【Research Note】

The resilience of the *Sengyo Shufu*: Is the emergence of alternative forms of womanhood, such as that of the *Career Woman*, threatening the hegemonic form of femininity within Japan?

Rasandeep Kaur Phull

Abstract

The post war period in Japan saw the gradual emergence of a new middle-class, where husbands were expected to follow the *Salaryman* ideal, and women were expected to become full-time housewives. It was during this particular period when the *Sengyo Shufu* came to wider prominence and became the hegemonic form of femininity in Japan. However, the implementation of the 'Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1985', coupled together with the burst of the economic bubble in the early 1990's, paved the way for the emergence of the *Career Woman* - a lifestyle which is steadily becoming an attractive alternative for many young Japanese women (Nikkei, 2018). It has been the aim of this particular study to determine whether or not the *Career Woman* has ultimately replaced the traditional *Sengyo Shufu* as the hegemonic form of femininity within Japan. The findings from this study suggest that, although many women are opting to work longer and start a family later on in their lives, the *Sengyo Shufu* lifestyle has not been replaced by that of the *Career Woman*. Instead, the government's ineffective utilisation of gender equality legislations, and a lack of acceptance from male superiors in the workplace, have pushed many young Japanese women away from full-time office-based employment. Furthermore, the persistent societal view in regards to the importance of marriage and motherhood, coupled together with the idea of 'doing as my mother did', has strengthened the position of the *Sengyo Shufu*, to the point where most of the participants of this study still consider it to be the ultimate goal.

Keywords: *Sengyo Shufu*, *Career Woman*, hegemonic femininity.

1. Introduction

The term 'hegemonic femininity' was first introduced by Pyke and Johnson (2003) at the turn of the century. Both authors state that there is no single form of femininity present in any given time or place. Instead, they argue that there are multiple forms of femininity which differ depending on various social factors. Some of these factors include; "race, class, sexuality, and age" (Pyke and Johnson, 2003, p.35). In addition to this, the dominant form of femininity in a particular location is often referred to as "hegemonic", and any alternative forms of femininity are usually referred to as "subordinate" (Smitsmans, 2014, p.5).

Studying about the various theories and issues that relate to hegemonic femininity is academically relevant. This is because, it only through exploring these various factors that we are able to understand the social model that all women within a particular nation have to position themselves in line with, by either embracing, or openly rejecting the ideal form of womanhood. According to Foo (2010, p.3), the pressure for women to conform to the "ideal

images of womanhood" is quite high. She then goes further to state that, women who ignore or fail to conform to these standards are "vulnerable of becoming an outcast from normality, desirability and femininity" (Foo, 2010, p.3). In addition to this, changes in hegemonic femininity can have policy-implications. For example, the government may have to improve child care policies, or they may have to create more favourable conditions for female workers.

In regards to the context of Japan, post WW2, the *Sengyo Shufu* (professional housewife) role came to wider prominence in the country. So much so in fact that it was eventually established as the hegemonic form of femininity within the country, opposite to the male *Salaryman* ideal (Vogel, 2012). However, the implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1985, along with the burst of the economic bubble in the early 1990's, paved the way for the emergence of the *Career Woman* - an alternative form and lifestyle of femininity which has steadily been gaining momentum over the last few decades (Nikkei, 2018).

It has been the aim of this particular study to determine whether or not the *Career Woman* has ultimately replaced the traditional *Sengyo Shufu* as the hegemonic form of femininity within Japan. In order to answer this particular research question, there are several sub-questions that need to be addressed. These sub-questions are as follows:

1. What do the words *Sengyo Shufu* and *Career Woman* mean to the participants in the research?
2. Do either of these lifestyles appeal to the participants in the research?
3. What future did the participants in the research aspire for before starting work, and has this now changed?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Position of Women in Pre-war Japan

According to Hsia and Scanzoni (1996), the women of Japan have often been portrayed as being passive, submissive and subordinate in comparison to their male counterparts. Nevertheless, there were certain historical periods in which Japanese women enjoyed various pockets of freedom. Several historical records have even suggested that there have been a handful of female empresses who have previously ruled the country (Tsurumi, 1981 and Kim, 2019).Following on from this, during the Heian period literature texts written by female authors, such as Murasaki Shikibu who wrote the *Tale of Genji*, and Sei Shonagon who authored *The Pillow Book*, were widely acknowledged and celebrated (Koyama, 1961). Gastineau (2015) goes further to state that some of the most prolific female figures in Japanese history were active during the Heian period.

However, after the introduction and gradual acceptance of Buddhist teachings and Confucianism from China via the Korean Peninsula, saw the social position of Japanese women deteriorate quite drastically (Karaoğlu, 2018). These thoughts and ideals that had been imported from the western part of the Orient strongly supported the segregation of the

two genders. It provided moral and spiritual backing for males - who were considered to be both physically and mentally superior - whilst on the other hand it generally viewed females in a less positive light (Germer et al., 2014). As a result, by the early eighteenth century women's roles became largely limited to the domestic sphere (Immamura, 1996). This change in the view of women greatly increased the gap between the two genders, and also had a significant impact on Japan's customs, manners and laws. An example of a law that showcased the differences in societal attitudes towards males and females within the borders of Japan, concerned the demise of one's spousal partner. In the case of spousal death, by law women were obligated to dress in traditional mourning garments for at least thirteen months. In addition to this, they were also required to abstain from all activities that were considered to be impure, such as gambling or any sexual activities, for a minimum of fifty days. In contrast to this, following the passing of their wife, it was sufficient enough for a husband to wear mourning garments for a minimum of three months. Also, a husband was only required to abstain from all impure activities for only twenty days (Clement, 1903).

The influence of Confucianism rapidly expanded throughout society as Japan entered the Edo period (1603 AD - 1867 AD) - also referred to as the Tokugawa period (Tsurumi, 2000). It was during this particular era where the Tokugawa regime saw the establishment of the hierarchical class system. Four classes were recognised in this feudal regime; the warrior class (*Samurai*) - that made up the top strata of society, followed by the artisans, farmers and merchants - all of whom occupied lower positions (Narayan, 2016). Broadbridge (1974) goes further to suggest that mobility between the four classes was generally frowned upon and largely discouraged. In regards to the position of women during the Edo period, their roles were usually limited to the four walls of the household. In fact, they were mostly ignored to the point where they were not even recognised in this Tokugawa feudal order (Germer et al., 2014). Commoners were also expected to mirror their daily lives to that of the warrior class. This was especially true in regards to the behaviours of both men and women in a societal setting, and a husband and wife in a domestic setting (Hsia and Scanzoni, 1996). Furthermore, women were forbidden to participate in the creation of feminine discourse during this period, yet were still expected to conform to the prescribed rules that had been thrust upon them (Griswold, 1995). However despite this fact, it is important to remember that the degree to which each person adopted these so-called warrior class ideals, tended to differ depending on one's social class. Generally, members of the upper tiers of society had an affinity for embracing gender distinctions more thoroughly and willingly. In contrast to this, members of the lower ranks of society were less inclined than their hierarchal superiors to do this (Germer et al., 2014). This view is backed up by Koyama (1961, p.10), who then goes further to state that "persons of the lower classes or those living in the remote countryside, observed the norm of distinction between male and female with less strictness".

The collapse of the Tokugawa Shogunate paved the way for the Meiji Restoration (1868 AD - 1889 AD). This new era was commonly viewed as a liberation of the Japanese people from the constraints of feudalism. In a more broader context however, the Meiji Restoration came to be identified as an era of major political, social and economic change - the combination of which led to a more modern and Westernised Japan (Horie, 1952 and Sakata and Hall, 1956).

In addition to this, this particular time period witnessed the unprecedented economic growth of the country - where the economy actually reached heights that had previously been unheard of in Asia (Narayan, 2016). However, although the country went through several major changes and significant growth, Tsurumi (2000) argues that in regards to the role of women, there was no substantial changes in behaviours or attitudes. Furthermore, during the Meiji era, nation-wide compulsory education for all children regardless of gender was introduced. Despite this fact, it has been suggested that the education that was given to male children was far superior to the education that was given to female children (Hsia and Scanzoni, 1996 and Tsurumi, 2000). Following on from this, at the turn of the twentieth century Japan held a general election that was based on the notion of 'universal suffrage'. Yet in reality, this 'universal suffrage' excluded women and was reserved exclusively for men (Nolte, 1986). An active feminist movement rose within the borders of the country as a direct result of this exclusion. However, this movement ended quite abruptly after a few years as WWII broke out, and Japan was organising itself to become a war like state (Koyama, 1961 and Germer et al., 2014).

2.2 The Establishment of the *Sengyo Shufu* as the Hegemonic Form of Femininity

The immediate post-war period saw the gradual emergence and growth of a "new middle class" (Vogel, 2012, p.687). During this period, husbands were expected to follow the *Salaryman* ideal. This particular ideal stipulated that men should acquire life-time employment at a large corporation, and that they should be rewarded for their work and loyalty with promotions and income based on their level of seniority (Jolivet, 2004 and Dasgupta, 2012). It was also during this particular period where the Japanese government heavily promoted the role of the *Sengyo Shufu* (professional housewife) as the hegemonic form of femininity within the country. It was here where women were expected to get married, have children and become full-time *Sengyo Shufu*. This specific form of femininity that had been socially designated for women was usually incorporated into the traditional household system (also referred to as the '*ie* system'). Within this particular system, multiple generations and the extended family all lived together. In addition to this, various labour related tasks were strictly divided between the sexes, and these *Sengyo Shufu* were largely responsible for the care of the family and of the daily running of the household (Vogel, 2012 and Germer et al., 2014). However, having said this, according to Sakata (2013) as career opportunities for women broaden and with less emphasise on these gendered roles especially from the younger members of Japanese society, this traditional image of the household system has largely faded from view and is not as popular as it once used to be.

According to Fujita (1989), despite being dignified with the term 'professional' in their title, the *Sengyo Shufu* were in fact simply subservient to their husbands and mothers-in-laws. This is backed up by Ueno (1987, p.80), who goes further to state that this use of the term 'professional housewife' is "semantically redundant", because there is nothing professional about a housewife and her duties. It could be suggested that these post-war ideals and values in regards to the division of labour that were present in Japan, were visibly gendered. They were initially created on the assumption that men would be in charge of productive roles, and women would be responsible for more reproductive roles (Macnaughtan, 2015). Additionally,

this method which was used to divide labour was in a sense created to obtain commitment and loyalty from a strong and powerful male dominated workforce which had stable employment, whilst simultaneously making use of women in more domestic-related and support roles (Shizuko, in Germer et al., 2014 and Nishimura, 2016).

In regards to the establishment of the *Sengyo Shufu* as the hegemonic form of femininity within Japan, several post-war scholars have tended to analyse the position of women through the use of 'Social Role Theory' - hereon referred to as SRT (Hesselbart, 1981; Nicholson, 1994 and Mitchell, 2004). Originally created by Eagly and Wood (2012), SRT is grounded in the supposition that all human beings are socially identified as either male or female, and thus "occupy different ascribed roles within social structures and tend to be judged against divergent expectations for how they ought to behave" (Shimanoff, 2009, no page). Eagly and Wood's (2012) theoretical framework upholds the view that, gender similarities and differences between men and women within a specific nation state, are based upon both societal stereotypes and biological differences. Therefore, because women are generally portrayed as being sensitive, co-operative, and more weaker physically compared to the opposite sex, they are considered to be better suited for more expressive and emotional roles that tend to emphasise nurturing, such as in nursing or child care. On the other hand, men tend to be viewed as more aggressive, stoic and dominant, and are therefore assigned more instrumental roles that emphasise leadership, such as in business or politics (Eagly and Wood, 2012). Nemoto (2012) goes further to suggest that post WWII, the social roles within Japan have been divided in such a way that within a family context, it is likely that men will continue their position as main breadwinner, while women will retain the role of primary caretaker and homemaker.

Currently, around 28.4% of full-time working Japanese women leave their jobs after childbirth, in order to become full-time *Sengyo Shufu* (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2017). Although this figure has decreased from previous years, it is still high compared to other industrial countries. For example, in the U.K. around 17% of women leave employment after childbirth, and in Sweden this figure stands at approximately 11% (Smith, 2019, and OECD.org, 2020). In addition to this, in her study regarding full-time Japanese housewives, Zhou (2019) has identified eleven main reasons as to why previously employed Japanese women decide to become *Sengyo Shufu* after giving birth (refer to ***Figure 1***). In her findings, Zhou (2019) concludes that motherhood plays an important part in the lives of many Japanese women, to the point where they would much rather concentrate all of their efforts on childrearing, as opposed career progression.

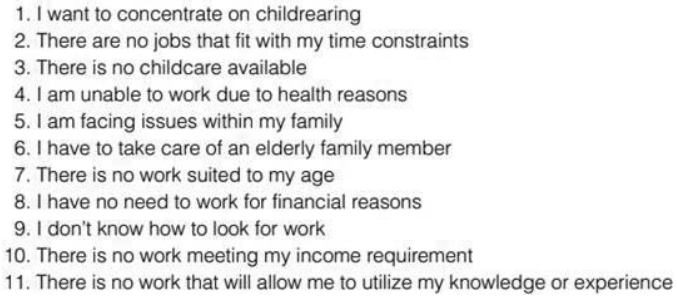

Figure 1 - Japanese Women's' Main Reasons For Becoming Sengyo Shufu (Source: Zhou, 2019, p.7)

To this day SRT plays a decisive role within the borders of Japan, to the point where it can actually have an effect on the day to day lives of the individuals within the country. In regards to females, the notions of marriage and motherhood are still considered to be a fundamental part of a Japanese woman's identity, and certain government officials still remain adamant on the preservation of the *ryousai-kenbo* ideal (Condon, 1985; Mitchell, 2004 and Nemoto, 2012). According to Shizuko (in Germer et al., 2014, p.86), the "*ryousai-kenbo*" or "good wife, wise mother" ideal of Japanese women's education, first appeared within the country in the late nineteenth century. This particular concept was considered to justify and validate the way in which labour tasks and employment were divided based on gender, so that "men work while women do housework and raise children" (Sakamoto, 2014, p.159).

Several Japanese scholars have used the *ryousai-kenbo* conceptual framework to both analyse the historical progression of females within the country, and to understand the day-to-day experiences and behaviours of Japanese women in a more local context (Uno, 1993; Iwao, 1993 and Immamura, 1996). Within her work, Iwao (1993) indicates that the *ryousai-kenbo* ideal was used as a moral tool by the Japanese government, in order to establish the *Sengyou Shufu* as the hegemonic form of femininity within the country. However having said this, this particular concept was not unique only to Japan as it actually existed in several other western countries as well (Nishimura, 2016). Despite this fact, Izuhara (2000) has suggested that the persistence of the *ryousai-kenbo* ideal from the post-war period to the present day in Japan, has been largely responsible for the resilience of the *Sengyo Shufu* as the hegemonic form of femininity within the country. Furthermore, Sakamoto (2014) states that the *ryousai-kenbo* ideal has become too heavily ingrained within Japanese society, to the point that regardless of their prior aspirations, after marriage and childbirth, the main priority for a Japanese woman will always be her family. This is backed up by Oi (2015, no page), who states that even though the number of Japanese women in full-time employment has been increasing in the last few decades, Japan still remains "a nation of housewives". It could therefore be suggested that the *Sengyo Shufu* form of hegemonic femininity, is unlikely to be replaced by any alternative forms of womanhood in the foreseeable future.

2.3 The Emergence of the *Career Woman*

During the 1980's, the Japanese employment system and business model became a popular area of research for many international scholars (Kambayashi and Kato, 2009). In addition to this, it was also during this particular period when the *Career Woman* way of life first started making a more public appearance, and was socially acknowledged as an alternative lifestyle to that of the traditional *Sengyo Shufu* (Roberts, 2016). Aronsson (2020, p.574) defines a *Career Woman* as a female who has rejected the traditional family oriented lifestyle, and has instead invested all of her time and effort into "crafting a socially accepted professional" identity in the workplace. Following on from this, in 1985 the Japanese government implemented the Equal Employment Opportunity Law - hereon referred to as EEOL. This particular law encouraged, but did not compel, employers to treat both male and female workers as equals. It also prohibited any discriminatory behaviours or treatments towards women in the workplace, it attempted (very weakly) to improve the working conditions of female employees, and to a certain extent, it also indirectly encouraged more female students to undertake university level education (Uno, 1993; Imamura, 1996, and Assmann, 2014).

There has been much widespread agreement amongst scholars that the implementation of the EEOL in Japan was largely for show, and it was passed in the country mostly in response to international pressure, rather than due to a shift in Japanese values (Izuhara, 2000 and Gelb, 2002). However having said this, different scholars have different views as to the impact of the EEOL on the role of women in Japan. On the one hand, Molony (1995, p.270) argues that the implementation of the EEOL has enabled professional working women, such as the *Career Woman*, to become a "symbol of contemporary Japanese womanhood". This is backed up by Gelb (2002), who states that an increasing number of young Japanese women are now opting to pursue four year university degree courses, in order to increase their chances of becoming full-time *Career Women* in the future. However on the other hand, Tipton (2004) argues that although the EEOL has provided a number of women with equal opportunities to men in the employment environment, the majority of female workers in Japan have largely been ignored. This view is mirrored by Brasor (2017), who goes further to state that while the number of women undertaking four year university degree courses has been increasing, the number of female students who actually go on to pursue ground-breaking careers in say business or science, is fairly low.

Following on from this, prior to the turn of the century, advertisements depicting a new, fresh, modern type of female started to appear. An example of this can be seen below in ***Figure 2***. In contrast to the more dominant form of femininity, which promoted motherhood and held filial piety in high regards, this particular advertisement suggests that full-time female employees, such as the *Career Woman*, were instead rapidly increasing in popularity. Molony (1995) goes further to suggest that this particular image of the woman in the advertisement, is openly rejecting the set biological stereotypes that have often been associated with SRT, through its depiction of the "*Oyaji Girl*". An *Oyaji Girl* can be described as a woman who is 'one of the boys'. She tends to live a similar life to that of an everyday *Salaryman*, and she also takes up "middle-aged male pastimes such as playing golf and going to panchinko parlors and race tracks" (Miller, 2004, p.227). It has been suggested

that the creators of this particular image appear to accept and approve of the entry of young women into professional roles of employment (Javaid, 2016).

However, having said this, this image also suggests that in order for a professional working woman to be accepted in her male dominated workplace, she must essentially "become manlike in the process" (Molony, 1995, p.270). Such behaviours were also recorded in Burgess et al.'s (2005) study of women workers in Australian industrial manufacturing companies. Burgess et al. found that female employee's tended to act more like the opposite gender in order to gain a sense of comradeship with male colleagues. This particular method of 'becoming a man' can clearly be seen in ***Figure 2***. For example, the *Oyaji Girl* in the image is posing using quite a manly stance. Her hair is also wild and unkempt, which is in contrast to the straight and smooth hair that is often considered as being feminine in Japan. She is also drinking from a bottle of what appears to be some sort of alcoholic drink, which suggests that she usually partakes in after work drinking parties - an event that is usually undertaken by *Salarymen*. Furthermore, her white shirt and briefcase are also reminiscent of the typical *Salaryman* attire (Molony, 1995).

Figure 2 - The "Oyaji Girl" - The characters in the bubble at the top of the page translate to "Oyaji Girl", while the characters in the box above the caricature's head translate to "Increasingly Rapid" (Molony, 1995. p.269)

2.4 Women in the Workplace

Career Women usually work in male-dominated environments (Aronsson, 2020). A study conducted by Lebra (1981, p.303) in regards to the career opportunities of women in male-dominated workplaces found that, women in these situations are forced to comply and adhere to "Japanese cultural values and norms which are clearly biased for 'career men'". Although this study was conducted almost forty years ago, Roberts (2016) states that it is still relevant in the present context. This is because stereotypical and biased gender views and opinions that are usually related to SRT still exist within the country. In January 2014, in order to combat this particular mindset, the Japanese government under the then leadership of Abe

Shinzo, attempted to promote more parity between men and women through the use of various 'Womenomics' policies (Assmann, 2014).

Modelled after his well-known 'Abenomics' framework, the term 'Womenomics' referred to Abe's rather ambitious plan to boost the number of female employees, in both Japan's labour force and within its government (Hasunuma, 2015). The then Prime Minister urged companies to increase the number of women workers in senior positions to 30% by the year 2020, and also insisted that firms appoint at least one female member to their board of directors (Osawa and Kingston, 2015). Currently, nearly 71% of the entire female population of Japan are in some form of employment (refer to ***Figure 3***). This has risen sharply in the last three decades, to the point where Japan's female labour participation rates have surpassed both the US and the Euro zone (Okuda, 2019, and Goldman Sachs, 2019). However, 56% of these women are in some form of temporary or part-time employment (refer to ***Figure 4***), and only around 15% represent the number of women in senior and leadership positions (Catalyst, 2019; Statistics Bureau, 2019; Goldman Sachs, 2019, and World Economic Forum, 2020). These figures are even more dismal when referring to the number of women in the Japanese Diet. Currently, women make up 10.2% of the lower house and 20.7% of the upper house (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2019, and World Economic Forum, 2020). It could therefore be argued that despite rallying his support for female empowerment both domestically and internationally, Abe's 'Womenomics' did not live up to all of its promises and hype (Kingston, 2013, and Okuda, 2019).

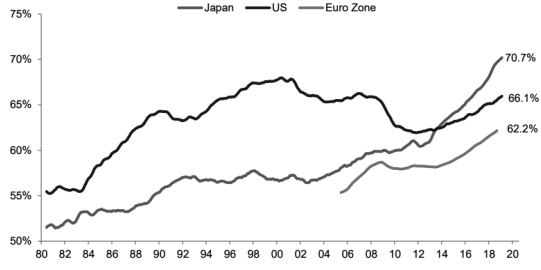

Figure 3 - Female Labour Participation Rate in Japan, the US and the Euro Zone (Goldman Sachs, 2019, p.8)

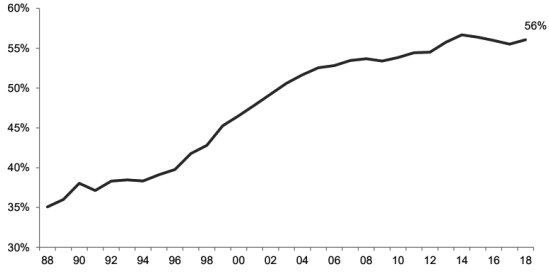

Figure 4 - The Number of Japanese Women in Part-time Employment (Goldman Sachs, 2019, p.9)

Following on from this, Macnaughtan (2015, p.3) states that "over the course of their working life cycle Japanese men and women work in significantly different patterns". Within Japan, male employment tends to take the shape of an inverted 'U' pattern (refer to **Figure 7**), whereas female employment tends to follow the 'M' curve pattern (refer to ***Figure 8***). In regards to the inverted 'U' pattern, male labour participation rates within Japan are quite high, as 95% of men between the ages of 25-60 are in some form of employment. Additionally, the 'M' curve suggests that the number of women in the Japanese workforce has gradually been increasing - especially for women between the ages of 25-29, and after the age of 35 (Shambaugh et al., 2017, and JIPLT, 2017). In a study conducted on behalf of the OECD, Jones and Seitani (2019) suggest that in regards to female labour participation rates, the 'M' in the curve is steadily flattening out. This is backed up by Macnaughtan (2015), who states that this 'flattening out' of the curve is mainly due to the fact that a growing number of Japanese women are either choosing not to marry and have children at all, or they are simply putting off marriage and childbirth until later on in their lives. While authors such as Kawata and Naganuma (2010) and Yazaki and Gatayama (2017) claim that these results go forth to emphasise that the demand for female labour is on the rise, Clark et al. (2010) and Nishimura (2016) disagree. Instead, they argue that these results highlight the underlying gender and societal related issues that exist within the borders of the country. These issues include a lack of availability for maternity leave, the high maintenance costs associated with child care, and a general lack of acceptance and understanding from male colleagues and superiors in the workplace (Clark et al., 2010, and Nishimura, 2016).

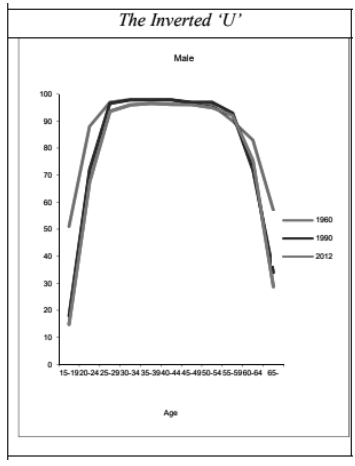

Figure 7 - The Inverted 'U' Pattern of Male Employment Within Japan (Macnaughtan, 2015, p.4)

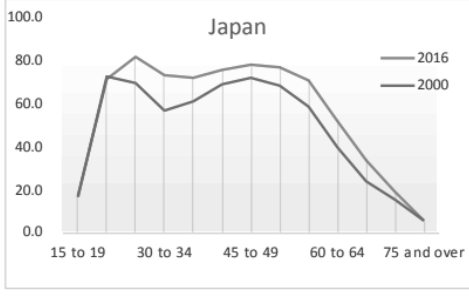

Figure 8 - The 'M' Curve Pattern of Female Employment Within Japan (Sakuma, 2018, p.6)

3. Methodology

3.1 Constructivist Grounded Theory

'Constructivist Grounded Theory' (hereon referred to as CGT), has been employed as the overarching methodology for this particular study. According to Charmaz (2006, p.130), CGT "places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants". Following on from this, CGT

rejects notions of objectivity, and instead assumes that people create and maintain individual realities in a given time and place, which may not necessarily fit into any single external reality (Kuper et al., 2008). Given that this particular study aims to identify whether or not there have been any changes to the hegemonic form of femininity within Japan, and also hopes to understand the experiences and opinions of working women within the country, it is understandable that each participant will have an individual reality that may not necessarily fit into any single external reality. Therefore, CGT has been deemed as the most appropriate approach for this study.

3.2 Sampling and Recruitment

Initially, 10 participants were approached to take part in this study. Each of the participants were primarily selected based on their gender, age, occupation and the fact that they were in full-time employment. Participants were also secondarily selected based on their marital status and whether or not they had any offspring. These selections were used in order to obtain a large range of opinions and experiences. Of these 10 participants, 7 agreed to partake in the study, with the other 3 having to withdraw due to other commitments. Despite these obstacles, the final data sample that was collected in regards to the hegemonic form of femininity within Japan, provided a large variety of rich data.

*[A summary table of the final interviewee sample has been included in **Appendix 1**]*

3.3 Data Collection

Initially I aimed to collect the data through face-to-face online interviews via Skype. However, the individual schedules of each participant and the short time frame in which I had to conduct the interviews, made it difficult to set out an appropriate date and time that was suitable for both myself and each participant. Therefore, it was decided that the data would ultimately be collected through semi-structured interviews that were to be conducted via email. I decided to conduct the email interviews in Japanese as 1) my Japanese reading and writing skills are much more advanced than my conversational abilities, and 2) I wanted the participants to have a more relaxed atmosphere where they could express themselves naturally.

*[The interview questions for this study can be found in **Appendix 2**]*

4. Findings

4.1 Meaning of the Words *Sengyo Shufu* and *Career Woman*

Sengyo Shufu

During the interviews, I asked each of the participants whether or not they were familiar with the term *Sengyo Shufu*, and what it meant to them. Yu for example said the following about what the *Sengyo Shufu* meant to her:

"She is graceful, caring and strong...strong as in not physically strong but mentally...and emotionally too. She lives in an urban area with her husband and two children. She spends most of her day doing

household chores, looking after her children, and waiting for her husband to return home from work. She also spends her free time mingling with other housewives who live in the same neighbourhood, gossiping about their spouses and in-laws."

It is interesting that Yu mentions 'strength' as a character trait, as it is somewhat at odds with the sensitive and docile image that is often associated with the *Sengyo Shufu* (Vogel, 2012). It is also quite intriguing that she does not mention the extended family at all and instead refers to the *Sengyo Shufu* as living in a nuclear family, thereby disregarding the traditional *ie*-system.

Yu was not the only one to mention this 'strength'. Kanako also mentioned it along with 'independence':

"The *Sengyo Shufu* is a housewife. She is a loving yet strong-willed woman who is in control of her household. She makes all of the decisions and no-one can question her...not even her husband. She maintains a level of independence by completing various tasks and errands by herself, and everyone in the family relies on her."

While the traditional male breadwinner supports his family financially, in this case we could perhaps view the *Sengyo Shufu* as an important member of the household who supports her family mostly in spirit, and by simply being there. This particular view was also mirrored by Ayumi, who mentioned that her mother (who is a full-time housewife), can usually be found pottering around the house, and simply having her there provides a sense of stability and emotional relief for her and her sister. Following on from this, many of the participants expressed a strong dislike for the term *Sengyo Shufu*. They thought that it was an outdated word and generally preferred the term *Shufu* instead.

Career Woman

Based on the interviews, when I asked each of the participants for their definitions of a *Career Woman*, a clear pattern became visible in the answers that I received, to the point that they became almost predictable. When I asked Haruna what the term *Career Woman* meant to her, she provided me with an answer that was similar to that of almost all of the other participants:

"It is a woman who prioritises her job over starting a family. Some of my upperclassmen from University have chosen this pathway."

This idea of 'prioritising one's career over starting a family' is extremely important, and remained a consistent factor in all of the interviews. Another interesting point that I noticed, is that the majority of the participants never once mentioned themselves as being a *Career Woman*, and would instead use the words 'she' or 'they' when referring to them. The only exception to this point was Kotori, who openly referred to herself as a *Career Woman*:

"We are not particularly interested in finding boyfriends, getting married or having children. We spend our youth studying so that we can get into a good University, put all our efforts into securing a well paid job at big company...and then aim for job promotions. This process requires time and consistency. In my

opinion, leaving this process after all of this hard work in order to get married and have children seems rather...what's the word...*mudana* (wasteful, pointless)."

In her answer Kotori seems to be describing character traits that are often associated with the traditional *Salaryman*. When I questioned her in regards to this matter she replied:

"There seems to be this idea that all women in Japan should aim at starting a family, and that only men should go out and work. I don't think it makes sense. People should be able to live as they like, regardless of their gender."

Kotori's answer clearly indicates that she is annoyed with the stereotypical aspects of SRT that linger within Japanese society. However, she also later mentioned that she "wouldn't mind getting married" to a "likeminded person", as it would provide her with a sense of "companionship" later on in life.

4.2 The Ideal Lifestyle

Marriage and Motherhood

Nearly all of the participants who were single (excluding Kotori), expressed a desire to get married and have either one or two children in the future. Additionally, there was a general consensus amongst the participants that around the age of thirty was the "best time for a woman to birth healthy and smart children" (as stated by Haruna).

From the answers that I had received, it was interesting to observe that all of the participants saw the nuclear family as the ideal family structure. When I asked Reika about her future family related plans she responded:

"I do want to get married in the next five years, preferably with someone from Japan. I would like to have two children. A boy and a girl would be nice. I grew up with four people in my family; my father, mother, younger brother and myself. I think that four was a good number."

Much like Reika, many of the other participants gave a similar response. It seems that nearly all of them want to have a similar family environment that they themselves grew up in. When asked the same question, Kanako replied:

"Yes, I would like to get married and have two children. My mother also had two children. When I was younger I wanted to get married at the age of twenty four. But I now think that around the age of thirty would be better, as I would be better off financially, and more mature mentally to be both a wife and a mother...One of my friends from high school got married early and had a child when she was twenty five. It seemed really difficult for her and her husband. They had no-one to ask for advice, as none of the people around them were in a similar situation."

From her answer, it seems that Kanako (as well as many of the other participants) has given some serious consideration to her future. This process may have perhaps been spurred on by the reality of witnessing the struggles of her friend.

Female Employment

As stated in the literature review chapter of this study, female employment in Japan tends to follow the 'M' curve pattern (refer to ***Figure 8***), where women usually leave their job during the peak child-rearing years (Macnaughtan, 2015). One participant who did not follow this typical employment pattern was Minami, who is an elementary school teacher. When I asked her why she chose this particular career pathway she replied:

"I am the oldest grandchild and was always surrounded by my younger cousins who lived in the same neighbourhood. I think that this started my love for children. There was even an elementary school near the house where I grew up...I always thought that the teachers there were really *kakkoi* (cool). After seeing them every day, I decided to become an elementary school teacher."

Unlike any of the other participants, Minami is married and has a child. I asked her whether or not she had faced any difficulties when returning back to work after the birth of her offspring, she replied:

"I didn't face any major difficulties per se. My boss is also a woman, so I think that she understood my situation and was very kind to me...my colleagues too. I was on maternity leave for around four months before returning back to work. I have some friends who used to be *OL's* (Office Ladies). They were all forced by their male bosses to quit their jobs after becoming pregnant. It's quite sad."

Minami's reply suggests that having superiors in the workplace who are female, may perhaps lead to better and more prosperous employment conditions for women in the workplace. Furthermore, many of the respondents felt that their male superiors acted as a barrier, and that they hindered the acceptance and progression of their female employees. Ayumi for example said:

"When I was a high school student, the *Career Woman* lifestyle appealed to me. I thought that this is what I want to become. But ever since I joined my company I started to receive a lot of pressure from my (male) department manager...I also find it difficult to interact with my male colleagues. I now think that perhaps it is best if I get married and become a housewife."

When I asked Yu about her experiences at work, she answered:

"My boss is a man in his fifties, and is very set in his old-fashioned ways. He believes that all women should focus on being wives and mothers. In my whole department, including myself there are two other women. Last year at the end of year company party my boss called us '*Christmas Cakes*' (an unmarried woman who is over the age of twenty five, and is therefore considered past her prime) in front of all of our male colleagues. We felt so embarrassed...but we cheered ourselves up by going to *karaoke* afterwards."

Despite her treatment in the workplace, Yu has stated that creating a sort of comradeship with the two other female employees in her department, has made her time at work bearable. She said that they all often go out to eat dinner after work, and two months ago they even went to a tap dancing class together. However, Yu also later stated that ten years into the future, she cannot see herself doing this same job.

4.3 Past, Present and Future

Aspirations and Challenges

I asked each participant what future they aspired for before starting work, and whether or not this had now changed. Although each of the answers were different in terms of where each participant would like to end up in the future, I noticed a common factor in all of the answers that I received. Regardless of their future job or lifestyle, all of the participants aimed for a future in which they had 'financial stability'. For example according to Haruna:

"When I was younger I would often watch American sitcoms. All of the families in those sitcoms were large...I thought that I too wanted this for myself. But as I grew older I realised that this is not realistic...it is very expensive to have children in Japan. My boyfriend agrees too. We both recently decided to do a lot of overtime work in the next few years in order to save up a decent amount of money. We will then get married and have one child...After we have a child I don't plan on working full-time, so the money we save now will help us out then".

When I questioned Haruna further on this particular matter, she stated that although she did not plan to work full-time, she still wanted to take up a part-time job at either a local cafe or supermarket after her child entered kindergarten. Haruna believed that in the long run it would be quite challenging to live off only one salary. Therefore she hoped that by obtaining a part-time job she would be able to maintain a sense of financial stability.

Additionally, with the exception of both Kotori and Minami, all of the other participants also expressed an interest in working part-time in the future as opposed to full-time. Another example of this can be seen in Kanako's response:

"As a mother, my main aim should be to look after my child...If I were to work full-time after having a child, I would feel like I was neglecting them in some way. I think that after my child turns three years of age, it should be alright for me to get a part-time job in the local neighbourhood to pass the time...that is what my mother did".

Similar to what was previously discussed (in the Marriage and Motherhood subsection), it seems that many of the participants are aiming for a future that is similar to that of their mothers. Reika's answer also portrayed this. She told me that her mother worked part-time in a local clothing shop whilst raising her and her brother. She noticed that many women who worked in the local stores in her neighbourhood were all also mothers. Witnessing the happiness her mother received from working part-time and from making many *mamatomo* (mothers who are friends), has inspired Reika to follow in her mother's footsteps.

5. Conclusion

The objectives of this particular study were to explore whether or not alternative forms of womanhood, such as that of the *Career Woman*, would ultimately replace the *Sengyo Shufu* form of hegemonic femininity within Japan.

In regards to the initial research objective for this particular study, I asked each of the participants for their individual definitions for the words *Sengyo Shufu* and *Career Woman*. Whilst certain parts of the answers that I had received were fairly standard, other parts proved to be quite surprising. Firstly, when combining the accounts of each of the participants, the *Sengyo Shufu* can be defined in the following way; a woman who is married with two children, who lives in an urban condominium and adheres to the nuclear family lifestyle, who spends most of her day at home doing housework, who can independently complete tasks and errands on her own, and who is very involved in the upbringing of her children. Additionally, although the term itself was considered to be out-dated, it was generally described in a positive light, and nearly all of the participants saw this particular pathway as a respectable way of living. Moreover, the traditional '*ie*-system' remained non-existent in all of the answers that I had received, which suggests that it is no longer a preferred living arrangement.

Next, in terms of the *Career Woman*, whilst this particular word was not viewed in a negative way, I found it quite interesting that the participants, with the exception of Kotori, generally avoided referring to themselves using this specific term. Based on each of the answers that I had received, we arrive at the following definition of a *Career Woman*; an unmarried and child-less woman, who has a full-time office job at a company, who has completed four years of University education, who lives in an apartment, who commutes daily to the city centre, who goes out drinking with her colleagues after work, and whose fulfilment in life comes from career progression. This definition could further highlight the numerous similarities between the *Career Woman* and the *Salaryman* (Malony, 1995).

This study's second research objective was focused on determining which of these two lifestyles the participants found more appealing. The answers from the interviews suggest that while the *Career Woman* lifestyle is considered to be attractive in the short-term, in the long-run the *Sengyo Shufu* way of life appears to be the ideal goal. This is because getting married and having children was still considered to be a top priority for many of the participants. This could perhaps emphasise that SRT still remains a heavily ingrained facet within the social structures of Japan. Additionally, many of the participants also described a future for themselves, whereby they were in some form of part-time employment, and where they had a certain level of financial stability. It is important to note here that all of the participants had a similar level of education. Therefore, in terms of their overall responses towards the particular topic, the general attitude towards the *Sengyo Shufu* lifestyle was positive. Furthermore, a consistent factor that continuously appeared throughout the interviews was this idea of 'doing as my mother did'. It seems that many of the participants' future aspirations were inspired by their mothers. This was to the point where they had actually made their own upcoming plans similar to what they had witnessed their mothers do when they were younger. Since their mothers were full-time housewives, many of the participants also aspired for such a future, and considered it to be ideal. This could further imply that if the participants' mothers were *Career Women*, perhaps this lifestyle may have been more appealing to them instead, and may even have become the norm.

Based on the answers that I had received in the interviews, it appears that the overall feelings of satisfaction in the workplace can vary depending on three different factors; one's occupation, the number of female colleagues present in one's workplace, and finally the gender of one's superior. Additionally, the results from the interviews suggest that, these three aspects sometimes played a large part in the participants' overall future aspirations, to the point where certain respondents actually altered their prospective plans because of them. Firstly, occupations that were not office related were generally discussed more positively. Also, having other female colleagues present in the workplace tended to evoke a sense of comradeship and in certain cases, made working more 'bearable'.

In regards to the gender of one's superior, female leaders were considered to be more understanding and open-minded towards their female subordinates. A similar sort of phenomenon was found in a study conducted by Hilal (2015), whose research focused on female leadership in Malaysia. Hilal (2015) asserts that women in positions of authority are considered to be more efficient and affectionate. They are also regarded as being more accessible by their employees, and are more willing to collaborate with their subordinates regardless of gender. On the other hand, the findings from this study suggest that male superiors (who were mostly in their fifties), were seen as barriers in the workplace. This is largely due to the fact that they tended to possess out-dated and stereotypical views on gender. Moreover, this persistent lack of acceptance by male employers could perhaps emphasise a failure of both the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, and of Abe's 'Womenomics' policies. This is backed up by Kingston (2013, p.16), who goes further to state that gender equality legislation within Japan is more of a "branding opportunity" for the government, which has been doomed to fail from day one, since the set policies are not actively and effectively pursued.

Finally, there are numerous other directions that future studies relating to this particular topic can take. For example, researchers can choose to undertake a qualitative study focussing on the influences a female parent has on their child's future career choices. Or perhaps, because this study lacks the perspective of women in their forties and fifties, who have chosen the *Career Woman* pathway, obtaining information in regards to the opinions and experiences of this particular age group may allow for a wider perspective, and for a greater range of data to be collected and analysed.

6. Appendix

6.1 Appendix 1: Final Interviewee Sample

Preferred Name	***Age Bracket***	***Gender***	***Occupation***	***Area of Residence***	***Relationship Status***	***No. of Children***
Ayumi	20's	Female	Office Worker	Kanto	Single	0
Haruna	30's	Female	Office Worker	Kansai	In a Relationship	0
Kanako	20's	Female	Bank Employee	Chubu	Single	0
Kotori	30's	Female	Office Worker	Chugoku	Single	0
Minami	30's	Female	Elementary School Teacher	Kansai	Married	1
Reika	20's	Female	Office Worker	Kanto	Single	0
Yu	20's	Female	Office Worker	Kanto	Single	0

6.2 Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Introduction: (about 3 mins)

Begin by discussing anonymity, the interviewee's name will not appear in the research if they wish, and they can use an alias if they prefer.

Start by asking the following questions:

- What name would you like to go by?
- How old are you?
- What is your occupation?
- Why did you choose this occupation?
- Did you go to University?
- What was your major at University?
- Why did you choose this major?
- Where do you live?
- Where are you originally from?
- Are you married?
- Do you have any children?

Main Discussion: (about 10 mins)

Introduce the Research Topic

Let's begin by discussing a typical Japanese woman:

- Can you describe a typical Japanese woman?
- What does a typical Japanese woman mean to you?
- Where does she live? (e.g. geographical area, apartment/mansion/house)

- Who does she live with? (e.g. alone, with parents, with a partner, etc.)
- What is her occupation?
- Why do you think she chose this occupation?
- What is her family situation?
- What is her educational background? (e.g. did she go to university?)
- What does she do in her free time?
- Does this lifestyle appeal to you? Why/ Why not?

Next, let's discuss about your experiences:

- What were your ambitions before starting work?
- How have these changed?
- What age would you like to get married? Why? (If they answer that they do not want to get married, ask why?)
- What age would you like to have children? Why? (If they answer that they do not want children, ask why?)
- Do you think you will continue to work after marriage/having children? Why/ Why not?
- Do you feel pressure to get married/have children/quit your job? (If so from who, e.g. parents, employers, society, etc.)
- What does your mother do? (If she is a housewife, ask if she had worked previously)
- Did she graduate University?
- Do you think that your family want you to lead a similar lifestyle?
- What do you think about the *Sengyo Shufu*? And do you know any?
- What do you think about the *Career Woman*? And do you know any?

Finally, we will discuss about the future of women in Japan:

- In general, do you think that this view of women will change in Japan?/ Is it now changing in Japan? How so?
- Do you think that the opinions of today's generation are different from that of the previous generation? How so?
- What do you think about the future for women in Japan?
- Do you think that Japanese women will still follow the *Sengyo Shufu* ideal? or will they choose something different? Why/ Why not?
- Do you think that the *Career Woman* path will be more popular? Why/ Why not?

Conclusion: (About 2 mins)

Thank the interviewee.

7. References

Aronsson, A. S. (2020), "Contemporary Japanese Career Women: Reflections on Profession, Life, and Purpose". *The Qualitative Report*, 25(3), pp.569-595. [Online] Available at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4024&context=tqr [Accessed 23rd August, 2020].

Assmann, S. (2014), "Gender Equality in Japan: The Equal Employment Opportunity Law Revisited **日本における男女平等　雇用機会均等法再考**". *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 12(45), pp.1-24. [Online] Available at: https://apjjf.org/2014/12/45/Stephanie-Assmann/4211.html [Accessed 5th July, 2020].

Broadbridge, S. (1974), "Economic and Social Trends in Tokugawa Japan". *Modern Asian Studies*, 8(3), pp.347-372. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/311738.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ac4e291ecd028007910e1d9d87c507493 [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Burgess, J., Henderson, L. and Strachan, G. (2005), "Women Workers in Male Dominated Industrial Manufacturing Organisations: Contrasting Workplace Case Studies from Australia". *Management Revue*, 16(4), pp.458-474. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/41783502?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 20th July, 2020].

Catalyst (2019), "Women in the Workforce - Japan: Quick Take". [Online] Available at: https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-the-workforce-japan/ [Accessed 10th August, 2020].

Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. [Online] Available at: http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Charmaz_2006.pdf [Accessed 8th July, 2020].

Clark, R. L., Ogawa, N., Kondo, M. and Matsukura, R. (2010), "Population Decline, Labor Force Stability, and the Future of the Japanese Economy". *European Journal of Population*, 26(2), pp.207-227. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40784186?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 30th July, 2020].

Clement, E. W. (1903), "The New Woman in Japan". *American Journal of Sociology*, 8(5), pp.693-698. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2761996.pdf [Accessed 3rd August, 2020].

Condon, J. (1985) *A half step behind: Japanese women of the '80s.* 1st edn. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

Dasgupta, R. (2012) *Re-reading the salaryman in Japan: crafting masculinities*. London: Taylor & Francis Group. [Online] Available at: https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780203102084 [Accessed 30th July, 2020].

Eagly, A. H. and Wood, W. (2012), "Social Role Theory". *Handbook of theories in social psychology*, 2, pp.458-476. [Online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285179532_Social_role_theory [Accessed 8th July, 2020].

Foo, S. Y. Y. (2010), "The Beauty Trap: How the pressure to conform to society's and media's standards of beauty leave women experiencing body dissatisfaction". *Master of Communication Studies Theses*. [Online] Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/56361799.pdf [Accessed 15th August, 2020].

Fujita, M. (1989), "'It's All Mother's Fault': Childcare and the Socialization of Working Mothers in Japan". *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 15(1), pp.67-91. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/132408?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 2nd August, 2020].

Gastineau, Z. N. (2015), "How Women in Heian Japan Reflect and Alter Ancient China's Ideal Woman: The Warriors of Virtue". *History Undergraduate Honors Theses*, 4. [Online] Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/72840033.pdf [Accessed 8th July, 2020].

Gelb, J. (2002), "The Equal Employment Opportunity Law: A Decade of Change for Japanese Women?". *Law & Policy*, 22(3-4), pp.385-407. [Online] Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9930.00099 [Accessed 20th July, 2020].

Germer, A., Mackie, V. and Wohr, U. (2014) *Gender, nation and state in modern Japan*, New York: Routledge.

Goldman-Sachs (2019), "Womenomics 5.0: 20 Years On". *Portfolio Strategy Research*. [Online] Available at: https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/pages/womenomics-5.0/multimedia/womenomics-5.0-report.pdf [Accessed 20th July, 2020].

Griswold, S. (1995), "Sexuality, Textuality, and the Definition of the 'Feminine' in Late Eighteenth-Century Japan". *U.S. - Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement*, 9, pp.59-76. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42772085.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A6dbfc48c940220dc5ded8bedadc9a0b [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Hasunuma, L. C. (2015), "Gender Gaiatsu: An Institutional Perspective on Womenomics". *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, 48, pp.79-114. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26401830?seq=1 [Accessed 9th August, 2020].

Hays, J. (2009), "Women in Japan: History, Character, Customs, Advancements and Violence". *Facts and Details*. [Online] Available at: http://factsanddetails.com/japan/cat18/sub118/item627.html [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Hesselbart, S. (1981), "An Evaluation of Sex Role Theories: the Clash Between Idealism and Reality". *Advances in Consumer Research*, 8, pp.570-575. [Online] Available at: https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/5861/volumes/v08/NA-08 [Accessed 3rd July, 2020].

Hilal, H. (2015), "Perceptions towards Female Leadership in Malaysia". *Journal of Modern Education Review*, 5(5), pp.517-525. [Online] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282415368_Perceptions_towards_Female_Leadership_in_Malaysia [Accessed 18th July, 2020].

Horie, H. (1952), "REVOLUTION AND REFORM IN MEIJI RESTORATION". *Kyoto University Economic Review*, 22(1), pp.23-34. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43216962.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A8bdb0b07f8dd3137b32fc6bd6156035d [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Hsia, H. C. and Scanzoni, J. H. (1996), "Rethinking The Roles of Japanese Women". *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 27(2), pp.309-329. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/41602460?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 8th July, 2020].

Immamura, A. E. (1996) *Re-imaging Japanese women*, Los Angeles: University of California Press

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2019), "Women in national parliaments". [Online] Available at: http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm [Accessed 10th August, 2020].

Iwao, S. (1993) *The Japanese woman: traditional image and changing reality*, New York: Free Press.

Izuhara, M. (2000) *Family change and housing in post-war Japanese society, the experiences of older women*, Vermont: Ashgate.

Javaid, M. (2016), "Asian countries have been offering females paid menstrual leave for almost 70 years". *Timeline*, 18th February. [Online] Available at: https://timeline.com/asian-countries-have-been-offering-females-paid-menstrual-leave-for-almost-70-years-401056aeb1ec [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

JILPT (2017), "Labor Situation in Japan and Its Analysis, Detailed Exposition 2016/2017". *The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training*. [Online] Available at: https://www.jil.go.jp/english/lsj/detailed/2016-2017.html [Accessed 9th August, 2020].

Jolivet, M. (2004), "Review of 'Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: Dislocating the Salaryman Doxa by James E. Roberson and Suzuki Nobue'". *Social Science Japan Journal*, 7(1), pp.169-172. [Online] Available at:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/30209483.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A095ca446244b2f8ff8af9e00ff1960bf [Accessed 30th July, 2020].

Jones, R. S. and Seitani, H. (2019), "LABOUR MARKET REFORM IN JAPAN TO COPE WITH A SHRINKING AND AGEING POPULATION". *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*. [Online] Available at: https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=ECO/WKP(2019)37&docLanguage=En [Accessed 5th August, 2020].

Kambayashi, R. and Kato, T. (2009), "The Japanese Employment System after the Bubble Burst: New Evidence". [Online] Available at: file:///C:/Users/Rasandeep/Downloads/WP_268.pdf [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Karaoğlu, S. (2018), "The Evolution of Japanese Women's Status Throughout the History and Modern Japan's Question, Are Japanese Women 'Empowered' Today?". *Research Gate*. [Online] Available at: file:///C:/Users/Rasandeep/Downloads/TheEvolutionofJapaneseWomensStatusThroughoutheHistoryandModernJapansQuestionAreJapaneseWomenEmpoweredToday.pdf [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Kawata, H. and Naganuma, S. (2010), "Labor Force Participation Rate in Japan". *Bank of Japan Review*. [Online] Available at: https://www.boj.or.jp/en/research/wps_rev/rev_2010/data/rev10e07.pdf [Accessed 23rd July, 2020].

Kim, V. (2019), "Women aren't allowed to be emperors in Japan. Does it matter?". *Los Angeles Times*, 1st May. [Online] Available at: https://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-japan-women-emperor-20190502-story.html [Accessed Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Kingston, J. (2013), "The Illusion That Is Abenomics". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(50), pp.15-17. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24479036.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aed507e9a13c60e8f0223ee0361c6faf0 [Accessed 10th August, 2020].

Koyama, T. (1961), "The changing social position of women in Japan". *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. [Online] Available at: file:///C:/Users/Rasandeep/Downloads/002807engo.pdf [Accessed 3rd July, 2020].

Kuper, A., Reeves, S. and Levinson, W. (2008), "Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Reading and Appraising Qualitative Research". *British Medical Journal*, 337(7666), pp.404-407. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/20510591?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 3rd July, 2020].

Lebra, T. S. (1981), "Japanese Women in Male Dominant Careers: Cultural Barriers and Accommodations for Sex-Role Transcendence". *Ethnology*, 20(4), pp.291-306. [Online]

Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3773352?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Macnaughtan, H. (2015), "Womenomics for Japan: is the Abe policy for gendered employment viable in an era of precarity?". *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 13(12), pp.1-23. [Online] Available at: https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/19702/1/HM%20womenomics%20APJ%20Final%20March%202020 15.pdf [Accessed 7th July, 2020].

Miller, L. (2004), "Those Naughty Teenage Girls: Japanese Kogals, Slang, and Media Assessments". *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 14(2), pp.225-247. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43102647?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 20th July, 2020].

Minear, R. H. (1980), "Orientalism and the Study of Japan". *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 39(3), pp.507-517. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2054678?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 3rd August, 2020].

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2017), "**結婚の状況別にみた就業状況の変化**". [Online] Available at: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/saikin/hw/judan/seinen09/kekka3-2.html [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Mitchell, J. C. W. (2004), "Procreative Mothers (Sexual Difference) and Child-Free Sisters (Gender): Feminism and Fertility". *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 11(4), pp.415-426. [Online] Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1350506804046812 [Accessed 2nd August, 2020].

Molony, B. (1995), "Japan's 1986 Equal Employment Opportunity Law and the Changing Discourse on Gender". *Signs*, 20(2), pp.268-302. [Online] Available at: https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1100&context=history [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Narayan, S. (2016), "Women in Meiji Japan: Exploring the Underclass of Japanese Industrialization". *Inquiries Journal*, 8(2), pp.1-3. [Online] Available at: http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1369/women-in-meiji-japan-exploring-the-underclass-of-japanese-industrialization [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Nemoto, K. (2012), "Long Working Hours and the Corporate Gender Divide in Japan". *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20(5), pp.512-527. [Online] Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2012.00599.x [Accessed 30th July, 2020].

Nicholson, L. (1994), "Interpreting Gender". *Signs*, 20(1), pp.79- 105. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3174928 [Accessed 3rd August, 2020].

Nikkei (2018), "Ratio of working women jumps to record in Japan". *Nikkei Asian Review*, 14th July. [Online] Available at: https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Ratio-of-working-women-jumps-to-record-in-Japan [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Nishimura, J. (2016), *Motherhood and work in contemporary Japan*, New York: Routledge.

Nolte, S. H. (1986), "Women's Rights and Society's Needs: Japan's 1931 Suffrage Bill". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 28(4), pp.690-714. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/178889.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A01fb7991e76fed48fa7992dc6c60d83d [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

OECD.org (2020), "Sweden's support for parents with children is comprehensive and effective but expensive". *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*. [Online] Available at: https://www.oecd.org/els/family/swedenssupportforparentswithchildreniscomprehensiveandeffectivebutexpensive.htm [Accessed 20th July, 2020].

Oi, M. (2015), "Japanese women at a crossroads". *BBC News*, 10th March. [Online] Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-31792714 [Accessed 17th July, 2020].

Okuda, K (2019), "Japan's female employment tops 50% for 1st time in half-century". *Nikkei Asian Review*, 2nd February. [Online] Available at: https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Japan-s-female-employment-tops-50-for-1st-time-in-half-century [Accessed 11th August, 2020].

Osawa, M. and Kingston, J. (2015), "Risk and Consequences: The Changing Japanese Employment Paradigm". *NYU Press*, pp.58-86. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctt15zc875.7.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_SYC-4946%2Fcontrol&refreqid=search%3A5adf1ad701a4682a187514d3e14b4047 [Accessed 10th August, 2020].

Pyke, K. D. and Johnson, D. L. (2003), "Asian American Women and Racialized Femininities: 'Doing' Gender across Cultural Worlds". *Gender and Society*, 17(1), pp.33-53. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3081813?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 3rd July, 2020].

Ramalho, R., Adams, P., Huggard, P. and Hoare, K. (2015), "Literature Review and Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology". *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16(3), pp.1-13. [Online] Available at: https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2313#:~:text=In%20grounded%20theory%20research%20it,before%20data%20collection%20and%20analysis.&text=Reflexivity%20is%20described%20as%20a,various%20reflexive%20strategies%20are%20presented. [Accessed 12 July, 2020].

Roberts, G. S. (2016), "Career Women in Contemporary Japan: Pursuing Identities, Fashioning Lives". *Social Science Japan Journal*, 19(1), pp142-145. [Online] Available at: https://academic.oup.com/ssjj/article/19/1/142/2451765 [Accessed 3rd July, 2020].

Sakamoto, T. (2014), "Ryosai Kenbo: The Educational Ideal of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother' in Modern Japan (The Intimate and the Public in Asian and Global Perspectives.)". *Educational Studies in Japan: International Yearbook*, 8, pp.159-161. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/esjkyoiku/8/0/8_159/_pdf [Accessed 9th August, 2020].

Sakata, S. (2013), “Historical Origin of the Japanese *Ie* System”. *Chuo Online*. [Online] Available at: https://yab.yomiuri.co.jp/adv/chuo/dy/opinion/20130128.html [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Sakata, Y. and Hall, J. W. (1956), "The Motivation of Political Leadership in the Meiji Restoration". *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 16(1), pp.31-50. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2941545?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Sakuma, K. (2018), "The Labour Market in Japan and Its Demographic Problems". *Institute for International Monetary Affairs*, 10, pp.1-10. [Online] Available at: https://www.iima.or.jp/en/docs/newsletter/2018/NL2018No_10_e.pdf [Accessed 3rd August, 2020].

Shambaugh, J., Nunn, R. and Portman, B (2017), "Lessons from the Rise of Women's Labor Force Participation in Japan". *The Hamilton Project*, pp.1-11. [Online] Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/es_110117_lessons_from_rise_womens_labor_force_participation_japan_economic_analysis.pdf [Accessed 8th July, 2020].

Shimanoff, S. B. (2009), "Gender Role Theory". *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. [Online] Available at: https://sk.sagepub.com/reference/communicationtheory/n161.xml#:~:text=Gender%20role%20theory%20is%20grounded,how%20they%20ought%20to%20behave. [Accessed 3rd July, 2020].

Smith, J. (2019), "Women less likely to progress at work than male colleagues after childbirth". *Insight*, 22nd October. [Online] Available at: https://workplaceinsight.net/women-less-likely-to-progress-at-work-than-their-male-counterparts-following-childbirth/#:~:text=Fewer%20than%20one%2Din%2Dfive,to%20four%20percent%20of%20men. [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Smitsmans, J. (2014), "The Resilience of Hegemonic Salaryman Masculinity: A comparison of three prominent masculinities". *Master's Programme in Asian Studies Theses*. [Online] Available at: http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=4933770&fileOId=4933777 [Accessed 20th July, 2020].

Statistics Bureau (2019), "Statistical Handbook of Japan". *Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications*. [Online] Available at:

https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/pdf/2019all.pdf#page=17 [Accessed 10th August, 2020].

Tipton, E. K. (2004), "Japanese Women and the 'Cult of Productivity'". *Women Workers in Industrial Asia*, pp.149-172. [Online] Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230596702_8#citeas [Accessed 3rd August, 2020].

Tsurumi, E. P. (1981), "Japan's Early Female Emperors". *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 8(1), pp.41-49. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41298739.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A173828349e5d601d8169084906317b91 [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Tsurumi, E. P. (2000), "The State, Education, and Two Generations of Women in Meiji Japan, 1968-1912". *U.S. - Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement*, 18, pp.3-26. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/42772154?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 20th January, 2024].

Ueno, C. (1987), "The Position of Japanese Women Reconsidered". *Current Anthropology*, 28(4), pp.S75-S84. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2743442?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 15th July, 2020].

Uno, K.S. (1993), "The Death of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother'?". In Gordon, A. , *Postwar Japan as history*, Berkley: University of California Press, pp.293- 322.

Vogel, S. H. (2012), "Japanese Society under Stress". *Asian Survey*, 52(4), pp.687-713. [Online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/as.2012.52.4.687?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [Accessed 3rd August, 2020].

World Economic Forum (2020), "Global Gender Gap Report 2020". *Insight Report*. [Online] Available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf [Accessed 10th August, 2020].

Yazaki, H. and Gatayama, M (2017), "Japan's female labor force set to toss out M-curve". *Nikkei Asian Review*, 17th September. [Online] Available at: https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Japan-s-female-labor-force-set-to-toss-out-M-curve [Accessed 23rd July, 2020].

Zhou, Y. (2019), "Poverty and Income Polarization of Married Stay-at-home Mothers in Japan, Part II: What Drives Japanese Women to Be Full-time Housewives despite Poverty?". *Japan Labor Issues*, 3(16), pp.6-11. [Online] Available at: https://www.jil.go.jp/english/jli/documents/2019/016-02.pdf [Accessed 15th July, 2020].