular employees, 20% non-regular employees, 30% full-time homemakers, 10% unemployed, job seekers, and others)
- Women aged 40-49 1,000 people (40% regular employees, 20% non-regular employees, 30% full-time homemakers, 10% unemployed, job seekers, and others)

In sampling, deviations from the above percentages were limited to a few percent, and care was taken to ensure that there was no drastic weighting toward certain educational backgrounds or occupations. The survey items were divided into five sections: “Basic attributes” “Occupation and background since graduating from school (career)” “Current occupation” “Current attitudes” and “Occupational and career-related support (career guidance needs)”. The main question items in each section were as follows:

- Basic attributes  
Gender, age, marital status, etc.
- Occupation and background since graduating from school (career)  
Educational background, academic performance, success or failure in job seeking, etc.  
Length of experience as a regular and/or non-regular employee, length of periods of unemployment, length of experience as full-time homemaker, experience with changing jobs, etc.
- Current occupation  
Annual income, current position or status,

industry and job category, number of employees in establishment of employment, etc.

- Current attitudes  
Crisis mentality with regard to working life (free answer), attribute scale, lifestyle goals, self-esteem scale, depression scale, etc.
- Occupational and career-related support (career guidance needs)  
When career support is wanted, how much support is needed  
Perception of type and severity of problems in occupation/career  
What sort of support or assistance is needed in occupation or career  
Money and time spent on career guidance  
What sort of career support is desired (environment, medium, staff, etc.)  
Needs for occupational or career information and medium of delivery

As shown in Table IV-4, in the 30-34 and 40-44 age brackets the percentage of women was higher, but overall the gender breakdown is close to 50-50.

**Table IV-4 Age Group and Gender Breakdown of Respondents to the Survey**

	Age 30-34	Age 35-39	Age 40-44	Age 45-49	Total
Men	332 43.9%	671 51.3%	479 45.7%	512 51.6%	1994 48.6%
Women	425 56.1%	636 48.7%	570 54.3%	481 48.4%	2112 51.4%
Total	757 100.0%	1307 100.0%	1049 100.0%	993 100.0%	4106 100.0%

### 3. Segmentation: How to Classify Recipients of Mature-adult-oriented Career Guidance in Japan

The segmentation of career guidance recipients is closely tied to cost issues. When formulating career guidance programs, the most effective approach to use is one-to-one, individualized support services such as counseling. This is because individualized support services can meet the specific and unique needs of recipients in a manner that uniform, by-the-book career guidance services cannot. However, individualized support services have a major problem, namely its “labor-intensive nature” (OECD, 2004), i.e. the need for a single supporter for every support recipient. This makes it an extremely costly approach.

For this reason it is crucial to identify on which recipients the most effective, but also the most costly, individualized counseling services should be concentrated. This leads into a discussion on how to

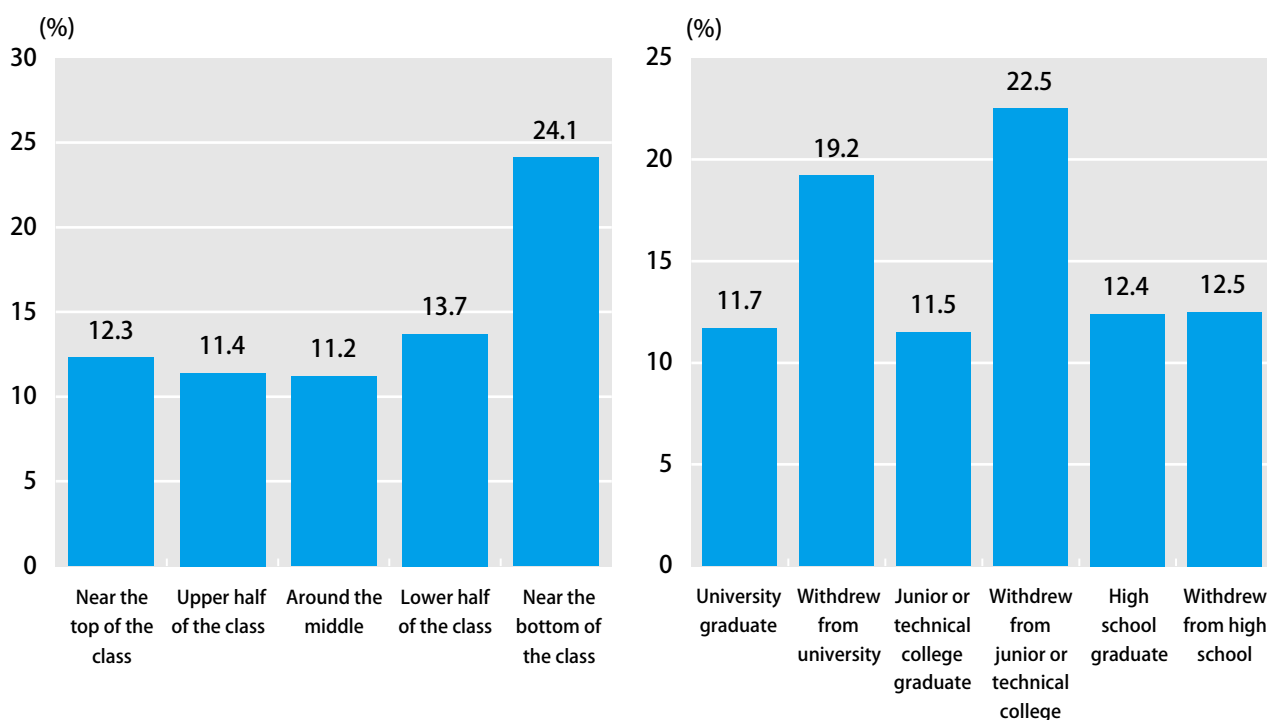
divide career guidance recipients into segments and deliver appropriate services to each.

Conventionally, recipients of career guidance for mature adults in Japan have been segmented by gender and age group: women, university graduates, young people, middle-aged and elderly people, etc. Today, however, there are career guidance recipients with all kinds of working styles. Moving forward, it will be essential to segment this diverse group of recipients appropriately in light of the degree of urgency of their need for career guidance. In particular, there is a need to clarify the career guidance needs of potential recipients who have not been given due attention thus far, including non-regular employees, homemakers, and unemployed individuals.

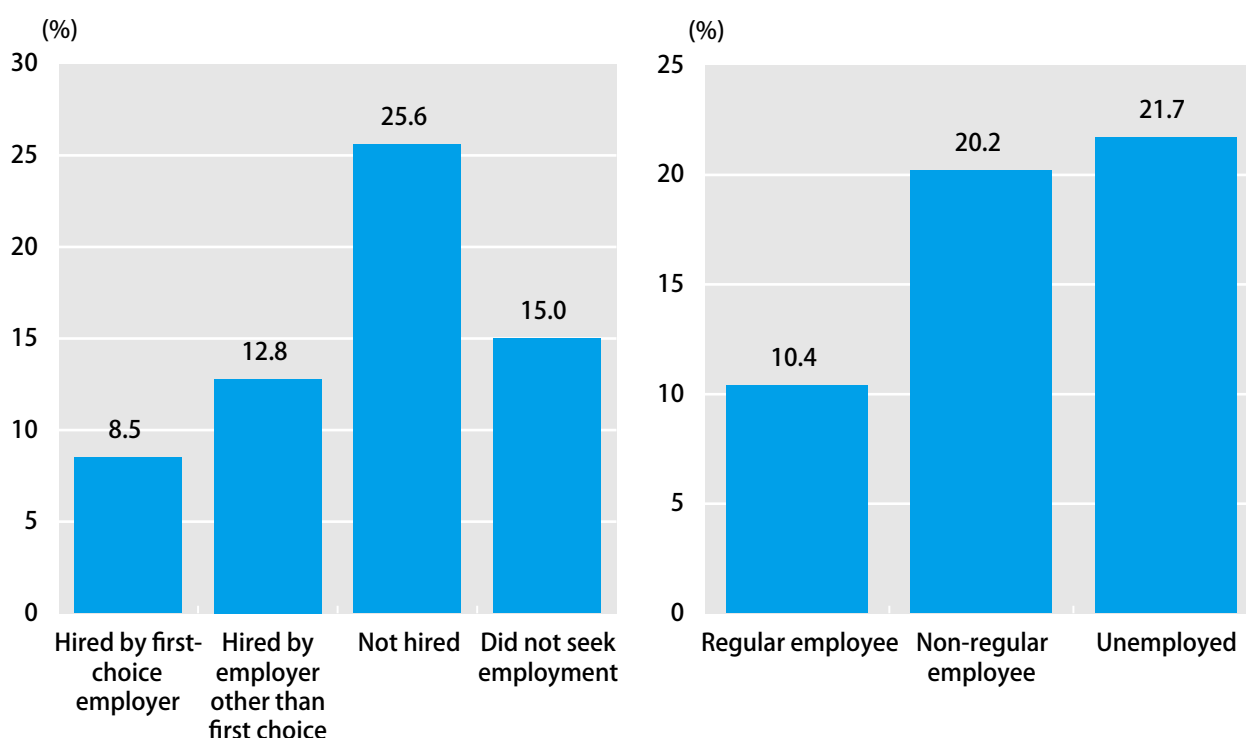
#### 1) Categories that perceive particularly severe occupational or career problems

What categories of potential guidance recipients

**Figure IV-5 Percentages of People Perceiving Occupational or Career Problems, by Junior High School Academic Performance (Left) and Educational Background (Right)**



**Figure IV-6 Percentages of People Perceiving Occupational or Career Problems, by Status/ Outcome of Job-Seeking Activities Accompanying Graduation (Left) and Status Immediately Following Graduation (Right)**



perceive particularly severe occupational or career problems? In response to the survey question “To what degree do you perceive problems with your occupation or career?”, the percentage of those who “perceive severe problems” was extraordinary high in certain categories, for example subjects responding that their junior high school academic performance was “near the bottom of the class” (24.1%), and people whose highest level of education was “junior college or technical college (withdrew)” (22.5%) (Figure IV-5).

Other categories perceiving “very severe problems” were people whose job-seeking activities accompanying graduation ended in “not being hired” (25.6%), while 20.2% and 21.7% respectively of those who were “non-regular employees” or “unemployed” immediately following graduation “perceive severe problems” (Figure IV-6). Many years later, the careers of people in their 30s and 40s were impacted by factors in the transition from school

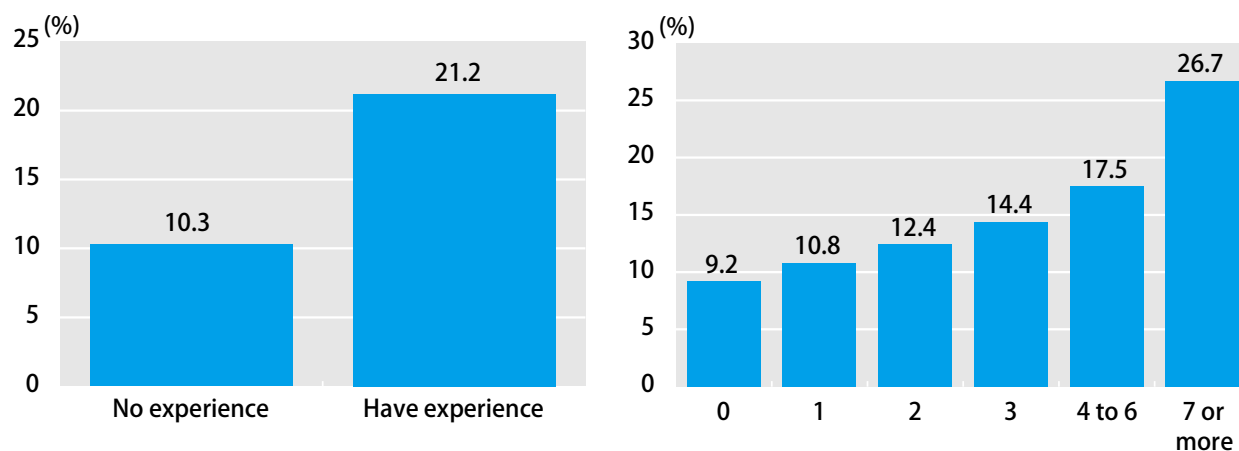
to work such as their academic performance in junior high school, their educational background, their job-seeking activities accompanying graduation, and their status immediately after graduation.

With regard to post-graduation career, as well, there are categories of respondents that stood out as perceiving “very severe problems” with their occupations or careers. As shown in Figure IV-7, people who have experienced periods of unemployment or have changed jobs a large number of times perceived problems with their careers at rates of 21.2% and 26.7% respectively.

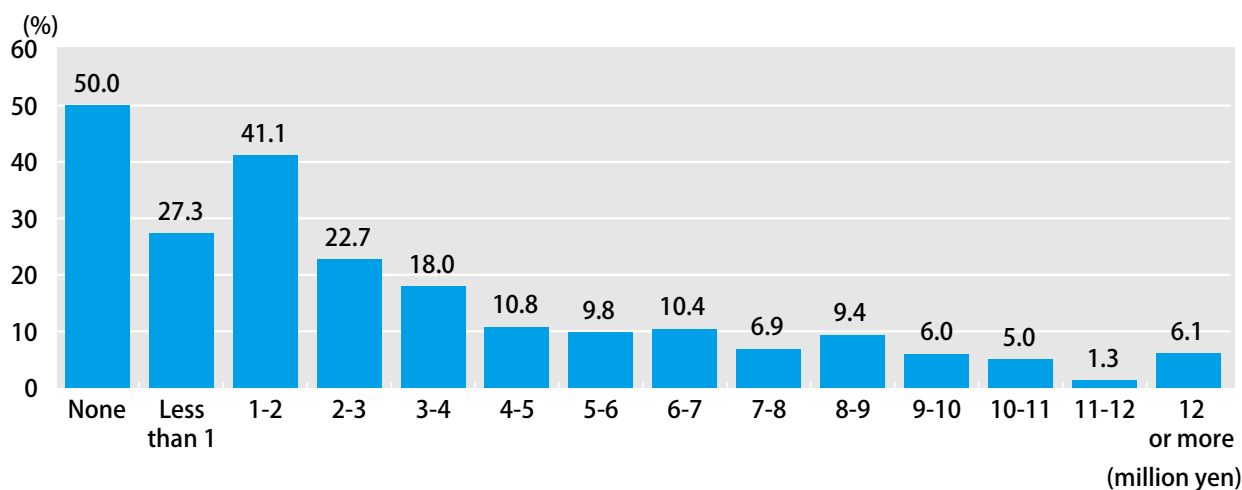
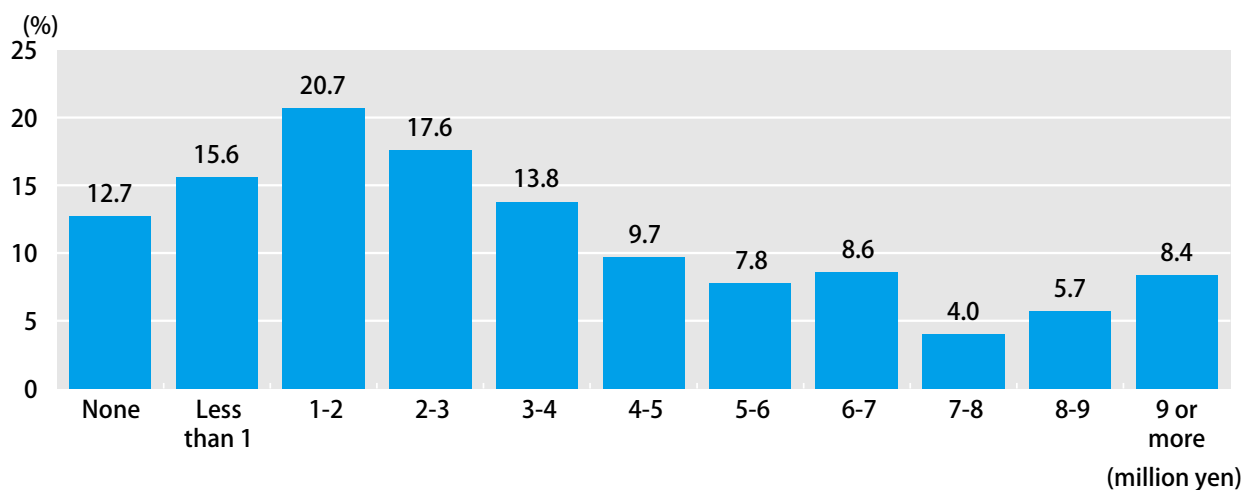
When broken down by income, as shown in Figure IV-8, high percentages of people whose annual individual income was “between 1 million and 2 million yen”, or whose annual household income was “zero”, “between zero and 1 million yen”, or “between 1 million and 2 million yen” responded that they “perceive severe problems”.

As shown in Figure IV-9, for the survey item

**Figure IV-7 Percentages of People Perceiving Occupational or Career Problems, by Experience of Periods of Unemployment (Left) and Number of Times Changing Jobs (Right)**



**Figure IV-8 Percentages of People Perceiving Occupational or Career Problems, by Annual Individual Income (Above) and Annual Household Income (Below)**



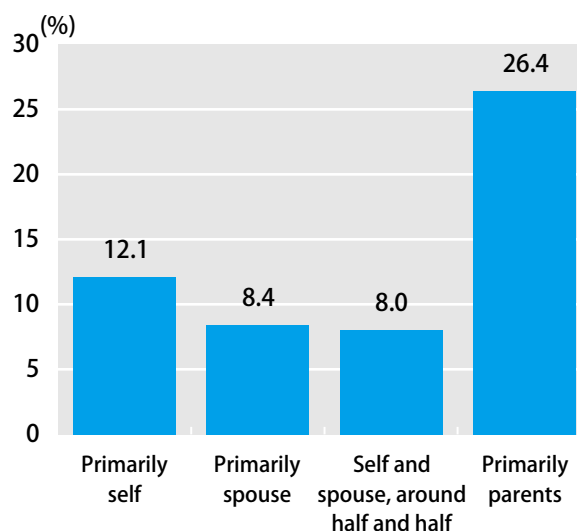


asking who was the breadwinner in the household, people who responded “primarily my parents” had the highest percentages of “perceiving very severe problems”. When formulating career guidance programs for people in their 30s and 40s, it should be kept in mind that people whose parents are the primary breadwinners have particularly urgent needs.

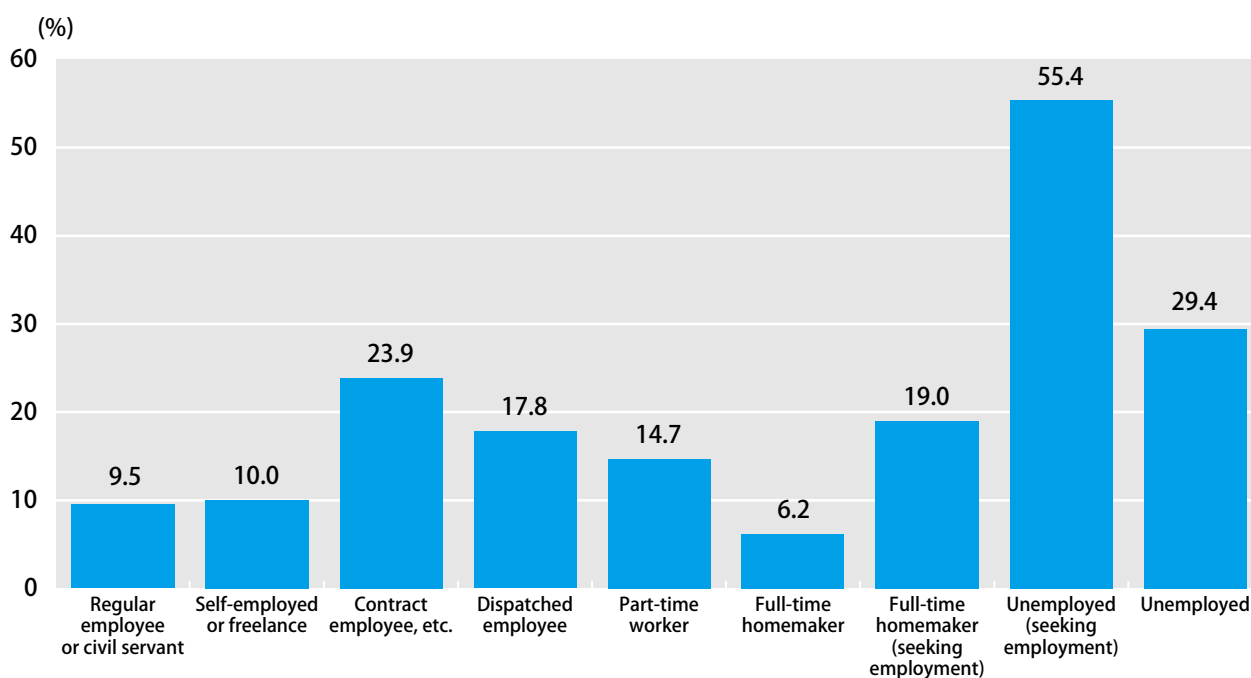
As shown in Figure IV-10, with regard to employment status, those most likely to perceive severe problems with their occupation or career were people who are currently unemployed and seeking work. Over half of these, 55.4%, “perceive severe problems”. This response was also given by 29.4% of people who are unemployed and not seeking work, and 23.9% of contract employees, etc.

To summarize the above findings, the categories of respondents who most often perceived problems with their occupation or career were (1) people whose junior high school academic performance was near the bottom of the class (2) people who withdrew from

**Figure IV-9 Percentages of People Perceiving Occupational or Career Problems, by Primary Household Breadwinner**



**Figure IV-10 Percentages of People Perceiving Severe Occupational or Career Problems, by Current Employment Status and/or Position**



junior college or technical college (3) people who engaged in job-seeking activities at graduation but were not hired (4) people who were non-regular employees or unemployed immediately after graduation (5) people who had experienced periods of unemployment or had changed jobs many times (6) people whose annual individual income was between 1 and 2 million yen or whose annual household income was under 2 million yen (7) people whose parents were the primary breadwinners in the household, and (8) people who were unemployed, seeking work, or contract employees, etc.

## 2) Methods of classifying target group aged 30-49

The attributes we have examined thus far have strong reciprocal correlations with one another. With this in mind, the attributes of survey respondents were replaced with dummy variables, the outcome overlaid with degree of severity of perceived occupational or career problems and plotted in two dimensions for a correspondence analysis.

The findings are shown in Table IV-11. This table contains figures on one axis, showing degree of severity of perceived occupational or career problems, and on another axis interpreted as a binary choice of regular or non-regular employee. The table indicates that respondents can be classified into the representative categories of (1) regular employees who “do not particularly perceive problems” (top left), (2) full-time homemakers who “do not perceive any problems” (bottom left), (3) unemployed individuals who “perceive severe problems” (top right), and (4) non-regular employees who “perceive problems to some degree” (bottom right).

(1) Regular employees who “do not particularly perceive problems” are from double-income households with high annual income, and have been regular employees of large companies for an extended period of time. Regardless of gender, they are a relatively privileged group in terms of career.

(2) Among full-time homemakers who responded that they “do not perceive any problems” or “cannot say either way”, many may actually not perceive any problems, it cannot be said with certainty that no problems whatsoever exist. Moving forward, it is

necessary to carefully consider latent career guidance needs that may exist beneath the surface, primarily among full-time homemakers.

(3) In addition to lack of employment, many unemployed individuals who “perceive severe problems” are characterized by primary dependence on parents, numerous changes of employer, lack of success with job-seeking at the time of graduation, and low household income. It is consistent with findings thus far that this group perceives the most severe problems.

(4) Non-regular employees who “perceive problems to some degree” are a group that merits closer attention as people in their 30s and 40s facing career problems. They tend to lack spouses or children, and to have changed jobs many times in the past. They also have a tendency to be employed at relatively small establishments.

These outcomes further clarify the stark contrast between male university-graduate full-time employees of major companies and full-time homemakers who do not particularly perceive problems, and unemployed individuals or non-regular employees who perceive severe problems. We can interpret it as a contrast between the conventional, traditional mid-career picture of a male regular employee and a full-time homemaker, and the unemployed or non-regularly employed mid-career individuals that have become increasingly common over the past 10 to 20 years. It is the latter that should be focused on as we consider career guidance in Japan in the future.

**Table IV-11 Results of Correspondence Analysis of Survey Respondent Attributes and Severity of Perceived Occupational or Career Problems**

Annual household income ¥10 million or above	0.83	-0.14	Current status: Unemployed, etc.	-2.69	0.56
Annual household income between ¥8 and ¥10 million	0.52	-0.15	Primary breadwinner: Parents	-1.31	0.14
Primary breadwinner: Self and spouse, around half and half	0.40	-0.44	Have changed jobs 7 times or more	-1.21	0.80
Size of establishment: 1,000 employees or more	0.37	-0.50	At time of graduation, sought job but was not hired	-1.20	0.38
Do not particularly perceive problems	0.33	-0.33	Annual household income between ¥0 and ¥4 million	-1.07	0.07
Number of years working as regular employee: 21 years or more	0.33	-0.29	Current status: Full-time homemaker / Unemployed (seeking work)	-1.06	0.86
Annual household income between ¥6 and ¥8 million	0.29	-0.07	Have experienced unemployment	-0.87	0.03
No experience of working as non-regular employee	0.22	-0.05	Perceive severe problems	-0.82	0.09
Current status: Regular employee	0.18	-0.42	Upon graduating, did not work for a period of time	-0.79	0.37
Worked as regular employee immediately after graduation	0.14	-0.01	Upon graduating, worked as a non-regular employee or non-regular civil servant	-0.75	0.10
Average number of work hours per week: 40 to 50 hours	0.13	-0.43	Have withdrawn from school in the past	-0.65	0.84
Number of years working as regular employee: 10-20 years	0.12	-0.19	4 or more years' experience working as non-regular employee	-0.57	0.08
Average number of work hours per week: less than 40 hours	0.11	-0.33	Academic performance in junior high school: Near the bottom of the class	-0.32	0.52
Average number of work hours per week: 40 hours	0.06	-0.16	Less than 10 years' experience working as a regular employee	-0.25	0.32
Academic background: University graduate	0.01	-0.21	At time of graduation, did not seek employment	-0.19	0.25
Perception of career: Perform a wide range of jobs in a specific field	0.00	-0.17	Have changed jobs twice	-0.16	0.07
Current status: Full-time homemaker	0.69	1.36	Perception of career: Perform a specific job in a wide range of fields	-0.16	0.27
Upon graduating, hired by first-choice employer	0.45	0.08	Live in urban area	-0.06	0.04
Do not perceive problems at all	0.42	0.42	Age: 35-39	-0.05	0.07
Married	0.39	0.11	Unmarried	-0.79	-0.13
Primary breadwinner: Spouse	0.39	0.52	Have changed jobs 4-6 times	-0.61	-0.14
Have never changed jobs	0.38	0.11	Current status: Non-regular employee	-0.50	-0.07
Current status: Self-employed / Family business	0.37	0.38	Have changed jobs 3 times	-0.44	-0.35
Have children	0.34	0.12	Do not have children	-0.41	-0.09
Perception of career: Perform a specific job in a specific field	0.34	0.12	Perception of career: Perform a wide range of jobs in a wide range of fields	-0.39	-0.02
Have experience as a homemaker	0.20	0.61	Size of establishment: 100 employees or less	-0.28	-0.34
Age: 45-49	0.18	0.03	Upon graduating, hired by employer other than first choice	-0.25	-0.13
No experience of unemployment	0.17	0.02	Age: 30-34	-0.24	-0.10
Cannot say either way	0.16	0.27	Perceive problems to some degree	-0.12	-0.15
Have changed jobs once	0.15	0.03	Size of establishment: 1,000 or fewer employees	-0.11	-0.40
Academic performance in junior high school: Around the middle of the class	0.08	0.23	Gender: Male	-0.09	-0.23
Live in non-urban area	0.08	0.00	No experience as a homemaker	-0.09	-0.20
Gender: Female	0.07	0.26	Size of establishment: 300 or fewer employees	-0.05	-0.43
Annual household income: ¥4 to ¥6 million	0.06	0.03	Primary breadwinner: Self	-0.04	-0.24
1 to 3 years' experience of working as non-regular employee	0.06	0.16	Average number of work hours per week: 50 hours or more	-0.01	-0.19
Academic background: Junior or technical college graduate	0.03	0.31	Academic performance in junior high school: Near the top of the class	-0.01	-0.16
Size of establishment: 29 or fewer employees	0.03	0.21			
Academic background: High school graduate	0.03	0.06			
Age: 40-44	0.03	0.06			

\*Results of correspondence analysis, arranged in order of size of value on first axis. First axis = degree to which occupational or career problems are perceived, Second axis = Regular employee vs. Non-regular employee axis.

#### 4. Delivery: How Career Guidance Should Be Delivered to Mature Adults in Japan

In the past, discussions of career guidance have primarily focused on the content of career guidance. Frequently covered topics have been related to career

guidance information and tools, such as what kind of job information should be provided and what sort of vocational interest tests should be performed. Recently, however, while not disregarding the content of career guidance completely, discussions have increasingly focused on the means of delivery.

This paper also examines career guidance for mature adults in light of these recent trends. With regard to the medium of delivery in particular, until now services have generally been provided by public vocational service institutions or via the Internet, but with regard to the future of career guidance it is necessary to consider other channels for delivery. These could include public occupational competency development facilities, schools, private-sector companies, and NPOs, as well as technologies and media such as telephone and e-mail. In particular, attention should be focused on means of delivering guidance to people in remote locations and steps to address disparities in access to information.

### 1) Content and delivery of career guidance

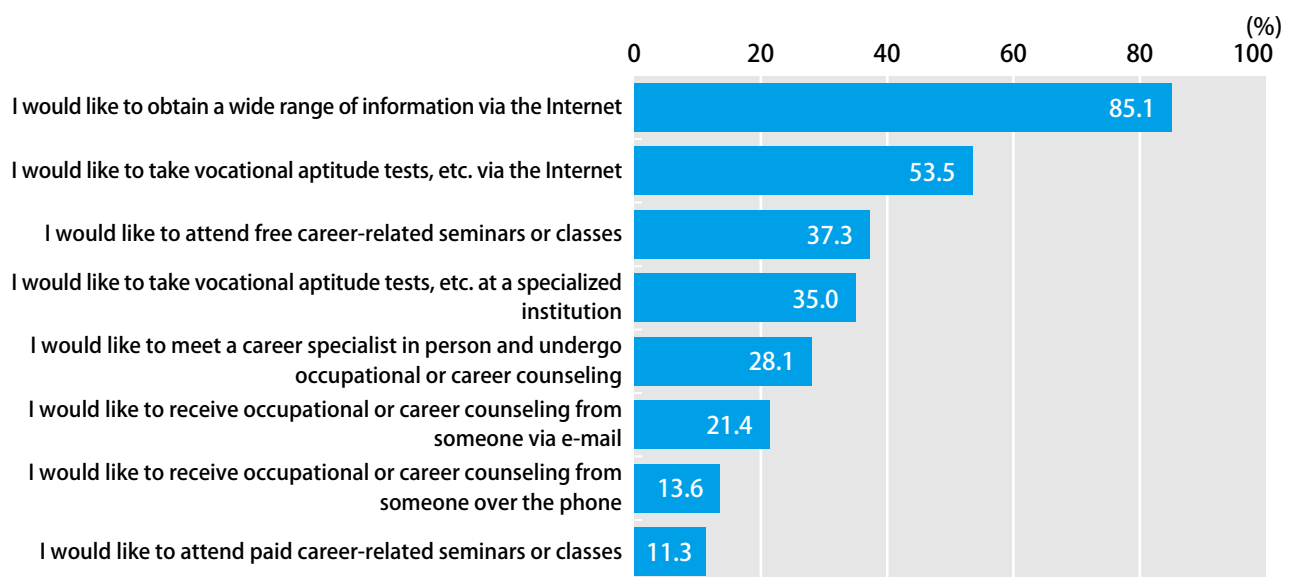
For this study, people were surveyed to determine what kind of career guidance services they would like and how they would like them delivered. The results are shown in Figure IV-12 as responses to the question “If you were able to utilize occupation- or career-related support or services, how would you do so?” As the figure shows, the most common response was “I would like to obtain a wide range of information via the Internet”, followed by “I would

like to take vocational aptitude tests, etc. via the Internet” and “I would like to attend free career-related seminars or classes”. It is evident that the Internet is the most favored medium of delivery, and information and tests are the most favored form of content.

However, it was inferred that correlations between career guidance delivery and content preferences exist, and for this reason a cluster analysis was performed. In a cluster analysis, items that are positioned close together (clustered) are basically interpreted as being strongly correlated with one another. It is also possible to obtain information on the hierarchy of correlations among items. In Figure IV-13, items are broadly separated into counseling and seminar type services (upper half) and information and testing type services (lower half). These findings suggest that survey respondents mentally divide career guidance services into two categories: (1) Free or paid seminars or counseling from specialists via e-mail or telephone, and (2) information collected via the Internet and testing services provided over the Internet or by specialized institutions.

Close examination of the figure reveals that

**Figure IV-12 Responses to the Question “If You Were Able to Utilize Occupation- or Career-related Support or Services, How Would You Do So?”**

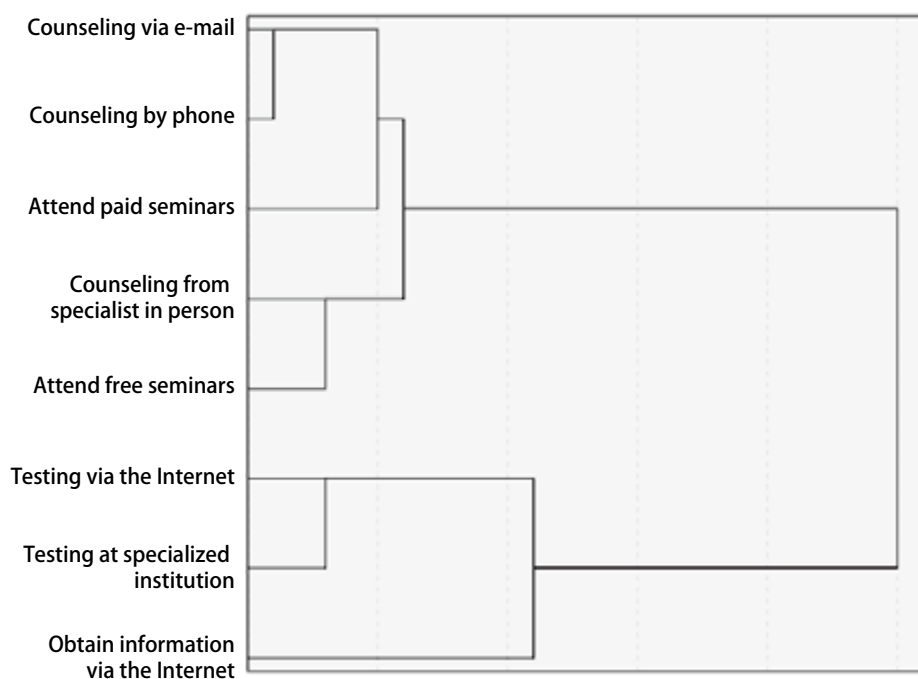


counseling via e-mail or telephone and paid seminars are closely related to one another. A separate close relation exists between free seminars and counseling from specialists. These connections can be interpreted from various angles, but the picture that emerges is of a combination of (1) paid seminars offered by private-sector companies for a fee and follow-up e-mail or telephone counseling thereafter, or (2) free seminars offered by public institutions and specialized counseling.

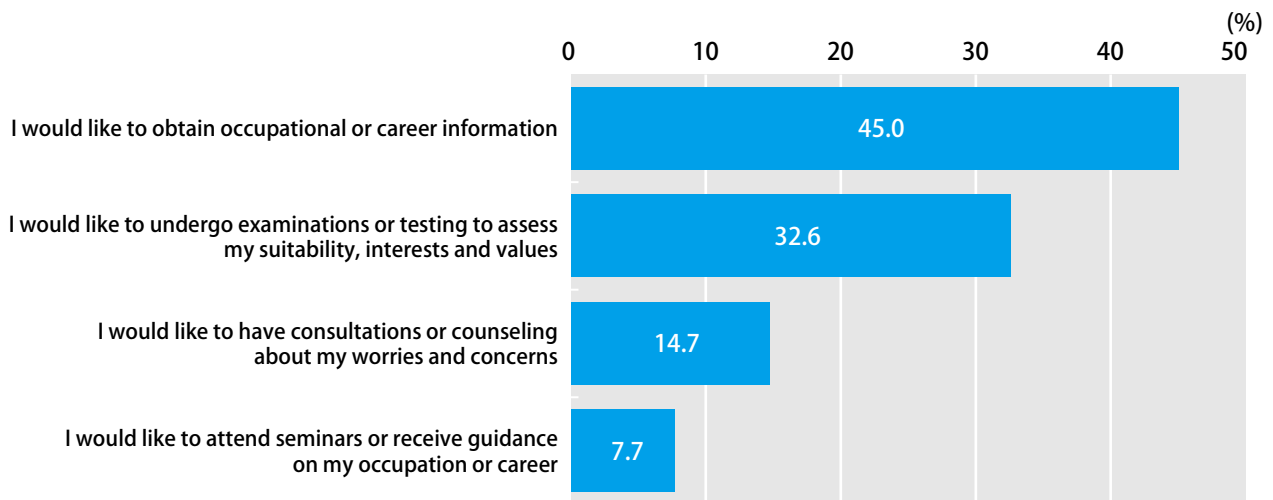
## 2) Various conditions applying to career guidance delivery

A further analysis of career guidance delivery from a different angle was performed. Figure IV-14 shows responses to the question, “If you were to receive support or guidance with your occupation or career, what form would this take?” As the figure shows, the most common response was “I would like to obtain occupational or career information”, followed by “I would like to undergo examinations or testing to assess my suitability, interests and values” and “I would like to have consultations or counseling about my worries and concerns”. Roughly, the order of preference for many respondents was “Information > Testing > Counseling > Seminars”.

**Figure IV-13 Results of Cluster Analysis of Types of Support and Services Respondents Prefer to Utilize**



**Figure IV-14 Types of Occupational or Career Support Respondents Would Prefer to Have**



The next table, Table IV-15, shows responses to a question about what conditions recipients would like to receive four types of support under.

- **Location:** Regardless of the type of support or assistance, “at the Employment Security Bureau” (nicknamed “Hello Work” in Japan) was a common one. However, “at home” was also a common response when the type of support was “obtaining occupation or career-related information” (hereinafter, “information”) or “undergoing testing or screening” (hereinafter, “testing”). Meanwhile, for the item “receiving consultations or counseling” (hereinafter, “consultations”) and “attending seminars or guidance sessions” (hereinafter, “seminars”) many people responded, “in a convenient place such as near a train station”. It appears that as a rule people want to receive career guidance services at the Employment Security Bureau, but when it comes to information and testing the home is also favored, while convenient locations such as near train stations are favored for seminars.
- **Length of time:** The most common response was “30 minutes to one hour”, but for “information”, “testing” “consultations” there were also many people responding “15 to 30

minutes”, and for “consultations”, “about one hour” was also a common response, and for “seminars”, “One to two hours or so” was also common. It is evident that people favor shorter times for obtaining information and undergoing testing, notably 30 minutes to one hour, while they are willing to spend longer times for consultations and seminars.

- **Number of times:** The most common responses were “Only once” and “No particular preference”.
- **Number of participants:** The vast majority responded “One (myself)”. However, in the area of seminars, respondents expressed an interest in “In a group of six to ten people”.
- **From whom:** Many people responded “From counselors, etc. at a public institution” or “From Employment Security Center staff”. It is evident that there are strong needs for services offered through public institutions including “Hello Work”. However, to some degree there are also needs for “Counselors at private-sector companies”, particularly in the area of seminars, consultations, and testing.

**Table IV-15 Differences in Desired Conditions for Career Guidance Services, by Type of Service**

(%)

	I would like to obtain occupational or career information (Information) N=1772	I would like to undergo examinations or testing (Testing) N=1281	I would like to have consultations or counseling (Counseling) N=578	I would like to attend seminars or receive guidance (Seminars) N=303	Total
<b>Location</b>					
At the Employment Security Bureau ("Hello Work")	29.1	21.7	22.1	17.0	24.7
At a career support institution	9.0	5.8	13.2	7.4	8.5
At a vocational training institution or facility	6.4	10.7	9.0	15.2	8.9
At a university, junior college, technical college, etc.	1.6	1.0	0.6	4.6	1.5
At a "culture center," etc.	3.1	7.5	7.7	14.2	6.1
At a specialized private-sector company	8.8	8.4	9.4	10.6	8.9
At my employer	4.9	6.0	6.8	9.2	5.9
At home	22.5	24.2	8.8	3.9	19.6
In a convenient place such as near a train station	12.7	13.5	20.2	17.4	14.5
Other	1.8	1.3	2.2	0.4	1.6
<b>Length of time</b>					
15 min. or less	13.7	11.5	6.4	5.3	11.3
15-30 min.	21.1	22.0	18.0	10.6	20.1
30-60 min.	39.9	42.4	43.9	41.1	41.4
About 1 hr.	12.7	13.0	18.0	17.5	13.9
1-2 hrs.	6.4	7.5	7.8	17.9	7.9
2 hrs. or more	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.4
No particular preference	5.7	3.5	5.4	7.0	5.0
<b>Time of day</b>					
Early morning	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.5
Morning	22.6	24.7	27.9	29.3	24.6
Afternoon	13.3	13.2	17.7	17.7	14.2
Late afternoon or evening	11.5	9.8	14.8	17.3	11.9
Want to utilize small amounts of free time	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.6
Want to utilize services where time is not a factor	30.8	31.1	15.2	10.7	27.0
No particular preference	19.8	19.3	21.9	23.0	20.2
<b>No. of times</b>					
Only once	26.3	40.9	25.6	28.8	31.1
Several consecutive days	5.1	4.6	4.8	7.6	5.1
Several times per week	6.1	4.1	4.5	2.6	4.9
Once a week for 4 weeks or so	12.9	11.0	13.5	16.2	12.7
Once a week for 2 or 3 months	7.7	6.3	7.1	10.9	7.4
Once a month for 2 or 3 months	7.3	7.5	9.3	12.3	8.0
Once a month for 6 months or so	2.8	2.4	5.9	4.3	3.3
Other	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.2
No particular preference	31.6	23.0	28.7	17.2	27.3
<b>No. of participants</b>					
One (myself)	80.4	77.0	88.4	40.9	77.4
Group of 2-3 people	6.8	7.7	6.6	5.6	7.0
Group of 4-5 people	5.1	8.0	3.3	15.8	6.6
Group of 6-10 people	3.8	3.5	0.3	17.5	4.3
Group of 11-20 people	2.0	1.7	1.0	8.9	2.3
Large group of 21 or more people	1.8	2.0	0.3	11.2	2.4
<b>From whom</b>					
Employment Security Center staff	21.0	13.0	11.3	10.6	16.2
Counselors, etc. at a public institution	25.7	38.0	40.5	31.3	32.3
Staff other than counselors at a public institution	9.7	10.4	11.3	12.3	10.4
Counselors at a private-sector company	20.7	23.0	25.7	31.3	23.0
In-house counselors at my employer	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.7
Friends and acquaintances	1.5	0.6	0.4	0.7	1.0
Online acquaintances, etc.	1.7	0.7	0.9	2.1	1.3
People I do not know	2.9	3.8	3.3	3.5	3.3
By myself	11.5	8.0	1.5	1.1	8.1
Other	1.2	0.6	1.1	1.8	1.0

\*For each item, the two most common responses are shaded.

## 5. Cost: How Much Are Recipients Willing or Able to Pay for Career Guidance in Japan?

Recent career guidance research has discussed cost issues and how career guidance can be delivered through the market, because in all developed countries, there is a perceived need to lessen the strain career guidance programs place on public coffers. Out of this has come the concept of recipients funding their own career guidance, at least when their income is above a certain level, and mechanisms of this sort are being explored.

However, discussions of this sort must start with the important prerequisite of people's ability to pay for career guidance services. The thorniest part of this discussion is the difficulty of determining exactly what is a fair price for career guidance services, and with this in mind, this study asked respondents how much they would be willing or able to pay for career guidance, so as to provide hints on the way forward.

With the above concerns in mind, this survey posed three questions about the expense and time consumed by career guidance services: “(1) If you were to receive one-to-one counseling or guidance

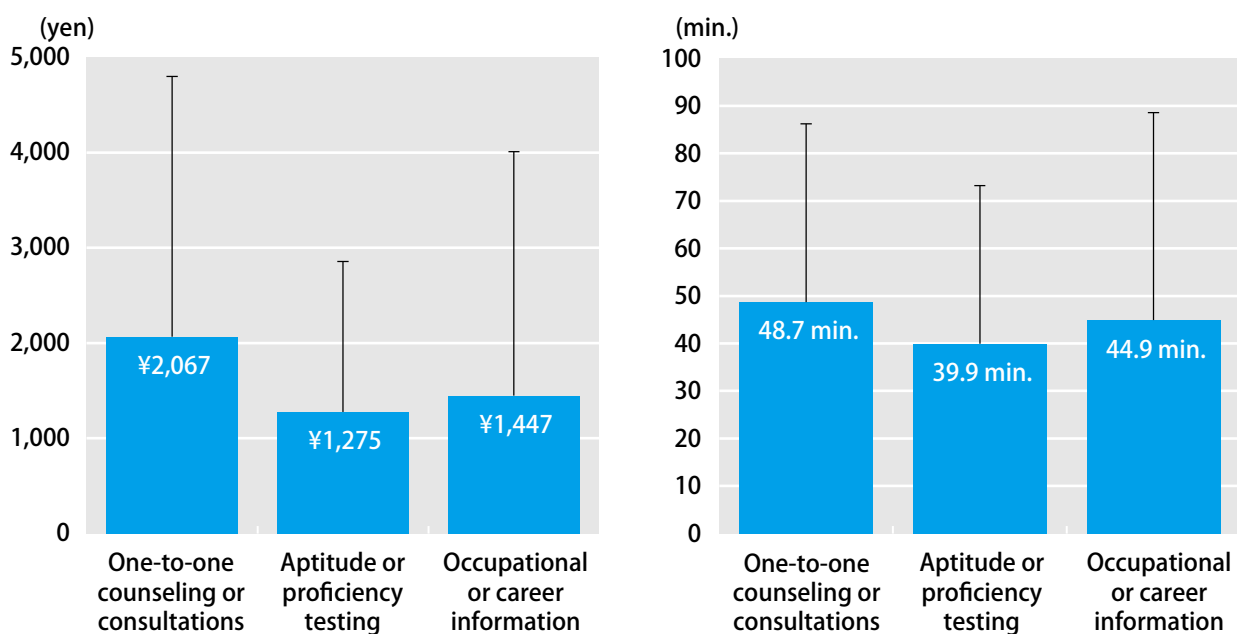
regarding your occupation or career, how much money and time would you be willing to spend for one session?” “(2) If you were to receive aptitude or competency testing regarding your occupation or career, how much money and time would you be willing to spend for one test?” “(3) How much money or time would you be willing to spend on obtaining information regarding your occupation or career?”

### 1) General tendencies related to the cost of career guidance services

Figure IV-16 shows the average amounts people are able to spend on career guidance services. The highest amount was for counseling and consultations at 2,067 yen, followed by information at 1,447 yen and testing at 1,275 yen. The order was the same with regard to time, with people willing to spend the longest on counseling at 48.7 minutes, followed by information at 44.9 minutes and testing at 39.9 minutes.

Based on these findings, if the amount people are willing or able to pay for counseling or consultations is calculated at a per-minute rate it comes to 42 yen/minute, followed by information at 32 yen/minute and

**Figure IV-16 Amount of Money (Left) and Time (Right) People Can Spend on Career Guidance Services**





testing also at 32 yen/minute. Here again counseling or consultations is shown to be the type of guidance people are most willing to pay for. We may infer that respondents viewed consultations or counseling as more specialized services than information or testing.

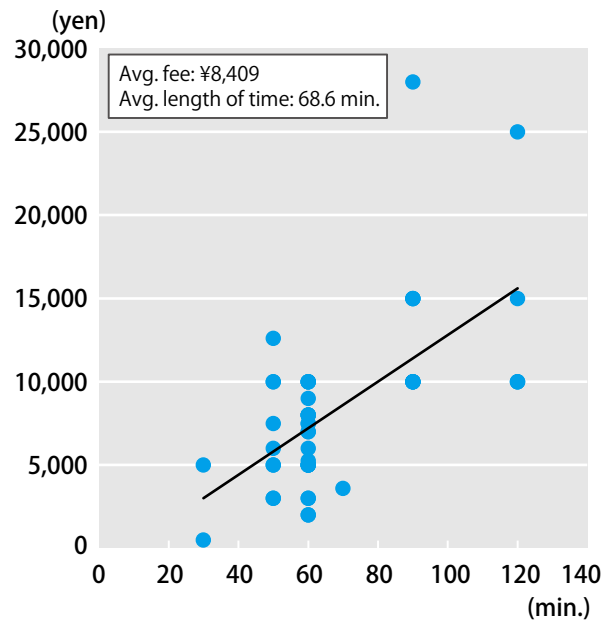
Here we should note that the average response to the survey question on counseling fees, approximately 2,000 yen, is extremely low compared to the actual cost of paid career counseling in Japan today. Figure IV-17 plots 50 pieces of data on the length of sessions and fees charged by career counselors in Japan who post their fees on the Internet. Data is clustered in the 50-60 minute range (average length of time 68.6 minutes), and between 5,000 and 10,000 yen (average 8,409 yen). This is extremely far removed from the fees respondents to this survey had in mind.

These findings indicate that if career guidance is offered as a paid service on the open market, there is a need for some kind of financial assistance to help fill the gulf between what people say they are willing or able to pay, around 2,000 yen per session, and what the service actually costs on average, about 8,500 yen.

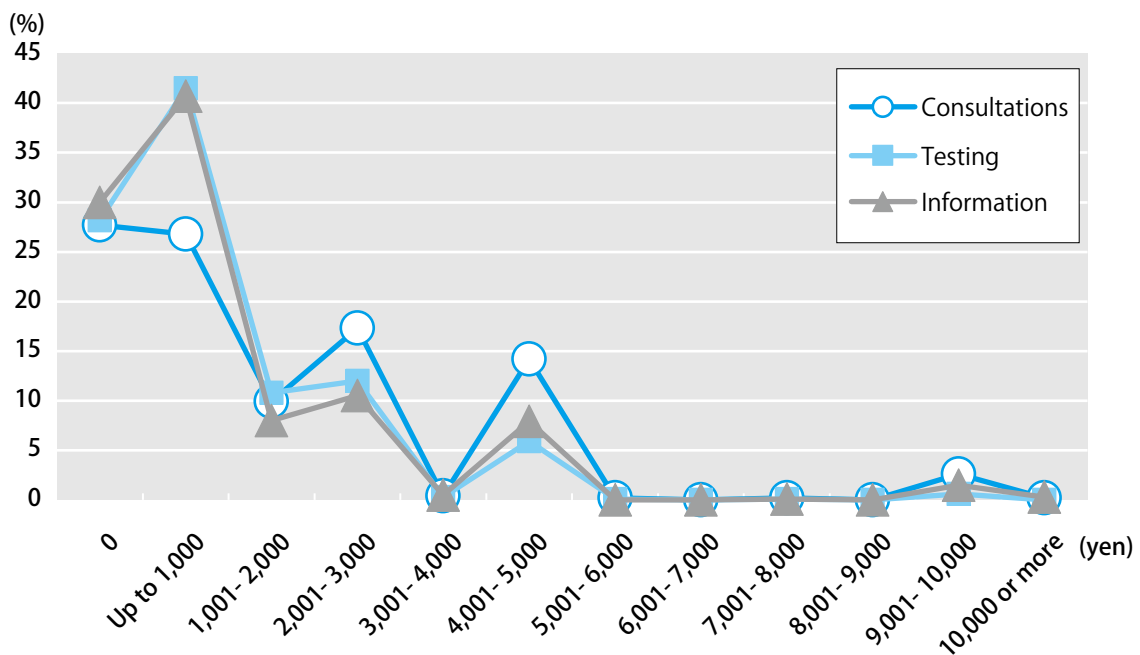
A great many respondents, however, seem to have the opinion that career guidance should as a rule be free. As shown in Figure IV-18, the responses regarding amounts people say they can pay are

distributed widely, but peak in the 0 to 1,000 yen range. The widespread and deep-rooted perception that career guidance should be available free of charge appears to be a major stumbling block to the

**Figure IV-17 Plot Chart of Japanese Career Counselors' Standard Session Lengths and Fees**



**Figure IV-18 Distribution of Amounts People Say They Can Pay for Career Guidance Services**



success of a model in which career guidance costs are borne by recipients.

## 2) Characteristics of individual attributes pertaining to amount people say they can pay for career guidance services

Next, this study examined correlations between individual attributes and amounts people say they can pay for career guidance services. As common tendencies are seen for “consultations”, “testing”, and “information”, here we will focus on the amounts people say they can pay for consultations in particular.

Table IV-19 shows the 20 individual attributes most positively correlated with being willing or able to pay for consultations, and the 20 most negatively correlated. The 20 most positively correlated include higher annual individual or household income; current status as a regular employee; either self or spouse being the primary breadwinner; male gender, and university graduate status. Many people with

these attributes have the wherewithal to spend freely on career guidance. Conversely, the 20 most negatively correlated include lower annual individual or household income; large number of changes of employer in the past; currently seeking a job, unemployed, an non-regular employee, or a full-time homemaker; and spouse being the primary breadwinner. Many people with these attributes lack the wherewithal to spend freely on career guidance.

Table IV-20 shows the results of a stepwise multiple regression analysis performed in order to determine which factors among those shown in Table IV-19 had the greatest impact on the amounts people are willing or able to pay for career guidance services. If all factors are included in the analysis, for consultations, testing, and information alike, the only factors with any significant impact were “annual individual income” and “annual household income”. Even if these two are removed from the scope of the analysis, the factors that exert the greatest influence

**Table IV-19 20 Individual Attributes Most Positively Correlated/ 20 Most Negatively Correlated with Being Willing or Able to Pay for Career Guidance Services (Consultations)**

Individual attributes (20 most positively correlated)	Amount willing or able to pay for consultations	Individual attributes (20 most negatively correlated)	Amount willing or able to pay for consultations
Annual individual income ¥12 million or more	¥4,509	Annual household income ¥0-2 million	¥1,051
Annual household income ¥12 million or more	¥3,302	Have changed jobs 7 or more times	¥1,170
Annual individual income ¥10-12 million	¥3,299	Current status: Seeking employment	¥1,204
Annual individual income ¥8-10 million	¥3,226	Annual individual income ¥0	¥1,305
Annual individual income ¥6-8 million	¥2,856	Annual household income ¥0	¥1,416
Annual household income ¥10-12 million	¥2,811	Current status: Non-regular employee	¥1,418
Length of service as regular employee: 21 years or more	¥2,627	Have experience as full-time homemaker	¥1,423
Annual household income ¥8-10 million	¥2,555	Current status: Unemployed	¥1,435
Annual individual income ¥4-6 million	¥2,535	Current status: Full-time homemaker	¥1,440
Primary breadwinner: Self and spouse, around half and half	¥2,506	Annual household income ¥2-4 million	¥1,445
Current status: Regular employee	¥2,490	Annual individual income ¥0-2 million	¥1,453
Gender: Male	¥2,467	Primary breadwinner: Spouse	¥1,549
Career thus far: A wide range of jobs in a specific field	¥2,417	Have changed jobs 4-6 times	¥1,572
Academic background: University or graduate school graduate	¥2,413	10 or more years' experience as non-regular employee	¥1,582
No experience as non-regular employee	¥2,403	Bottom half of the class	¥1,641
Primary breadwinner: Self	¥2,374	Vocational school, etc.	¥1,663
Academic performance in junior high school: Near the top of the class	¥2,341	Career thus far: A wide range of jobs in a wide range of fields	¥1,667
Have never changed jobs	¥2,328	Status immediately after graduation: Non-regular employee, etc.	¥1,668
No experience as full-time homemaker	¥2,308	1-3 years' experience as non-regular employee	¥1,683
Age: 45-49	¥2,275	Up to 10 years' experience as regular employee	¥1,684

**Table IV-20 Factors That Most Influence the Ability to Pay for Career Guidance Services (Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis)**

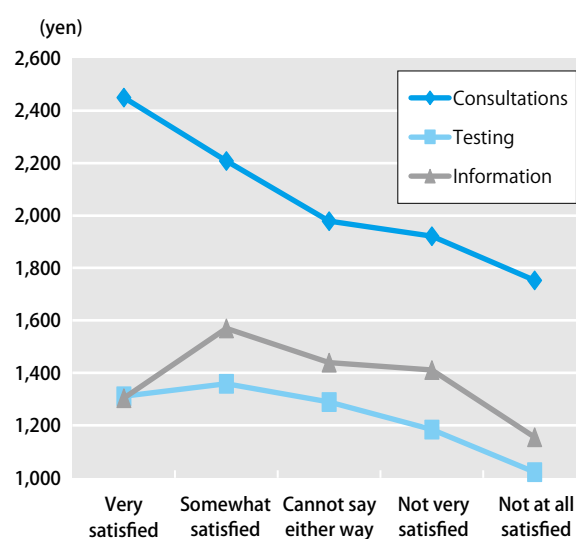
	Consultations	Testing	Information
	B sig.	B sig.	B sig.
Current status: Self-employed			.056 **
Current status: Unemployed, etc.			.056 **
Annual individual income	.213 **	.170 **	.138 **
Annual household income	.105 **	.103 **	.069 **
R <sup>2</sup>	.077 **	.049 **	.029 **

(Results excluding annual individual and household income)	Consultations	Testing	Information
	B sig.	B sig.	B sig.
Gender (1=Men、 2=Women)			-.060 **
Currently live in urban area		.049 **	
Academic background: University or graduate school graduate	.081 **	.069 **	.064 **
Number of years working as regular employee:	.067 **	.075 **	.053 **
No. of times changing jobs	-.057 **	-.065 **	
Career thus far: A wide range of jobs in a specific field	.043 **		
Current status: Regular employee	.128 **	.074 **	
Current status: Self-employed	.052 **		
R <sup>2</sup>	.053 **	.035 **	.029 **

are those that imply higher income and ability to spend freely on career guidance services, such as regular employees status, long period of experience as a regular employee, and university graduate status.

These results indicate that those capable of spending the most on career guidance are precisely those that least need it, namely male, university-graduate regular employees with high annual individual and household income, while those most in need of career guidance (job seekers, the unemployed, non-regular employees, full-time homemakers) are paradoxically those least capable of paying for it.

It follows that those least satisfied with their careers thus far are also least capable of paying for career guidance, as illustrated by Figure IV-21. This further validates one of the key points that emerged from this study, namely that one reason attempts to have career guidance recipients shoulder the cost of this guidance is that those who genuinely need guidance (people dissatisfied with their careers) have low incomes and lack the funds to pay for it. This point can hardly be emphasized enough.

**Figure IV-21 Amount People Say They Can Pay for Career Guidance Services, by Degree of Satisfaction with Career Thus Far**

## 6. Summary and Implications

This paper examined career guidance for mature adults in Japan from the three vantage points of segmentation, delivery, and cost. A summary of the findings follows.

First, with regard to segmentation, it was clear that many people in their 30s and 40s did not fit the conventional mold of male regular-employee breadwinners and female full-time homemakers raising children, including a large contingent of unemployed or non-regularly employed people. The latter were the ones most in need of career guidance, with this need particularly pronounced among the following groups: (1) people whose academic performance in their student days had been poor, (2) people who had withdrawn from school, (3) people who had sought jobs around the time they graduated but had not been hired, (4) people who worked as non-regular employees or were unemployed immediately following graduation, (5) people who had experienced periods of unemployment since graduating, and (6) people who had changed jobs many times thus far. It was evident that difficulty in transitioning from school to work or career problems during their younger days continued to exert a negative impact on people's careers into their mature adult years (aged 30-49). However, even among regular employees there was an apparent gap between one group, who worked many hours per week on average but had only average income, and another group of high-income employees of major corporations. The findings indicated that in the future, it may be necessary to focus on the career guidance needs of already employed people, particularly regular employees.

Second, regarding delivery, it was found that: (1) Recipients thought of career guidance as divided into two basic types: (a) a combination of paid or free seminars and consultations via e-mail or telephone with specialists, and (b) acquisition of information from the Internet and testing over the Internet or through specialized institutions. (2) As a rule, recipients hoped to receive career guidance through public employment services such as Employment Service Center ("Hello Work"). (3) However,

recipients preferred to acquire information and undergo testing at home, but to have consultations or participate in seminars in convenient public locations. (4) In terms of time, people hoped to spend only small amounts of time on information or testing, but greater amounts on consultations or seminars. (5) Regarding service providers, counselors or staff members at public institutions were most favored, but for seminars, consultations, and testing, there was demand for counselors employed by private-sector companies as well.

Third, in terms of cost, the average amount people said they could spend for career guidance services was approximately 2,000 yen for consultations, 1,300 yen for testing, and 1,400 yen for seminars. These amounts are extremely low compared to the average fees charged for paid career counseling in Japan today (around 8,000 to 10,000 yen). Also, a "catch-22" was evident in that those most able to pay for career guidance, namely male university-graduate regular employees with ample annual individual or household income, are those least in need of guidance, while conversely, those in great need of career guidance (job seekers, those currently unemployed, non-regular employees, full-time homemakers) are those least able to afford it.

The above results have the following implications for the future of career guidance for mature adults in Japan: One key implication is that in Japan, mature adults requiring career guidance are not necessarily regular employees but may very well be unemployed or working as non-regular employees. It is important to recognize that these people require not only introductions to potential employers, but also the sort of all-around career guidance often provided to younger people. Mature adults who lack employment or are non-regular employees often carry a legacy of career difficulties extending back to their student days, and as a result require thoroughgoing career guidance of the sort they ought to have had at a younger age. For example, they may need advice of the sort they should have gotten from teachers prior to graduation, testing that they should have undergone in the past, and seminars covering material they ought to have covered at some point in the past. On the surface, career guidance for unemployed individuals

and non-regular employees may appear to be “putting the cart before the horse” (as finding employment quickly might seem like the first priority). However, it is clear that this group faces occupational or career issues that were not sufficiently resolved at a younger age, and if these go unresolved, over the long term they will face the same problems over and over again.

Second, it is evident that there is a need to offer the above-described demographic career guidance services through conveniently accessible channels at a reasonable cost. Recent research on career guidance specifically envisions information and communications technology-based channels, as well as delivery of services in convenient public locations such as next to train stations. In Japan, Employment Service Centers already offer information on job opportunities via the Internet, as well as career advancement services for mature adult non-regular employees, and “Hello Work” Plazas in convenient locations where information-search and occupational counseling services are available. In short, conveniently accessible career guidance services for mature adult non-regular employees do exist in Japan. This study indicates that these services do indeed fulfill the career guidance needs of the mature adult demographic, and they will need to be expanded and enriched in the future. Also, there is a need for further development of services such as online information enabling people to understand their aptitudes and compatibilities, and simple checklists for greater self-understanding. The survey results in this study indicated a strong demand for user-friendly career guidance services instantly accessible at home. This situation calls not only for efforts to meet these Internet-based needs, but also more strategic examination of how they can be seamlessly connected to more abundant and effective non-Net-based services at public employment service providers.

Third, this study showed that when the current status of career guidance through public channels is taken into account, the concept of having recipients bear the cost of guidance is not a realistic one. The primary reason for this is that people truly in need of career guidance are precisely those who are unable to afford paying for it. On the other hand, paid career guidance aimed at resolving workplace issues, for

relatively economically secure regular employees, could be feasible. Appropriate career guidance for regular employees is an area that has not received sufficient attention due to focus on the needs of unemployed individuals and non-regular employees.

This study concludes that in Japan today, a diverse range of career guidance needs is not being sufficiently met. While there may be progress, it is clear that it needs to be accelerated, and career guidance programs broadened and enriched. However, the environment surrounding mature adults’ careers is constantly evolving, and there is a need for further, ongoing research on career guidance for this demographic in Japan.

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