

Mind the gap: Japan: Employee perspective

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MIND THE GAP

JAPAN



EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE

This paper presents and discusses information about employees' perspectives to their quality of employment in the contemporary country context of Japan. Much research suggests that quality of employment among employees in Japan varies significantly by gender, education, occupations, industry, and size of the workplace.⁶ Furthermore, to the country's emerging concern, over the last decade a gap in quality of employment has been growing between, in OECD's classification, regular (fulltime and presumably lifetime) and non-regular (part-time and/or fixed-term) employees.⁷ Relative to regular employees, the non-regular counterpart seems trapped in lower wage, job insecurity, and lack of opportunities for job skill development.⁸ In this paper, nonetheless, we focus mainly on age, an important characteristic of employees, which have received less attention to date. Rather than delivering comprehensive information about employees' perspectives to their quality of employment in Japan, in this paper, we aim to overview how the priorities, preferences, and satisfaction with the quality of employment differ between different age groups. In this paper we divide information about employees in Japan into that of three age groups: younger, middle-age, and older employees.

Masa Higo and Shoghik Hovhannisyan

INTRODUCTION

Organizations that want to remain employers-of-choice must periodically assess how shifts in the business environment might affect the effectiveness of their talent management strategies, policies and programs. Globalization and changes in the age composition of the workforce - two important 21st century trends that have affect today's businesses - make it important for managers to consider:

- How does age affect employees' preferences for an idealized job and their assessments of their employment experiences?
- Do employees' perceptions of their employment experiences vary from country to country?

What does "mind the gap" mean?

Train stations across England play recorded messages to remind passengers that they should "Mind the Gap." These words of caution urge train travelers to pay attention to the space between the door of the train car and the platform in the station for safe commutes and travels.

For this series of our research publications, we have adopted the phrase, "Mind the Gap." The Mind the Gap series aim to remind employers to pay attention to any gaps that might exist between employees' priorities and need and employers' allocation of workplace-based resources. Our Mind the Gap papers also aim to help our readers to such gaps in quality of employment in other country contexts.

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The Sloan Center on Aging & Work in Boston, in collaboration with the Middlesex University Business School in London, created the Mind the Gap series to provide employers with basic employment-related information country-by-country. There are two types of papers in the Mind the Gap series.

Employee Series: This series examines the perspectives that adults of different ages have about employment and the assessments that they make about their employment experiences. These papers focus on one central question:

- Does age affect employees’ preferences for an idealized job and their assessments of their employment experiences?

Employer Series: This series examines the prevalence of human resource policies and programs at workplaces in a selected country. Because most talent management strategies and programs are age-neutral, we compare the availability of selected human resource policies in practices in the targeted country with the availability of similar policies and practices in a small number of countries with approximate economic circumstances. These papers focus on one core question:

- How does the availability of human resource policies and programs in the targeted country compare with other countries?

Although papers in both series focus on a single country, when the information contained in two or more papers are considered in tandem, it is possible to consider whether employees’ perceptions of their employment experiences vary from country to country.



Quality of Employment: Dimensions of a “Good Job” and a “Good Place to Work”

Most people would agree that “good jobs” are a “good thing.” High quality jobs offer benefits to employees and to the organizations where they work.

- **Benefits for Employees:** The quality of employment affects the health and well-being of employees. Research confirms that poor quality job (such as jobs requiring extreme work hours, jobs that are very demanding – particularly those where employees do not have access to the resources they need to meet those demands) are associated with negative outcomes, including high stress levels and physiological reactions such as cardio-vascular problems.¹
- **Benefits for Employers:** Employers often connect the quality of employment they offer to employees to their employer-of-choice strategies. There is some evidence that the adoption of policies and practices that promote the quality of employment available to employees is related to positive outcomes for organizations, such as customer satisfaction and organizational performance.² Employer-of-choice strategies can result in enhanced employee engagement which, in turn, can be linked to organizational outcomes, including financial measures. For example, higher employee engagement can reduce costs such as those associated with unwanted turnover. One study found that 59% of highly engaged employees report that they intend to stay with their employers in comparison to the 24% of disengaged employees who “intend to stay.”³ A number of studies have linked employee job satisfaction with positive performance indicators. Fortune reports positive relationships between being recognized as a “great place to work” and stock indices.^{4,5}

In this paper, we focus on eight important dimensions of the quality of employment:

- Fair, Attractive, and Competitive Compensation & Benefits
- Opportunities for Development, Learning & Advancement
- Wellness, Health, & Safety Protections
- Opportunities for Meaningful Work
- Provisions for Employment Protections & Predictabilities
- Workplace Flexibility
- Culture of Respect, Inclusion, & Equality
- Promotion of Constructive Relationships at the Workplace

The following sections of this paper use the quality of employment framework as a structure to discuss the perspectives of employees about their employment situations.

QUALITY EMPLOYMENT IN JAPAN:

1. Indicators of Fair, Attractive, and Competitive Compensation & Benefits

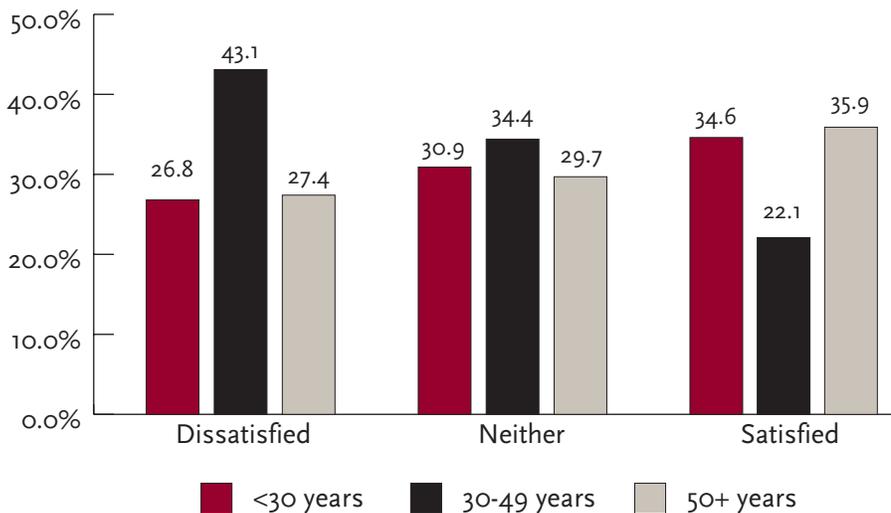
- ▶ Compensation and benefits meet most of employees' basic economic needs, and those are distributed in a fair and equitable manner.

- Slightly less than 30% of adults in Japan in working age report that having a job which offers good pay is an important job characteristic; however, older adults (33.1%) are somewhat more likely to report that having a good paying job is important than younger adults (23.8%) or adults at midlife (26.3%).⁹

- ➡ As indicated by the information in Figure 1 below, about 30% of Japanese employees across all age groups are satisfied (or somewhat satisfied) with their wages and fringe benefits. Employees at midlife (43.1%) are much more likely than older employees (27.4%) or younger employees (26.8%) to be dissatisfied with their wages and fringe benefits, such as personal/family health insurance, housing-expense compensations, education/training benefits, paid vacation days, paid holidays, & paid sick days.¹⁰



Figure 1: Satisfaction with Wages and Fringe Benefits by Age Group



The measure, Satisfaction with Wages and Fringe Benefits, is based on data from the 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. This survey asked respondents about how satisfied they were with their wages (salaries) and fringe benefits separately. This measure is the sum of responses to these two separate survey questions. The response, "satisfied," in this measure is the sum of the responses, "satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied." The response, "dissatisfied," is the sum of the responses, "dissatisfied" and "somewhat dissatisfied."

Source: The 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment¹⁰

- ➡ Only with wages, older employees (39.1%) are more likely to be satisfied (or somewhat satisfied) than younger employees (35.2%) or employees at midlife (35.5%).¹⁰

- For fringe benefits only, older employees are more likely than younger employees or employees at midlife to report both their satisfaction and dissatisfaction; while older employees (25.6%) are more satisfied with fringe benefits than younger employees (18.4%) or employees at midlife (20.2%), they also report to be more dissatisfied (44.5%) than younger employees (19.6%) or employees at midlife (20.9%).¹⁰

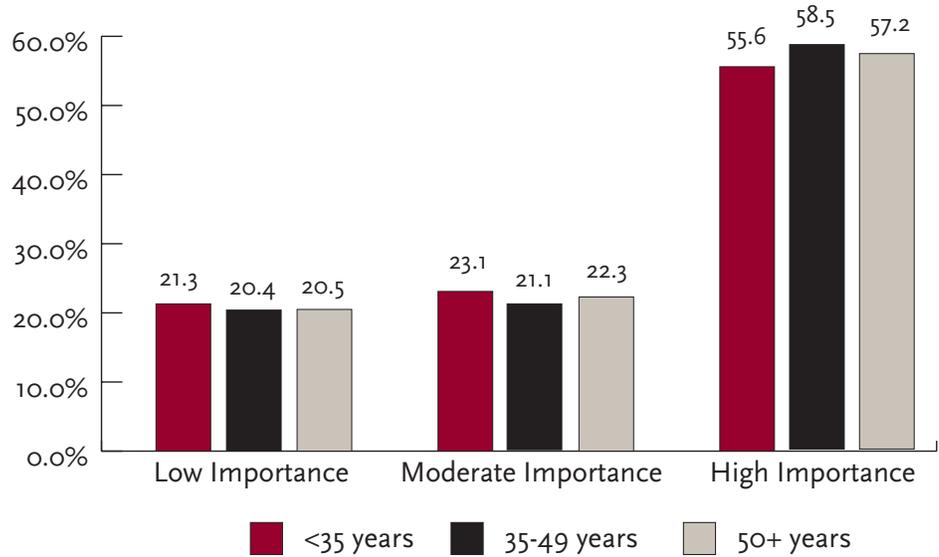


The measure, the importance of opportunities for achievement and responsibility, is based on data from the 1999-2000 World Values Survey (including approximately 1,362 respondents from Japan). This variable is the sum of whether people reported that it was important/very important to have “job you can achieve something” and “a responsible job.” A score of 0 (neither mentioned) was considered low, while a score of 2 (both mentioned) was considered high.

2. Indicators of Opportunities for Development, Learning & Advancement

- ▶ *Opportunities for the development and advancement of job skills and knowledge are made available in an accessible manner.*
- Nearly 60% of Japanese adults report that it is important for them to have a job where they can achieve something and a job with responsibility. As noted in Figure 2 below, there is no substantial difference the age groups indicating that having opportunities for advancement and responsibility are important job characteristics; 57.2% of older adults, 58.5% of or adults at midlife, and 55.6% of younger adults report that they value a job that gives them opportunities for achievement and responsibilities. ⁹

Figure 2: Importance of Opportunities for Achievement and Responsibilities by Age Group



Source: The 1999-2000 World Values Survey⁶

- Younger employees (69.7%) are much more likely than employees at midlife (61.3%) or older employees (37.0%) to report that they are interested in developing their job-related skills and knowledge. ¹⁰
- Of those Japanese employees who have changed their employers in the past, younger employees (8.9%) are more likely than employees at midlife (2.7%) or older employees (3.0%) to raise accumulation of job-specific skills, knowledge, and experiences as the most important reason to change their employers. ¹¹
- The majority (about 55%) of Japanese employees across all age groups report that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with opportunities for job-training and education at their workplace. However, employees at midlife are slightly more dissatisfied (22.6%) than younger employees (20.1%) or older employees (19.2%). ¹⁰
- Employees at midlife (26.3%) are slightly more likely than younger employees (23.0%) or older employees (19.0%) to have utilized job-related training and education benefit packages through workplace. ¹¹

3. Indicators of Wellness, Health, & Safety Protections

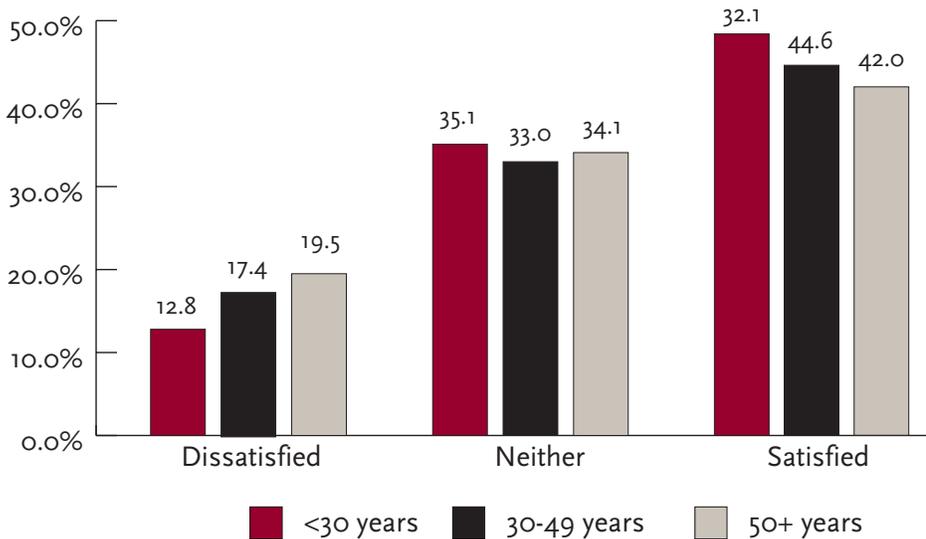
- ▶ Well-being is promoted through workplace policies, and social protections are offered in case of illness.

- About 22% of adults in Japan in working age report that it is important to have a job that does not give too much pressure.⁹
- About 70% of Japanese employees across all age groups report that they evaluate appropriate the measures that their employers have taken to maintain workplace safety. Younger employees (80.9%) are more likely than employees at midlife (62.3%) or older employees (69.2%) to evaluate their workplace safety measures to be appropriate.¹²



- ➡ As indicated by the information presented in Figure 3, about 45% of Japanese employees across all age groups are satisfied (or somewhat satisfied) with their worksite conditions such as lightings, noise-control, and locations. Older employees (19.5%) are more likely than younger employees (12.8%) or employees at midlife (17.4%) to report that they are dissatisfied with these worksite conditions.¹⁰

Figure 3: Satisfaction with Worksite Conditions



The measure, Satisfaction with Worksite Conditions, is based on data from the 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment (Sh gy keita no Tay ka nikansuru S g jittai Ch sa) conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. This survey asked respondents about how satisfied they were with the worksite conditions of lightings and noise-control and the locations of the worksites. The response, “satisfied,” in this measure is the sum of the responses, “satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied.” The response, “dissatisfied,” is the sum of the responses, “dissatisfied” and “somewhat dissatisfied.”

Source: The 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment ¹⁰

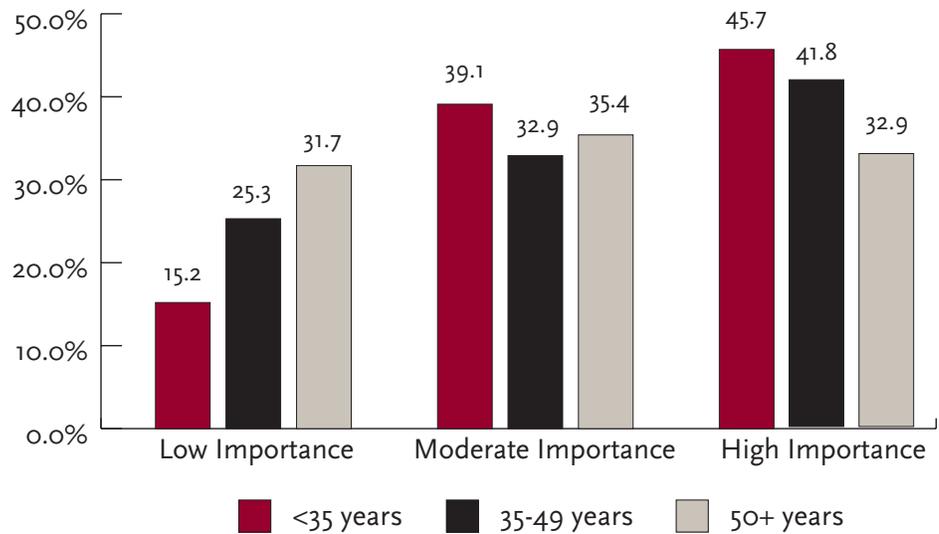


The measure, Importance of Having a Job with Meaningfulness, is based on data from the 1999-2000 World Values Survey (including 1,362 respondents from Japan). This variable is the sum of whether respondents reported that it was important to have “a job that is interesting” and “an opportunity to use initiative.” A score of 0 (neither mentioned) was considered low, while a score of 2 (both mentioned) was considered high in the respondents’ concerns on this aspect of jobs.

4. Indicators of Opportunities for Meaningful Work

- ▶ *Opportunities for meaningful or fulfilling employment are available through appropriate job-skill matches, self-realization through occupation, or community participation away from routine work.*
- ➡ As indicated by the information presented in Figure 4, about 40% of Japanese adults in working age report that it is very important to have a job that is meaningful to them. Younger adults (45.7%) are substantially more likely than slightly more likely than adults at midlife (41.8%) or older adults (32.9%) to report that having a meaningful job is of high importance in their working lives.⁹

Figure 4: Importance of Having a Job with Meaningfulness by Age Group



Source: The 1999-2000 World Values Survey⁹

- More than 60% of Japanese employees are satisfied (or somewhat satisfied) with the meaningfulness of their job; Older employees (65.8%) are slightly more likely than younger employees (62.3%) or employees at midlife (55.5%) to report that they are satisfied (or somewhat satisfied) with the meaningfulness of their jobs.¹⁰
- Of those Japanese employees who have ever changed their employers, older employees (36.5%) are much more likely than younger employees (16.3%) or employees at midlife (23.9%) to report that they have chosen current employers because they are allowed to exercise their specialized skills, knowledge, and experiences at work.¹¹
- Younger employees (22.9%) are more likely than employees at midlife (12.1%) or older employees (10.1%) to report that they have left their last employers because they are not satisfied with the meaningfulness of their jobs.¹¹

5. Indicators of Provisions for Employment Protections & Predictabilities

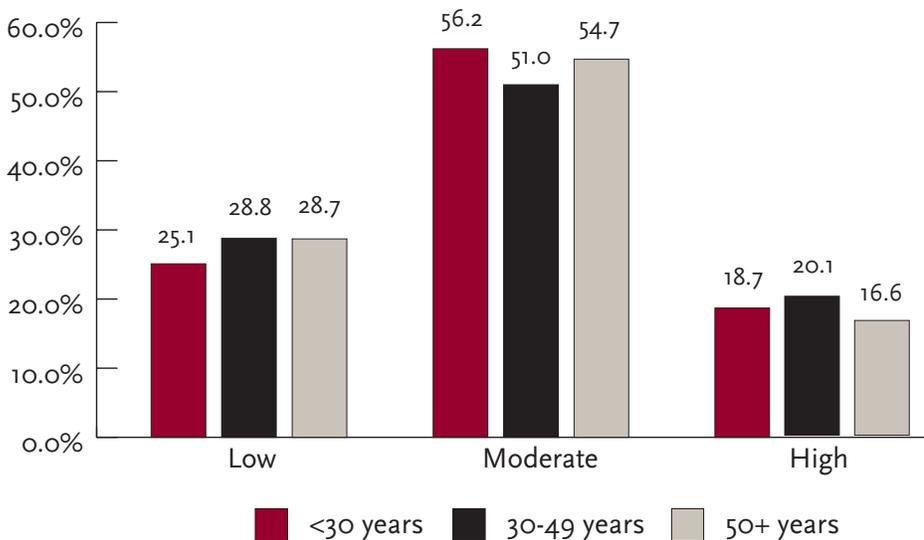
- ▶ *Job security of the employed is protected, and clear communication of terms of employment is facilitated.*

- About 27% of adults in Japan in working age report that having good job security is an important characteristic of their working lives. Older adults (34.4%) are more likely than younger adults (21.5%) or adults at midlife (24.3%) to report that it is important in their working lives to have high job security.⁹
- Of those Japanese employees who have ever changed their employers, employees at midlife (11.6%) are more likely than younger employees (8.5%) or older employees (2.1%) to report that they have chosen current employers because of high job securities.¹¹



- ➡ As indicated by the information presented in Figure 5, about 38% of Japanese employees feel that the extent of employment insecurities at workplace is low; employees at midlife (21.1%) are slightly more likely than younger employees (16.1%) or older employees (16.7%) to report that they feel high job/employment insecurities.¹⁰

Figure 5: Extent of Job Insecurities by Age Group



The measure, Extent of Job Insecurities, is based on data from the 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment (Sh gy keita no Tay ka nikansuru S g jittai Ch sa) conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. This survey asked respondents about how secure they thought about their job-positions and employments

Source: The 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment¹⁰

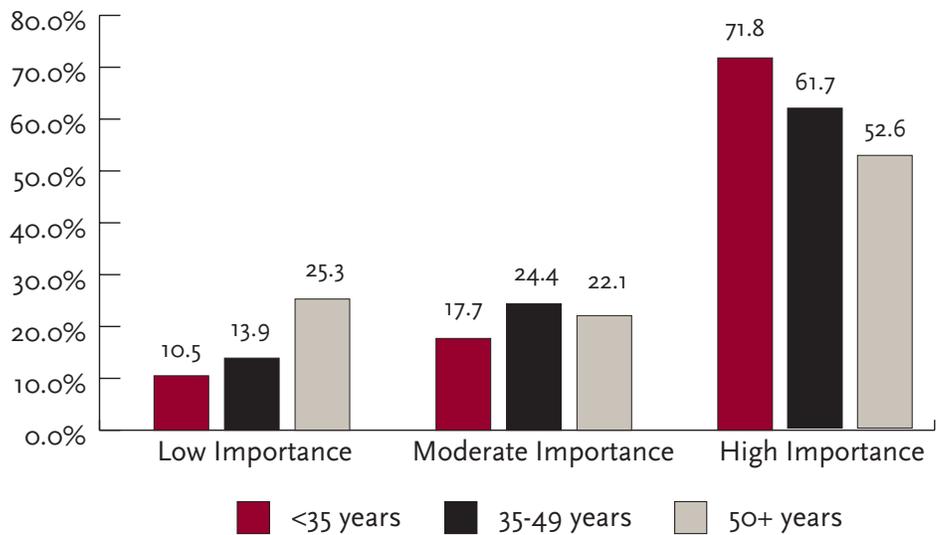


The measure, Access to Flexible Work Hours, is based on data from the 1999-2000 World Values Survey (including 1,362 respondents from Japan). This variable is the sum of whether respondents reported that it was important to have “good hours” and “generous holidays” in their jobs. A score of 0 (neither mentioned) was considered low, while a score of 2 (both mentioned) was considered high in the respondents’ concerns on this aspect of jobs.

6. Indicators of Workplace Flexibility

- ▶ Flexible work options are available and accessible to for employees of various life stages through increasing their control over work hours, locations, and other work conditions.
- ➡ As indicated by the information presented in Figure 6, about 62% of adults in Japan in working age report that it is of high importance to have a job that provides flexible work hours and generous holidays. However, younger adults (71.8%) are substantially more likely than older adults (52.6%) or adults at midlife (61.7%) to report that having flexible work hours and generous holidays are of high importance.⁹

Figure 6: Access to Flexible Work Hours by Age Group



Source: The 1999-2000 World Values Survey⁹

- Employees at midlife (9.2%) are *more* likely than younger employees (2.9%) or older employees (6.6%) to report that they are dissatisfied with their work hours/days.¹⁰
- Employees at midlife (5.2%) are *more* likely than younger employees (4.1%) or older employees (1.6%) to report that they left their last employers because of lack of employer supports for their child and elderly cares.¹¹
- Employees at midlife (17.6%) are *more* likely than younger employees (15.9%) or older employees (6.7%) to report that they left their last employers because they were not offered desired work condition besides wages (hours, days, and locations).¹¹

7. Indicators of Culture of Respect, Inclusion, & Equality

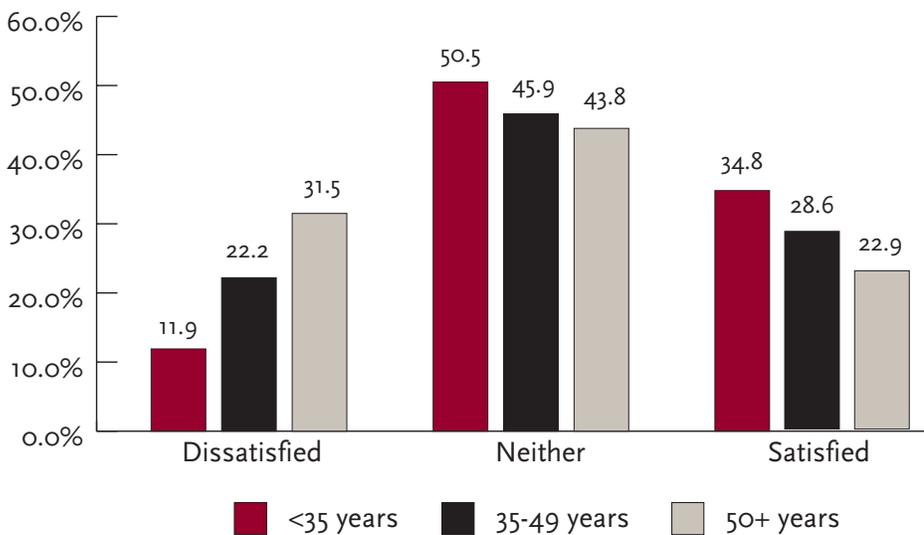
- ▶ *Diversity in the workforce and inclusion of less advantageous populations are promoted, and equity in work conditions is pursued.*

- Older adults (20.3%) are more likely than younger adults (8.0%) or adults at midlife (8.7%) to report that it is important to have job that is respected.⁹
- Older employees (15.1%) are much likely than younger employees (4.1%) or employees at midlife (8.6%) to report that they left their last employers because they felt that their employers (including managers and supervisors) did not fairly evaluate their performances.¹¹

- ➡ As indicated by the information presented in Figure 7, about 28% of Japanese employees across all age groups are satisfied (or somewhat satisfied) with the ways in which their employers (including line managers and supervisors) evaluate their performances and the extent to which their employers show respect to them.¹⁰



Figure 7: Satisfaction with Employer's Evaluation, Respect, and Rewarding by Age Group



Source: The 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment¹⁰

- Older employees (31.5%) are much more likely than younger employees (11.9%) or employees at midlife (22.2%) to report that they were dissatisfied with the ways in which their employers (managers and supervisors) evaluate their performances and the extent to which employers show respect to them.¹⁰

The measure, Satisfaction with Employer's Evaluation, Respect, and Rewarding is based on data from the 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment (Sh gy keita no Tay ka nikansuru S g jittai Ch sa) conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. This survey asked respondents about how satisfied they were with the ways in which their employers evaluated their performance and how fair the ways in which their employers reward the results of their performance. The response, "satisfied," in this measure is the sum of the responses, "satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied," The response, "dissatisfied," is the sum of the responses, "dissatisfied" and "somewhat dissatisfied."

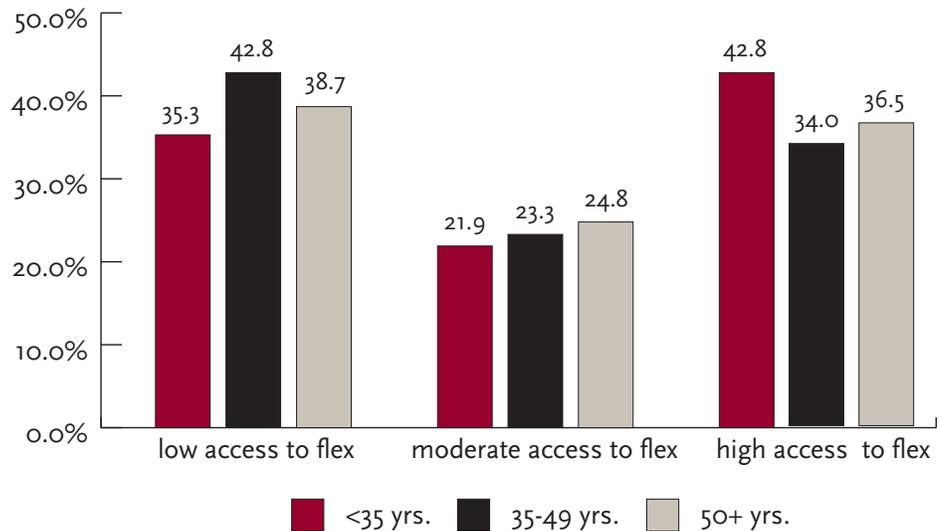


The measure, Satisfaction with Human Relationships and Communication, is based on data from the 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment (Shōgyō Keitai no Tayō ka nikansuru Sōgō jittai Chōsa) conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. This survey asked respondents about how satisfied they were with the quality of human relationships and communications at their workplace. The response, “satisfied,” in this measure is the sum of the responses, “satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied.” The response, “dissatisfied,” is the sum of the responses, “dissatisfied” and “somewhat dissatisfied.”

8. Indicators of Promotion of Constructive Relationships at the Workplace

- ▶ Interactions with supervisors and coworkers are constructive and respectful, and workplace frictions and conflicts are mitigated in a professional manner.
- ➡ As indicated by the information presented in Figure 8, the majority of Japanese employees across all age groups (about 55%) are very satisfied with human relationships and communications at workplace.¹⁰

Figure 8: Satisfaction with Employer’s Evaluation, Respect, and Rewarding by Age Group*



Source: The 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment ¹⁰

- Older employees (21.6%) are much more likely than younger employees (10.8%) or employees at midlife (13.1%) to report a low degree of satisfaction with human relationships and communication at workplace.¹⁰
- Of those Japanese employees who have ever changed their employers, younger employees (14.2%) are more likely than employees at midlife (11.7%) or older employees (2.7) to raise negative human relationships at workplace as the most important reason to leave their employers.¹¹
- More than 40% of Japanese employees across all age groups reported that they feel the employer-employee relations at their companies are good (or somewhat good). Older employees (48.8%) are more likely than younger employees (41.2%) or employees at midlife (41.9%) to report that they view the employer-employee relations are good (or somewhat good).¹³
- About 85% of Japanese employees across all age groups reported that they have never formally complained to their employers about their work conditions over the last three years. Younger employees (17.5%) are slightly more likely than employees at midlife (13.7%) or older employees (13.8%) to report that they have formally complained about their work conditions to their employers.¹³

SUMMARY: MINDING THE GAP

In this paper we have presented information about how the priorities, preferences, and satisfaction with the eight dimensions of the quality employment indicators differ between three age groups: younger, middle-age, and older employees (or working-age adults) in Japan. Based on the information, how do we characterize employees' perspectives to their quality of employment in the contemporary country context of Japan? Our findings about Japanese employees' perspectives may be summarized as follows:

- **Younger Employees:**

Younger employees are more likely than employees at midlife or older employees to report that they are satisfied with safety and physical conditions of their work environment and such workplace culture as respect, inclusion, and equality. They are also more likely than the other age groups to report that they are satisfied with human relationships and communication at the workplace. They are also more likely than the other age groups to report that they put high importance on meaningfulness of their jobs and availability of workplace flexibility.

- **Employees at Midlife:**

Employees at midlife tend to report that they have less access to many of the indicators of quality of employment than younger employees or older employees, including access to core benefits, opportunities for job-training and education at workplace, safety and physical conditions of their work environment, and flexible work options. Employees at midlife also tend to report that they have less job security and fair evaluations of their performances from their employers.

- **Older Employees:**

Older employees are more likely than younger employees or employees at midlife to report that they are satisfied with wages and fringe benefits. They are less likely than the other age groups to report that they are satisfied with human relationships and communication at the workplace and such workplace culture as respect, inclusion, and equality. They are also less likely than the other age groups to report that they are satisfied with safety and physical conditions of their work environment. Older employees are less likely than the other age groups to report that they place high importance on opportunities for meaningful work or availability of workplace flexibilities.

CONCLUSION: CLOSING THE GAP IN TODAY'S GLOBAL ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

The information that we presented and discussed in this paper has delivered very general and suggestive background knowledge employees' perspectives on their quality of employment in the contemporary country context of Japan.

How might employers in Japan and those in similar country contexts find ways to close the gap between employees' and employers' perspectives on quality of employment today?

In order for employers to become or remain the possible employer-of-choice in contemporary Japan, in addition the information delivered by this paper, further inquiries aiming to obtain more specific information may be necessary. Future inquiries might obtain more

in-detailed and definitive information about the priorities of and access to specific workplace-based resources aiming to increase quality of employment and the working lives at large. Such inquiries will also clarify more in-detail whether and to what degree employees of difference age groups are satisfied with their employment.

In concluding this paper, we mention crucial implications of the current global economic challenges that most employers in the world are facing today. The current global economic downturn has placed employers in the world, including those in Japan, under unprecedented pressures to reduce new hires in their workplaces. Simultaneously, employers have been facing an unprecedented pressure to look into the talent – their employees – that they currently have. In this context, facilitating efficiency and productivity – quality of their talent – has come to be understood as a crucial resource for most employers to cope with today's looming global economic challenges. In order to remain competitive in today's global economy, more than ever before, today's employers need to close the gap between what employees prioritize and need and what employers provides in their workplaces.

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Established in 2007 by the Center on Aging & Work, the Global Perspectives Institute is an international collaboration of scholars and employers committed to the expansion of the quality of employment available to the 21st century multi-generational workforce in countries around the world.

The Global Perspectives Institute focuses on innovative and promising practices that might be adopted by employers and policy-makers.

The Institute's research, publications, and international forums contribute to:

- ▶ a deeper understanding of the employment experiences and career aspirations of employees of different ages who work in countries around the world;
- ▶ informed decision making by employers who want to be employers-of-choice in different countries; and
- ▶ innovative thinking about private-public partnerships that promote sustainable, quality employment.

Apart from the Mind the Gap series, the Global Perspectives Institute publishes a Statistical Profile Series highlighting workforce demographic trends in different countries as well as a Global Policy Series focusing on selected workforce policy in certain country contexts.

For more information on our publications, please visit us online at:
www.bc.edu/agingandwork

The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College promotes quality of employment as an imperative for the 21st century multi-generational workforce. We integrate evidence from research with insights from workplace experiences to inform innovative organizational decision-making. Collaborating with business leaders and scholars in a multi-disciplinary dialogue, the Center develops the next generation of knowledge and talent management.

The Sloan Center on Aging & Work is grateful for the continued support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

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- 2 For example, see:

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Barnett, R. C., & Hall, D. T. (2001). How to use reduced hours to win the war for talent. *Organizational Dynamics*, 29(3), 192.

Edmans, A. (2008). *Does the stock market fully value intangibles? Employee satisfaction and equity prices*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania- The Wharton School. Retrieved from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=985735>
- 3 Towers Perrin. (2005). *Winning strategies for a global workforce: Attracting, retaining and engaging employees for competitive advantage*. Stamford, CT: Towers Perrin. Retrieved from <http://www.towersperrin.com/tp/getwebcachedoc?webc=HRS/USA/2006/200602/GWS.pdf>
- 4 Great Places to Work Institute. *What makes a great place to work: Financial results*. Retrieved April 15, 2009, from <http://www.greatplacetowork.com/great/graphs.php>
- 5 Unfortunately, most of the research linking employer-of-choice strategies with business outcomes tends to focus on correlational relationships. Such studies do not definitively establish that being a “best place to work” causes positive organizational performance; indeed, it might also be true that high profits and strong financial growth cause higher employee engagement and foster perceptions that a particular workplace is an employer-of-choice.

6 For this discussion, see:

Nomura, Masami (2007). Japanese employment institutions [Nihonteki Koy kank]. Tokyo: Minerva Press.

Shinozuka, Eiko (1989). Employment management institutions in Japan [Nihon no Koy ch sei]. Tokyo: T y keizai Shinp sha.

a. Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2008). *OECD economic surveys, Japan*. Paris: OECD.

b. Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2007). *Employment outlook*. Paris: OECD.

c. The 1999-2000 World Values Survey.

d. The 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment (Sh gy keita no Tay ka nikansuru S g jittai Ch sa) of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Government of Japan.

e. The 2006 National Survey on Employees in Career Transitions (Tenshokusha Jittai Ch sa) of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Government of Japan.

f. The 2005 Basic Survey on Workplace Safety and Health (R d Anzeneisei Kihonch sa) of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Government of Japan.

g. The 2004 National Survey on Employer-Employee Communications (R shi Communication nikansuru Ch sa) of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Government of Japan.

Note on the data:

Data for this paper are drawn from the following 5 sources:

1. The 1999-2000 World Values Survey: This survey was conducted in 1999-2000 and gathered information from 1,362 respondents (age 18 to 86) in Japan. The respondents were shown a list of job characteristics and told, "Here are some more aspects of a job that people say are important. Please look at them and tell me which ones you personally think are important in a job."
2. The 2003 General Survey on Diversified Type of Employment (Sh gy keita no Tay ka nikansuru S g jittai Ch sa): This survey was conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in October 2003 and gathered information from 24,930 individuals in the workforce in Japan (the sample number: 35,094; effective response rate: 71.0%). In the released form of this survey data, the age of respondents were originally classified into six age Categories: 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and older. Therefore, for our discussion based on data drawn from this survey, we classify Japanese employees into the following three age groups: those age 15 to 29 as younger employees; those age 30 to 49 as employees at midlife; and those age 50 and older as older employees.
3. The 2006 National Survey on Employees in Career Transitions (Tenshokusha Jittai Ch sa). This survey was conducted in Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in October 2006 and gathered information from 4,319 individuals in the workforce (the sample number: 6,637; effective response rate: 65.1%).
4. The 2005 Basic Survey on Workplace Safety and Health (R d Anzeneisei Kihonch sa). This survey was conducted in Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in May 2005 and gathered information from 11,823 individuals in the workforce (the sample number: 17,969; effective response rate: 65.8%).
5. The 2004 National Survey on Employer-Employee Communications (R shi Communication nikansuru Ch sa). This survey was conducted in Japan by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in June 2004 and gathered information from 4,227 (the sample number: 7,000; effective response rate: 61.1%).

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