

Exploring Gender Differences in “Happiness” “Nature of Work” and “Job Satisfaction” in Japanese Society

Hiroko Kanoh¹

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Abstract

This study examines gender differences in happiness, nature of work, and job satisfaction in Japanese society, utilizing data from the 2023 National Employment Status Panel Survey. Despite Japan's slight improvement in the Global Gender Gap Index, ranking 118th out of 146 countries in 2024, significant challenges persist in achieving gender equality, particularly in economic participation and political representation. Analysis of survey responses from 55,807 participants revealed significant gender disparities in happiness and life satisfaction. males reported higher levels of happiness, while females demonstrated greater life satisfaction, suggesting a complex interplay between gender roles and subjective well-being in Japanese society. Further investigation into the nature of work and job satisfaction uncovered notable gender differences across multiple dimensions. females reported higher levels of engagement in work that influenced others, greater autonomy in decision-making, and a more positive outlook on future career prospects. Conversely, males exhibited higher satisfaction with workplace relationships and enthusiasm for their work. A critical finding of this study is the tendency for females to be assigned or hired for monotonous and less rewarding jobs, which are often low-paid. This, coupled with the greater burden of household responsibilities, contributes to lower levels of happiness and motivation for work among females. The study suggests that this lack of motivation may partly explain Japan's low female political participation and the persistent gender gap in leadership roles. The research highlights a concerning trend where females appear to accept the limitations of their roles without aspiring for systemic change, potentially contributing to lower levels of political engagement and reluctance to advocate for greater gender parity in leadership and policymaking roles. These findings underscore the need for structural reforms to enhance economic and political participation and inspire females to engage more actively in societal change. The study contributes to the growing body of research on gender dynamics in the Japanese labor market

¹ Assoc. Prof. Institute of Arts and Sciences, National University Corporation Yamagata University, Yamagata, Japan, kanoh@cc.yamagata-u.ac.jp

and provides valuable insights for policymakers and organizations striving to create more equitable work environments and close the persistent gender gap in Japanese society.

Keywords: Gender Differences, Happiness, Nature of Work, Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), published annually by the World Economic Forum, measures gender parity across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. The index is calculated using a ratio of female to male values, with a score of 1 indicating parity and 0 indicating complete inequality. In the 2024 report, Japan ranked 118th out of 146 countries, slightly improving from its 125th position in 2023(Table1) [1][2]. Despite this advancement, Japan continues to face significant challenges in achieving gender equality, particularly in the areas of economic participation and political representation.

Table1: Japan's Rankings in the Global Gender Gap Index (2023 vs. 2024)

Dimension	2023 Rank	→	2024 Rank
Overall	125th	→	118th
Economic Participation	123rd	→	120th
Political Empowerment	138th	→	113th
Educational Attainment	47th	→	72nd
Health and Survival	59th	→	58th

1.1. Economic Participation and Opportunity

Despite a slight improvement in the overall ranking, Japan remains low in terms of economic participation and opportunity, ranking 120th. The labour force participation rate for female stands at 76.8%, an increase from previous years, yet the gender gap in leadership roles remains substantial. The gender parity score for senior positions is only 17.1%, indicating that approximately five out of six leadership positions are held by male. Furthermore, the estimated earned income score is 58.3%, reflecting persistent wage disparities between male and female. Although there has been progress since 2016, the score is still 2.6 points below the highest value recorded in 2015, highlighting the need for further efforts to close the economic gender gap.

1.2.Political Empowerment

Japan's ranking in political Empowerment improved significantly from 138th in 2023 to 113th in 2024. This progress is largely attributed to an increase in the proportion of female in ministerial positions, from 8% in 2023 to 25% in 2024, raising the parity score to 33.3%. However, the representation of female in the national parliament remains low at 11.5%, and the

overall political Empowerment score is only 11.8%. These figures suggest that, despite recent gains, Japan still lags far behind other developed nations in political gender equality.

1.3. Educational Attainment

Japan has achieved near gender parity in educational achievement, with a score of 99.3%. Literacy rates and secondary education enrolment rates are nearly equal for males and females. However, according to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's "Basic School Statistics" (2023), the university enrolment rate is higher for males, at 53.4% for females and 59.7% for males. As a result, Japan's ranking drops significantly from 47th in 2023 to 72nd in 2024, indicating potential problems in maintaining this balance and suggesting that further attention is needed to ensure sustainable gender equality in education.

1.4. Health and Survival

In terms of health and survival, Japan ranks 58th, showing little change from its 2023 ranking of 59th. While gender disparity in this area is not as pronounced as in others, the stagnation in this ranking suggests a need for continuous monitoring and targeted policies to maintain and improve gender parity in health outcomes.

2. Methodology

2.1. Previous Research and Purpose of This Paper

Japan's 2024 GGGI ranking of 118th reflects modest progress but also highlights persistent challenges in achieving gender equality. Although improvements have been made in political representation, significant disparities remain in economic participation and opportunity, as well as in political Empowerment. Educational Attainment, while close to parity, requires ongoing vigilance to prevent future regression. Addressing these issues is crucial for Japan to foster a more equitable society and leverage the full potential of its population.

Concerning economic participation, wage disparity is often pointed out as a problem (Hara, 2022) (Shibayama, 2020) (Onozuka, 2016) (Chiang, 2014) (Abe, 2010) [3][4] [5] [6] [7]. Figure 1 shows a graph based on the Basic Survey on Wage Structure by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare [8]. In Japan, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was enacted in 1985. Although this law aims to achieve gender equality, looking at the wage disparity graph, it shows that it has had little effect.

In addition, according to Xepoleas et al. (2020), female surgeons in Japan reported the least personal time and the least family support for their careers compared to female surgeons in other countries. Furthermore, they reported that female surgeons in Japan were more likely to report having sacrificed career success or promotion for childbirth compared to female surgeons in other countries.

Fukai et al. (2022,2023) examines how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected female Employment in Japan. Our estimates indicate that the Employment rate of married female with children decreased by 3.5 percentage points, while that of those without children decreased by only 0.3 percentage points, implying that increased childcare responsibilities caused a sharp

decline in mothers' Employment. Further, mothers who left or lost their jobs appear to have dropped out of the labour force even several months after school reopening. In contrast to females, the Employment rate of married male with children was not affected, which hindered progress in narrowing the Employment gender gap.

It has also been shown that marriage and child-rearing have a significant impact on the way Japanese female work (Chiba and Kanoh, 2024) (Ito and Kanoh, 2024). However, it has not been clarified whether there are gender differences in specific work tasks in Japanese society. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze and find insights into gender differences in happiness, as well as gender differences in "nature of work" and "job satisfaction."

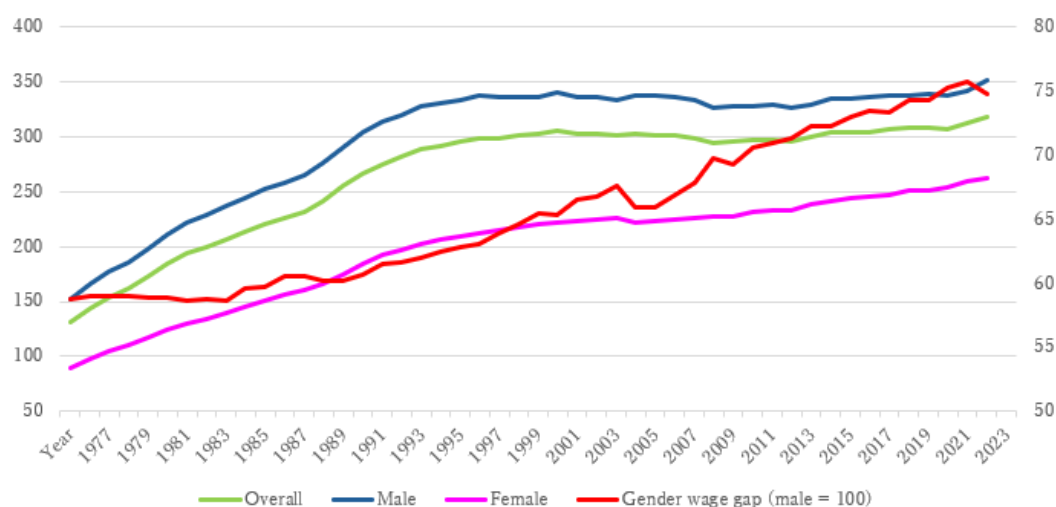


Figure1: Gender Wages of Workers (Excluding part-time workers)

※ The left axis is Wages (thousand yen).

※ The right axis is the gender wage gap (male = 100)

2.2. Procedure

The data used in the analysis of this paper is the "National Employment Status Panel Survey, 2023" data from the SSJ Data Archive, the Social Survey and Data Archive Research Centre attached to the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo. The response method for both surveys was an internet monitor survey (eligible individuals were selected from Intage Inc.'s Mighty Monitors), with 55,807 responses collected and 21,930 responses collected in the supplementary survey. The survey period was from January 5, 2023 (Thursday) to January 31, 2023 (Tuesday), and from January 13, 2023 (Friday) to February 7, 2023 (Tuesday).

In addition to [gender], the following questions were used in this survey. In each case, the questions asked were about the respondent's work over the past year.

Happiness (On a 5-point Likert scale, 5 is "very happy")

Life satisfaction (On a 5-point Likert scale, 5 is "very satisfied")

"Nature of work" and "job satisfaction"

1. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was in charge of a variety of tasks, not monotonous.

2. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I worked while understanding the whole job.

3. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was engaged in work that influenced others inside and outside the company.

4. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was able to decide how to do my work.

5. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I received a fair evaluation for my work.

6. Nature of work [Base: Non-regular employee, December last year] I felt that the evaluation of my work style was fair and not unreasonable compared to the evaluation of regular staff/employees.

7. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with the work itself.

8. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with the relationships in the workplace.

9. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I felt that I was "growing" through my work.

10. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I had a good outlook for my future career.

11. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with my work history so far.

12. Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was able to work with enthusiasm.

13 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was enthusiastic about my work.

14 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I found myself absorbed in my work.

15 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was always busy and tried to do many things at once.

16 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I felt obligated to work hard even when I wasn't enjoying it.

3.Results

3.1. A Comparison of Gender Differences in Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Table 2 shows a comparison of gender differences (means and standard deviations) in happiness and life satisfaction. Responses were asked on a five-point Likert scale. For happiness, 5 was "very happy," and for life satisfaction, 5 was "very satisfied." A one-way analysis of variance with a within-subjects design revealed significant differences between conditions for both “happiness ($F(1, 55805) = 502.90, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.009$) ” and “life satisfaction ($F(1, 55805) = 361.97, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.006$) ”. males exhibited higher levels

of happiness compared to females, while females demonstrated higher levels of satisfaction than males. These findings suggest that although males experience greater happiness, they are less satisfied than females. On the other hand, females, despite reporting lower levels of happiness, appear to be more satisfied with their circumstances, possibly indicating a contentment with the status quo.

Table2: Comparison Of Gender Differences in Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Gender		Happiness	Satisfaction
Male	Mean	2.78	2.11
	N	29124	24605
	Std. Deviation	1.001	1.368
Female	Mean	2.59	2.16
	N	26683	19974
	Std. Deviation	0.959	1.412
Total	Mean	2.69	2.13
	N	55807	44579
	Std. Deviation	0.985	1.388

3.2. "Nature of Work" and "Job Satisfaction"

Next, Table 3 shows gender differences (means and standard deviations) in "nature of work" and "job satisfaction." Table 4 shows the results of a one-way analysis of variance with a within-subjects design.

Table3: Gender Differences in "Nature of Work" and "Job Satisfaction"

Items	Gender Male			Female			Total		
	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD
1. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was in charge of a variety of tasks, not monotonous.	2.91	24605	1.151	2.97	19974	1.156	2.94	44579	1.154
2. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I worked while understanding the whole job.	2.35	24605	1.002	2.40	19974	1.013	2.37	44579	1.007
3. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was engaged in work that influenced others inside and outside the company.	2.90	24605	1.165	3.22	19974	1.205	3.05	44579	1.194
4. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was able to decide how to do my work.	2.69	24605	1.136	2.90	19974	1.173	2.78	44579	1.157
5. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I received a fair evaluation for my work.	2.92	24605	1.024	2.88	19974	1.026	2.90	44579	1.025
6. Nature of work [Base: Non-regular employee, December last year] I felt that the evaluation of my work style was fair and not unreasonable compared to the evaluation of regular staff/employees.	3.10	4448	1.061	3.13	9091	1.091	3.12	13539	1.081
7. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with the work itself.	2.86	24605	1.064	2.79	19974	1.050	2.83	44579	1.058
8. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with the relationships in the workplace.	2.85	24605	1.107	2.76	19974	1.149	2.81	44579	1.127
9. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I felt that I was “growing” through my work.	3.08	24605	1.043	3.02	19974	1.052	3.05	44579	1.048
10. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I had a good outlook for my future career.	3.38	24605	1.050	3.50	19974	1.029	3.44	44579	1.042
11. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with my work history so far.	3.10	24605	1.067	3.16	19974	1.068	3.13	44579	1.068
12. Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was able to work with enthusiasm.	3.03	24605	1.078	2.98	19974	1.090	3.01	44579	1.084

Items	Gender Male			Female			Total		
	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD	Mean	N	SD
13 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was enthusiastic about my work.	2.71	24605	1.043	2.60	19974	1.040	2.66	44579	1.043
14 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I found myself absorbed in my work.	2.93	24605	1.066	2.87	19974	1.079	2.90	44579	1.072
15 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was always busy and tried to do many things at once.	3.06	24605	1.088	3.11	19974	1.113	3.08	44579	1.099
16 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I felt obligated to work hard even when I wasn't enjoying it.	2.85	24605	1.024	2.78	19974	1.042	2.82	44579	1.033

The results of the analysis of variance (AANOVA) revealed significant differences ($p < .001$) in multiple items, particularly regarding the nature of work and job satisfaction, indicating distinct perceptions and experiences between male and female. Below are the findings for each item with significant differences.

Table 4: ANOVA Results for "Job Characteristics" and "Job Satisfaction"

Gender×Each Items	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
1. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was in charge of a variety of tasks, not monotonous.	36.888	$p < .001$	0.001
2. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I worked while understanding the whole job.	22.54346	$p < .001$	0.001

3. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was engaged in work that influenced others inside and outside the company.	816.6523	$p<.001$	0.018
4. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I was able to decide how to do my work.	370.7626	$p<.001$	0.008
5. Nature of work [Base: Hired last year] I received a fair evaluation for my work.	14.8168	$p<.001$	0
6. Nature of work [Base: Non-regular employee, December last year] I felt that the evaluation of my work style was fair and not unreasonable compared to the evaluation of regular staff/employees.	2.01246	0.156	0
7. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with the work itself.	39.13336	$p<.001$	0.001
8. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with the relationships in the workplace.	69.76211	$p<.001$	0.002
9. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I felt that I was "growing" through my work.	39.58425	$p<.001$	0.001
10. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I had a good outlook for my future career.	160.9416	$p<.001$	0.004
11. Job satisfaction [Base: Hired last year] I was satisfied with my work history so far.	26.06489	$p<.001$	0.001
12. Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was able to work with enthusiasm.	19.14731	$p<.001$	0
13 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was enthusiastic about my work.	120.3929	$p<.001$	0.003
14 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I found myself absorbed in my work.	32.32474	$p<.001$	0.001
15 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I was always busy and tried to do many things at once.	18.26423	$p<.001$	0
16 Job satisfaction [Base: Employed last year] I felt obligated to work hard even when I wasn't enjoying it.	50.63109	$p<.001$	0.001

(1) Nature of Work

Item 1: The work involved various tasks and was not monotonous.

A significant difference between male and female was found in their perceptions of task diversity. Although the effect size (η^2) is small, it suggests that female are slightly more likely to perceive their work as diverse compared to male.

Item 2: I had a good understanding of the overall work process.

female reported a stronger sense of understanding the overall work process than male, but the effect size is small, indicating only a minor difference between genders.

Item 3: I engaged in work that had an impact both inside and outside the organization.

A notable difference was observed between male and female regarding the perception of impact. With a larger effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.018$), female are more likely to feel that their work influences others both inside and outside their workplace.

Item 4: I had autonomy in deciding how to proceed with my tasks.

A significant difference was found, with female reporting higher autonomy in their work decisions compared to male. The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.008$) suggests a moderate level of difference.

Item 5: I felt that my work was evaluated fairly.

While the effect size is small, female perceived their work evaluations as slightly less fair than male did.

(2) Job Satisfaction

Item 7: I was satisfied with the content of my work.

Although the effect size is small, female reported slightly higher job satisfaction than male in terms of their work content.

Item 8: I was satisfied with my workplace relationships.

A significant difference was found in workplace relationships, with female expressing higher satisfaction compared to male. The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.002$) suggests a small to moderate difference.

Item 9: I felt that I was growing through my work.

female felt slightly more that their work contributed to personal growth, but the effect size is small.

Item 10: I had a positive outlook on my future career.

A significant difference was observed in terms of career outlook, with female expressing greater optimism about their future career prospects. The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.004$) indicates a moderate difference.

Item 11: I was satisfied with my career path so far.

While the effect size is small, female reported higher satisfaction with their career paths compared to male.

Item 12: I approached my work with passion.

Although there was a significant difference, the effect size is negligible, indicating very little difference between male and female regarding their passion for work.

Item 13: I was motivated to work.

female were found to be more motivated in their work than male. The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.003$) suggests a moderate difference in motivation levels.

Item 14: I was deeply engaged in my work.

female reported being more engaged in their work, but the difference is small in terms of effect size.

Item 15: I was always busy, trying to juggle many tasks at once.

Although there was a significant difference, the effect size is zero, indicating virtually no practical difference between male and female in terms of perceived busyness.

Item 16: I felt obligated to work hard even when I wasn't enjoying it.

female felt a slightly stronger sense of obligation to work hard compared to male, though the effect size is small.

From this, five key insights regarding gender differences in the "nature of work" and "job satisfaction" can be derived.

Nature of Work: Across multiple dimensions of job nature, females generally reported slightly higher means compared to males. For instance, in item 3 ("I was engaged in work that influenced others inside and outside the company"), females had a higher mean (3.22) compared to males (2.90). This pattern continues in items such as autonomy over work decisions (item 4) where females scored higher (2.90) than males (2.69). This could suggest that females feel slightly more engaged and autonomous in their work roles than males.

Fair Evaluation of Work: With regard to the perception of being fairly evaluated (Item 5), males scored 2.92, while females scored 2.88, suggesting that females are more likely than males to feel that they are not being fairly assessed. However, among non-regular employees (Item 6), the level of satisfaction with the fairness of the evaluation of their work methods was slightly higher for females (3.13) compared to males (3.10).

Job Satisfaction: The results in job satisfaction highlight several differences. In terms of satisfaction with the work itself (item 7), males reported a higher mean (2.86) than females (2.79), indicating slightly greater satisfaction among males in this regard. However, when considering future career outlook (item 10), females scored higher (3.50) than males (3.38), suggesting that females may feel more optimistic about their career trajectories despite marginally lower satisfaction with the current work itself.

Enthusiasm and Absorption: In terms of enthusiasm for work (item 12), males reported slightly higher levels of enthusiasm (3.03) compared to females (2.98). However, for being absorbed in work (item 14), the difference is smaller, with males reporting a mean of 2.93 and females 2.87.

Workload and Obligation: Interestingly, when it comes to feeling busy and trying to handle many tasks simultaneously (item 15), females (3.11) reported feeling this pressure more acutely than males (3.06). Similarly, males reported a slightly higher obligation to work hard even when not enjoying it (2.85) compared to females (2.78).

Overall, these findings suggest that while males and females exhibit different levels of satisfaction across various job-related factors, females appear to have a more positive outlook on their future careers and a higher sense of involvement in influencing others. Conversely, males tend to report slightly higher satisfaction with their work and work history but feel more obligated to continue working under unfavorable conditions. This gender dynamic in job satisfaction warrants further exploration to understand underlying causes and implications for workplace policies.

3.3. Gender differences by occupation

Table 5 shows gender differences by occupation. The right side of the table shows the difference (female-male). Occupations with a higher number of men are shown in blue, and occupations with a higher number of females are shown in shades of red. The data presents distinct gender disparities across various occupations, with several professions showing pronounced gender imbalances. Predominantly male-dominated fields include technical and manual labor roles such as automobile/motorcycle mechanics (95.3% male), construction workers (over 90% male across categories), and security-related jobs (e.g., security guards and police officers, with over 90% male representation). Conversely, certain service-oriented and care-related jobs are overwhelmingly female-dominated, such as medical administration (92.4% female), receptionist (90.8% female), and nursing assistants (73.8% female). These trends reflect enduring gender segregation in the labor market, particularly in traditionally gendered roles, where men predominantly occupy physically demanding or technical positions, while female are more prevalent in caregiving and administrative roles. Interestingly, some professions like service workers (gas station workers) and accommodation staff reflect a near-equal gender distribution, indicating potential shifts in gender roles in specific service industries.

In terms of occupational categories with the highest gender imbalances, professions such as truck drivers (96.6% male), security guards (95.2% male), and barbers (78.2% male) reveal substantial male dominance. On the other hand, roles such as esthetician (94.2% female), hairdresser (69.2% female), and waitresses (80.7% female) showcase significant female predominance. This gender disparity is further illustrated in the extreme underrepresentation of female in technical or managerial positions, as evident in categories like machine maintenance (97.6% male) and management in technical fields (96.5% male).

Additionally, although the numbers of female involved are not large, a high proportion of female also work in monotonous jobs such as housekeeping (71.4%), waiters/waitresses (80.7%) and other customer service/waiting workers (70.8%). Furthermore, when we look at the medical field, 74.5% of doctors are male, while only 25.5% are female. On the other hand, jobs that assist doctors include medical administration (92.4%), secretaries (84.4%) and receptionists (90.8%).

Overall, these findings align with broader trends observed in labor markets worldwide, where gender roles remain deeply entrenched in certain sectors, despite increasing awareness and policy efforts toward achieving gender equality.

Table 5: Gender Differences by Occupation

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Housekeeper	10	28.6%	25	71.4%	35	15
Home helper/care worker	187	38.6%	297	61.4%	484	110
Nursing assistant/dental assistant, etc.	71	26.2%	200	73.8%	271	129
Barber	61	78.2%	17	21.8%	78	-44
Hairdresser	40	30.8%	90	69.2%	130	50
Esthetician	3	5.8%	49	94.2%	52	46
Other life hygiene service workers	64	35.8%	115	64.2%	179	51
Japanese food cook, sushi chef	70	58.3%	50	41.7%	120	-20
Western food cook	50	65.8%	26	34.2%	76	-24
Chinese food cook	17	54.8%	14	45.2%	31	-3
Other cooks, bartenders	165	34.4%	314	65.6%	479	149
Waiter, waitress	109	19.3%	455	80.7%	564	346
Hall staff (pachinko, amusement hall)	55	48.7%	58	51.3%	113	3
Accommodation staff	83	53.9%	71	46.1%	154	-12
Tour conductor, tour conductor	7	46.7%	8	53.3%	15	1
Other customer service/waiting workers	243	29.2%	589	70.8%	832	346
Building/parking lot/apartment/boiler management	270	89.1%	33	10.9%	303	-237
Automobile/motorcycle mechanic	162	95.3%	8	4.7%	170	-154
Machine maintenance	163	97.6%	4	2.4%	167	-159

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Service staff (gas station)	39	81.3%	9	18.8%	48	-30
Service workers not classified elsewhere	301	55.0%	246	45.0%	547	-55
SDF personnel	146	94.8%	8	5.2%	154	-138
Police officers, coast guard officers, etc.	157	90.8%	16	9.2%	173	-141
Security guards, guards, firefighters, etc.	459	95.2%	23	4.8%	482	-436
Agriculture Contractors, landscapers, livestock farmers, forestry and fishing workers	263	66.6%	132	33.4%	395	-131
Drivers (vans, wagons)	167	92.3%	14	7.7%	181	-153
Drivers (trucks)	511	96.6%	18	3.4%	529	-493
Drivers (buses)	141	98.6%	2	1.4%	143	-139
Drivers (taxi, hire cars)	109	93.2%	8	6.8%	117	-101
Ship and aircraft operators	26	96.3%	1	3.7%	27	-25
Railway operators (train drivers, etc.)	174	97.8%	4	2.2%	178	-170
Other transport and machinery operators	130	93.5%	9	6.5%	139	-121
Metal manufacturing, production and repair workers	330	88.0%	45	12.0%	375	-285
Machinery manufacturing, production and repair workers	259	82.2%	56	17.8%	315	-203
Electrical manufacturing, production and repair workers	147	84.0%	28	16.0%	175	-119
Automobile manufacturing, production and repair workers	304	80.9%	72	19.1%	376	-232
Food and daily necessities manufacturing and production workers	355	53.0%	315	47.0%	670	-40

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Other production-related and production-like workers	893	71.4%	358	28.6%	1251	-535
Construction workers (civil engineering workers)	118	94.4%	7	5.6%	125	-111
Construction workers (construction workers)	163	94.2%	10	5.8%	173	-153
Construction workers (electrical and facility construction workers)	192	97.0%	6	3.0%	198	-186
Other construction, civil engineering and mining workers	89	89.0%	11	11.0%	100	-78
Cleaning staff, garbage and waste Urine and waste disposal workers	201	52.5%	182	47.5%	383	-19
Delivery staff	167	81.1%	39	18.9%	206	-128
Warehouse workers	352	56.7%	269	43.3%	621	-83
Other transport, cleaning, packaging, etc. workers	128	50.2%	127	49.8%	255	-1
Members of parliament, administrative national and local government officials	172	85.6%	29	14.4%	201	-143
Company directors, directors of independent administrative agencies, etc.	638	86.6%	99	13.4%	737	-539
Management (technical)	383	96.5%	14	3.5%	397	-369
Management (clerical)	550	79.6%	141	20.4%	691	-409
Management (sales)	336	95.7%	15	4.3%	351	-321
Management (professional)	95	79.2%	25	20.8%	120	-70
Management (sales)	49	80.3%	12	19.7%	61	-37
Management (service)	54	77.1%	16	22.9%	70	-38
Supervisor	30	58.8%	21	41.2%	51	-9

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Store manager	67	74.4%	23	25.6%	90	-44
Management (other)	154	85.1%	27	14.9%	181	-127
General affairs	680	42.8%	908	57.2%	1588	228
Human resources	123	50.8%	119	49.2%	242	-4
Labor	63	53.4%	55	46.6%	118	-8
Legal affairs	61	70.1%	26	29.9%	87	-35
Public relations	29	47.5%	32	52.5%	61	3
Corporate planning	133	75.1%	44	24.9%	177	-89
Sales administration	358	34.1%	691	65.9%	1049	333
Administrative affairs	172	50.1%	171	49.9%	343	-1
International affairs	15	57.7%	11	42.3%	26	-4
Trade administration	18	30.5%	41	69.5%	59	23
Business	155	44.5%	193	55.5%	348	38
Inventory management	64	61.0%	41	39.0%	105	-23
Product management	60	46.5%	69	53.5%	129	9
Purchasing	27	52.9%	24	47.1%	51	-3
Purchasing and materials	100	57.8%	73	42.2%	173	-27
Medical administration	31	7.6%	376	92.4%	407	345
Secretary	12	15.6%	65	84.4%	77	53
Receptionist	27	9.2%	267	90.8%	294	240
Telephone operator	16	26.2%	45	73.8%	61	29
Arrangements	15	27.3%	40	72.7%	55	25
Staff coordinator	15	44.1%	19	55.9%	34	4
Other general affairs	730	25.1%	2174	74.9%	2904	1444
Planning	103	69.1%	46	30.9%	149	-57
Sales promotion	110	63.6%	63	36.4%	173	-47

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Marketing	43	71.7%	17	28.3%	60	-26
Advertising	6	54.5%	5	45.5%	11	-1
Research	13	48.1%	14	51.9%	27	1
Product development, merchandiser	18	54.5%	15	45.5%	33	-3
Product planning	13	61.9%	8	38.1%	21	-5
Buyer	10	76.9%	3	23.1%	13	-7
Other planning and promotional administrative work	32	54.2%	27	45.8%	59	-5
Finance, accounting	151	47.5%	167	52.5%	318	16
Accounting	164	24.6%	502	75.4%	666	338
Keypunchers, computer operators, etc.	39	29.5%	93	70.5%	132	54
Other administrative workers	98	41.2%	140	58.8%	238	42
Real estate sales	146	83.9%	28	16.1%	174	-118
Food sales	91	85.0%	16	15.0%	107	-75
Pharmaceutical sales	60	83.3%	12	16.7%	72	-48
Chemical sales	26	83.9%	5	16.1%	31	-21
Machine sales	62	92.5%	5	7.5%	67	-57
Electrical and electronic equipment sales	73	91.3%	7	8.8%	80	-66
Telecommunications sales	41	66.1%	21	33.9%	62	-20
System sales	61	95.3%	3	4.7%	64	-58
Bank sales	73	58.4%	52	41.6%	125	-21
Insurance sales	123	48.8%	129	51.2%	252	6
Securities sales	10	71.4%	4	28.6%	14	-6
Travel sales	17	65.4%	9	34.6%	26	-8
Other sales	592	82.5%	126	17.5%	718	-466

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Sales clerks, fashion advisors	485	37.7%	803	62.3%	1288	318
Cashiers	124	16.0%	649	84.0%	773	525
Door-to-door product sales workers	13	46.4%	15	53.6%	28	2
Real estate agents, buyers and sellers, insurance agents, etc.	10	76.9%	3	23.1%	13	-7
Natural science researchers	50	87.7%	7	12.3%	57	-43
Humanities and social science researchers	11	61.1%	7	38.9%	18	-4
Agricultural engineers	22	73.3%	8	26.7%	30	-14
Livestock engineers	6	75.0%	2	25.0%	8	-4
Forestry engineers	4	100.0%	0	0.0%	4	-4
Fisheries engineers	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	4	-2
Other agriculture, forestry and fisheries engineers	13	76.5%	4	23.5%	17	-9
Research and development (chemistry)	75	75.0%	25	25.0%	100	-50
Research and development (biotechnology)	14	58.3%	10	41.7%	24	-4
Research and development (food)	21	56.8%	16	43.2%	37	-5
Research and development (electrical and electronic)	92	96.8%	3	3.2%	95	-89
Research and development (optical related)	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	5	-3
Research and development (communications)	7	87.5%	1	12.5%	8	-6
Research and development (semiconductors)	32	91.4%	3	8.6%	35	-29

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Research and development (machinery)	115	98.3%	2	1.7%	117	-113
Research and development (mechatronics)	17	100.0%	0	0.0%	17	-17
Research and development (computers)	39	90.7%	4	9.3%	43	-35
Other research and development	80	80.0%	20	20.0%	100	-60
Food engineers (excluding development)	37	66.1%	19	33.9%	56	-18
Electrical circuit design	25	100.0%	0	0.0%	25	-25
Semiconductor design	19	79.2%	5	20.8%	24	-14
Machine design	97	91.5%	9	8.5%	106	-88
Mechatronics design	6	100.0%	0	0.0%	6	-6
Telecommunications engineers	29	90.6%	3	9.4%	32	-26
Control design	33	97.1%	1	2.9%	34	-32
Mold design	10	76.9%	3	23.1%	13	-7
Other electrical, electronic and mechanical design related jobs	121	94.5%	7	5.5%	128	-114
Chemical engineers	26	83.9%	5	16.1%	31	-21
Other mining and manufacturing engineers	35	79.5%	9	20.5%	44	-26
Technology development (architecture, civil engineering, plants, facilities)	47	92.2%	4	7.8%	51	-43
Architectural design	101	77.1%	30	22.9%	131	-71
Civil engineering design	81	86.2%	13	13.8%	94	-68
Other designs	36	81.8%	8	18.2%	44	-28

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Architectural construction management, site supervision and construction manager	106	87.6%	15	12.4%	121	-91
Civil engineering construction management, site supervision and construction manager	118	95.9%	5	4.1%	123	-113
Facility construction management, site supervision and construction manager	101	95.3%	5	4.7%	106	-96
Other architecture, civil engineering and surveying engineers	115	87.8%	16	12.2%	131	-99
Development jobs (software related jobs)	387	86.6%	60	13.4%	447	-327
Programmer	116	74.4%	40	25.6%	156	-76
WEB-based apps Application development	70	83.3%	14	16.7%	84	-56
Database engineer	12	85.7%	2	14.3%	14	-10
Communication/network engineer	100	91.7%	9	8.3%	109	-91
Infrastructure engineer	126	88.7%	16	11.3%	142	-110
Security engineer/security consultant	24	96.0%	1	4.0%	25	-23
System consultant/IT consultant	58	89.2%	7	10.8%	65	-51
Support engineer (software)	57	71.3%	23	28.8%	80	-34
Support engineer (hardware)	25	89.3%	3	10.7%	28	-22
Customer engineer	45	78.9%	12	21.1%	57	-33
Data scientist	9	81.8%	2	18.2%	11	-7
IT architect	27	96.4%	1	3.6%	28	-26
Game-related professionals	6	85.7%	1	14.3%	7	-5
Other system engineers	111	84.7%	20	15.3%	131	-91

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Web producer	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	3	-1
Web director/planner	6	50.0%	6	50.0%	12	0
Web marketing	6	66.7%	3	33.3%	9	-3
Web designer	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	49	3
Other internet-related professionals	41	57.7%	30	42.3%	71	-11
Control engineers	12	92.3%	1	7.7%	13	-11
CAD operators	22	42.3%	30	57.7%	52	8
Field engineers	13	100.0%	0	0.0%	13	-13
Process engineers	11	91.7%	1	8.3%	12	-10
Patented technology	6	85.7%	1	14.3%	7	-5
Industrial designers	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	4	0
Other than the above, engineers	96	91.4%	9	8.6%	105	-87
Pharmacists	69	34.7%	130	65.3%	199	61
Doctors, dentists, veterinarians	143	74.5%	49	25.5%	192	-94
Public health nurses, midwives	2	4.1%	47	95.9%	49	45
Nurses (including assistant nurses)	96	12.3%	687	87.7%	783	591
Radiological technologists, clinical laboratory technicians, dental hygienists/technicians, physical therapists, etc.	252	46.5%	290	53.5%	542	38
Nutritionists	7	5.6%	117	94.4%	124	110
Massage	45	77.6%	13	22.4%	58	-32
Other medical professionals (medical/environmental/food hygiene inspectors, psychological counselors, etc.)	60	38.0%	98	62.0%	158	38

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Welfare consultation guidance specialists	28	48.3%	30	51.7%	58	2
Childcare workers	27	5.9%	430	94.1%	457	403
Other social welfare professionals (care managers, probation officers, etc.)	113	46.1%	132	53.9%	245	19
Caregivers	244	41.6%	342	58.4%	586	98
Lawyers, patent attorneys, judicial scriveners, etc.	86	79.6%	22	20.4%	108	-64
Certified public accountants, tax accountants, etc.	70	72.9%	26	27.1%	96	-44
Management/accounting consultants, etc.	45	83.3%	9	16.7%	54	-36
Dealers, fund managers, actuaries	12	100.0 %	0	0.0%	12	-12
Financial planners	6	66.7%	3	33.3%	9	-3
Other finance-related professionals	25	69.4%	11	30.6%	36	-14
Literary artists, journalists, editors, proofreaders, etc.	58	54.7%	48	45.3%	106	-10
Illustrators	10	35.7%	18	64.3%	28	8
Character/ CG designer	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	4	-2
Graphic designer, editorial designer	34	54.0%	29	46.0%	63	-5
Fashion-related designer	6	42.9%	8	57.1%	14	2
Photographer, videographer	32	84.2%	6	15.8%	38	-26
Other artists	20	50.0%	20	50.0%	40	0

Occupations	Gender				Total	Female-Male
	Male	(%)	Female	(%)		
Fashion-related jobs (pattern makers, stylists, sewing staff, etc.)	6	19.4%	25	80.6%	31	19
Interior-related jobs	5	27.8%	13	72.2%	18	8
Copywriter	1	16.7%	5	83.3%	6	4
Producer, director	17	73.9%	6	26.1%	23	-11
Other advertising, publishing, and media professionals	38	52.8%	34	47.2%	72	-4
DTP operator	15	55.6%	12	44.4%	27	-3
Printing press operator	25	92.6%	2	7.4%	27	-23
Other printing-related professionals (plate making, printing technology)	19	79.2%	5	20.8%	24	-14
Teachers (elementary, middle, and high school)	381	61.1%	243	38.9%	624	-138
Teachers (university, junior college, and vocational school)	92	70.2%	39	29.8%	131	-53
Other teachers (driving instructors, Japanese language teachers, vocational training instructors, legal instructors, etc.)	75	41.9%	104	58.1%	179	29
Cram school instructors	179	51.9%	166	48.1%	345	-13
Instructors	72	40.9%	104	59.1%	176	32
Interpreters	13	38.2%	21	61.8%	34	8
Other professionals	234	50.0%	234	50.0%	468	0
Unclassifiable occupations	1672	51.5%	1573	48.5%	3245	-99
Total	2388	55.6%	1907	44.4%	4295	-481

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed five intriguing insights into the gender differences in happiness, life satisfaction, the nature of work, job satisfaction, and career choices.

1. Gender Differences in Happiness and Life Satisfaction

According to the results, males report higher levels of happiness compared to females, whereas females exhibit greater life satisfaction. This suggests that while males are more inclined to experience happiness, they are also more prone to dissatisfaction with their overall life circumstances. Conversely, although females report lower levels of happiness than males, they express greater satisfaction with their current situation. This disparity implies that the metrics and values that contribute to feelings of 'happiness' and 'satisfaction' may vary between genders. Males may pursue fleeting moments of happiness, while females may place greater emphasis on long-term stability and security within their current circumstances. Alternatively, it could also be interpreted that males feel happy but are not satisfied, and attempt to fulfil their desires, suggesting a tendency towards selfishness.

2. Gender Differences in the Nature of Work

In relation to the 'nature of work,' across various dimensions of job characteristics, females generally reported slightly higher averages compared to males. These results suggest that females may feel more engaged and autonomous in their work roles than males. On the other hand, with regard to the perception of being fairly evaluated, suggesting that females are more likely than males to feel that they are not being fairly assessed.

3. Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction

With respect to job satisfaction, males scored marginally higher on satisfaction with the job itself.

The higher satisfaction among males with work aspects (e.g., tasks and colleagues) could be linked to their traditionally dominant role in Japanese corporate culture.

In terms of future career prospects, females appeared more optimistic. This may suggest that females place less emphasis on future career development, rather than holding high expectations for it. The gender differences observed in occupational roles indicate that females tend not to hold key positions and are more likely to be engaged in roles such as reception or routine clerical work. Consequently, they may not be in environments that foster expectations for significant career advancement.

4. Attitude towards Work

In terms of enthusiasm and engagement in work, males demonstrate slightly higher levels of enthusiasm, while there is almost no difference between males and females in the degree of work engagement. This suggests that both groups approach their work with a similar attitude. Additionally, females are more likely than males to feel the pressure of managing multiple tasks simultaneously, while males tend to continue their jobs despite experiencing some level of dissatisfaction.

5. Gender Trends in Career Choices

Furthermore, gender trends in career choices reveal that males are more likely to choose rewarding technical professions, such as being a doctor or Lawyer, while females tend to choose monotonous and less stimulating roles, such as nursing and clerical work.

If the work is perceived as rewarding, it can motivate individuals to continue even in challenging circumstances. Considering Fukai's (2022) mention that females are often burdened with household chores and childcare responsibilities, it can be inferred that females, more than males, tend to be overwhelmed by the demands of daily life, leading to a lack of motivation to persist in monotonous and unstimulating jobs.

These findings indicate diversity in job satisfaction and attitudes towards work between males and females, with significant gender differences in certain areas.

According to the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), Japan ranks 120th in the economic domain and 113th in the political domain, reflecting persistently low rankings. It is believed that the economic and political fields are closely intertwined. The gender gap in senior positions in Japan remains substantial, with a gender equality score of only 17.1%, and five out of six leadership roles occupied by males. As depicted in Figure 1 of this paper, the salary gap between genders also remains pronounced.

The underlying cause appears to be the tendency for females to be assigned or hired for monotonous and less rewarding jobs, which are also low-paid. Furthermore, household responsibilities often lead to females being overwhelmed, which in turn may contribute to their resignation from work. Being consumed by the daily grind makes it difficult for females to develop the motivation to engage in politics. Consequently, Japan's gender gap remains structurally difficult to close. Given that there is no significant difference in work enthusiasm between genders, structural changes could be anticipated if females were to assume more rewarding roles and occupations.

Conclusion

Our analysis indicates that female is often relegated to monotonous, repetitive roles such as housekeepers or secretaries, which may diminish their sense of purpose and engagement in work. This, coupled with a greater burden of domestic responsibilities, contributes to their lower levels of happiness. The data also suggest that Japanese female may be experiencing a form of resignation, where their everyday responsibilities and limited career progression leave them less motivated to engage in broader societal activities, including politics.

This lack of motivation is critical, as it may partly explain Japan's low female political participation. Even though female reported slightly higher optimism regarding their career prospects, the overall contentment with the status quo, despite dissatisfaction with certain aspects of work, might reflect a broader societal trend where female accept the limitations of their roles without aspiring for systemic change. Consequently, this passive acceptance could contribute to lower levels of political engagement and a reluctance to advocate for greater gender parity in leadership and policymaking roles.

In summary, Japanese female, despite performing various tasks and contributing meaningfully within their professional and personal spheres, appear to lack the broader ambition or drive for political participation, likely influenced by the repetitive nature of their work, household obligations, and a sense of satisfaction with maintaining the current state of affairs. As a result, their overall well-being and political representation remain subdued. The findings raise important questions about the structural reforms needed to not only improve economic and political participation but also to inspire female to engage more actively in societal change.

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