

# Japan's "Employment Ice-age Generation" Today: Investigating the Impact of Instability in the School-to-work Transition

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The youth unemployment rate in Japan has remained relatively low in comparison with that of other countries, due to the system of "simultaneous mass recruiting of new graduates" allowing young people to make a smooth transition from school to work. However, during the extreme slump in employment opportunities from 1993 to 2004—, namely a period which became known as the "employment ice age," young people graduating high school or university were often unable to make that transition so easily. This paper sheds light on the state of employment among the "employment ice-age generation" through secondary analysis of data from MIC's *Employment Status Survey 2017*. While said generation is already in or approaching middle age, even now a considerable percentage are still freeters or NEETs. The rate of new graduates entering regular employment was used to divide them into the six generations: the "late bubble economy generation," "early employment ice-age generation," "late employment ice-age generation," "economic recovery generation," "2008 financial crisis generation," and "Abenomics generation." Looking at the results by gender and educational background, the rate for male and female university graduates was at its lowest in the late employment ice-age generation among those six, with the rate subsequently making a rapid recovery to the level it had reached in the early employment ice age generation. In the case of high school graduates, the trends among male were similar to those of male and female university graduates, while among female high school graduates the rate remained low until the recent economic recovery. It was also observed that the rate of people who were still regular employees in the company that they had joined directly after graduation was also low among the ice-age generation in comparison with other generations, suggesting that the instability that this generation faced at the time of first entering employment has an ongoing impact on their careers into middle age. The ice-age generation was the first since the postwar rapid economic growth to provoke awareness of the need to provide support for young people, and is likely to continue to unsettle the frameworks of Japanese society that have long been based on the premise of the availability of stable employment.

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## I. Background and Objectives

The objective of this paper is to shed light on the current situation of the “employment ice-age generation” through secondary analysis of 2017 *Employment Status Survey* conducted by the Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). While support for the employment ice-age generation is addressed in the government’s recent Action Plan for the Realization of Work Style Reform, under measures for “creating an environment to facilitate human resources development and other empowerment for women and young people” in a category entitled “empowerment of the employment ice-age generation and young people,” many readers may wonder why the employment ice-age generation—who are already in or approaching their 40s—are categorized alongside young people in the context of policies on career development.

The employment ice-age generation was the first since the period of postwar rapid economic progress to reveal issues concerning youth employment in Japan. Simultaneous mass recruiting of new graduates (*shinki ikkatsu saiyo*) has long been a customary means of hiring students straight from school to, generally, regular employment.<sup>1</sup> From the rapid economic growth period until the early 1990s, young people had access to a stable source of employment opportunities and the youth unemployment rate was considerably low in comparison with that of other countries. As a result, young peoples’ struggles to find employment as new graduates and in turn develop stable careers following the collapse of Japan’s bubble economy had gone unrecognized for over ten years, and it was not until the Youth Independence and Challenge Plan of 2003 that youth employment was acknowledged as a major policy issue in the society. As the employment ice-age generation have grown older, they have been addressed as part of developments in Japan’s policies on youth employment, and thus they seem to be regarded as an extension of the younger generation in support frameworks such as those set out in the aforementioned Action Plan.

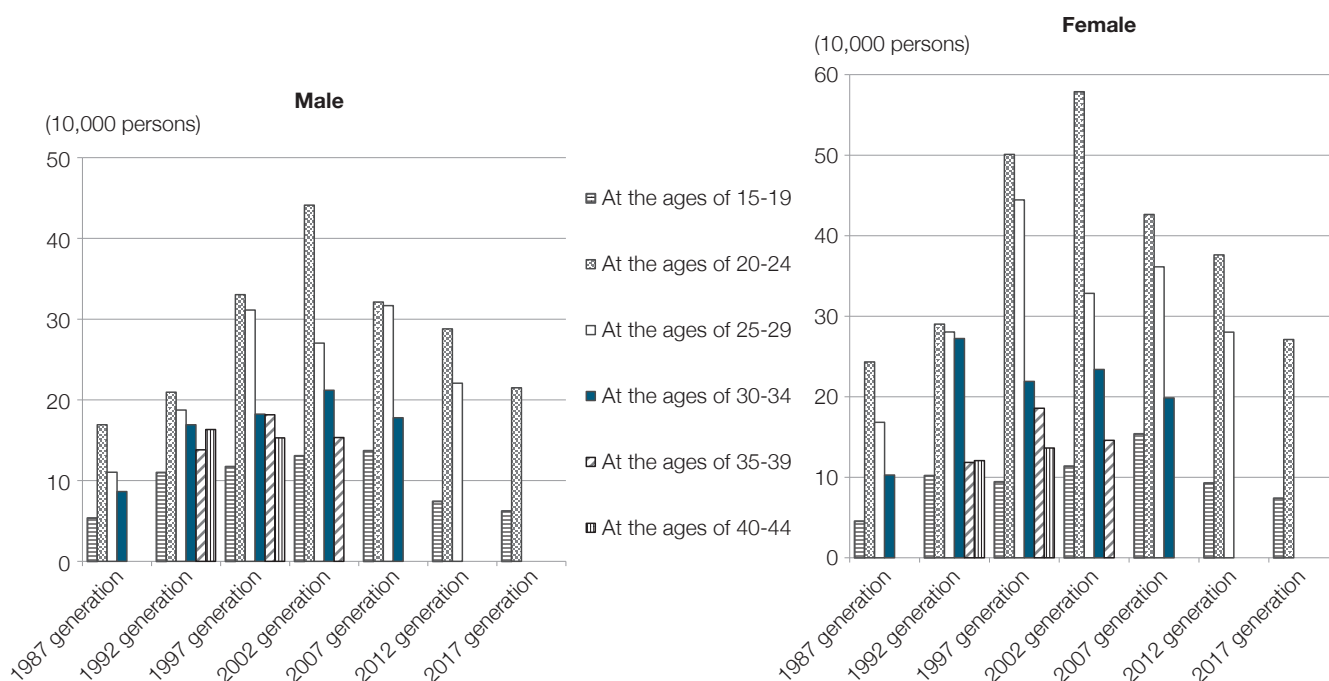
At the same time, a clear consensus is yet to be reached as to the age group that the “employment ice-age generation” covers. While the term “employment ice age,” originally coined by a job-placement magazine, appears to have been recognized by society to a certain extent, the period it refers to is not expressly defined.<sup>2</sup> In this paper we will begin by utilizing data from the *Employment Status Survey* to define the quantitative trends in freeters and NEETs among the age group referred to by employment policies as the employment ice-age generation. We will then use the rate of people entering regular employment as a new graduate—as an indicator of the employment situation at the time that those graduates entered the labor market—as a basis to categorize people in the period surrounding the employment ice age and look at the trends in their career paths, before concluding by interpreting and elaborating on the analysis results. In addition to the data provided by the MIC from the 2017 edition of the survey (respondents’ employment status as of October 1, 2017), the analysis also draws on results from previous studies.<sup>3</sup>

Before the analysis, let us review the state of research on the employment ice-age generation. The first youth employment issues recognized in Japan were those concerning difficulties in the previously stable transition from high school to employment. Investigation of such issues in turn prompted survey research on the subsequent situations of young people who had entered the labor market under such instability (Hori 2018). There is a significant amount of research on the younger years of the employment ice-age generation after they entered the labor market. However, research on the said generation after reaching their 40s is extremely limited, with the rare examples including studies by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT 2017), the Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards (RIALS 2016) and in Genda, ed. (2017), in which the employment ice-age generation are treated as “non-regular workers in mid-prime-age.” This paper seeks to provide insights on the current situation of the employment ice-age generation by investigating the consequences that the instability in their school to labor market transition may have had for them as they enter or approach middle age.

## II. Quantitative Trends among Freeters and NEETs

Policy documents in recent years have adopted the assumption that members of the employment ice-age generation are currently around 35 to 45 years of age. In this section we will draw on data from the MIC's *Employment Status Survey* and the fact that it is conducted at five-year intervals to investigate the generational trends in employment status by regarding the early 20s (20–25) age group from the surveys in 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017 as pseudo-cohorts. As the early 20s age group has the highest number of freeters (see note for Figure 1 for definition) across the generations, the “generations” referred to here are early 20s age groups from the respective surveys—for instance, the “1982 generation” refers to the early 20s age group in the 1982 survey. While this approach entails the problem that the timings of the surveys do not necessarily correspond with the economic trends and thus the economic circumstances faced at the time of entering the labor market may differ from person to person within the same five-year cohort, it is an excellent means of ascertaining a dynamic view of the changes that have occurred.

Among the 1987 generation, who were able to make a stable transition into employment, the number of freeters decreases sharply following a slight increase in their early 20s (Figure 1). The employment ice-age generation (in their late 30s and early 40s as of 2019) includes the 1997, 2002, and 2007 generations, and its core is the 2002 generation. A comparison between the genders shows a rather high number of freeters among women, but a highly similar trend in the changes. Among the 1997 generation the number of freeters did not decrease even in their early 20s. The number first showed a decrease in their late 20s, which was relatively limited. While among the 2002 generation the number of male freeters significantly exceeded 400,000, this decreased in their late 20s, and continued to decrease into their early 30s. For the 2007 generation, the number



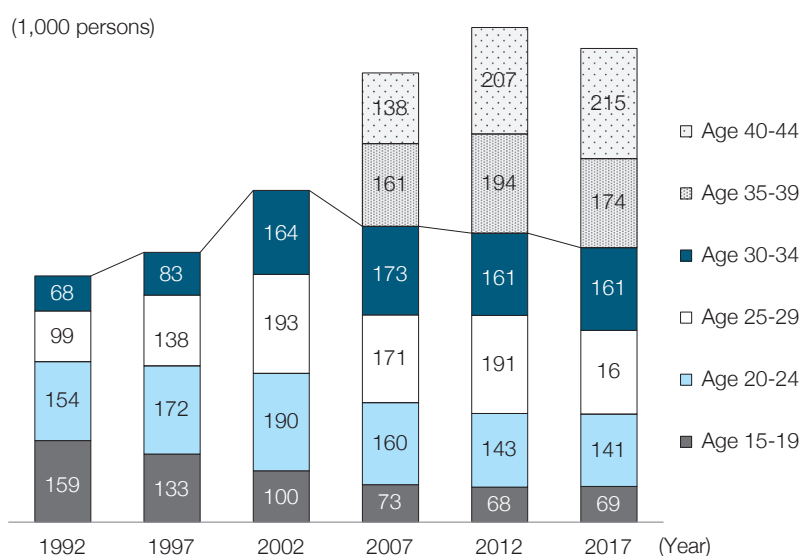
Source: JILPT (2019).

Note: “Freeters” refer to school graduates (and the unmarried in the case of female) who are currently employed and referred to as “part-time workers or *arbeit* (temporary workers)” at their workplace, or who are currently not engaged in work and neither doing housework nor attending school but wish to be employed as part-time workers or *arbeit*. The typical age range for “freeters” (15–34 years of age) is not applied in this analysis.

Figure 1. Trends in the number of freeters by generation (pseudo-cohorts)

of freeters saw almost no change in their early 20s and late 20s, but decreased rapidly in their early 30s. Similar to the preceding generations, both the 2012 and 2017 generations showed the highest numbers of freeters in their early 20s, and among the 2012 generation that number was on the decrease in their late 20s. While the number of freeters always saw the highest increase among those in their early 20s across the generations, the numbers also decrease at the time of economic upturns. Here it is particularly interesting to note the numbers of freeters in the late 30s and early 40s age groups. While the figures for the 1987 generation, which are only estimates for up until the early 30s, show small values, the succeeding generations—the 1992, 1997, and 2002 generations—clearly include a considerable number of freeters even among those in their late 30s and after. The trends in the numbers of freeters aged 35–44 are, for men, an increase from 230,000 in 2007 to 340,000 in 2012, followed by a slight decrease to 300,000 in 2017, and, for women, an increase from 190,000 in 2007 to 310,000 in 2012, followed by a slight decrease to 290,000 in 2017. This shows that a significant number of those from the age group known as the employment ice-age generation are still not in stable employment in mid-to-older age.

Let us now look at the trends in NEETs (see note for Figure 2 for definition), albeit with a slightly different approach.<sup>4</sup> While the cohorts are defined according to the same principle as adopted above, here we will focus on those in their late 30s and early 40s from 2007 onward. These are the same age groups as those for the freeters in the 1997, 2002, and 2007 generations above. In the 2017 survey, the late 30s and early 40s age groups include greater numbers than the early 20s age group, shifting the overall volume toward a higher age range. Moreover, the rise or fall in the number of NEETs is not significantly influenced by the employment conditions as opposed to freeters. While the relevant graph has been omitted, it is important to note that this trend appears to be due to a combination of multiple issues that may not all be related to employment, given that a higher percentage of respondents state “illness or injury” as a reason for not working in comparison with other age groups, and that a significant number are not working for long periods.



Source: JILPT (2019).

Note: “People not in education, employment or training (NEETs)” are defined as graduates who are currently not receiving education and are neither in employment nor seeking employment. Those who have a spouse or are engaged in household work are excluded. For those aged 35 or over, only the results of the 2007 survey onward have been included.

Figure 2. Trends in the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)

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### III. Categorization of the Employment Ice-age Generation

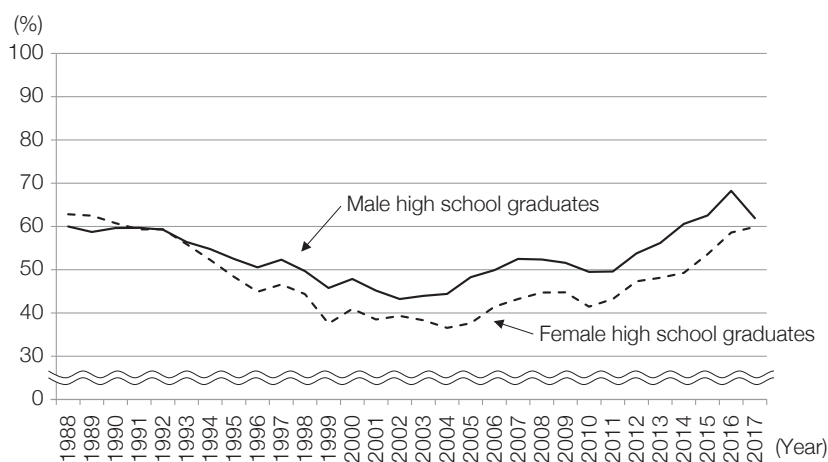
As touched on above, the concept of the employment ice-age generation is still not clearly defined. The “lost generation,” a term adopted by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper to describe an almost identical concept, is defined as referring to people born between 1972 and 1982 (Asahi Shimbun “The Lost Generation” Press Team 2007). While both the “employment ice-age generation” and the “lost generation” are generally regarded as those who graduated in a period of poor employment opportunities and have continued to face unstable conditions thereafter, Taromaru (2009) questions such a definition of the issue. Building on the premise that the “lost generation” were merely victims of the “chronocentrism” (the misconception that the period one is living in is special or unique) of that age, he uses data from the “Labour Force Survey” conducted by Statistics Bureau, MIC to argue that the rates of people in non-regular employment are in fact comparatively lower among the “lost generation” than among younger generations (Taromaru 2009: 135). While this is certainly a thought-provoking argument, when considered that the employment ice-age generation is a category defined with a focus on the poor economic conditions at the time of their graduation, it could be suggested that analysis is more effective if it includes data by gender, year of graduation, and educational background respectively, rather than only by year of birth and gender.<sup>5</sup> For instance, in the case of people born in 1972, those who entered employment as high school graduates did so during the bubble economy, while those entering employment as university graduates did so in the employment ice age. That is, the problem of analysis only by year of birth and gender is that the economic circumstances at the time of entering employment may differ from person to person among those born in the same year. The analysis is insufficient if people with the same year of birth but differing educational backgrounds are placed in the same group, particularly when such a group corresponds with a shift in the economy, and this may have influenced the results. When setting the generations within the labor market, it is therefore preferable to use groups categorized by gender, educational background, and year of graduation, as seen in Ota, Genda and Kondo (2007).

An online survey led by Genda (RIALS 2016) limited its subjects to those who had graduated from a four-year university and categorized them on the assumption that they graduated from university at 22 years of age. Those who graduated between academic year (AY) 1989 and AY 1993 are classed as the “pre-employment ice-age generation,” followed by AY 1994–1998 graduates as the “early employment ice-age generation,” AY 1999–2003 graduates as the “late employment ice-age generation” and AY 2004–2008 graduates as the “post-employment ice-age generation.” While it is unfortunate that only university graduates are included, this was no doubt unavoidable given the general difficulty in securing high school graduates as subjects for online surveys. It would also be more effective to directly inquire the year of graduation, rather than using an assumed year of graduation.<sup>6</sup>

For this paper we have therefore divided people in the period surrounding the employment ice-age generation into “generations” based on a combination of gender, educational background and year of graduation. It is, however, necessary to note that there are also problems involved in using data from the *Employment Status Survey*. While the survey includes questions on year of graduation, year of first entering employment, and job status in first employment, it does not inquire about the situation at the time of graduation in detail. Moreover, respondents may not necessarily have first entered employment directly after graduation, and where respondents did not first enter employment in the same year as they graduated, there may be a discrepancy between the year of graduation and the year of first entering employment. We addressed these issues by creating the following variables: “entered regular employment directly (by June) after graduation,” “entered regular employment within three years,” “entered regular employment three or more years later,” “first form of employment was not regular employment,” “year of entering employment predates year of graduation,” “yet to enter employment,” “other/unknown.” In calculating the rate of people entering regular employment as a new graduate (the percentage of those who “entered regular employment directly, i.e. by June, after graduation”; referred to as the “new graduate regular employment rate” hereinafter NGRER), those

who selected the response “year of entering employment predates year of graduation,” or “other/unknown” were excluded. Moreover, the survey response options for “year of first entering employment” included only 1988 or later. We therefore investigated the trends in NGRER by educational background, gender, and year of first entering employment for people who graduated in 1988 or later. As it is not possible to cover all types of educational background in this paper, we focus exclusively on high school graduates and university graduates.

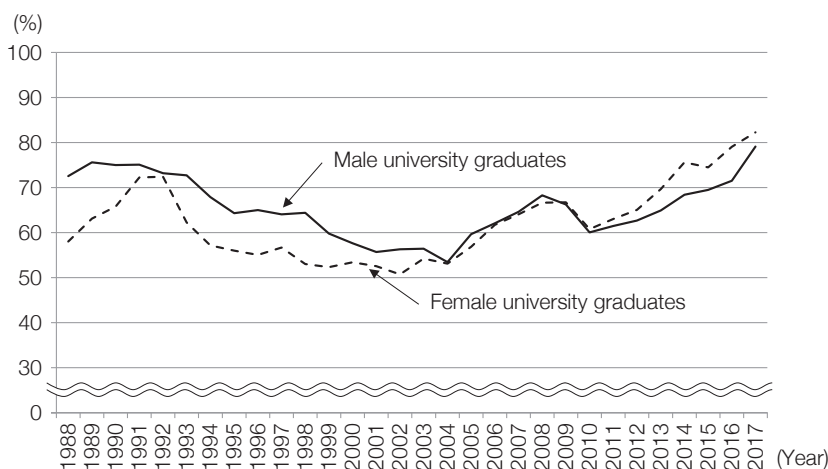
Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the trends in NGRER by gender for high school graduates and university graduates respectively. In the case of high school graduates, NGRER for both men and women dropped below 60% from 1993 onward, and from the early 2000s fell below 50% for men and 40% for women. Despite recovering in 2006, it fell once again in 2010 due to the impact of the 2008 financial crisis. While it has since then been on the increase as a result of the economic upturn in recent years, for female high school graduates



Source: JILPT (2019).

Note: Low NGRER in 2017 is thought to be attributable to the fact that the survey was conducted in the same year and respondents therefore included high school graduates who had failed university entrance examinations and were studying to retake (*shingaku rōnin*).

Figure 3. Trends in the new graduate regular employment rate (percentage of people who first entered employment as a regular employee by June in the year of their graduation) among high school graduates



Source: JILPT (2019).

Figure 4. Trends in the new graduate regular employment rate (percentage of respondents who first entered employment as a regular employee by June in the year of their graduation) among university graduates

it has not returned to its level during the bubble economy. Looking at the trends for university graduates (Figure 4), NGRER for male university graduates, which is relatively high in general, exceeded 70% even in 1993 but dropped below 60% in 1999. It recovered to 60% in 2006 and has improved in recent years despite a temporary dip due to the 2008 financial crisis. At 58.0% NGRER for female university graduates in 1988 was considerably low in comparison with that of male university graduates, but this is thought to be attributable to the fact that at the time it was harder for women who had graduated from a university to find employment in comparison with those who had graduated from a junior college (two-year post-secondary college). NGRER for female university graduates peaked in 1992, after which it dropped below 60% in 1994 and stagnated around that level, until later recovering to 60% in 2006. Although subsequently also affected by the impact of the 2008 financial crisis, it is currently higher than the levels it reached during the bubble economy. As this analysis shows, while the trends in NGRER differ slightly according to educational background or gender, the key turning points are 1993–94, 1998–99, 2004, and 2010, regardless of those factors.

This analysis therefore defines the “employment ice-age generation” as those who reached school graduation age between 1993 and 2004, as is also the range adopted in policy development. Given, as shown in Table 1, the differing levels in NGRER within said employment ice-age generation we divided the generation into the *early* employment ice-age generation and *late* employment ice-age generation, and created a total of six “generations” as follows: the “late bubble economy generation” (graduation between 1988 and 1992, the same applies below), the “early employment ice-age generation” (1993–1998), “late employment ice-age generation” (1999–2004), “economic recovery generation” (2005–2009), “2008 financial crisis generation” (2010–2011) and “Abenomics<sup>7</sup> generation” (2012–2017).

The significant changes in NGRER can be seen in the figures for high school graduates and female university graduates. High school graduates faced even greater difficulty in periods of economic downturn. In recent years, NGRER for male high school graduates has been returning to the level it had reached during the “late bubble economy generation,” while for female high school graduates it was not until the “Abenomics generation” that it finally reached the level it had in the “early employment ice-age generation.” In the case of female university graduates, NGRER has seen an unprecedented rise since the mid-2000s, despite the impact

Table 1. Categorization of generations by new graduate regular employment rate (%)

Year of graduation	Generation	New graduate regular employment rate (NGRER)	
		Male	Female
High school graduates			
1988–1992	<b>Late bubble economy generation</b>	57.6	61.5
1993–1998	<b>Early employment ice-age generation</b>	49.7	47.4
1999–2004	<b>Late employment ice-age generation</b>	42.1	35.5
2005–2009	<b>Economic recovery generation</b>	48.3	39.2
2010–2011	<b>2008 financial crisis generation</b>	48.3	38.9
2012–2017	<b>Abenomics generation</b>	56.8	47.6
University graduates			
1988–1992	<b>Late bubble economy generation</b>	76.2	68.6
1993–1998	<b>Early employment ice-age generation</b>	67.8	58.6
1999–2004	<b>Late employment ice-age generation</b>	57.4	54.7
2005–2009	<b>Economic recovery generation</b>	66.4	65.2
2010–2011	<b>2008 financial crisis generation</b>	63.1	62.8
2012–2017	<b>Abenomics generation</b>	70.1	76.5

Source: Hori (2019).

of the 2008 financial crisis slowing its recovery.

Let us now look at the current situation of the employment ice-age generation in Figure 5 in terms of their career types as shown in the box below. The high school graduates of the “Abenomics generation” include young people who had just graduated high school at the time of the survey. Those “not working” are considered to include high school graduates who had failed university entrance examinations and were studying to retake. Note that full-time homemakers (male and female) have been excluded from the analysis of career types.

Looking at the distribution of career types by generation for each educational background, male high school graduates have a low percentage of those in “settled regular employment after entry as a new graduate” and a high percentage of those in “regular employment after entry from other form of employment” in the early and late employment ice-age generations in comparison with other generations. A similar trend can also be seen among male university graduates, with the percentage of those in “settled regular employment after entry as a new graduate” lower among the “late employment ice-age generation” than among the “early

### Career types

- **Settled regular employment after entry as a new graduate**  
First entered employment as a regular employee and currently in the same job (first entered employment by June of the year of graduating school)
- **Settled regular employment after other entry as a new graduate**  
First entered employment as a regular employee and currently in the same job (first entered employment in July of the year of graduating school or later)
- **Regular employment with experience of job change**  
First employment, previous employment, and current employment all as a regular employee (has changed jobs)
- **Regular employment with experience of non-regular employment**  
First employment as a regular employee, previous employment in a type of employment other than regular employee, and current employment as a regular employee
- **Regular employment after entry from other form of employment**  
First employment in a form of employment other than regular employee, current employment as a regular employee
- **Mainly non-regular employment**  
First employment in a form of employment other than regular employee, current employment is also non-regular employment
- **Non-regular employment entered from regular employment**  
First employment as a regular employee, current employment is non-regular employment
- **Self-employment/family business**  
Currently self-employed or engaged in family business
- **Not working**  
Currently not working
- **No response/background unknown**  
Current employment is regular or non-regular employment but background is unknown, or, current form of employment is unknown

Source: JILPT (2019).

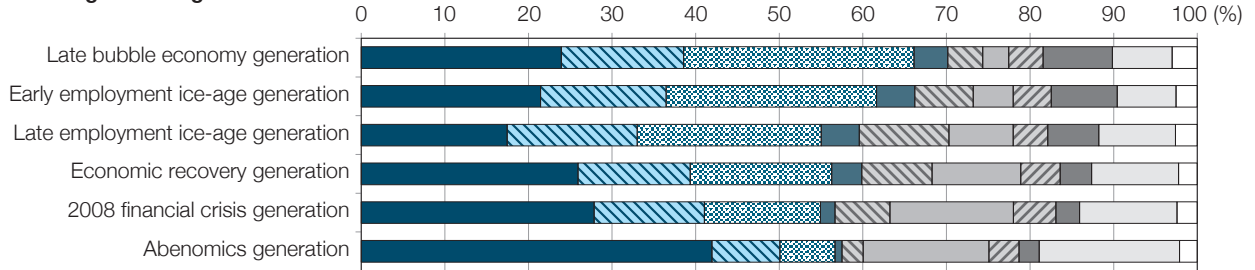
Notes: 1. The survey asks respondents to state their “first employment,” “previous employment” and “current employment.”

2. “Non-regular employment” refers to those *not* employed as regular employees or workers, under categories referred to by their employers as “part time,” “side job (*arubaito*),” “dispatched worker from a temporary staffing agency,” “contract employee,” “temporary contract employee (*shokutaku*)” or “other.”

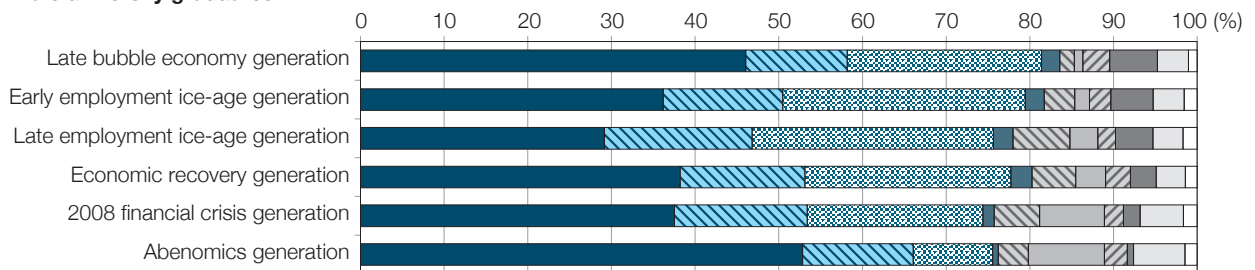
3. “Other form of employment” refers to “non-regular employment” as well as “self-employed/family business” and those whose “form of employment is unknown.”



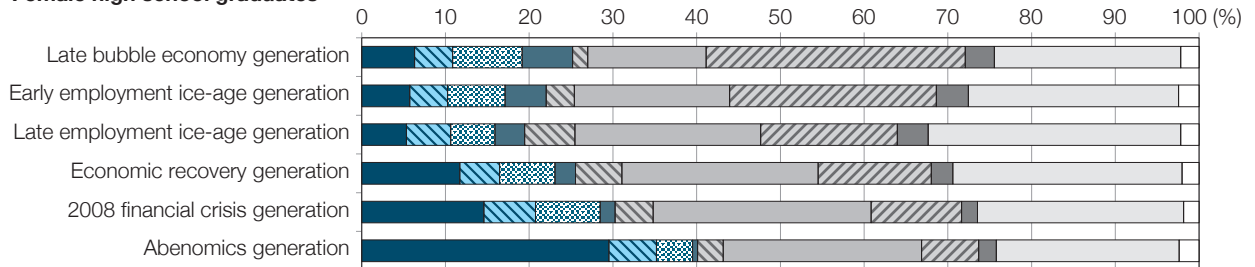
**Male high school graduates**



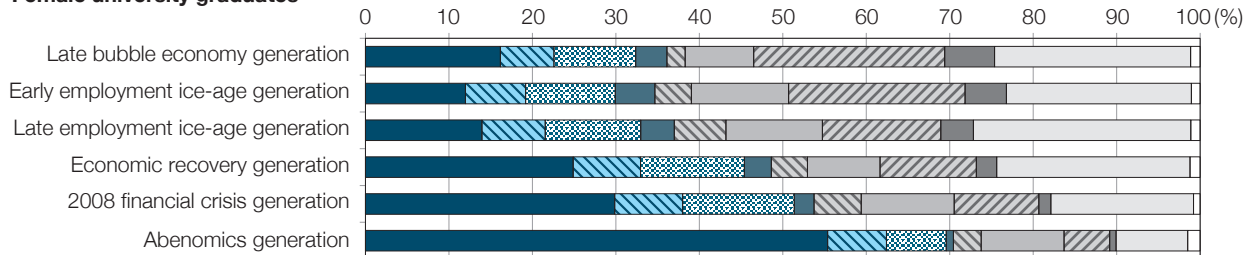
**Male university graduates**



**Female high school graduates**



**Female university graduates**



- Settled regular employment after entry as a new graduate
- ▨ Regular employment with experience of job change
- ▩ Regular employment after entry from other form of employment
- ▧ Non-regular employment entered from regular employment
- Not working
- ▨ Settled regular employment after other entry
- Regular employment with experience of non-regular employment
- ▩ Mainly non-regular employment
- Self-employment/family business
- No response/background unknown

Source: JILPT (2019).

Figure 5. Careers of the employment ice-age generation in comparison with other generations

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employment ice-age generation.” Among those in the same employment ice-age generation NGRER differs between the early and the late stage of the generation, suggesting that developing a career was more difficult for those in the “late employment ice-age generation.”

In the case of female high school graduates, although it is difficult to identify clear trends given that many leave employment due to marriage, having children or other such reasons, the percentage of those in “regular employment after entry from other form of employment” is high among those in the “late employment ice-age generation.” While female university graduates also demonstrate a similar trend to that among female high school graduates, the fact that the percentage of those in “settled regular employment after entry as a new graduate” is lower among the “early employment ice-age generation” and “late employment ice-age generation” than among the older age group—namely, the “late bubble economy generation”—appears to indicate the persistent aftereffects of the difficulties of finding employment at the time of graduation.

#### **IV. The Employment Ice-age Generation Today and the Future of Policy Support**

This paper has utilized data from the 2017 *Employment Status Survey* to ascertain the situation of the employment ice-age generation. Even as the employment ice-age generation grows older, a considerable number are still in unstable forms of employment or not working. A categorization of the generations on the basis of NGRER revealed that the rate was lowest among the “late employment ice-age generation,” regardless of gender or educational background. Female high school graduates in particular saw a consistently low NGRER not only in the employment ice-age generation but across the generations, up until the economic recovery of recent years. The analysis showed that the careers of the employment ice-age generation are more unstable in contrast with those of other generations, suggesting that the difficult situation they faced at the time of graduation has an ongoing impact on their careers even as they grow older.

While many developed countries have responded to the unstable conditions that young people have been facing since the 1970s by gradually developing various forms of social support, in Japanese society—where it has been assumed that young people will enjoy a stable transition into employment—unstable economic conditions in people’s younger years have resulted in considerable difficulty for affected people and their families. As it took Japanese society some time to recognize the necessity of support for young people, the employment ice-age generation were forced to rely on their own resources to endure difficult conditions in a persistently struggling economy. Among the younger generation it is also generally the case that those who fail to make the transition into regular employment at the first opportunity go on to have an unstable career. The employment ice-age generation was the first since Japan’s postwar rapid economic growth to reveal to Japanese society the necessity for young people to receive support,<sup>8</sup> and in the future it will continue to unsettle the various frameworks that were established from the rapid growth period onward. The difficulties that the employment ice-age generation are currently facing in middle age are also likely to arise in similar forms for the younger generations at some point. Particularly the trend of NEETs, who have hardly decreased despite the economic recovery, is thought to be likely to remain an ongoing problem.

In addition to the provision of support for members of the employment ice-age generation—who are already in or approaching middle age—to convert to regular employment, it is also expected that Work Style Reform to ensure equal pay for equal work and measures to ensure that workers can convert to open-ended employment under the amended Labor Contracts Act will provide means for those who are working to continue doing so, even if they are in side jobs (*arubaito*) or other such forms of non-regular employment. For those who are not working, there is a need for action such as collaboration with forms of welfare support that go beyond the conventional forms of job seekers’ support. At the same time, looking at the practical steps that have been taken to implement support, there are also a considerable amount of issues to address. Given that the current support for the employment ice-age generation is largely provided by support institutions such as the “Regional Youth Support Stations” intended to assist young people of 15–34 years of age, it is

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necessary to consider whether it is viable to apply the conventional methods of support for young people to the employment ice-age generation.

Moreover, high school employment guidance, which for many years contributed to ensuring a smooth transition from high school to employment on the basis of a plentiful selection of job vacancies for high school graduates, has inevitably undergone changes since the early 1990s—particularly in high schools specializing in commerce (*shōgyō kōkō*) and high schools providing a comprehensive academic curriculum (*futsū kōkō*)—as a result of the difficulties that arose as the labor market for high school graduates shrunk rapidly in times of economic recession (Hori 2016). In the coming years, the deteriorating employment environment seems likely to continue to directly affect the transition of high school graduates, particularly female high school graduates, into employment. While in other societies the difficulties surrounding said transition for young people who do not go on to receive higher education have attracted significant social concern, in Japan they have not been regarded as such a major issue due to the role played by Japan’s unique system for high school graduates to enter employment. In the future, it will be necessary to provide even greater support for ensuring the smooth transition of high school graduates into Japanese professional society.

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#### Notes

1. Companies recruit inexperienced young people on the basis of their ‘trainability.’ The principal criterion for taking on a graduate is the school or college from which he or she graduated. Companies plan on developing employees’ abilities within the company over the long term. Unlike recruitment aimed at filling vacancies, the mass recruitment of new graduates involves recruitment of school or college students at fixed intervals to start work as *seiki koyo* employees (regular employees) (Hori and Nakajima 2018).
2. The term “employment ice age” received a special recognition award in the “New Words and Buzzwords Awards of the Year” (*Shingo/Ryūkōgo Taishō*) in 1994.
3. The analysis covered in this paper was conducted independently and may not be consistent with the individual questionnaire data from the *Employment Status Survey* conducted by MIC.
4. As the analysis of past trends in NEETs has only been conducted for the 1992 survey onward, the surveys analyzed are not identical to those for the analysis of freeters.
5. Taromaru (2017), which follows up on these insights, also focuses its analysis of the “Labour Force Survey” on year of birth and gender only.
6. The analysis in JILPT (2014) also uses an assumed year of first entering employment.
7. Abenomics is the economic policy to overcome deflation and strengthen the economy adopted by the administration led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.
8. While empirical research on the generation effect in labor economics includes analysis regarding population size and state of demand (Ota, Genda, and Kondo 2007), this analysis investigates the conditions of transitions into employment as the result of population size and the state of demand. It could be suggested that one of the key reasons why the “employment ice-age generation” prompted the youth employment problem to be widely recognized is that Japanese society was unable to withstand the considerable quantitative impact of this problem, due to the fact that the population size is large in comparison with other generations.

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