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## General Survey

### Number of Businesses Decreases

According to a 1994 survey on consolidation of records of businesses an interim report of a statistical survey on establishments, the number of establishments and employees working for them dropped below that reported in the previous 1991 survey. This clearly indicates that the adverse effects of the economic slowdown following the bursting of the financial bubble are enormous. It was the first such drop since 1947 when the survey was originated.

The survey is carried out among all establishments across the nation to probe the realities of their business activity. Its interim report, compiled recently, was intended to amend and consolidate records of businesses prepared in the 1991 survey and also to find out how many private-sector establishments were in operation, how many were established and how many closed their doors. As of April 20, 1994, the number of private-sector businesses in the nation was 6.55 million, a drop of 12,000, or 0.2 percent, from the level of the 1991 survey, the survey report said. Of the 6.55 million establishments, 5,698,000 had previously been in operation, accounting for 87 percent of the total, and 849,000 went into business, making up 13 percent of the total. Furthermore, 861,000 closed their doors, accounting for 13.1 percent of the total private-sector establishments surveyed in 1991. Companies closing down outnumbered those being set up by 12,000. Meanwhile, the total number of employees working at private-sector establishments was 54.366 million, a decrease of 666,000, or 1.2 percent, from the previous survey. Regarding employees, the number of employees at new establishment stood at 6,971,000, representing 12.8 percent of the total. The number of employees at establishments closing their doors was 5.686 million, or 10.3 percent of the total number of employees of establishments in operation in 1991. Employees of newly created establishments outnumbered those of establishments closing down by 1.285 million, but the figure for establishments in operation (47.376 million) dipped by 1.951 million from that posted in the 1991 survey.

By industry, excluding agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the rate of increase in establishments, when compared with that of the previous survey, was the highest at 2.2 percent for services, followed by 1.6 percent for real estate and construction. Thus, the number of establishments rose in six industries. The increase rate, however, fell in the three industries-4.2 percent for manufacturing, 3.1 percent for mining and 1 percent for wholesale and retail trade and eating and drinking places. Meanwhile, the number of employees increased in the three industries-4.2 percent in electricity, gas, heat supply and water supply, 2.4 percent in services and 1.6 percent in wholesale and retail trade and eating and drinking

places.

But the rate dropped in six industries, including real estate(8.3%) and manufacturing(5.6%). Thus, the survey revealed a notable rise in the number of establishments and employees in the services but a large decline in manufacturing.

## Working Conditions and the Labor Market

### 1994 Industry Labor Situation Survey

In the two-year period from September 1992 to August 1994, about 60 percent of businesses surveyed implemented employment adjustment measures and one in 10 conducted voluntary retirements and dismissals due to the effects of the prolonged recession, said the Ministry of Labour in a recent report.

The Industry Labor Situation Survey was carried out in September 1994, to gain deeper insights into the realities of employment adjustment measures and to review management and projects at enterprises and their future plans. The survey covered 4,500 companies with 30 or more regular employees in six industries--construction, manufacturing, transport and communication, finance and insurance, wholesale and retail trades and services. The Ministry of Labour said that as of September 1994, 9.8 percent of the 4,021 respondents had "redundant labor," 71.5 percent found their number of employees "adequate" and 18.3 percent replied that they were experiencing a "shortage of workers". Firms with 100 and more employees strongly felt they had excess employees, and workers were particularly redundant in office work and management and in enterprises of all sizes.

What percentage of enterprises undertook employment adjustment measures and what were these actions? During the two-year period from September 1992, 60.8 percent of the firms questioned carried out employment adjustments in some form or other. By type of measure (multiple answer possible), the highest, or 30.1 percent placed "limits on overtime," followed by 23.8 percent effecting "relocations" and 23.7 percent who "slashed or suspended midcareer hirings." In addition, those which resorted to such harsh measures as voluntary retirements and dismissals" reached 11.7 percent, while 8.3 percent "farmed out employees to other firms and subsidiaries."

An average 20.9 employees per enterprise were asked to retire voluntarily or were dismissed. By size of company, 130.3 employees, 31.8 employees and 14 employees were dismissed or retired voluntarily at firms with a workforce of 1,000 and more, 100 to 999 and

30 to 99, respectively.

In the five years from 1989, 72.5 percent of enterprises took measures and policies to overhaul and restructure management, including "labor saving, rationalization and streamlining investment for higher productivity"; "review and downsizing of production and services" and "organizational reform." The larger the size of the company, the more firms took such measures. Within the coming five-year period, 68.4 percent plan to carry out the following overhaul and restructuring measures and policies: "labor-saving, rationalization and streamlining investment for higher productivity (42.1%); "review and downsizing of production and services" (41.4 %) and "strengthening of business operations through diversification of customers" (40.7%).

## Human Resources Management

### 1995 Conference on Industrial Relations

The 1995 Conference on Industrial Relations met on March 16-17 under joint sponsorship of the Japan Industrial Relations Research Association (JIRRA) and the Japan Institute of Labour (JIL). The conference featured three different sessions. First was public policy with employment-policy law and the labor standards law as bases axes. Second was the macroeconomic environment and policy for the job market. Third was corporate management centering on such subjects as personnel and labor management policies and introduction of annual pay programs. In each of the sessions, the participants reported on the current situation of and trends in Japanese-style employment practices.

The first session featured legislation and policies which played major roles in establishing and maintaining Japanese-style employment practices. Mr. Yasuo Suwa, professor of Hosei University, and Mr. Yoichi Shimada, professor of Otaru University of Commerce, reported on laws concerning employment policy and labor standards in related laws, respectively. Presenting a list of postwar labor-related laws, Mr. Suwa pointed out the remarkable increase in laws concerning employment policy since the 1960-1970 period. In recent years, the Japanese government has stressed positive employment policy with the objective of full employment. Further, the government has even formulated policies more directly involving the internal labor market within the firm, in the form of intra-firm training, maintenance of employment and employment administration, he noted. In step with growth and maturity of society and the economy, the image of workers who are the object of labor laws is now shifting away from that of "workers as a group" who are uniform and submissive to forced regulations toward that of "workers as individuals" who are more suited to voluntary

regulations in an individualistic and complementary manner while their intentions are being respected, he added.

Mr. Shimada stated the fact that Japanese-style employment practices, which were suited to the era of high growth, are now pressed to respond to the needs of the times and that this poses a significant problem also for labor legislation. He thus stressed that "labor legislation is now entering an important phase of reorganization." Also, he provided examples of recent changes involving employment practices. First, the declining ratio of regular employees on a long-term basis. Second, flexible employment of professional workers. Third, changes in personnel management away from working hours management toward ability management. Fourth, individualized and liberated awareness of workers and setbacks from group-based industrial relations.

In the second session, Professor Hiroyuki Chuma of Hitotsubashi University, expounded on the merits of long-term employment practices from the standpoint of economics. On the other hand, Professor Naohiro Yashiro of Sophia University maintained that slower economic growth and future tighter labor demand - supply situation will make employment more flexible, while acknowledging the merits of long employment tenure. Noting that the allocation mechanism of the "internal labor market" complements the incompleteness of the external labor market, Mr. Chuma cited, as reasons for failure of the external labor market to function properly, difficulty in precisely measuring productivity and work performance of workers engaged in "non-uniform" upper-level duties and workers' not wanting major changes in wages. He thus questioned whether a full shift of the nation's employment practices away from the internal labor market toward the external labor market will take place. To this, Mr. Yashiro said he "quite agrees" with Mr. Chuma on the merits of Japanese long-term employment practices. Yet he pointed out the fact that with a declining labor force and slower economic growth in future years when the nation experiences a full-fledged graying of society, enterprises will find it difficult to maintain traditional long-term employment practices. Also, he added that enterprises will have a hard time paying wages for two adult persons of a single-income family and that the wage system, in step with women's advancement into the job market, will move away from a family-based structure toward an individual-based one.

The third session focused on intra-firm personnel and labor management policies. Assistant Professor Hiroyuki Fujimura of Shiga University proposed that a long-term policy of personnel management be adopted for blue-collar workers. Mr. Fujimura expressed the view that behind the need for review of Japanese-style employment practices lies the enterprise's self-centered "desire to shed this layer" of middle-aged and elderly workers which are deemed redundant. Also, he pointed out that the bloated layer of middle-aged and older

workers is attributable to an imbalance between the fruits of labor and wage levels, lack of managerial posts and difficulty in responding to new technologies and outdated abilities. Further, he stated that the employer who has stuck to uniform personnel management is responsible for "making middle-aged and elderly persons useless." Mr. Naoyuki Kameyama, JIL research director, reported on the realities of introduction of the annual pay system which is drawing much attention as a new way of administering white-collar workers. "The annual pay system is one which is moving away from seniority-based toward merit-based pay, with the assumption that the traditional seniority-based wage scheme is not tied to ability and achievement," said Mr. Kameyama, thus pointing out that the seniority-based wage system "also involved evaluation and disparity." He added that the priority-based introduction of the annual wage system into those in management posts played the role of making managers recognize problems different from those involving rank-and-file employees and had a great impact in this sense.

## International Relations

### **Honda Launches First Works Council in Europe**

In response to a directive from the European Union(EU), Honda Motors has established a works council for its facilities there. At a regular annual meeting, the corporation will tell representatives of workers in its European plants about its management policy and will make a preliminary report on important decisions, such as any closure of its European facilities.

Some analysts believe that the European Works Council(EWC), to be launched by 1999 at latest, will prevent businesses from restructuring themselves. Honda, however, concluded that establishing the EWC will help it localize its projects and decided that it will be the first Japanese business to introduce the EWC. Honda's adoption of the EWC is also characterized by the fact that it has organized employees of the countries which are not subject to the EU directive. Toyota Motor, Sony and Toshiba are also planning to do the same and are likely to follow in the footsteps of Honda.

It was decided by an EU unified directive of September 1994 that the EWC be established. In the EU region, other than Britain which has declined to participate in the social policy agreement of the Maastricht Treaty, corporations which employ 1,000 and more workers and which hire 150 and more workers in each of two or more countries, are to create works council to notify their employees beforehand of management decisions. By September 1996, individual countries will put the EU directive into action and by 1999 at latest, corporations are obliged to found a EWC. However, when voluntarily inauguration of EWC is carried out

before the directive takes effect, labor and management of the company can decide on the details of the EWC irrespective of requirements as provided for in the directive. Accordingly, many multinationals have already moved toward voluntary establishment of the EWC.

Honda Motor Europe(HME Leding, UK), which controls all Honda facilities in Europe, was the central actor in establishing the works council for 23 companies in 16 European nations, including four-wheel and two-wheel vehicle plants and distribution facilities. Twenty-two representatives of workers from the 16 countries were elected . About 60 persons, including top managers of HME and individual corporations gathered for the first regular meeting in Majorca, Spain.

In the regular meeting to be held once a year, Honda will report on business performance and management policy and projects for a new fiscal year for Honda facilities in Europe and will be questioned by representatives of workers. These representatives will then notify employees in production facilities in European nations of what was discussed and decided. When it is necessary to alter management policy such as a decision for closure of a plant, management and employee representatives meet for an extraordinary gathering to report on the matter beforehand.

Honda's newly inaugurated works council is characterized by the following features. First, the EWC involves all production facilities throughout Europe with the objective of cooperation between labor and management regardless of the EU directive. Second, Honda's EWC deliberately includes employees of Honda facilities in Britain, which accounts for a shade over 40 percent of the total of 5,200 European workers. Third, employees of Honda plants in Switzerland, Czecho and Poland which are not the EU member nations are also included. Particularly, noteworthy is the fact that Honda does not have to allow employees in Britain to join the works council since Britain is not covered by the EU directive.

## Special Topic

### "Blood-Typing" is Still Popular in Japan

Kiyoshi Ando  
Professor of Psychology  
Tokyo Woman's Christian University



## **(1) Introduction**

"Only those with blood type AB were organized to launch a project which plans the development of and sales strategies for new facsimile machines," went part of an article introducing a decision by a noted electronics maker, in the November 21, 1990 issue of Asahi daily, one of Japan's large national newspapers. Perhaps those who are not Japanese found themselves baffled by what the article said. When asked "Do you think blood type reveals a man's personality, the majority of Japanese college students answer "Yes." This belief is not limited to college students alone. Corporate workers often bring up the topic of blood-type at the workplace. Believing, from his years of "experience," that there is a relationship between blood-type and personality, a personnel manager of the above mentioned electronics firm probably decided on the plan to exclusively utilize type AB persons to work on the product development and sales strategies.

In this paper, I would like to study from the perspective of social psychology the concept that blood-type has something to do with personality-which I call the blood-type theory of personality-. More specifically, I want to examine the appropriateness of this blood-type theory of personality, its significance in people's social life and the concomitant effects of the claimed relationship of blood-type and personality (Sato & Watanabe, 1992).

## **(2) Blood-typing Craze and Psychology**

Psychologists have shown little interest in the issue of the relationship between blood-type and personality despite wider acceptance by many people of the notion that blood-type is related to personality. But a company, such as the one introduced in the opening part of this paper, utilized blood grouping as a management tool. A kindergarten, meanwhile, has adopted the way it educates children, depending on which blood types they have. This new trend prompted several psychologists (e.g. Ohmura 1990) to recognize the need for a psychological study of problems concomitant with the blood-type theory of personality and to conduct empirical research from several different viewpoints.

The first of several related research currents is concerned with use of existing personality tests to check to see if blood-type really affects personality. Takuma and Matsui(1985), for example, utilized the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule(EPPS) to examine the relationship between personality and blood typing. Meanwhile, Hasegawa (1985) used the Yatabe-Guilford Personality Inventory to do the same. Naturally, neither of the two research groups found any statistically significant relationship between test scores and blood groups. To say the least, no relation seems to be observed between blood types and "personality" utilizing existing personality tests.

The second research current attempted to clarify how many persons believe in this notion and how "different" they consider personality to be depending on blood groups, aside from the actual relationship between the two. In the 1985 Takuma and Matsui survey conducted among 613 male and female college students, about 48 percent said blood types make personality "extremely different" or "considerably different." Ninety-six percent of 105 college coeds questioned in a 1986 Toyama survey answered blood types "have much to do with" or "have something to do with" personality. Only four percent declared there is no relationship at all between the two. The percentage varied by sex and age group, but a very large number of young persons, it is fair to say, have interest in the blood-type theory of personality.

What are the personality traits of people with each of the four major blood types, designated as A, B, AB and O, then, and what do those who believe in this theory, think about this? In a 1988 survey by Sakamoto, 219 female college students were asked to evaluate the personality of "typical group A" and "typical group B" persons on 20 pairs of adjectives. They observed those with type B blood to be characterized as "cheerful, whimsical, self-centered, optimistic, highly individualistic, broad-minded, extraverted, positive and sociable," while those with type A blood are "neurotic, prudent, cooperative, sensitive, serious, realistic and rational." Of the four major blood groups, group A and group B persons tend to be more clearly contrasted with each other in personality traits.

The third current of research is an attempt to clarifying why many people tend to be affected by seemingly groundless opinions. Belief in what is scientifically unfounded has in itself some "functionality." Takuma and Matsui both verified in their joint 1985 research that those who see blood types and personality as being related to each other are more strongly colored by the need for affiliation, the need for deference, cyclical tendency and social extraversion than those who think otherwise. What is more, it was found that blood typing was seen to be similar to horoscope and palm reading. From these findings, Takuma and Matsui concluded as follows. Supporting the blood-type theory of personality, first, are auxiliary functions for socializing in the sense of providing topics; second, it functions as a tool for predicting the destiny and behavior of the self and others in the same manner as the horoscope does; and third, it functions as an aid to relying on authority in order to avoid complex thinking and use of judgment.

Finally, much research has been carried out on why blood types and personality "seem" related to each other. In fact, when asked about the relationship between blood groups and personality, a vast number of people say, "That reminds me of something that I have forgotten until now." If so, then understanding why they believe there seems to be a relationship between the two should open the way for more in-depth and significant research. The first

thing to note is the effect of "label." When they know their own blood types, or "labels," people have a strong tendency to consider the traits pointed out as being attributed to themselves. Ohmura(1984) clarifies the following fact. When reading a description referring to the characteristics of personality which supposedly correspond to individual blood types, even though they are substituted for each other, the subjects often will detect the description referring to his or her own blood type and will reply "applicable to me." Hasegawa(1985) shows to the contrary. In short, when asked to evaluate a variety of personality characteristics, those who do not know their "labels" do not make systematically different replies depending on their actual blood types.

Let us now examine why people, when observing the behavior of others, tend to think of a description referring to the characteristics which were pointed out by the blood-type theory of personality as being applicable to themselves. This can generally be considered as a problem of why stereo-typed traits are maintained and reinforced. First, the following fact was determined by Snyder and Uranowitz (1978). When they receive information corresponding to the stereo-typed characteristics, those with stereo-typed traits accept it as it appears to them and bear it in mind well. When they receive one which is contradictory to the stereo-typed traits, however, they either tend to reinterpret it in such a manner that it agrees with the stereo-typed traits or tend to forget it. This is also applicable to the stereo-typed blood groups. Take Sakamoto (1989), for instance. In his research, Sakamoto made the subjects read descriptions which refer to the characteristics of the "typical group A person" or the "typical group B person." Then, he had them read "diaries on a certain day by certain persons." Thereafter, he had them recollect what the diaries were about and found that those who read a description of the traits referring to the "typical group A person" remembered well the diary written by the type A person, while those who read a description of the traits referring to the "typical group B person" remembered well the one written by the type B person.

### **(3) Hazards of the Blood-Type Theory of Personality**

The blood-type theory of personality, as long as it is used only as a tool for easy conversation, may not pose a serious problem. However, psychologists entertain some misgivings about it from the following two points of view.

First, the possibility is that belief in the relationship between blood-type and personality shared by many persons, even if it proves wrong, will come true. This is a process which is termed as the self-fulfilling prophecy. In this process, when a person develops an expectancy (prophecy) of others, he generally accepts the information which corresponds to his expectancy, but does not accept that which runs counter to it, thereby "seeing" reality as it was initially hoped for. Furthermore, he acts in the way his expectancy is to be met, which in turn leads

others to behave in the same fashion, thus "actualizing" his own expectancy.

Referring to the blood-type theory of personality, if we believe, for example, that "group B persons are easygoing," then we gradually come to see them truly as such by the type of distorted recognition mentioned in the previous section. What is more, if we believe that others are optimistic, we will probably mix with them casually and will thus likely make them actually act like optimistic persons in these situations. This would mean that the existence of solidly stereo-typed persons will prompt a relationship to be actually created by blood-type and personality despite the fact that there is no such essential relationship between the two.

Sakamoto and Yamazaki(1991) conducted interesting research in this respect. They listed as characteristics associated with group A persons "prudent" and "able to draw a line" and as those associated with group B persons "not hung up on details" and "whimsical." Then they gave 1 point to those who answered "Applicable to me" and 0 point to those who replied "Not applicable to me" and found the total for each characteristic. Thus, the more points they got, the more strongly they are regarded as "group A persons," while the fewer points they got, the more strongly they are regarded as "group B persons." Analysis of biannual data from 1978 to 1988 showed that type A persons gradually got higher points for type A. Namely, no differences were observable at first between type A and type B persons in 1978, but those with type A blood alone tended to distinguish themselves from those having any other blood type as having a type A personality (Fig.1). This indicates that self-description of the subjects underwent changes, but it is not clear whether it also caused their behavior to change. It is fair to say, however, that it indicates a strong impact on the stereotypes of blood groups.

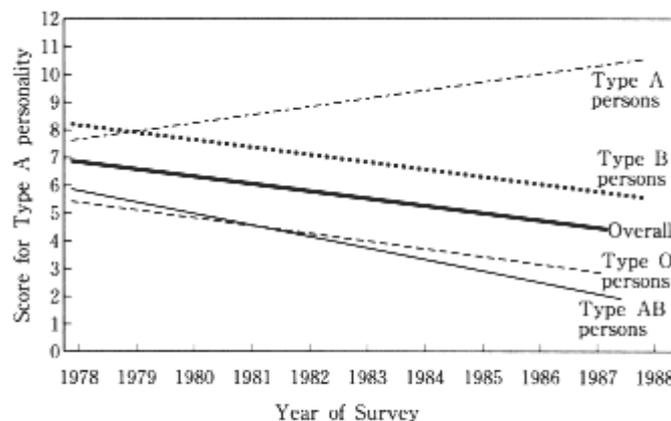


Fig.1 Sequential Change by Blood Type in Scores for Blood Type A Personality  
 (Yamazaki & Sakamoto, 1992)

Second, a problem involving prejudice and discrimination must be cited. The percentage of the four major blood groups in Japan is as follows: 40 percent group A persons, 30 percent group O persons, 20 percent group B persons and 10 percent group AB persons. It has been found in past studies that many persons have a negative impression of those with type AB

blood, the percentage of which is the smallest of the four. In the work of Sato, Miyazaki and Watanabe(1991), for example, a group of students were asked to freely describe their impressions of those with the four major blood groups. Then the other group of students was asked to evaluate how desirable those with the four blood groups are in terms of their respective characteristics obtained from the initial free description. The values obtained were summed for each blood type, and it was found that the subjects had bad impressions of type AB persons as compared with the other blood type persons. We can easily imagine that this kind of prejudice exerts a negative influence on interpersonal relations.

In the example given in the opening part of this paper, employees with type AB blood were picked out for a development project because of their "ability to make plans." But to the contrary, negative impressions of those with type AB blood, we cannot deny, will not possibly put them in a disadvantageous position in terms of personnel management. Personnel management, if implemented, by an uncontrollable factor of blood-type, would constitute nothing but discrimination. We may not be critical of bringing up blood grouping as a "lubricant" for conversation, but we need to bear in mind the fact that there lurks a structure which will breed prejudice and discrimination in talking about the relationship between blood-type and personality.

Finally, in this paper, I discussed the hazards involving stereo-typed interpretations of blood-type, and I want the reader not to have a stereo-typed belief that "the Japanese are people who are stupid enough to believe in the relationship between blood-type and personality." There are many Japanese who do not believe in such a relationship. In addition, the hazards resulting from the formation of stereotypes are not limited to those related to blood-type. The process in which stereotypes are created and are confirmed is found inside the mind per se of people who "try to know" the object. The attitudes toward checking the process in which a person forms his own judgment, it is safe to say, are necessary for all.

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## Statistical Aspects

### Recent Labor Economy Indices

	February 1995	January 1994	Change from previous year
Labor force	6,514(10thousand)	6,519(10thousand)	17(10thousand)
Employed	6,315	6,324	13
Employees	5,178	5,196	26
Unemployed	196	195	5
Unemployment rate	3.1%	3.0%	0.1
Active opening rate	0.66	0.66	0.02
Total hours worked	159.0(hours)	144.1(hours)	1.2
Total wages of regular employees	279.1 (¥ thousand)	275.5 (¥ thousand)	2.2

Source: Management and Coordination Agency, Ministry of Labour.

Notes: 1.\*denotes annual percent change.

2.From February 1991, data of "Total hours worked" and "Total wages of regular employees" are for firms with 5 to 30 employees.

**Comparison of 1991 and 1994 Annual Per Capita Incomes by Prefecture**



Prefecture	1991 income (unit:¥1,000)	1994 income (unit:¥1,000)	Added-value amount per employee in manufacturing (unit:¥1 million)
Yamagata	318	375	9.87
Tokyo	397	453	12.55
Fukui	308	428	8.11
Aichi	343	397	12.92
Osaka	314	384	11.77
Hiroshima	351	381	11.18
Fukuoka	351	385	10.79

Source: Management and Coordination Agency, *Family Income and Expenditure Survey and Annual Report on Family Income and Expenditure (1991)*, MITI, *Industry Statistics (1991)*

Notes 1. 1991 annual per capita income by prefecture represents the annual average of the family head's monthly income excluding extra income and bonuses. The 1994 figure denotes the family head's income for December 1994 because the average annual income for 1994 was not available. The year 1991 was in the bubble period boom economy, while the year 1994 was in the period of economic recovery following the bursting of the financial bubble.

2. The added-value amount per manufacturing employee is based on 1994 *Industry Statistics*.