

# МАГІСТЕРСЬКИЙ ПРОЕКТ «СОЦІАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ МОЛОДІ: НАЦІОНАЛЬНІ ПРОФІЛІ»

Координатор проекту — Случайна Л.О., к.політ.н., доцент

**Volodina O.**

*Student of Master's Degree Course*

*Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman*

## CAREER RACE IN JAPAN

**Abstract.** *This article analyzes the main difficulties and obstacles in the process of employment, working conditions, and the impact of social status on these processes. Some new forms of employment and their respective social groups are described. The aim of the article is to analyze the current Japanese practices and their compatibility with Ukrainian labor market.*

**Анотація.** *У цій статті проаналізовано основні труднощі і перешкоди в процесі працевлаштування, умови найму, а також вплив соціального статусу на ці процеси. Описано деякі нові форми зайнятості та їх відповідні соціальні групи. Метою дослідження було дослідити сучасні японські практики у цій царині та проаналізувати доцільність їх наслідування для української молоді.*

**Key words:** *Japanese youth, forms of Japanese employment, social status in Japan, Japanese marriage and family, «non-standard» groups in Japan.*

**Ключові слова:** *японська молодь, форми зайнятості і працевлаштування, соціальний статус, шлюб та родина, «нестандартні» групи.*

**Statement of the problem.** In the modern world of open borders, free labor, and other sorts of migration, people are trying to find an ideal world and better working conditions. The generation of Ukrainian millennials, who are brought up in the era of online games, anime and gadgets, begins to dream about the countries of the Far East, such as Japan / China / Korea / Singapore. On the one hand the youngsters might be frustrated by the complete absence of real economic reforms in their own country, on the other hand they might be attracted by fairly stable and developed economies, with quite strong beliefs and cultural values that make people feel respect and a desire to be part of them.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Japan has always attracted the interest of scientists, as it stood out qualitatively against the background of other countries, with its culture and fairly authentic features. Thus, it was researched by Genda Yuji in the famous work *A Nagging Sense of Youth Insecurity: The New Reality Facing Japanese Youth*; Emma E. Cook in *Reconstructing Adult Masculinities: Part-time Work in Contemporary Japan*; Marcus E. Rebick in *The Japanese Employment System: Adapting to a New Economic Environment*; David Chiavacci, Professor in Social Science of Japan at the University of Zurich who has written over 60 publications on this subject.

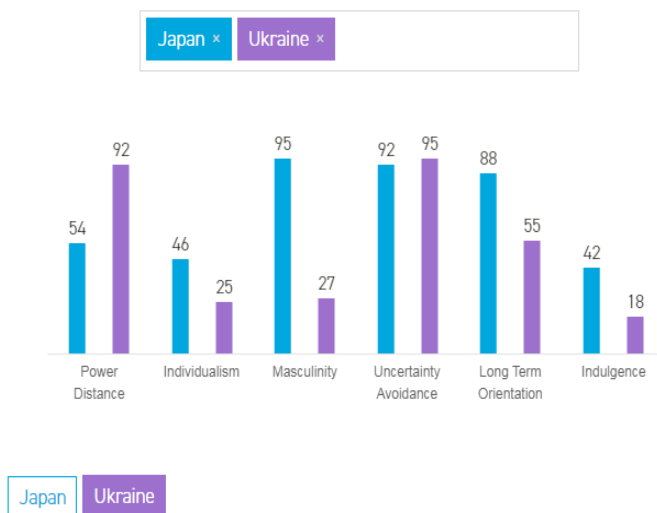
**Purpose of research.** The purpose of the article is find out the direct connection of the Japanese culture with the conditions of work and employment and to inform the Ukrainian youngsters about it. Such information could be important for the fans of Asia

and for those who would plan to analyze compatibility of the best Japanese practices with Ukrainian labor market.

**The key findings.** First of all, we would like to analyse the differences in the attitudes to career race in Ukraine and Japan. For this reason, it is necessary to clarify what recruitment in Japan means. In the overwhelming majority of cases university graduates have to be employed immediately after the graduation. It means that a student has to find a job during the last year of study in his/her educational institution so that he can «transfer» from one train to another without any delay.

According to Confucius instructions, a human being has special value. The Japanese believe in the endless force of human being and attach great importance to human training and training innovators. Japanese organizations see their staff as their asset and regard human resources development as a very important matter. Many organizations use regulations and laws to lead their staff to perform tasks and some of them emphasize cultural norms and values as the mechanism of dominance on staff. In Japan, if there are laws and regulations, norm orientation is dominant on legalism. According to some researches, functionality of Japanese staff is controlled by their own colleagues in the working groups. One of the essential values which have effect on the worker's behavior in Japan is to wish others' kindness. The Japanese learn from the childhood that they *rely on others' kindness and enjoy this kindness* [1]. The Japanese worker does not kick the bucket because in such case, it leads to humiliation of other members of the group.

Secondly, the cultural differences between Japan and Ukraine become more obvious if we explore them through the lens of Hofstede's 6-D Model.



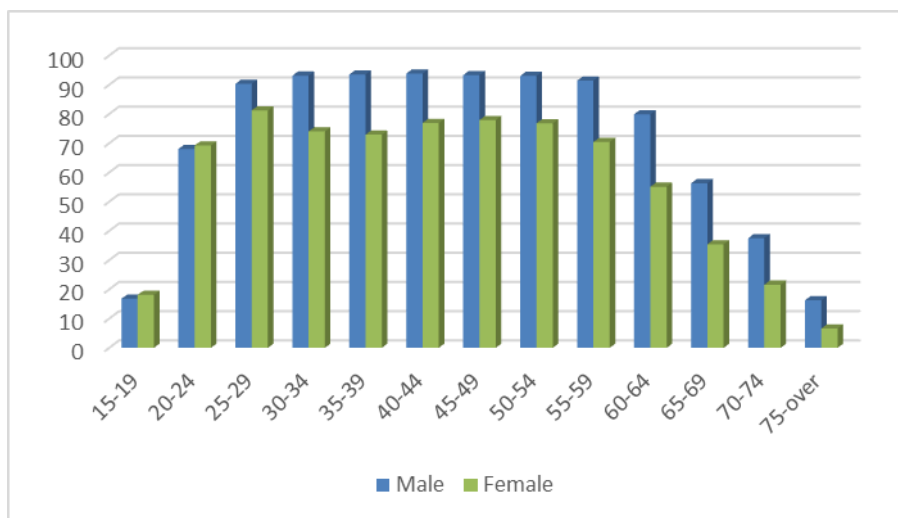
Pic. 1. Hofstede insights of Japan comparing with Ukraine [12]

Thirdly, we would like to highlight the fact that young Japanese are quite actively involved in the economic life of the society. Side jobs such as *Arubaito* (temporary worker) in cafes, restaurants, small shops, etc. are particularly popular among students and schoolchildren. However, the absolute majority of Japanese youth seeks to continue their education after graduating from the highest level of secondary school in two-year colleges, vocational schools *Sammon Gakko*, and universities.

Young people between the ages of 20 and 24 are represented mainly by those who have already completed their education and for whom the main activity is work.

It is clear that the gap between the employment rates of age groups within 15–34 is due to the fact that the first age group includes pupils and students who continue their education, and the second and third groups are mainly represented by those who have already completed their education and entered a life.

Furthermore, due to the aging of the population in the country, there is a fairly rapid reduction in the number of people of working age (from 15 to 64 years). The rate of decline of the population of Japan in 2019 will be 408 people per day.



Pic. 2. Ratio of Persons Engaged in Work by Sex and Age, % (2012, 2017) [3]

In other words, judging by the above figures, it can be concluded that in terms of job security and opportunities to build life plans, Japanese youth can feel quite confident. However, a closer look reveals a slightly different picture.

As G. Hofstede puts it, the Japanese are always conscious of their hierarchical position in any social setting and act accordingly. However, it is not as hierarchical as most of the other Asian cultures. Some foreigners experience Japan as an extremely hierarchical society because of their business experience of painstakingly slow decision making process: all the decisions must be confirmed by each hierarchical layer and finally by the top management in Tokyo. Paradoxically, the exact example of their slow decision making process shows that in the Japanese society there is no one top guy who can take decision like in more hierarchical societies. Another example of not so high Power Distance is that Japan has always been a meritocratic society. There is a strong notion in the Japanese education system that everybody is born equal and anyone can get ahead and become anything if he (yes, it is still he) works hard enough [12].

*Marriage Institute.* The problem of population aging is caused by cultural characteristics, given the problem of gender inequality, women are increasingly inclined to build a career, to learn and be independent, which in turn extrudes any possibility of creating a family. However, even women who adhere to the old views cannot be confident in their happy family future, since only few modern men can meet the standards of an ideal husband, the so-called *Sarariman*. This is a person who must be in a prestigious position, preferably a public servant with a significant social status and weight in a society who does not change his work throughout his life, as well as being the only one earner in the family. In addition to this, the circles of communication of

people employed at different levels of the work do not touch. Social norms create conditions for communication only social groups of their own kind. The same is a problem and the birth of a child, because it is a break in “her” career and it is very possible that not only break but the end. Every year the number of youths is inexorably growing and will continue to grow as for the changes it is necessary to break the traditional character of their life, which is unlikely to happen, given their historical experience of development.

The fact that, despite all the changes in the labor market, non-permanent employment, as before, is perceived in Japan as a kind of deviation from the norm, is evidenced, for example, by the position of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. In the labor market surveys conducted by this ministry, the «standard worker» is the one who «was accepted into the enterprise immediately after graduation and will work on it for a long time» [5, p. 3].

Japanese enterprises try to avoid firing of their current permanent workers. Therefore, this means that the problem is solved at the expense of the youth. The number of graduates who will be able to get a full-time job next year will plummet. This has happened here more than once. In addition, where these graduates go after this is perfectly clear to everyone: to the ranks of powerless temporary workers. What a standard of living awaits them is easy to imagine...

This is understandable, from the point of view of those who are already working. In Japan, losing job is more dramatic than in Ukraine. Since here, until recently, the system of life-long employment was practiced; there is no system for changing jobs. Even if you are lucky, they will take you somewhere — the conditions will be much worse, because the salary rises here for long service at this particular enterprise, and in the new company you will start from scratch. And then your own company promises that it will not offend any of the current employees. In general, it would be strange to cut current workers and recruit newbies by the same approach.

Nevertheless, it turns out that the current youth must pay on all accounts. In Japan, it is how right after high school you will not get a permanent job. All life you will be powerless temporary worker with an hourly wage. Even if then the economic situation in the country improves, and enterprises will need a greater number of workers, they will intensively search for them among university graduates of this particular year. In the direction of those who had the misfortune to graduate in the years when workers were practically not recruited, no one will look. The Japanese believe that «everything must be done on time».

A rather scary system — one has to stumble somewhere once (and no matter what is not your fault) — and the situation becomes irreparable.

As noted above, due to the peculiarities of the Japanese labor market, namely the existence of the institution of life-long employment with its guarantees of maintaining the status of a permanent employee and long-term employment for those who were employed in previous years, changes in the structure of labor demand from Japanese companies Above all, young people who first entered the labor market were affected. Therefore, the growth of non-permanent employment turned out to be the most significant among the young contingents of the labor force.

Despite the fact that in 1985 Japan adopted the Law on Equal Rights of Women and Men in Employment, which banned any form of discrimination in this area based on gender, the gender factor continues to influence the position of women in the labor market. Thus, the majority of Japanese women who were able to get a permanent job are forced to content themselves with a more modest professional career than their male counterparts. Until now, in many firms, women are hired mainly to do the so-called regular work (*ippanseku*), while men are charged with the so-called common work. While general work presupposes advanced training within the framework of in-house training, career growth and annual wage increases, regular work provides significantly more modest opportunities for further training and career growth, which means more moderate wage growth.

As can be expected, average annual salary increases by age group, but there is a significant gender gap across age groups. The average annual salary for a person in their twenties is ¥3,540,000 (\$32,182). The average salary for a 20-something man is ¥3,740,000 (\$34,000), while the average salary for a 20-something woman is ¥500,000 less, at ¥3,240,000 (\$29,455).

Age Group	Currency	Overall	Men	Women
20s	JPY	3,540,000	3,740,000	3,240,000
	USD	32,182	34,000	29,455
30s	JPY	4,670,000	5,010,000	3,900,000
	USD	42,455	45,545	35,455
40s	JPY	5,640,000	6,160,000	4,250,000
	USD	51,273	56,000	38,636
50s	JPY	7,010,000	7,440,000	4,610,000
	USD	63,727	67,636	41,909

Pic. 3. Average Salary in Japan by Age, 2017 [4]

Changes in the structure of labor demand occurring in the Japanese labor market have an impact on other aspects of the life of Japanese youth. In particular, they led to a certain decline in the eyes of young people of the value of education as a tool guaranteeing a calm, stable and secure life. For a long time, finding a job as a permanent employee immediately after graduation (school graduates — blue-collar places, university graduates — white-collar places) was the main goal for the majority of Japanese youth. However, the reduction of permanent employment opportunities has led to a certain erosion of the previously effective «institution-company» company transit mechanism and, to a certain extent, undermined confidence in the inseparable link between academic success and a successful career.

In addition, as Hofstede said, in corporate Japan, you see that employees are most motivated when they are fighting in a winning team against their competitors. What you also see as an expression of Masculinity in Japan is the drive for excellence and perfection in their material production (*monodukuri*) and in material services (hotels and restaurants) and presentation (gift wrapping and food presentation) in every aspect of life. Notorious Japanese workaholicism is another expression of their Masculinity. It is

still hard for women to climb up the corporate ladders in Japan with their Masculine norm of hard and long working hours.

Innovations in youth groups. Young people who do not have a permanent job (in Japan they are called *freeters* — from English Free and German Arbeiter) are perceived by the public consciousness as a kind of deviation from the norm, and their social status is estimated as much lower than the status of a permanent employee. Their frequent change of work (especially under the pretext that she doesn't like it), the lack of clear life goals are perceived as an indicator of weak character, immaturity, manifestation of selfishness and irresponsibility towards the family and society. As long as male freelancers are young, they are condescending, but the older they get, the more strictly those around them evaluate them and the sharper they themselves feel the discrepancy of their position to the expectations of society. Closer to 30 years, many of them are trying to change lifestyles and find a stable job, but for most it turns out to be impossible.

Changes in the labor market, a sharp increase in the number of young people who do not have a permanent job, were also one of the factors for the emergence of various non-standard, unusual for Japan youth groups, lifestyles and values that contrast sharply with generally accepted norms and perceptions. These are, for example, the so-called *parasite singars*, or *parasite singles*. This term was introduced into scientific circulation in the late 1990s by the well-known Japanese sociologist Yamada Masahiro to designate the following category of young people: working only occasionally (with the aim of receiving funds for entertainment and pocket money) living together with their parents and completely dependent on them in meeting their basic needs.

Even more unusual for Japan is the group of youth that emerged in the 1990s-2000s, became the so-called NEETs (not in Education, Employment or Training). According to the definition of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, NEETs are young people between the ages of 15 and 34 who are not engaged in anything - neither study, nor work, nor professional retraining. In this environment, a special subgroup of young people was also formed — the so-called hikikomori, which in Japanese means reclusive. *Hikikomori* are young people who avoid contact with the outside world, prefer to spend time at home (mostly in their room), plunging into the virtual world of manga, anime, computer games, etc. According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, there are about 260 thousand families in Japan where there are children leading the hikikomori lifestyle [6, p. 38].

**Conclusion.** Over the past decade, the situation of Japanese youth has deteriorated markedly. The reduction of permanent employment in all age cohorts and the growth of the category of non-permanent workers, failures in the mechanism of employment of school and university graduates that worked flawlessly before, the need to choose between career and family for Japanese women who have the status of permanent worker, the emergence of all sorts of groups of non-standard youth — all these phenomena indicate that modern Japanese youth live in a qualitatively different, more complex social and psychological atmosphere as well as young Ukrainians do.

Moreover, if previously, thanks to the general growth of welfare and the democratization of the education system, the youth environment was quite homogeneous, now its polarization is increasing. At one pole are young people who

managed to get a permanent job and who can count on a prosperous, calm, predictable life, and on the other — those who for various reasons turned out to be outside the sphere of permanent employment, and, therefore, beyond calm, prosperous life. It is in this environment that youth groups are formed, whose way of life and value system contrast sharply with the ideas about normal life, a successful career, etc., rooted in the public consciousness. The existence of these groups of «non-standard» young people is a serious social problem, especially in light of the rapid aging of the country's population and the reduction in the number of people of working age.

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**Honcharova H.**

*Student of Master's Degree Course*

*Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman*

### THE INFLUENCE OF CONFUCIANISM ON ASIAN TIGERS' ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Abstract.* The present article deals with the main concepts of Confucian philosophy and the way they pre-determine Hofstede's cultural dimensions. It contains the review of the basic features of this philosophical school and the comparison of Asian Tigers' cultural Indexes. The prior objective of the