

Career Development of University Students in Japan

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When I started job-hunting, I had a vague uneasiness for my future although I participated in a sales internship. In my situation, I had to decide my career as soon as possible. However, I did not know what I wanted to do in the future. The reason why I had to decide my career in a hurry was due to Japanese companies' unique recruitment system in which companies recruit mostly new graduates once in a year, in every April. In retrospect, there were few opportunities to consider my future career throughout my life or at school. Therefore, I thought a large number of university students may be in the same situation, and I wondered if university students do not have opportunities to think about themselves and their career. Drawing on Foucault's concept of subjectivity as the way one sees oneself in terms of the society, Kjærård (2020) used subjectivity as a framework to analyze the data of Nordic youth in his research of career development.

In this paper, I depicted subjectivity to career development of university students in Japan and investigated how the subjectivity is constructed. In order to explore my research, I used Kjærård's concepts as a framework of my analysis.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

In my research, I focused on subjectivity of job hunting. In order to investigate what subjectivity Meisei University students have, I employed the concept of subjectivity which is defined as an idea of how modern man understands himself (Villarsen 2015).

2-1 Three career consciousness

In the study (Adachi 2006) which examined university students' career consciousness, it is mentioned that there are three career consciousnesses. The career consciousnesses are *Ukemi* (Passivity), *Tekishoku Sinko* (belief in the idea of perfect vocation), *Yaritaikoto Sinko* (inclination toward personal interests) (Adachi 2006). Therefore, I employed these three notions of career consciousnesses as subjectivity in my research.

2-2 Five Subjects

Kjærgård notes about five subjects on how career guidance is nationalized in Norway. Five subjects are as follows:

- 1) The philanthropic and progressive movement and the moral subject.
This is the subject that people wish to contribute to society and act for it.
- 2) Industrialization psychometrics and the adaptable subject.
This is the subject that people mentally and physically adapt to society and a company. This interpretation is possibly different from what Kjærgård mentioned. However, I interpreted as a subject which people adapt to society.
- 3) The welfare state security mechanism and judicial subject.
This is the subject which is putted emphasis on citizen's needs and rights such as equal rights, social and financial security. From these things, I interpreted this subject is similar to stability orientation.
- 4) Human capital neoliberalism and the economic subject.
This is the subject which is having high motivation to be a top or greater heights and substantiate promotion of economic efficiency by free competence.
- 5) The knowledge society career management skills and the competence subject
This is the subject which is focused on skills to learn.

I regard subjectivities reside in a subject. In this research, I used the notion of the following five subjectivities to refer to the internal consciousness of self in Kjærgård's five subjects; "Philanthropic subjectivity" "Adaptable subjectivity" "Stability orientation subjectivity" "Human capital subjectivity" "Competence subjectivity".

I employed these subjectivities in my research, and I focused on how these subjectivities appeared in participants.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In my research, I investigated the subjectivity to career development of university students in Japan and how the subjectivity is constructed. In order to depict the subjectivity and the elements which construct the subjectivity, I interviewed six students of Meisei university.

3-1 Data Collection Method

I performed semi-structured interviews with participants and recorded the interview to collect data correctly. Data collection period was between the months of June and August in 2021. The situation during the period was under COVID-19 pandemic. Besides the pandemic, some of the participants and I were busy with job hunting during that period because most Japanese companies finish hiring new graduates in September hence job hunting students tend to be busy before September. From the above, I interviewed on zoom.

3-2 Participants

I focused on the fourth grade students and third grade students of Meisei University as the participants. The reason why I focused on the fourth grade students and the third grade students was because Japanese university students tend to consider a future career from the third grade. Moreover, I equally included male and female in order to observe differences between both genders. The list below presents the details of participants.

Fourth Grade Students	Third grade students
Name(gender)	Name(gender)
Name(gender)	Name(gender)
Name(gender)	Name(gender)

3-3 Research Ethics

I obtained permission from all participants to use the data from the interview and to record the interview. Moreover, in order to protect the privacy of participants, I employed pseudonyms.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

In this paper, I investigate the subjectivity to career development of university students in Japan and how the subjectivity is constructed. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight students at Meisei University students and recorded the interview to collect data. In order to analyze the data, I divided participant's job research period in to three processes. The processes are sequenced from 'before job search' 'during the job search' and 'after job search' respectively. From this process, I analyzed how the subjectivity is constructed and changing.

4-1 The participants roughly decide career by three career attitudes.

Adachi's three career consciousness appeared to all participants in each job research processes. The data below shows three different career subjectivities backed up with interview data.

4-1-1 Passivity

In my data, there were participants who took passive attitude to job hunting. Passive attitude appeared in four out of eight participants. I analyzed that passive attitude is same as Ukemi in Adachi's three career consciousness. The data showed passive attitude appeared before or in the early stage of job hunting.

「就職活動の仕方がわからないし、自信がないから行動してない。(I did not

know how to do job hunting, and I was not confident, so I did not act.)」(Akira 2021/8/20). 「焦って就職活動をしたくないから、友達が経験したことを聞いてから行動したい。(I do not want to rush job hunting, so I want to do job hunting after referring to my friends' experience.)」(James 2021/8/24). From the above data, I analyzed that some students do job hunting according to the surrounding people or situation. In other words, there were students who have low awareness of career development and decision.

4-1-2 Tekishoku Shinko attitude

There were participants who pursue a perfect job. I regard that this attitude is same as Adachi's Tekishoku Shinko. In my data, six out of eight participants appeared Tekishoku Shinko attitude during job hunting period. From the data, Tekishoku Shinko attitude was tended to appear from the middle to the latter half.

「人と関わることが好きだから、人材業界に就職した。この仕事は私に向いていると思う。(I will work in the human resources industry because I like to interact with people, so I think that this job suits me.)」(Ann 2021/8/20).

「考えることが好きで、いいサービスがないかよく考えていた。だから企業して自分で事業を作った方が向いていると思った。(I like thinking, and I was frequently thinking about new service which useful for the world, so I thought that it is suits me to start up a company.)」(Akira 2021/8/20). In addition, I analyzed that there are two kinds of Tekishoku Shinko. One was active Tekishoku Shinko. Another one was reactive Tekishoku Shinko. Some participants who were active Tekishoku Shinko consider themselves and occupation to find vocation. Emily described her experience during job hunting.

「サマスの経験から小学校の実習に参加したけど、将来自分が働くイメージがわからなかったからやめた。そのあとイベントを企画するのが好きだったからイベント会社の説明会を受けに行ったが、人が自分に合わないと感じた。そこで就活イベントに参加して保険会社が気になった。しかし知人や友人に営業することもあると知りやめた。(I participated teaching at elementary school based on the experience in MSSP. however, I was not able to image that I work at elementary school. After that, I interested in a job which organize events

because I liked to organize events, but I did not feel any charm at the company briefing. Then I participated joint job fairs, and I interested in insurance company, but I heard that sometimes I need to sales activities to my friend and acquaintance.)」 (Emily 2021/8/23). On the other hand, some participants were reactive Tekishoku Shinko. The participants judged themselves only by experience and find vocation. In the interview, Akira said 「今までとにかく楽な道を選んできていて、将来会社に入って働いても続かないなと思ったから就活はしなかった。(I did not do job hunting because I have taken easy way so far, and even if I enter a company, I thought that I will not continue doing the job.)」 (Akira 2021/8/20). From these data, I was able to understand that most of students consider whether the job is suitable for their personality and special skills concurrently with looking for a specific job. Among them, I analyzed that Tekisyoku Shinko attitude was divided in to active Tekishoku Shinko and reactive Tekishoku Shinko.

4-1-3 Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude

There were participants who pursue a job which is interested in. I regarded that this attitude is same as Adachi's Yaritaikoto Shinko. Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude appeared at various timings during job hunting with all participants, and Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude appeared most. From the interview data, I analyzed that Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude has some different elements. One is a job what they want to do as work, and the other is a job what they want to do as part of their hobby.

「アイデアを形にできて、世の中の役に立つ仕事をしたい。(I want to do a job which can shape my idea and useful for people.)」 (Emma 2021/9/29). 「やりたいことを仕事にしたい。好きなことをしていると楽しくられる。(I want to make something I like into my job, and)」 (Emily 2021/8/23). 「英語を使える仕事に就きたい。(I want to work in a job that uses English.)」 (Ken 2021/8/28). From above the data, I analyzed that all participants basically decide their career they want to do.

4-2 Students who have Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude tend to have Competence subjectivity.

I analyzed that five subjectivities which is summarizing in the table 1 exist in the Adachi's three career consciousness.

Table 1

- | |
|--------------------------------------|
| ① Philanthropic subjectivity |
| ② Adaptable subjectivity |
| ③ Stability orientation subjectivity |
| ④ Human capital subjectivity |
| ⑤ Competence subjectivity |

From the table 2, I realized that competence subjectivity is frequently appeared in Fourth year students who have Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude. Therefore, I understood that students who have Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude tends to have high study motivation, and they want to brush up their skills on their career.

Table 2

Fourth year students		Ann(F)			Emily(F)			Emma(F)			Akira(M)			Ken(M)		
		B	D	A	B	D	A	B	D	A	B	D	A	B	D	A
Passivity	①	○														
	②				○											
	③				○					○						
	④															
	⑤															
Tekisyoku Shinko	①			○				○			○					
	②		○			○										
	③															
	④			○			○									
	⑤							○	○		○	○				
Yaritaikoto Shinko	①							○	○		○	○				
	②					○										○
	③						○									
	④								○							
	⑤			○			○			○	○	○	○	○	○	○

B= Before job search, D=During job search, A=After job research

4-3 Career subjectivity changes from passivity to Tekishoku Shinko and Yaritaikoto Shinko.

I analyzed that career subjectivity tends to change in the following order Passivity, Tekishoku Shinko and Yaritaikoto Shinko. The table 3 showed that Ann, Emily, and Akira’s career subjectivity was similarly changed in that process. From these data, I understood that students have a passive attitude before job research and consider what is perfect vocation for them afterwards. After they consider vocation, students finally take an Yaritaikoto shinko attitude such as they find thing they want to do at work. As an example, Akira mentioned about before job research as follows 「自分は就職活動をなにも考えていなかったけど、周りがやり始めたから将来について考え始めた。(I did not have any job hunting plans. However, I have come to think about my future because my friends already start job hunting, and I was anxious.)」 (Akira 2021/8/20). Akira additionally mentioned about during job research as follows 「自分で企業したほうが自分を表現できるし向いている。(I am suited for starting a business because I can express myself more than hiring out as an employee.)」 (Akira 2021/8/20). These data show that Akira’s subjectivity is changed from passivity to Tekishoku Shinko. After he changed to Tekishoku Shinko his subjectivity changed to Yaritaikoto Shinko. 「ビジネスを通して世の中の子供達が

Table 3

Fourth year students		Ann(F)			Emily(F)			Emma(F)			Akira(M)			Ken(M)			
		B	D	A	B	D	A	B	D	A	B	D	A	B	D	A	
Passivity	①	○															
	②				○												
	③				○						○						
	④																
	⑤																
Tekisyoku Shinko	①			○					○			○					
	②		○														
	③						○										
	④							○									
	⑤			○				○									
Yaritaikoto Shinko	①								○	○			○	○			
	②						○										○
	③																
	④																
	⑤			○			○			○			○	○	○	○	○

B= Before job search, D=During job search, A=After job research

もっと苦勞しない社会を作りたい。また起業する人たちへの支援もしたい。(I want to create a society where children can live without taking pains, and also I want to support people want to start a business.)」(Akira 2021/8/20). Based on these data, I understood that university student’s career subjectivity changed from passivity to Tekishoku Shinko and from Tekishoku Shinko to Yaritaikoto Shinko.

4-4 Third year students tend to have Yaritaikoto shinko in the early of job research.

There was tendency that the third year students have Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude. Their career attitude are summarized in Table 4.

Table4

Third year sutudents		Mia(F)		Harper(F)		James(M)	
		B	D	B	D	B	D
Passivity	①						
	②					○	
	③		○			○	
	④						
	⑤						
Tekisyoku Shinko	①					○	
	②					○	
	③	○				○	
	④						
	⑤						
Yaritaikoto Shinko	①			○	○		
	②		○			○	
	③	○	○			○	
	④						
	⑤				○		

B: Before job research, D: During job research, A: After job research

In the interview, all the third year students have something they want do. 「卒業したら留学か、ワーホリか、海外ボランティアに参加したい。(After I graduate, I want to go abroad or working holiday, and also I want to join an international volunteer group.)」(Hana 2021/8/20). 「動物が好きだから、動物関係の仕事をしたい。(I want to work in a job related to animals because I like animals.)」(Mia 2021/8/24). Therefore, the third year students have something they want to do in the early of job research. In addition, the table 4 represent that the third

year students tend to have Philanthropic subjectivity, Adaptable subjectivity, Stability orientation subjectivity. From these data, there were tendency to have abstract career subjectivity.

4-5 Results

From my research data, I understood that Meisei university students have three career attitudes as follows: Passivity, Tekishoku Shinko, Yaritaikoto Shinko. These attitudes change in the following order Passivity, Tekishoku Shinko and Yaritaikoto Shinko. In addition to these, I found that Kjærgård's five subjectivities reside in above three career attitudes. I found a tendency that the fourth year students are tended to have competence subjectivities with Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude, and the third year students tended to have Philanthropic subjectivity, Adaptable subjectivity, Stability orientation subjectivity with Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude. Therefore, both of the fourth year students and third year students develop career with Yaritaikoto Shinko attitude. However, their attitude is constructed with different subjectivities between the fourth year students and the third year students. As a result, Meisei university student's career subjectivity is constructed of surrounding environment. Therefore, putting yourself in the environment where you can get positive effect is connected to develop ideal career. In order to find the environment, it is necessary to be proactive and have a lot of experiences.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this paper, I focused on the career subjectivity of university students, and how the career subjectivities are constructed. The motivation of this research was a vague feeling of anxiety I had for my future. I did not understand what I wanted to do in the future or what I wanted to be when I started job hunting. Therefore, I was curious about how university students around me understand themselves and construct their career. This study provided detailed career subjectivities of students in Meisei University and the processes of the

career subjectivity construction. Therefore, the result of this study helps not only to understand myself, but also helps people in terms of career construction because it is important to understand oneself when constructing a career. Understanding oneself precisely is connected to ideal career construction. In other word, this study can be a part of self-analysis. Hence, I would like to construct my ideal career with this study, and I am glad if the number of people who build an ideal career.

References

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