

The Factors of Japanese Female Workers' Job Quitting for Childbirth/childrearing

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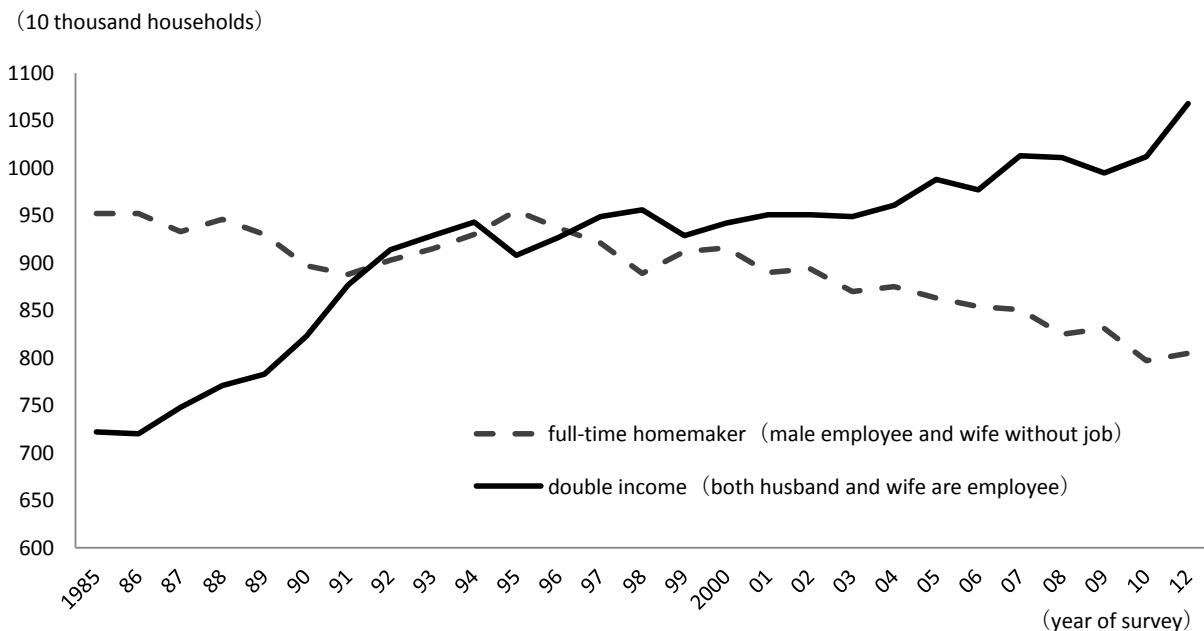
I Purpose

This article analyzes why female Japanese workers leave their jobs for childbirth and childrearing.

Gender role divisions in an industrial society, where workplaces and residences are separated, dictate that husbands work outside their homes while their wives engage in housework. Feminists such as Friedan (1963) criticized gender role divisions, while Parsons and Bales (1956) used biology to explain these divisions, given that women bear children. The percentage of married women employed has risen, and Davis (1984) proposed that the breadwinner system—in which one member of the family provides the family's income—is an anomaly, and that the egalitarian system in which both husband and wife work become more common than the breadwinner system.

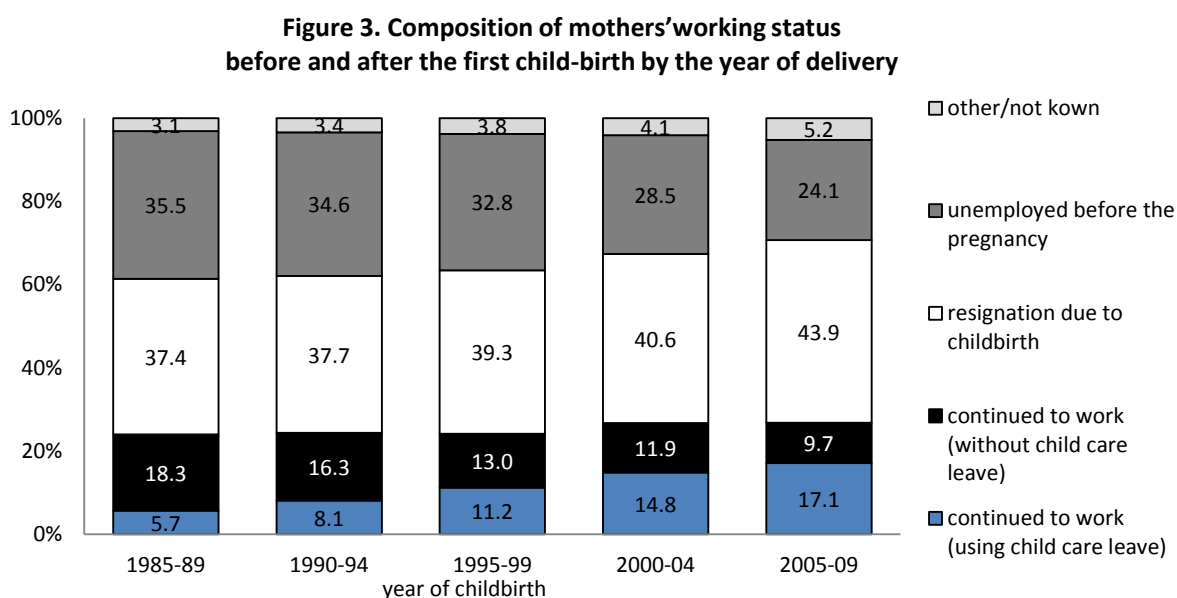
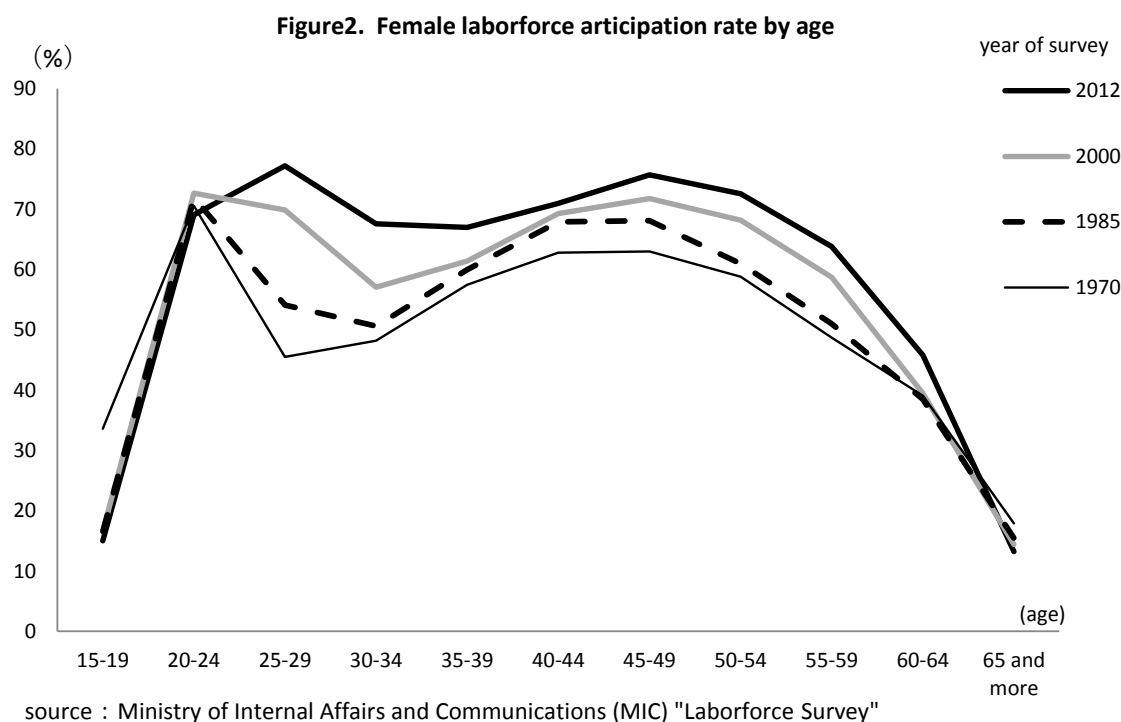
The percentage of married women's employment in Japan has also risen. Further, the number of double-income households is greater than the number of full-time homemaker households, as Figure 1 shows. However, this does not mean that women work in the same way that men do. Despite the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) and Childcare Leave Act¹

Figure 1. the Numbers of duple-income and full-time homemaker household



source : Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC)"Laborforce Special Survey"(1985-2001)
"Laborforce Survey"(2002-2012)

¹ "Parental leave" in Europe is called "childcare leave" in Japan. Employers in Japan cannot refuse the demand of childcare leave by their employees with children less than 1 year old in principle according to the act.



Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research "the 14th basic survey on childbirth trend (survey of couples)"

(CLA) more than 20 years ago, many women still interrupt their careers at the time of marriage or childbirth/ childrearing. Consequently, the female laborforce participation rate by age still produces an M-shaped curve, although the bottom of the M is rising, as shown in Figure 2.

Furthermore, it is more remarkable that, as Figure 3 shows, the percentage of mothers who continue working after childbirth has not changed since the late 1980s, while regulations promoting gender equality at workplaces, and support systems for reconciling work and childrearing such as childcare leave, have been strengthened. I would like to identify the factors influencing female Japanese workers to leave their jobs when they become pregnant.

The results of following analysis in this article imply that it is helpful for employees in small enterprises to gain knowledge of work-life balance (WLB) support systems such as childcare leave to have bargaining power to their boss so as to avoid having to leave their jobs later. It is also important to help female workers searching for regular employment with WLB support systems so as not to choose non-regular jobs with fewer hours and fixed-term contracts, in order to balance work life with family life.

II Hypothesis and Methodology

1 Hypothesis : The Determinants of Married Women's Careers

Hakim (2000) has reported on a similar situation in the United Kingdom (UK). She tried to explain female workers' career paths using her original "Preference Theory." She identified three types of preferences between work and home: "work-centered," "home-centered," and "adaptive." Work-centered women tended to continue full-time work after marriage and childbirth, contrary to home-centered women who tended to be full-time homemakers who never returned to jobs after marriage and childbirth. The adaptive group "consists of women who want to combine employment and family without either taking priority" (Hakim 2000:165). Many adaptive women choose intermittent work or part-time jobs.

While Hakim stressed that these enduring preferences were independent of external influences such as their vocational status, and educational background, her theory was criticized by feminists such as McRae (2003a), who focused on work-centered or home-centered preferences, and how they imposed constraints on women's careers². However, Hakim's theory implies that many women's careers are influenced by external situations, if we focused on the "adaptive" who are the majority of women. It is also important to note that distinctions between being adaptive or being home-centered are relative, rather than rigid. She writes, "some adaptive women give a slight priority to motherhood over employment. They transfer to part-time jobs or to intermittent work" (Hakim 2000:167), while "the modern version of the homemaker career permits employment after marriage if it is restricted to part-time, and other jobs chosen to fit in with a domestic role" (Hakim 2004:136). The distinction between being adaptive or being home-centered are also relative. She writes, "adaptive women in professional, managerial and other occupations that do not offer plentiful opportunities for part-time or intermittent work adopt other strategies to combine continuous full-time work with family life"(Hakim 2000:167) This career is similar to work-centered women's one. Although we can therefore suppose work-centered and home-centered preferences are extreme orientations, most moderate women are adaptive.

² McRae (2003a) shows the results of longitudinal data analysis which do not support the central argument of the preference theory; full-time working mothers' attitudes toward gender roles are not distinctive from those of other types of mothers. McRae (2003a) emphasizes the constraints of mothers' careers relative to preferences. Hakim (2003) replies to McRae (2003a) that "her longitudinal study of first-time mothers does not provide a valid test of preference theory," and "her results generally support the theory" (Hakim 2003:339).

Consequently, we must examine the influence of external factors on women's behaviors to reconcile work and home. McRae (2003a) mentioned childcare and the husband/partner's attitudes as influential factors. Hakim (2003) contradicted this hypothesis. She wrote, "women in Britain (and in most modern societies) *choose* their partners on the basis of attitude congruence, *inter alia*. Spouses are not imposed on women, randomly and by force. Yet McRae reports the congruence between a spouse's views and a woman's employment pattern as if the woman herself had not chosen both. On the contrary, my Future of Work survey indicated that serious conflict over the family division of labor was rare; most couples were in agreement on how to divide responsibilities" (Hakim 2003:343). Shimane and Tanaka (2011) have reported similar data in Japan. The same contradiction can occur with regard to childcare. Women who search for childcare prefer to continue working after childbirth.

I would like to focus on Hakim's concept of "preferences" in relation to Bourdieu's perspective on "disposition" (Hakim 2000:13-14). Bourdieu (1979, 1980) defined "habitus" as a system of durable disposition, and he theorized that the habitus are formed in one's habitat, where people are born and raised, especially with regard to one's family orientation. Based on this argument, we can say Hakim's "preferences" should be formed in a manner consistent with the family's orientation. Typically, women follow their mothers' examples with regard to their careers, and their views of work and home; if a woman's mother continued to work at a full-time job, the daughter must form a work-centered preference and will continue her job after marriage and childbirth. On the contrary, a homemaker's daughter may form home-centered preferences and leave her job under these circumstances. Although Hakim (2000) denied this hypothesis, Nagase (1999) in Japan performed a data analysis that supported the hypothesis of Japanese mothers' influences on their daughters. We can say women chose their careers as if what they were doing was a *repetition of the past*. However, women's behavior as described in Hakim's theory is more flexible than Bourdieu's habitus. Women might not leave their jobs if they have been told they have access to WLB systems such as childcare leave before facing childbirth, regardless of their mother's career. *Repeating the past* for adaptive women means not only processing the influences of their family's orientation but also external environmental influences. Moreover, these adaptive behaviors are not only a repetition of past events, but are also a response to approaching changes—women's careers should be, as it were, a *response to the future*, in contrast to being a *repetition of the past*.

I would like to focus on Japanese labor market reforms as being representative of remarkable changes in society, changes which have influenced adaptive women's behaviors. Women's own preferences, their husband's attitudes, and access to childcare are all factors of labor supply. I suppose, however, labor demand factors became more influential during economic recessions, after the bubble economy burst in early 1990's. Hakim (2002) pointed out the influence of relaxing labor market regulations on increasing the extent of part-time work and intermittent

careers, which are typical of adaptive women in Europe. I surmise that it is also important to consider the structure of Japan's labor market as an influential factor explaining women's behaviors on a large-scale. Japanese society has experienced extended recessions over the past two decades, and firms have increased the number of their non-regular employees such as part-time and temporary workers as flexible labor forces, rather than the number of regular employees, though equal employment opportunities and WLB systems like childcare leave have been expanded in the same two decades. This extreme employment situation has had negative influences on job continuity for many female workers, though some firms have maintained female regular employees as part of their long-term labor force. Particularly small enterprises are not necessarily supportive of childcare leave arrangements, while large enterprises promote them. As a result, the job continuity rate after the first childbirth is increasing only for female regular employees in large enterprises.

In sum, whether or not female workers quit their jobs for childbirth or childrearing will be a consequence of previous experiences and future prospects if we focus on internal factors, and with regard to external factors, the structure of the labor market as well as family background will be influential.

2 Methodology: The Survey Data Analysis

The research method used for this study is a retrospective profile survey on occupational careers and experiences of childbirth/childrearing. An outline of the "Survey on Women's Working Styles and Family Life"³ the Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training (JILP) conducted in 2010 is described next.

(1) Purpose

The survey looks into work, marriage, and childbirth/childcare conditions, business employment practices, regional community services, and family support services, in order to identify the challenges inherent in work environments and the social supports that would allow women to retain their jobs.

(2) Main Survey Categories

- 1) Occupational careers
- 2) Marriage experience
- 3) Childcare experiences
- 4) Domestic work-sharing between family members
- 5) How work-life balance support measures are used
- 6) Present working conditions including income
- 7) Awareness of work, career, and home-life

³ This data is accessible to the public on the JILPT data archives website.
<http://www.jil.go.jp/kokunai/statistics/archive/index.htm>

Table1. Summary statistics of data

	MEANS	SD	MAX	MIN	N
age cohort*					
1966-70 (30-34years old)	.402	.491	1	0	604
1971-75 (35-39years old)	.379	.486	1	0	604
1976-80 (40-44years old)	.219	.414	1	0	604
age of the first childbirth	27.473	4.037	39	17	601
co-residence with parents at the first childbirth time*	.279	.449	1	0	598
regidential area at the first childbirth time(urban area=1, other=1)*	.571	.495	1	0	599
educational background*					
junior or senior highschool	.420	.494	1	0	584
colleage or vocational school	.438	.497	1	0	584
university or graduate school	.142	.349	1	0	584
employment categories at the first pregnancy(regular=1, non-regular=0)*	.659	.474	1	0	604
job categories at the first pregnancy*					
teachers or nurses	.126	.332	1	0	540
professionals	.128	.334	1	0	540
clerical workers	.404	.491	1	0	540
sales workers	.094	.293	1	0	540
service workers	.180	.384	1	0	540
skilled worker or laborers	.069	.253	1	0	540
the same job as male regular employees	.596	.491	1	0	539
size of entepriees at the first pregnancy*					
less than 100 employees	.411	.493	1	0	547
100-299 employees	.205	.404	1	0	547
more than 300 employees	.325	.469	1	0	547
government or public sector	.059	.235	1	0	547
member of labor union at the first pregnancy*	.338	.473	1	0	571
notification of childcare leave system from workplace*					
yes (there was notification from workplace)	.207	.405	1	0	580
no(system was introduced in workplace but it was not notified)	.269	.444	1	0	580
childcare system is not introduced	.524	.500	1	0	580
mother's job continuation*	.483	.500	1	0	574
access to WLB information outside workplace*	.288	.453	0	1	559
employment at the first chilbirth*	.440	.497	1	0	603

* dummy variables (yes=1, no=0)

SD: Standard Deviation

source: Survey on Women's Working Styles and Family Life (JILPT 2010)

(3) Survey Scope

2,000 women nationwide, between 30 and 44 years of age

(4) Survey method

- 1) Sampling method: Stratified two-stage sampling
- 2) Survey method: Questionnaire delivery and collection

(5) Survey period

November 18-December 12, 2010

(6) Survey implementation

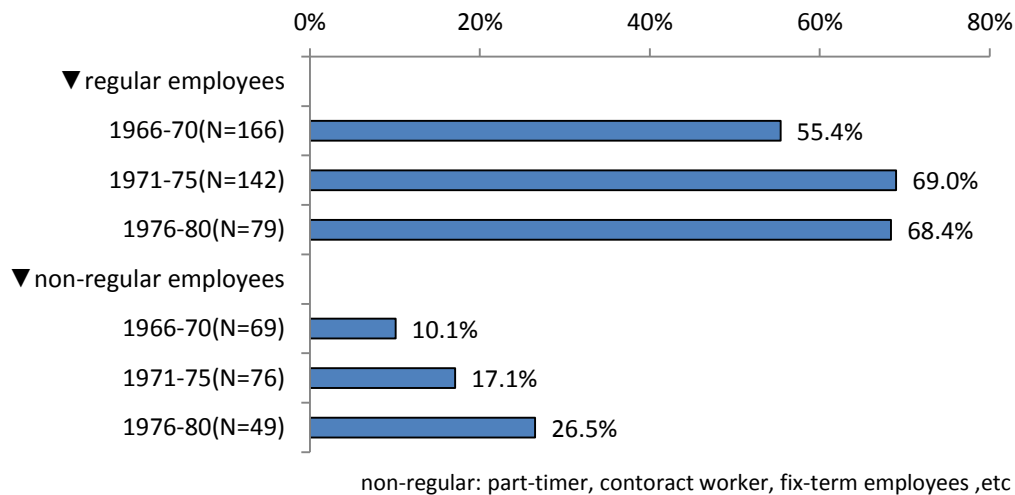
The survey was contracted out to a research firm (Central Research Services, Inc.)

(7) Questionnaire collection

A total of 1,240 questionnaires were distributed, and the response rate was 62.0%.

Summary statistics are reported in Table 1. We know the year and month women started their jobs and left them, and the year and month the women had babies. There are some correlations

**Figure4. Percentage of women whose workplaces had childcare leave system at the first pregnancy:
By employment categories and age cohort**



source: Survey on Women's Working Styles and Family Life (JILPT 2010)

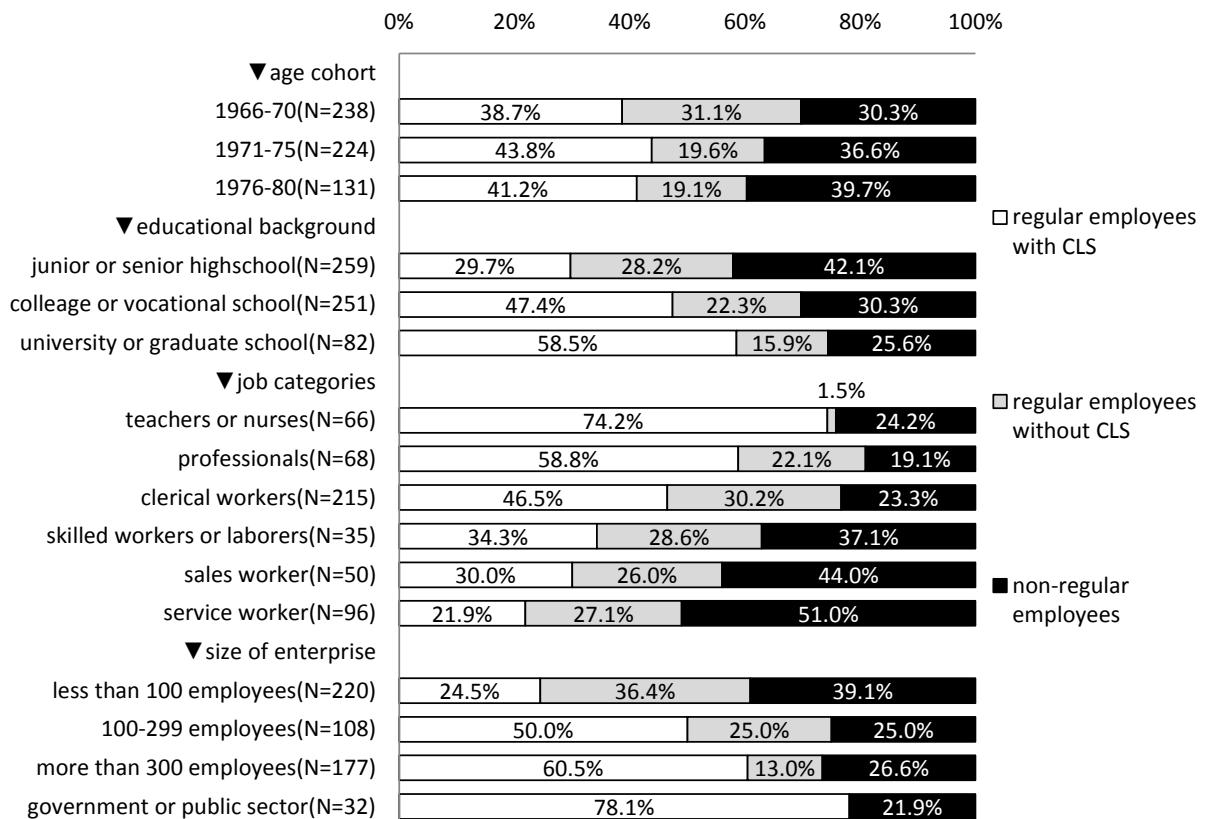
between variables as described below.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of women whose workplaces had childcare leave system by employment categories and age cohort. The percentage of non-regular employee's with access to childcare leave system is low in every cohort. Although childcare leave system presuppose a long-term tenure of employment in Japan, many non-regular employees including part-timers and contract workers provide a short-term, flexible labor force⁴. The opportunity for non-regular employees' job continuity is therefore restricted.

In addition, Figure 5 shows the percentage of employees with access to the childcare leave system (CLS) and employment categories at first pregnancy by age cohort, educational background, job categories, and size of enterprises. The younger cohort entered the labor market and spent its youth during a time when opportunities for regular employment are being reduced because of the prolonged recession after the 1990's. This job insecurity hurt those with less education the most. Typical jobs held by non-regular employees were service and sales. Additionally, regular- employees' childcare leave also showed differences by level of education, job categories, and size of enterprises. The most remarkable difference was by the size of enterprises. In enterprises with more than 300 employees, 13% of the regular employees were without CLS. In an enterprise with less than 100 employees, 36.4% of the regular employees did not have access to CLS. This implies that it is harder for female workers at small enterprises to

⁴ There are many fixed-term employees in Japan who renew their employment contracts, and work at the same workplace continuously. The number of such continuous working non-regular employees is increasing under the prolonged recession, which began in 1990. Since 2005 these continuous working non-regular employees have had access to childcare leave, even though the employment contract is fixed-term. However, there is still a widely held belief that the childcare leave system is intended for regular employees. Considering this situation, our analysis on childcare leave also focuses on regular employees.

**Figure 5. Percentage of childcare leave system and employment categories at the first pregnancy:
By age cohort, education, job categories, and size of enterprises**



source: Survey on Women's Working Styles and Family Life (JILPT 2010)

CLS:Childcare Leave System

stay on the job after childbirth than for those at large ones. These results are all consistent with prior research conducted in Japan.

I will first analyze whether or not the women had jobs when they had their babies, to evaluate the women's subjective behaviors as a *repetition of the past* or a *response to the future*. In this analysis, I will focus on the first pregnancy and childbirth period, when the rate of married female workers leaving was highest. The explanatory variables for *response to the future* are as following; one is introduction and notification of childcare leave system in their workplaces, and the other is whether their job was the same as male regular workers who supposed to be long-term labor forces. These factors should show women the possibility of continuous career after childbirth. I will also use two explanatory variables for *repetition of the past*; one is the respondent's mother's job continuation as analyzed by Nagase (1999), and the other is access to information on WLB systems such as childcare leave, outside the workplace before the first childbirth. Secondly, I will analyze job mobility before the first pregnancy, to assess the structure of the labor market at that time. Women at small enterprises have high mobility compared to those at large ones, because of the lower availability of childcare leave system, which shows prospects of job continuity. Third, my analysis focuses on the practice of leaving jobs at small

enterprises—which have a different style of management compared to large enterprises—to increase opportunities for job continuity at the small enterprises. It is said that small enterprises support employee flexibly at a level corresponding to individual employees' demands, even if there is no established WLB system in the organization. However, it is also said that small enterprises are not as positive toward providing WLB support as large ones. I would like to pay attention to the extent to which workers gain knowledge of WLB systems outside their workplaces. Beyond the flexible support offered by enterprises, workers must have access to WLB information to avoid having to leave their jobs when they become pregnant.

III Findings: Results of Data Analysis

1 Determining Factors of Job Quitting at the First Pregnancy

Table 2 summarizes determining factors of employment when the first child was born. The objectives of this analysis those who are regular and non-regular employees at their pregnancy time of the first child. If the woman is not employed when her first child is born, she would have quit her job before childbirth.

Model 1 shows the influence of social determinants such as a woman's age at first childbirth, her residential area⁵, employment category (regular employee), job category (teachers or nurses), and size of enterprise (government or public sector). These results are consistent with prior research findings.

Model 2 verifies the first hypothesis, repeating the past and responding to the future. In addition, we add the experience of being injured or contracting a disease at work, and having bad morning sickness, which leads to difficulties using present work as control variables. The results show that both the mother's job continuation and previous access to WLB information outside the workplace influences job continuity positively. The variables of future prospects also have positive influences. To occupy the same job as that held by male regular employees can be understood as being part of a continuous labor force. A childcare leave system is even more indicative of the employee's prospects for job continuity. However, it is also said that taking leave in Japan is not so easy, even if the system for doing so has been introduced. It is difficult to take leave when the workplace does not give notice of its childcare leave system to its employees. Compared with Model 1, the effect of a woman's age at first childbirth⁶, her employment category, job category, and the size of the enterprise do not have a significant effect in Model 2. These effects can be said to be the result of the childcare leave system as shown in Figure 5.

⁵ There is a correlation between population levels in residential areas and childcare shortages. Urban areas representing this variable are the Tokyo metropolis, Kanagawa prefecture, Saitama prefecture, Chiba prefecture, Kyoto prefecture, Osaka prefecture, Hyogo prefecture, and a city with more than 300,000 people where childcare is in short supply, according to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare(2009).

⁶ The childcare leave system has been spreading since the 1990's. The older a woman's age at childbirth, the higher the possibility is of having a childcare leave system introduced in the workplace.

Table 2. Determining factors of employment at the first childbirth(logistic regression analysis)

explained variables(yes=1, no=0)	employment at the first childbirth					
	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	Exp(B)	B	SE	Exp(B)
age cohort (BM:1966-70)						
1971-75	.229	.219	1.258	.252	.259	1.287
1976-80	.476	.265	1.610	.131	.311	1.140
age of the first childbirth	.111	.028	1.117 **	.060	.034	1.062
co-residence with parents at the first childbirth	.329	.224	1.390	.411	.263	1.508
residential area at the first childbirth(urban area=1)	-.632	.202	.532 **	-.812	.240	.444 **
educational background (BM: junior or senior high school)						
college or vocational school	-.229	.238	.795	-.065	.279	.937
university or graduate school	.268	.342	1.307	.490	.405	1.632
employment category at the first pregnancy (regular=1)	1.193	.231	3.298 **	.538	.324	1.713
job category at the first pregnancy (BM: clerical workers)						
teachers or nurses	.872	.338	2.391 *	.364	.408	1.439
professionals	.227	.323	1.255	.139	.381	1.150
sales workers	-.439	.379	.645	-.237	.442	.789
service workers	-.020	.291	.980	.104	.351	1.110
skilled workers or laborers	-.124	.399	.883	-.754	.502	.471
size of enterprises at the first pregnancy (BM: less than 100employees)						
100-299employees	.166	.259	1.181	-.117	.309	.889
more than 300employees	.173	.233	1.189	-.291	.288	.747
government or public sector	1.142	.478	3.133 *	.540	.566	1.716
injured or disease by work		-		-.034	.230	.967
absent from bad morning sickness		-		-.177	.705	.838
mother's job continuation		-		.527	.237	1.693 *
access to WLB information outside workplace		-		.558	.265	1.748 *
the same job as male regular employees		-		.623	.265	1.865 *
notification of childcare leave system from workplace (BM: childcare system was not introduced)						
Yes (there was notification from workplace)		-		1.799	.378	6.042 **
No(system was introduced but it was not notified)		-		.477	.291	1.611
invariable	-4.162	.846	.016 **	-3.234	1.039	.039 **
chi-square		100.406 **			140.151 **	
df		16			23	
N		533			451	

obectives:employees at the first pregnancy time

SE: Standard Error

** p <.01 *p < .05

source: Survey on Women's Working Styles and Family Life (JILPT 2010)

2 Job mobility before the first pregnancy

We can say, therefore, that it is important to work at an organization with a childcare leave system in order to avoid having to leave one's job during the pregnancy and childbirth period. However, the job mobility characteristic of youth makes this difficult to achieve. Figure 6 shows the percentage of regular employees whose workplaces at their first pregnancy have childcare leave system. If a woman's first job is that of a regular employee, and the workplace at first pregnancy has changed (category B in Figure 6), the percentage of regular employees with a childcare leave system (CLS) is only 27.1%, while the same percentage for the regular employee who continues at her first job until the first pregnancy (category A), is 70.7%. The percentage of regular employees with CLS at pregnancy in category B is as high as the percentage of

Figure6. Percentage of regular-employee with childcare leave system at the first pregnancy : By the first employment categories and the first job continuity till the first pregnancy

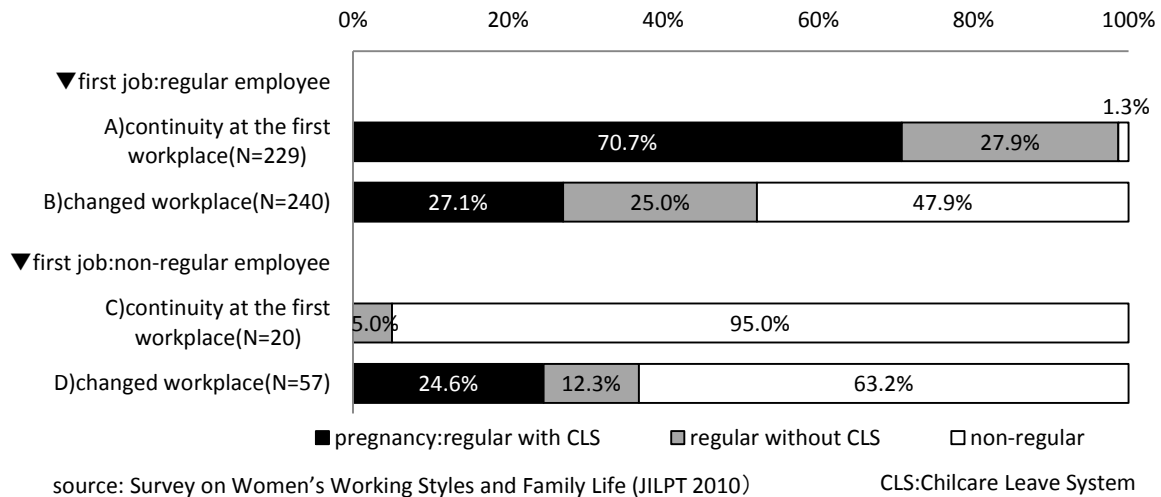
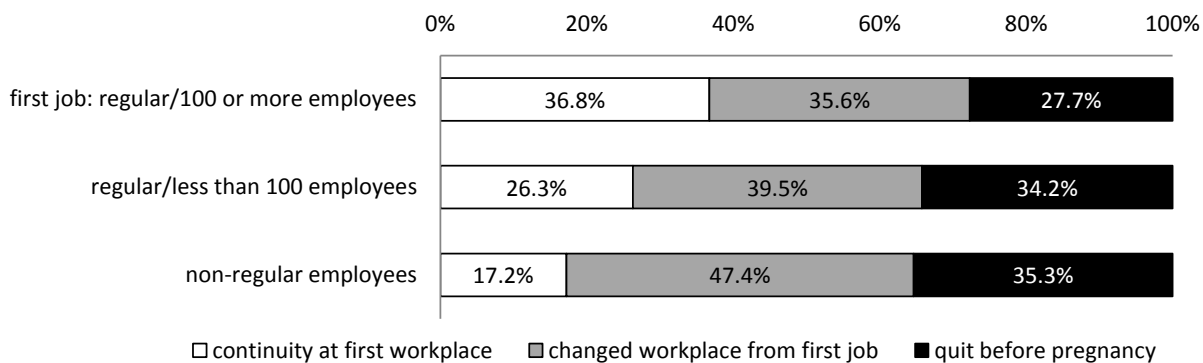


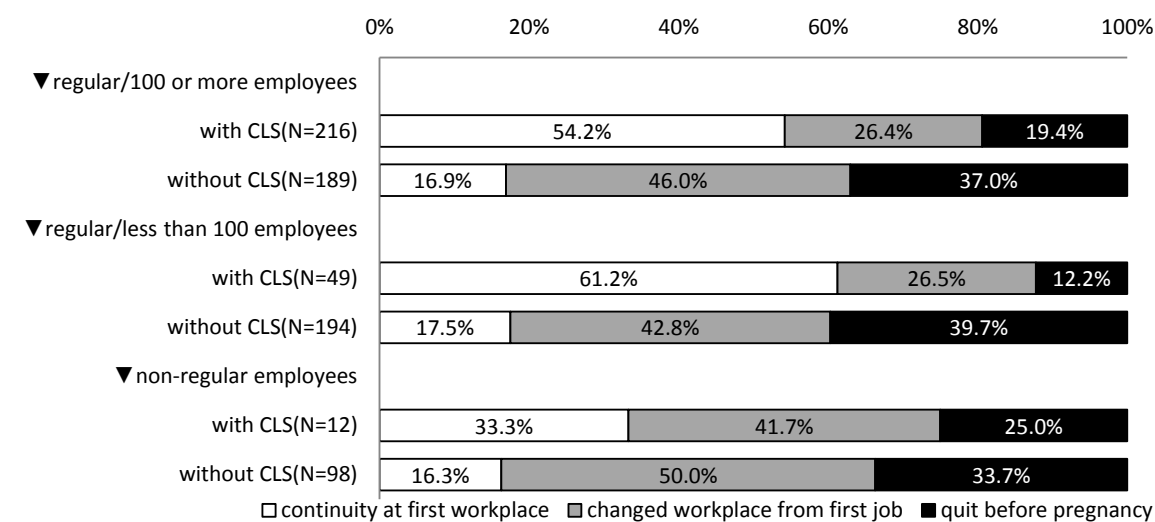
Figure7. Percentage of job continuity till the first pregnancy: By employment categories and size of enterprises



non-regular employees who changed their workplace before the first pregnancy in category D. If the first job is non-regular, it is difficult to become a regular-employee in Japan. Figure 6 implies such a reality. However, this result also implies that it is difficult for regular employees to change to a workplace with CLS.

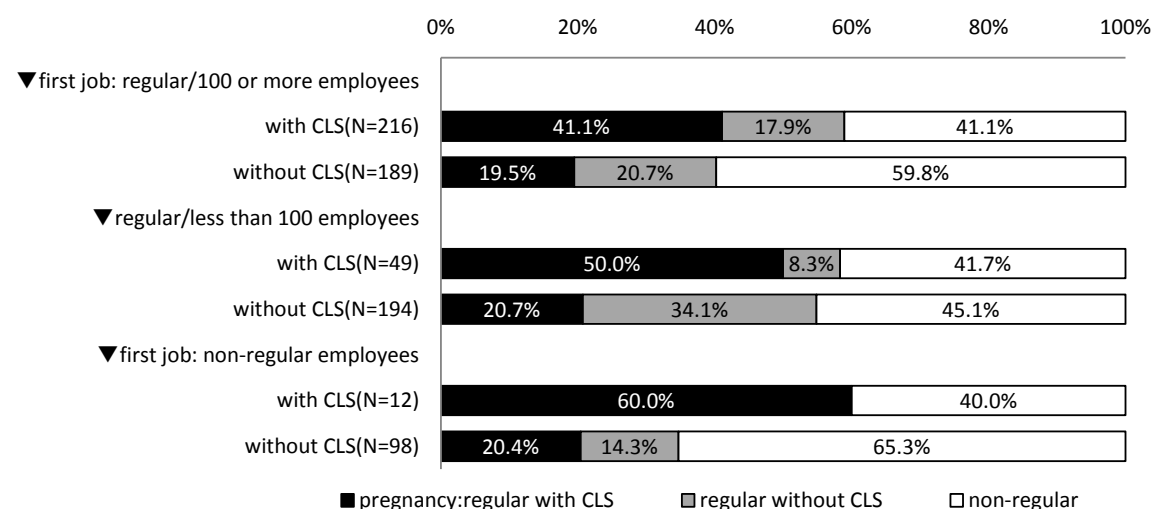
The job mobility of regular employees correlate with the size of the enterprise as Figure 7 shows, and high mobility in small enterprises is also related to a WLB support system as Figure 8 shows. If the workplace has CLS, there is no difference between the percentage of first job continuity in enterprises with more than 100 employees and those with less than 100 employees. Figure 9 implies that it is difficult to change from a workplace without CLS to one with CLS. It is not so easy for regular employees to reconcile work and family life without a WLB system, because of work demands. Non-regular employment is better than regular employment when there is no WLB system, in term of work burdens. Of course, regular employment with a WLB system is the best

**Figure8. Percentage of job continuity till the first pregnancy:
By childcare leave syystem, employment categories, and size of enterprises**



source: Survey on Women’s Working Styles and Family Life (JILPT 2010) CLS:Childcare Leave System

**Figure9. Percentage of regular-employee with childcare leave system
at the first pregnancy : By the first employment categories,
size of enterprises, and childcare leave system at first workplace
(women changed workplace before the first pregnancy)**



source: Survey on Women’s Working Styles and Family Life (JILPT 2010) CLS:Childcare Leave System

option, but the availability of WLB systems in individual enterprises is not known outside the organization. It is safer for women who would like to avoid work-family conflicts to choose non-regular employment.

The results of our data analysis suggest that it is important to support female workers searching for regular employment with WLB systems, so they do not have to choose non-regular jobs in order to balance work with family lives. For example, it is helpful for future regular employees of small enterprises to have information, which employer promotes WLB support, when they are hired, and so avoid having to leave their jobs when they become pregnant.

3 Determining Factors of Job Quitting at the First Pregnancy in Small Enterprises

In summary, it is important to increase the probability of job continuity at small enterprises. The obvious way of doing so, as mentioned above, is to broaden the availability of WLB systems such as childcare leave. However, it is not easy to enforce government regulations in every small enterprise. It is also said that the management style of WLB systems is different in small enterprises from in large ones. Small enterprises support their employees not through institutionalized systems, but by their more flexible responses to employees' demands. In this situation, the presence of fewer WLB systems among small enterprises is not so problematic. However, it is not realistic to assume that small enterprises are always supportive of WLB. There should be women's effort encouraging workplaces to offer flexible support options. In short, women's knowledge of WLB systems and their ability to negotiate the terms of their employment based on this knowledge should prove effective in small enterprises. In general, the previous experiences of individual women are more influential in small enterprises than large ones.

Table 3 shows the determining factors of employment at the first childbirth by size of enterprise.

Table 3. Determining factors of employment at the first childbirth by size of enterprise (logistic regression analysis)

explained variables(yes=1, no=0)	employment at the first childbirth					
	100 or more employees			less than 100 employees		
	B	SE	Exp(B)	B	SE	Exp(B)
cohort (BM:1966-70)						
1971-75	.160	.390	1.173	.085	.682	1.088
1976-80	.180	.497	1.197	-.974	.825	.378
age of the first childbirth	.066	.053	1.068	.098	.092	1.103
co-residence with parents at the first childbirth time	.091	.411	1.096	.383	.639	1.466
residential area at the first childbirth time(urban area=1)	-.853	.373	.426 *	-.960	.604	.383
educational background (BM:junior or senior high school)						
colleage or vocational school	.597	.442	1.817	-.401	.660	.670
university or graduate school	-.247	.625	.781	1.673	1.216	5.329
job category at the first pregnancy (BM: clerical workers)						
teachers or nurses	.035	.683	1.036	1.131	1.090	3.097
professionals	.617	.591	1.854	.054	.893	1.056
sales workers	.196	.633	1.217	-1.339	1.124	.262
service workers	-.411	.636	.663	.338	.853	1.402
skilled workers or laborers	-1.152	.844	.316	-.414	.968	.661
injured or disease by work	-.063	.353	.939	.565	.568	1.760
absent from bad morning sickness	.263	1.253	1.301	-1.433	1.459	.239
mother's job continuation	.374	.367	1.453	1.441	.608	4.224 *
WLB information outside workplace	.277	.391	1.320	1.617	.721	5.039 *
the same job as male regular employees	.986	.454	2.681 *	.353	.668	1.423
notification of childcare leave system from workplace (BM: childcare system was not introduced)						
Yes (there was notification from workplace)	1.667	.557	5.297 **	2.727	1.188	15.288 *
No(system was introduced but it was not notified)	-.155	.454	.857	1.899	.716	6.677 **
invariable	-2.964	1.457	.052 *	-4.381	2.682	.013
chi-square		47.938 **			59.641 **	
df		19			19	
N		188			114	

objectives: regular employees at the first pregnancy time SE: Standard Error
source:Survey on Women's Working Styles and Family Life (JILPT 2010)

** p < .01 *p < .05

This analysis is restricted to regular employees. The significant factors of small enterprises are different from ones of large enterprises. Those with less than 100 employees show significant effects from childcare leave system, mother's job continuation, and the provision of WLB information outside the workplace. The latter two variables reflect *repetition of the past*, which do not have a significant effect on enterprises with 100 or more employees. There are significant effects from having "the same job as male regular employees," and receiving "notification of the childcare leave system" available at these larger enterprises. The management of larger enterprises is done by collective, so the effects of past experiences, which represent growing individual influence in workplaces, is not thought to be significant, instead the management styles at these workplaces mirror employees' prospects for the future.

IV Implications

Women's careers are diversified in Japan, just as Hakim described them in Europe. However, in Japan these diversified careers are not the result of individual choice but an outcome of the labor market structure, as well as experiences of their mothers' job continuation.

The Japanese labor market has legislated equal employment opportunities for men and women, and has also promoted work-life balance (WLB) systems such as childcare leave. As a result, women's retention is increasing in large enterprises, where division of labor by sex is being dismantled, and taking childcare leave is increasing. In general, there is a developed internal labor market, and the collective management of human resources in large Japanese enterprises. The results of our analysis imply that the female labor force is also internalized, as are male workers these days. We can therefore say it is important companies show female employee the prospect of careers after childbirth through arrangement of equal employment opportunity and WLB system.

On the other hand, there is a vector that mobilizes the female labor force in small enterprises. It has been said that job mobility is greater in small enterprises where the internal labor market is not well developed. Women that move from one company to another should not be excluded from the labor market after their childbirth. However, in fact, the WLB system is not very popular in small enterprises. Moreover, it is not easy to select workplaces with a WLB system when women change their jobs, because in Japan it is not common to have working conditions stated clearly before workers are hired. It is safe in this situation to choose non-regular employment that often does not have a WLB system, because it is easier to reconcile this type of employment with family life due to fewer work demands. These non-regular employee's careers are usually intermittent. It is therefore important to discuss the possibility of job continuity in small enterprises, in order to reduce the number of women having to quit their jobs for childbirth/childrearing. Although it is desirable to extend the WLB system, it is not easily done. Our results imply that it is effective not only to strengthen regulations requiring enterprises to promote WLB, but also to give individual workers information on WLB to avoid having to leave their jobs. The effect of this information is

peculiar to small enterprises. This is the original finding of our research, and it implies that the duration of a woman's career at a workplace depends on the organization's size.

KEYWORDS: women's employment, Japanese labor market, work-life balance

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