

The Importance of Gender in Japan

1. Motivation behind Research Paper

In this day and age of globalization, I believe it is very important for Japan to deeply consider international relations. I wanted to learn about the achievements of the SDGs and how to continue the success of them, and to contribute to the realization of a sustainable society.

2. Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to deepen the exploration of gender equality in Japanese society.

First, the level of gender relations in Japan today was compared to the rest of the world. At the top of the list, it can be seen that it is still mostly Europe, the birthplace of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, despite being an industrialized country, Japan's gender gap index is still low. The data collected for this study includes a study by the World Economic Forum (WEF) called "The Global Gender Gap Report 2021," citing the Gender Gap Index (GGI), which measures the gender gap in each country.

**Gender Gap Index (2021)
Ranking of top and main countries**

Rank	country name	value	previous year's figure	Change in ranking from the previous year
1	Iceland	0.892	0.877	—
2	Finland	0.861	0.832	1
3	Norway	0.849	0.842	-1
4	New Zealand	0.840	0.799	2
5	Sweden	0.823	0.820	-1
11	Germany	0.796	0.787	-1
16	France	0.784	0.781	-1
23	England	0.775	0.767	-2
24	Canada	0.772	0.772	-5
30	America	0.763	0.724	23
63	Italy	0.721	0.707	13
79	Thailand	0.710	0.708	-4
81	Russia	0.708	0.706	—
87	Vietnam	0.701	0.700	—
101	Indonesia	0.688	0.700	-16
102	Korea	0.687	0.672	6
107	China	0.682	0.676	-1
119	Angola	0.657	0.660	-1
120	Japan	0.656	0.652	1
121	Sierra Leone	0.655	0.668	-10

Figure 1. Gender Gap Index report 2021

3. Results and Analysis

First, there was a need for the research group to expand on knowledge of gender to some extent, so each member read a book. I read *Why Diverse Societies Are So Difficult* and focused on issues related to the marketplace. One of the things that struck me was a post on Twitter about a woman with a toddler who tried to buy potato salad at a corner deli and witnessed an elderly man tell her, "If you're a mother, why don't you at least make potato salad?" This became a hot topic of conversation, with more than 130,000 retweets, and was dubbed 'the potato salad controversy'. Some took the stance that mothers should spare no effort in preparing

homemade food, and criticized the man's lack of housekeeping insight in dismissing potato salad, a seemingly simple but surprisingly time-consuming side dish.

When men lecture women from a place of superiority, it is called "mansplaining," and it is probably part of this practice. However, when we asked mothers about this, some of them said, "The people who give attention to women may not really feel the same way, but rather want to be treated with a sense of justice." It is true that in Japan, according to various statistical surveys, "mothers have a lot of demands on them in terms of housework and childcare," but "elderly men are lonely because they have few relationships with others. If the only way for them to make contact with others is to yell at them, the darkness is deep (Kiyoo, Minashida, 2021). After considering the source of why these problems occur, I thought that we Japanese have somehow conceptualized the idea of "femininity" and "masculinity," which is not a rule, and have constrained the freedom of our original gender. I focused on the word "rashisa". I believe it is largely influenced by traditional Japanese gender stereotypes (biased assumptions about men and women). I am convinced that it includes not only the current perception that 'this is what women/ men are like', but also the normative connotation that 'women/ men should be like "this"'. Women are expected to be beautiful, cooperative, and submissive, while men are expected to be independent, strong, and show leadership. For example, in the most typical case, men are expected to work and women are expected to be at home. Such gender stereotypes are thought to lead to the imposition of character. Gender stereotypes are gradually accumulated in one's life as knowledge of what roles men and women play, how they behave, and how they are evaluated. This knowledge is accumulated through seeing and hearing about the roles of men and women in the world, how

they behave, and how they are evaluated, as well as by learning about how men and women are portrayed in the media. People use this framework of knowledge in their minds when judging the events and people in front of them, but they are rarely aware that they are using such a framework of knowledge at the moment. When judging a woman or a man, they do not think deeply about the gender stereotypical framework of knowledge and use it without being aware of it. This is why, for example, a female student who gets good grades in math will reflexively make comments such as, "She's a girl, but she's amazing." I thought about what I alone could do to eliminate this. I thought that each one of us needs to accept our values, value ourselves, and be willing to accept anything and everything, breaking down the notion that people are just the way they are.

4. Conclusion and Future Problems

When people are always categorized by gender, they become aware that women and men are different, and therefore their roles are different. When the assumption is fixed as the natural cognitive framework for viewing human beings, deviations from it are often positioned as abnormal. Such assumptions have led to the discourse that "despite the fact that men and women have strict differences as living organisms, it is against the natural order of things to ignore these differences and make men and women the same" and the terms "gender" and "gender-free" are currently being used in some parts of Japan, according to the source *Why a Diverse Society is Difficult: The Evolution of Diversity in Japan*. In order to clear up such misunderstandings, we must improve our language and expressions to be appropriate and easy to understand. We must not confuse the nature of gender as

an organism, the phenomenon of social and cultural gender, and the issue of human dignity, including the sexuality of individuals in their daily lives.

5. Reflection

Gender does not ignore or deny the differences between the sexes of human organisms or their individuality. Gender is the study of respecting the dignity of each unique human being and building a society in which it is possible to coexist while recognizing diversity.

6. Work Cited

Kiyo, Minashida. Why Diverse Societies Are Difficult. The Evolution of Diversity, 2021. Print. Mithubachi. "'Potato salad' problem," Twitter. 8 Jul. 2020. Web. 20 Oct. 2022.

World Economic Forum. The Global Gender Gap Report 2021. 2021. Print.