

令和 3 年 5 月 18 日現在

機関番号：32689

研究種目：基盤研究(C) (一般)

研究期間：2015～2020

課題番号：15K03598

研究課題名(和文) A mixed-method examination of the impact of gender and cultural diversity on Japanese organizational practices and strategies

研究課題名(英文) A mixed-method examination of the impact of gender and cultural diversity on Japanese organizational practices and strategies

研究代表者

EDMAN Jesper (Edman, Jesper)

早稲田大学・商学大学院・准教授

研究者番号：20615976

交付決定額(研究期間全体)：(直接経費) 3,600,000円

研究成果の概要(和文)：企業のダイバーシティ戦略の元に3つの目的がある：労働力不足の解決策、イノベーションの源泉、そして平等の理由。3つとも戦略の主な課題は女性と外国人従業員の定着である。本研究の成果では統合と特別扱いのバランスを取る組織政策が最も効果的であることを示している。女性と外国人従業員を日本人男性従業員と同等に扱う政策はしばしば疎外感とアイデンティティの喪失につながる一方、女性と外国人に「特別扱い」を提供する戦略は排除感につながる。企業はバランスの取れた制度を導入し始めているが、ダイバーシティ戦略はまだ企業の業績に直接的な影響を与えていない。

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

To realize gains from diversity, companies must integrate women and foreigners into the firm while also recognizing their unique skills and capabilities. Companies should avoid policies that ignore women and foreigners unique skill-sets, or which treat them as exceptions to regular employees.

研究成果の概要(英文)：Japanese companies adopt diversity strategies for three different reasons: as a solution to labor shortages, as a source of innovation, and in some cases for reasons of equality. Across these strategies, the biggest challenge is retention of employees, including both women and foreigners. The study indicates policies that balance integration with a recognition of women and foreigners' unique skills and capabilities are the most effective in retaining workers. Policies that treat women and foreign employees as equal to male Japanese employees often lead to alienation and a loss of identity, whereas strategies that provide "special treatment" for women and foreigners lead to feelings of exclusion. While Japanese companies have begun to adopt balanced integration-type strategies, evidence suggests more needs to be done, as the employment of women and foreigners has no statistically significant effect on firm performance.

研究分野：Diversity management

キーワード：Diversity Female managers Foreign employees Organizational policies Strategy

科研費による研究は、研究者の自覚と責任において実施するものです。そのため、研究の実施や研究成果の公表等については、国の要請等に基づくものではなく、その研究成果に関する見解や責任は、研究者個人に帰属します。

1 . 研究開始当初の背景

Over the past ten years, the topic of human capital diversity has become increasingly important and well-recognized among Japanese firms. The underlying idea behind diversity in human capital is that organizations perform better when they include employees with different ethnic, racial, national, social, physical and sexual backgrounds and experiences. While the origins of the emphasis on employee diversity can be traced to equal employment laws in the United States and the women's movement in Europe, diversity has increasingly come to be seen as a potentially strategic advantage for companies, particularly in relation to issues of innovation, problem-solving and new opportunity recognition.

For Japanese companies, an emphasis on diversity offers unique opportunities. On the one hand, greater diversity in employee backgrounds can contribute to greater creativity and innovation, both of which are key advantages for competing in the global economy. Second, greater diversity in the national background of staff can offer Japanese firms important capabilities for dealing with foreign clients in culturally dissimilar markets. Finally, by targeting a broader swath of the labor force, a more inclusive employment strategy can help solve issues related to labor shortages due to the shrinking population.

An emphasis on diversity, however, also presents unique challenges for Japanese firms. To begin with, a key competitive of Japanese corporations – particularly those in the manufacturing sector – has been the efficiency that comes from work teams that share similar cultures and norms; while diversity offers many advantages, it has also been shown to have a negative impact on efficiency, especially in the short term. Second, employment, training, and promotion policies in Japanese companies have largely been designed around the implicit assumption that Japanese managers are married heterosexual Japanese men. In order to accommodate a more diverse group of employees, many of these policies must be re-examined and changed, but without alienating the existing core employees. Finally, the traditional Japanese human capital policies are closely interlinked with broader societal norms related to gender roles, family values, and notions of in-group vs out-group belonging. Consequently, any diversity policies implemented by Japanese corporations must align with the logics of society at large.

2 . 研究の目的

Based on both the opportunities and challenges presented by the notion of diversity, this research project had several aims:

1. First, what do Japanese companies' diversity strategies look like? Specifically, why have they been adopted? What are their objectives and goals? And what types of policies do they involve?
2. Second, given these diversity policies, what impact do they have on employees? How do diversity policies shape the experience of women, foreigners and other minorities working in Japanese companies? How have they been received and interpreted by traditional Japanese staff (e.g. male Japanese workers)?
3. Finally, what effect, if any, do diversity policies have on firm performance? What impact do they have on the retention of vital human capital talent? To what extent do they foster innovation, greater productivity, or other forms of organizational performance?

3 . 研究の方法

To address these issues, I adopted a mixed-methodology employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The methodologies were applied in accordance with the nature of the research questions, proceeding in stages as follows:

Stage 1: Qualitative and quantitative exploratory analysis of diversity policies

To address the first research question, I began with exploratory interviews at Japanese companies, with the goal of identifying key aspects of their diversity policies. During these interviews, my main goal was to ascertain companies' *motivations* for adopting diversity strategies, the specific *policies and strategies* adopted, as well as the *goals and objectives* of embracing diversity policies. I conducted exploratory interviews with 22 HR managers at 17 companies, operating in various industries, including automotive, heavy industry, finance, consulting, online services, chemicals, insurance and consumer products. Of the companies,

12 were Japanese corporations, while 5 were the Japanese subsidiaries of foreign companies. I included the foreign companies both as a means to introduce variation into the sample, and as a control category to be compared against the Japanese firms. I had all interviews translated and transcribed by professionals for accuracy, after which I used the qualitative content analysis software Atlas.ti to analyze their content. Employing a grounded theory approach, wherein themes emerge from coding and constant comparison, I identified several key aspects of Japanese firm's diversity motivations, policies, and objectives.

I also conducted exploratory quantitative content analysis of firm's diversity policies. For my data source I used company action plans uploaded on the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's database for the Women's Advancement Promotion Law (女性活躍推進企業データベース)¹. The Women's Advancement Promotion Law obligates all firms of 301 employees or more to make efforts to upload and update their diversity strategies on an annual basis. A research assistant downloaded all available action plans (541 at the time of the analysis in 2017) and subsequently divided these up according to the different sections related to Problems, Goals, and Objectives. Using KH Coder, a quantitative content analysis software specifically built for Japanese text, I engaged in exploratory analysis to identify keyword and themes in the action plans. I also used KH Coder to assign scores to companies, based on the different Problems, Goals and Objectives presented in the plans.

Stage 2. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of employee reactions to diversity policies

In the second stage of the analysis, I used in-depth qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to study how both women and foreign employees were reacted to Japanese company diversity policies. In-depth interviewing is particularly useful when researchers want to understand the "lived experiences" of subjects and how they deal with the daily situations. To be effective, however, qualitative interviewing also requires trust and time, which may limit sampling. To overcome these challenges, I selected subjects through a snowball-sampling technique, relying on relationships with former MBA students, as well as foreigners in the Tokyo community, who work at Japanese firms. Through these initial contacts I was able to identify additional interviewees. In total, I interviewed 69 employees relating to their experiences as foreigners or women, working at Japanese companies. The interviews were professionally transcribed and translated, after which I analyzed them in Atlas.ti using a grounded theory approach.

In addition to the qualitative interviews, I also developed a quantitative questionnaire in collaboration with Professor Ran Ri of Hitotsubashi University. The primary goal of the survey was to understand how foreign employees were adjusting to working in Japanese corporations. Building on pre-existing survey instruments designed to measure ethnic and racial diversity, we developed 150 questions related to national identity. The survey was translated into Japanese, English, Cantonese and Mandarin and subsequently distributed to foreign employees in Japan with the help of a recruitment company specializing in foreign workers. The results from this survey are still pending.

Stage 3: Case study and quantitative analysis of the effect of diversity policies

In the final stage of the analysis I focused on identifying the impact of diversity policies on key measures, including both retention of employees, and overall firm performance. To do this I employed both a comparative case-based methodology and quantitative approaches.

For the comparative case-study approach I selected two of the firms interviewed in stage 1 for further analysis. The two firms were selected based on their adoption of different diversity strategies (see further below). For each firm I conducted additional interviews with non-HR employees (5 and 8, respectively) to gain greater understanding of how the firm's diversity strategies were being implemented. I also gathered archival data from internal documents and reports, as well as anonymous commentary about the working environment through *Open Work*² an online portal specializing in evaluating work environments at Japanese firms. Finally, I also observed group-dynamics among employees from both firms during off-site executive education sessions. I used within-case analysis to construct cases covering diversity policies and practices at each firm; subsequently, I used between-case analysis to

¹ https://positive-ryouritsu.mhlw.go.jp/positivedb/en_index.html

² <https://www.vorkers.com/>

compare both the focal firms to each other, as well as to “ideal” foreign firms that have previously been identified in the literature as best-case examples of diversity policies.

I also conducted quantitative analysis using multiple datasets. To analyze the overall effects of diversity policies I purchased annual data from the HR-section of Toyo Keizai’s CSR survey for the years 2004 to 2018 (published between 2006 and 2020). I combined this data with Toyo Keizai’s Company Performance Database (available at Waseda University) to construct an unbalanced panel data set of Japanese firms’ diversity policies for the focal years. Based on the analysis conducted in Stages 1 and 2, I examined the impact of different sets of policies on both female and foreign retention and promotion (at different levels), as well as the overall impact of female and foreign employees on company performance and productivity. I also combined the dataset with results of the exploratory quantitative content analysis in Stage 1 to examine how different problems identified by firms related to their subsequent policies. Using the CSR data I also examined whether and how the effect of the company’s diversity team varied based on its position in the organizational hierarchy. Since the probability that women are hired is not random, I used a two-stage Heckman model with fixed effects to deal with selection issues and endogeneity.

To complement the examination of diversity at headquarters I also carried out an additional analysis on the impact of foreign vs Japanese employees on the performance of Japanese overseas subsidiaries. This study, conducted jointly with Professor Riki Takeuchi of the University of Texas at Dallas, utilizes the Basic Survey on Overseas Business Activities (海外企業活動基本調査, hereafter Basic Survey) conducted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) to examine the effect of Japanese expatriates vs local employees, in different organizational positions, on both the overall sales and productivity performance of Japanese subsidiaries.

4 . 研究成果

In the following I summarize the results of my various studies in accordance with the research questions they address. Due to space limitations I am not able to include all the results, but I have tried to highlight the most important points and to give references for further discussion.

RQ 1: Objectives, goals and policies of Japanese diversity strategies

Based on the findings from interviews and the content analysis of the MHLW website, I identify three different approaches to diversity among Japanese companies. The first approach – what I call the *Labor Diversity Strategy* – sees diversity mainly as a solution to labor shortages; companies employing this approach emphasize the “lack of engineers” and “the need for more workers.” These strategies put primary emphasis on input-goals (i.e. how many women should be hired) as opposed to performance goals (i.e. objectives for female managers or executives).

The second approach to diversity – *Innovation Diversity Strategy* – views diversity as a source for greater innovation and creativity. Companies espousing this strategy view homogeneous workforces as a strategic weakness, hence they emphasize how an increase in women (and foreigners, to some extent), can provide new ideas and contribute to making the firm more competitive in the global environment. For companies with this strategic approach, goal objectives are measured mainly in terms of increasing the number of women and foreigners in the company’s management track, as well as senior management positions (e.g. department head or executive). Often, these strategies contain an emphasis on the need for competing in the global economic environment.

The final approach constitutes the *Equality Diversity Strategy*; here the emphasis is more specifically directed at promoting gender and racial equality within the organization. While firms with an Equality-approach also emphasize the global economic environment, their focus lies more on aligning with international norms and standards, as opposed to international competition. For firms with this strategic approach, traditional Japanese labor practices are problematic from the point of fairness; consequently, they often set goals related to paternity leave (for gender equality) as well as more general objectives of creating “environments that are supportive of diversity.”

RQ 2: The impact of diversity policies on female and foreign employees

Based on the in-depth interviews, I found that the most effective diversity strategies are those that focus on integrating women and foreign employees into the organization, while at the same time recognizing some of their special needs and situations. Among women, the emphasis on integration meant providing them with the same opportunities as men, while also providing extra networking events and support to deal with challenges related to rearing children or having household duties. These “integration”-type policies and strategies can be contrasted with more general “special treatment” strategies (such as enhanced maternity leave, vacation, or work-from-home) which did not appear to be as popular. Notably, attitudes towards policies differed somewhat by age. For example, while younger women seem to be impressed with and supportive of policies that provide working mothers with longer maternity leave and other benefits, older, more experienced women were generally wary of such “special treatment strategies” because they make it harder for women to qualify for senior management positions. Some of the interviews went so far as to suggest this was done on purpose, as a way to limit the number of women in the upper-levels of the firm. While it is impossible to know whether these results are age or cohort based, they do suggest that employee responses to diversity practices may differ significantly depending on their life- and career-stage. Many of the challenges for professional women arise when they must balance the demands of family life with the increasing pressures at work; for women in their mid-20s who have only recently joined the firm, these pressures will presumably be less.

For foreign employees, the experience at Japanese companies appears to depend on the organization’s ability to integrate them effectively in daily life. The foreign employees who were most content at Japanese organizations, and who also sought to stay there the longest, were those who were able to form strong bonds with fellow employees and managers, while at the same time maintaining their distinct foreign identities and experiences. For the companies, these employees also added important value, functioning as “bridge builders” between the Japanese side of the organization and international customers and partners. Foreign employees were less happy – and less likely to stay in the company or contribute – when this balance between integration and differentiation was upset. For example, when foreign employees were treated exactly the same as Japanese hires (including standard training, assignments, etc.), they often felt as if they were “losing their identities” and becoming Japanese, without taking advantage of their unique knowledge. Conversely, when foreign employees’ jobs were limited to only interacting with foreigners or international markets it often left them alienated from the rest of the business, with limited learning and contribution.

RQ 3: The impact of diversity policies on firm outcomes

The quantitative analysis provides several insights into the impact of diversity policies and practices on firm performance. In terms of the retention of both foreign and female employees, the quantitative analysis of the Toyo Keizai data indicates that integrative strategies – including for example better networking opportunities, more employee training, and in-house day-care – has a positive impact on both the retainment and promotion of women. For foreigners, however, no such relationship was evident, although this may be due to the fact that policies are directed more specifically at women.

In terms of the direct relationship between the number of female and foreign employees on the one hand, and firm performance on the other, the findings indicate ROE has statistically significant negative relationship with foreign employees in senior management positions, but a statistically positive relationship with foreign employees in senior executive positions. I find no statistically significant relationship between the percent of foreign or female employees (at different levels) and firm sales or productivity. This findings reaffirms the qualitative results that firms have yet to fully leverage the unique experiences of both foreign and female employees to the point of impact their performances.

Finally, the quantitative analysis of diversity strategies in foreign subsidiaries suggests that home country (i.e. Japanese) CEOs and HR managers have a significantly positive impact on both sales and productivity, but that Japanese expatriates in other positions (including that of sales manager, top management team member, line manager, and regular employees) have no statistical effect on subsidiary sales or productivity. The significant impact of home country CEOs and HR managers on subsidiary performance further emphasizes that traditional management practices continue to play a key role in Japanese enterprise, even in foreign locations.

5. 主な発表論文等

〔雑誌論文〕 計0件

〔学会発表〕 計4件（うち招待講演 2件 / うち国際学会 2件）

1. 発表者名 Jesper Edman
2. 発表標題 Becoming Agents of Globalization: How Foreign Employees Construct Their Roles at MNE Headquarters
3. 学会等名 CBS Department of Economics, Business and Government (招待講演)
4. 発表年 2020年

1. 発表者名 Jesper Edman
2. 発表標題 Employing Women Managers: Implications for Japanese Corporate Routines and Practices
3. 学会等名 Society for the Advanced of Socio-Economics (国際学会)
4. 発表年 2018年

1. 発表者名 Jesper Edman
2. 発表標題 Has Abenomics Failed? The Future of the Japanese Economy
3. 学会等名 Institute for Security and Development Policy (招待講演)
4. 発表年 2016年

1. 発表者名 Jesper Edman
2. 発表標題 Foreignness as an Organizational Identity: Attributes, Competitive Effects, and Determinants
3. 学会等名 Academy of Management (国際学会)
4. 発表年 2015年

〔図書〕 計0件

〔産業財産権〕

〔その他〕

-

6. 研究組織

	氏名 (ローマ字氏名) (研究者番号)	所属研究機関・部局・職 (機関番号)	備考
--	---------------------------	-----------------------	----

7. 科研費を使用して開催した国際研究集会

〔国際研究集会〕 計0件

8. 本研究に関連して実施した国際共同研究の実施状況

共同研究相手国	相手方研究機関
---------	---------