Study of gender equality in the Higher Education sector in Japan

Findings from a desk study of existing research and key stakeholder interviews

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3 April 2024

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Executive Summary

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. One area of work the Education team in Japan is exploring as a theme is the promotion of gender equality in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Japan.

In January 2024, Future Sessions Inc. were commissioned to conduct preliminary research on the status of and issues regarding gender equality in higher education in Japan. The findings from this research will support the British Council to design and develop new programmes and activities.

Chapter 2 identifies the number of female researchers in Japan based on various statistical data. Amongst the 38 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, Japan has the lowest ratio of female researchers, 17.8% as of 2022. In addition, the percentage of female researchers decreases with each successive career stage, a situation referred to as the "leaky pipeline". The national government is aware of this situation, and the "Third Science and Technology Basic Plan" for the period FY2006–FY2010 committed to increasing the number of female researchers, with a numerical value for the target ratio of female researchers set. Based on this Plan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) launched a programme to support female researchers in 2006.

However, the percentage of female researchers in Japan remains low. Inadequate gender statistics and the lack of a theoretical foundation for policy implementation have been identified as issues through comparison with policies in other countries. In addition, two factors contributing to the low number of female researchers in the academic sector of Japan were identified from previous studies: the challenge of work-life balance and the structural problem created by the male-dominated master-apprentice system.

Chapter 3 lists and categorises the status of actions aimed at promoting diversity at universities in Japan, based on data from previous studies. Specifically, we listed universities that have established administrative organisations such as "Gender Equality Offices" and "Diversity Promotion Offices". Many national universities have established operating organisations because of MEXT's project to support female researchers. In addition, most national universities have expanded their support systems for work–life balance, indicating a policy-driven movement to close the gender gap at national universities. By contrast, few private universities have established similar governing bodies.

Chapter 4 details interviews with five faculty members engaged in gender equality and diversity promotion work at universities and provides detailed clarification of the actual gender gap at universities. The following is a summary of the current situation and issues identified from the interviews.

First, at present, national universities provide considerably more support than private universities for female researchers in terms of facilities because there are many situations in which national universities must be aware of competitive funds and grants. In addition, national universities have been trying to increase the visibility of excellent female researchers through positive actions, such as limiting recruitment for specific posts to female researchers only. Although some male researchers criticise the increase in the number of female researchers

because of doubts about their female colleagues' abilities and a fear that they themselves will find fewer posts available, there is also a welcoming atmosphere from the broader perspective of academic development and human resource development.

One issue that was raised is the uniform implementation of MEXT's programme to support female researchers. National universities vary widely in terms of location, number of students and faculty members, and research environment. When it comes to the acquisition of female researchers, whose population is small to begin with, such differences in conditions may lead to competition for human resources, and there is a risk of increased polarisation among universities. In addition, the adoption period of each project is short (only a few years), making it difficult to measure the effects of various support programmes on female researchers. MEXT only considers the growth rate in the ratio of female faculty members, which presents a problem as this is not an accurate reflection of the actual status of the initiatives.

The following are some of the issues that should be addressed to close the gender gap in Japanese universities:

- The 30% female researcher ratio set as a target has not been achieved, and the percentage of women decreases at each stage of the career path leading to a research role, resulting in competition to recruit from a small pool of female researchers.

- The uniform target values and short-term evaluation of MEXT's female researcher support programme make it difficult to measure the effectiveness of support systems.

- Inadequate gender statistics make it difficult for universities to understand the current situation and formulate improvement measures.

- Generation gaps in ways of thinking exist between faculty and administrative staff, and between students and alumni, reproducing misogynistic values within the organisations.

Based on an overview of this research, the report proposes four approaches for the British Council to consider adopting in the future, especially when drawing up action plans, to address the issues identified in the interviews:

1. Propose policy revisions to MEXT.

2. Analyse the actual status of female researchers at each national university.

3. Develop gender statistics for each university.

4. Offer gender courses as an external organisation.

Chapter 1: Research background, aims, and methods

1.1 Research background and aims

The British Council, the entity carrying out this research, is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. As such, we are active in fields such as the arts and culture, and education. In our higher education activities and programmes, we are involved with international dialogues and exchange between policymakers, education leaders, researchers, and students. We create educational opportunities and support higher education reforms around the world, with a focus on shared global challenges such as inclusion and internationalisation.

In March 2022, we published the "Report: Gender Equality in Higher Education - Maximising Impacts" bringing together research into the gender gap in higher education systems and educational institutions around the world. The report set out a consensus on the need for coordinated efforts by governments, higher education institutions, and other actors in addressing the issue of this gender gap.

The report also pointed out the low ratio of female students at each level from undergraduate to doctoral programmes in Japan, and the fact that this was also apparent in the low ratio of female academics at universities. This situation has been recognised by academia and the government, and government-driven remedial measures have been taken, but these have not yet led to a substantial increase in the proportion of female researchers.

In the light of this background, we commissioned Future Sessions Inc. to carry out an investigation into the current state and issues related to gender equality in the higher education sector in Japan, with the aims of gathering the main opinions in this field and of sketching a general consensus for Japan. The information about the gender gap at Japanese universities brought to light by this research will be used by the British Council in planning and developing new programmes and activities.

1.2 Research methods

This research consisted of three parts: desk research, case studies, and research interviews. During the desk research, we clarified the proportion of female researchers at Japan's universities using statistical data published by the government, giving a numerical understanding of the current situation. We also confirmed the implementation status of policies aimed at closing the gender gap at Japanese universities, based on materials published by the government and academic articles (Chapter 2).

In the research to develop case studies, we investigated and made lists of the national, local public, and private universities across Japan which have set up gender equality or diversity promotion management organisations. We also extracted each university's main support systems and analysed these by type (Chapter 3). After having gained a macro-level understanding of the gender gap and of initiatives aiming to improve it through the desk research and case studies, we carried out research interviews. Five academic or administrative staff members involved with activities to eliminate the gender gap at university institutions were interviewed, clarifying the sense of the problems held by those working on the ground and the current issues which can be understood from this (Chapter 4). Taking these research results into account, the future approaches which the British Council could take have been laid out (Chapter 5).

Illustration 1: Methodology of the commissioned project

Methodology of the commissioned project

1. Desk research

1-1. Quantitative data
1-2. Policy implementation status
1-3. Literature review

➤ We will research each type of quantitative data, policy implementation status, and the scholarly literature, leading to an analysis of the current situation regarding the gender gap in Japan's higher education.

2. Consideration of case studies

2-1. Compilation of a list of activities at each university
2-2. Categorisation of activity content, understanding of trends

➤ We will pick up examples of activities aimed at gender equality, etc. at each university, and analyse trends.

3. Interview survey

3-1. Selection of interview subjects
3-2. Holding of interviews
3-3. Summary of interview findings

➤ We will carry out interviews. These will clarify the opinions of those working on the ground, as well as the issues.

4. Creation of a report
We will put together the macro (desk research, examination of case studies) and micro (interviews) perspectives to clarify the current situation and issues within the higher education sector.

Chapter 2: Desk research

2.1 Quantitative data research

2.1.1 The number and ratio of female researchers in Japan

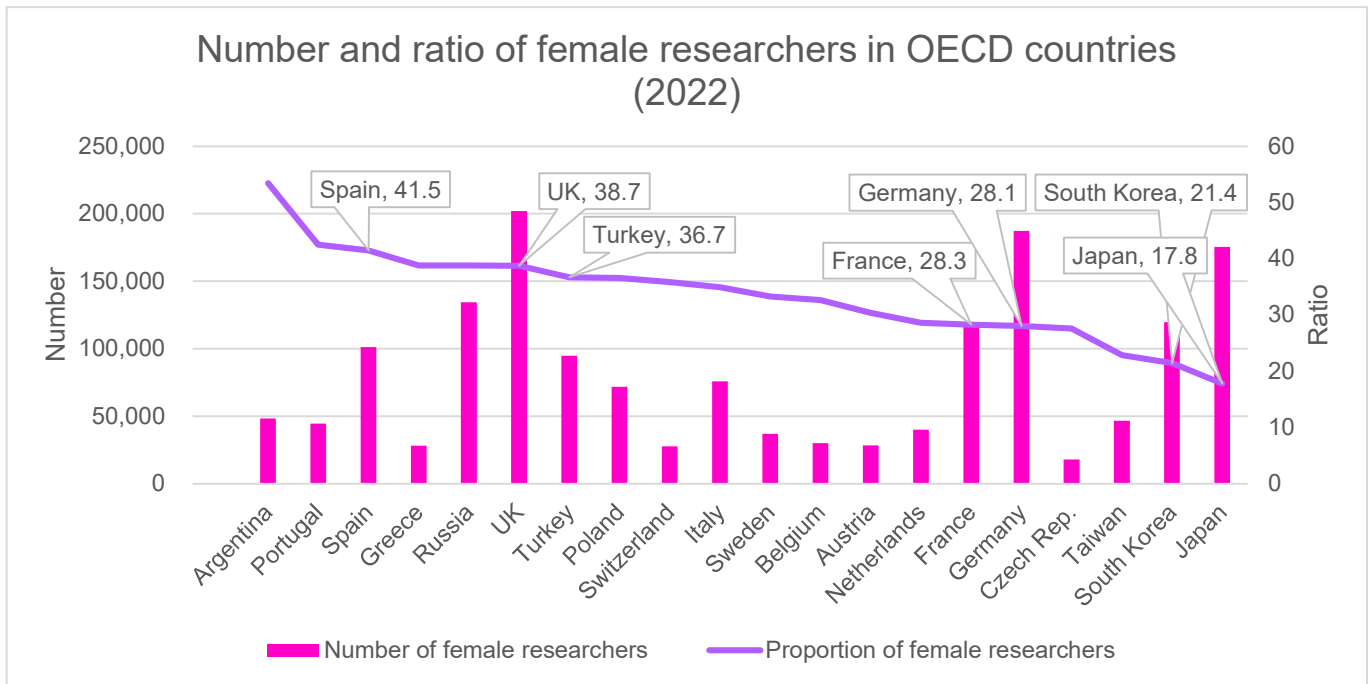**Number and ratio of female researchers in OECD countries (2022)**

Fig. 1 Number and ratio of female researchers in OECD countries (2022)
[Graph created by the authors from the 2023 Basic Survey on Science and Technology and OECD Main Science and Technology Indicators March 2023][1]

If we compare Japan with the 38 member states of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in terms of the issue of female researchers, Japan was in bottom place in 2022, with a ratio of 17.8% female researchers. Even in comparison with other countries with similar numbers of female researchers, such as Spain (41.5%), Turkey (36.7%), France (28.3%), Germany (28.1%), or South Korea (21.4%), Japan is the only country below 20%.

Nevertheless, if we look at changes in the number of female researchers in Japan and the proportion of the total which they make up, we can point to the fact that these have been rising for the past 40 years. Despite the rollout by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereinafter "MEXT") of projects aimed at supporting female researchers in the country, as described later in this report, and the implementation of policies to develop research environments and increase the number of researchers, it remains that the ratio of female researchers is still low in comparison with those in other countries.

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[1] Excluding countries where there are fewer than 100 female researchers.
NB This graph was created by the translator using data including a slightly different selection of countries.
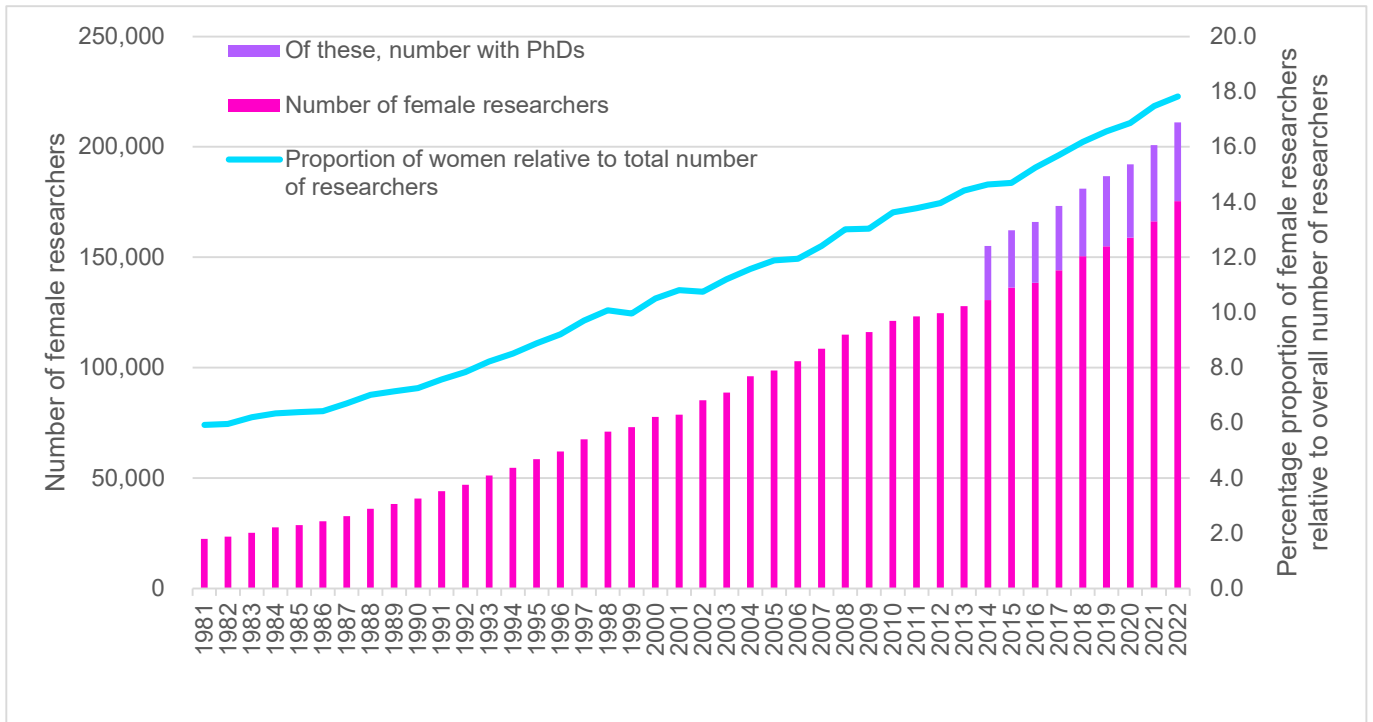
**Fig. 2 Changes in the number of female researchers in Japan
and their proportion of the total number of researchers[2]**

If we refer next to the most recent data, that from 2023, we find that there are 1,011,016 men and 319,263 women. The ratio of female researchers is 24%, much higher than the 17.8% in 2022.
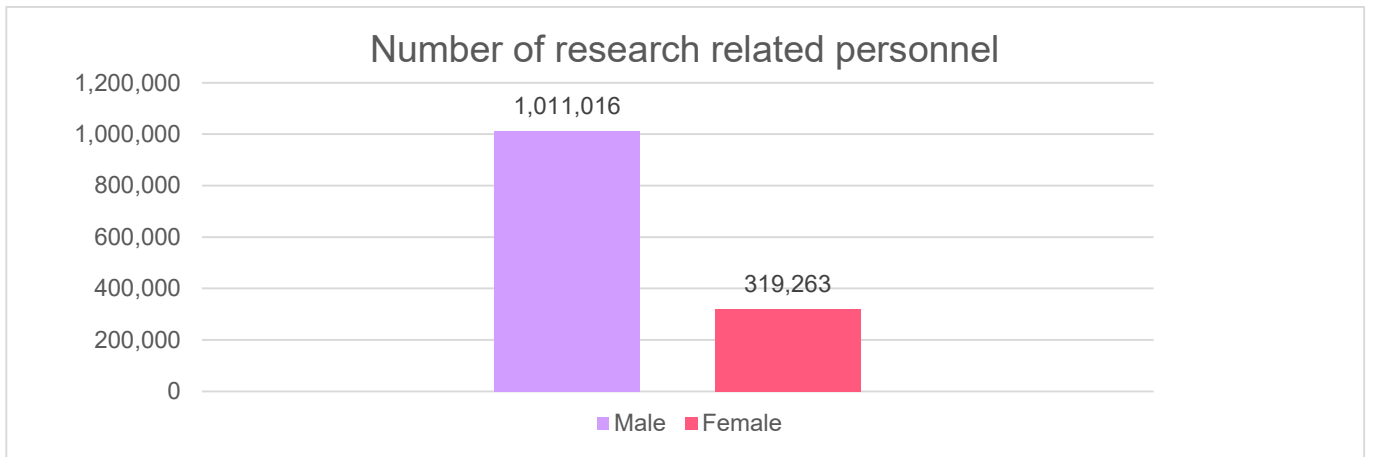
Fig. 3 The number of research related personnel[3] in Japan (2023)
[Graph created by the authors from the 2023 Basic Survey on Science and Technology]

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[2] National Institute of Science and Technology Policy (2023) "Science and Technology Indicators 2023" https://www.nistep.go.jp/sti_indicator/2023/RM328_24.html, accessed 21 February 2024
[Translator's note: this is a Japanese-language page. An English-language summary can be downloaded from https://nistep.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/2000006, as of 19 June 2024]
[3] Indicates people working in research related roles at companies; non-profit organisations or public agencies which have the carrying out of experimental or investigative research into the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences, etc. as a goal; universities; etc. In the case of universities, it includes not only academic staff but also those enrolled on doctoral programmes. (See the Statistics Bureau of Japan, "Survey of Research and Development – Outline", https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/kagaku/index.html [English-language page], accessed 21 February 2024)

The figures for researchers connected to higher education institutions, the target of this research project, will be further examined below. If we look at the trend in the number of full-time academics at universities over the past 20 years, the number of men is roughly stable, but the number of women working as academics has increased greatly; in 2023, the proportion of women among full-time academics was 27.2%.

Fig. 4 Trends in the number of male and female full-time academics
[Graph created by the authors from annual statistics in the Basic School Survey]

Moreover, the number of female postgraduate students has been steadily growing since around 2015. The proportion of women among postgraduate students was 32.8% in 2023, higher than the proportion among full-time academics. Furthermore, if we look at the trends in the numbers of male and female students at undergraduate level, the number of male students is declining while that of female students is increasing greatly, with the proportion of women among undergraduate students at 44.6% in 2023.
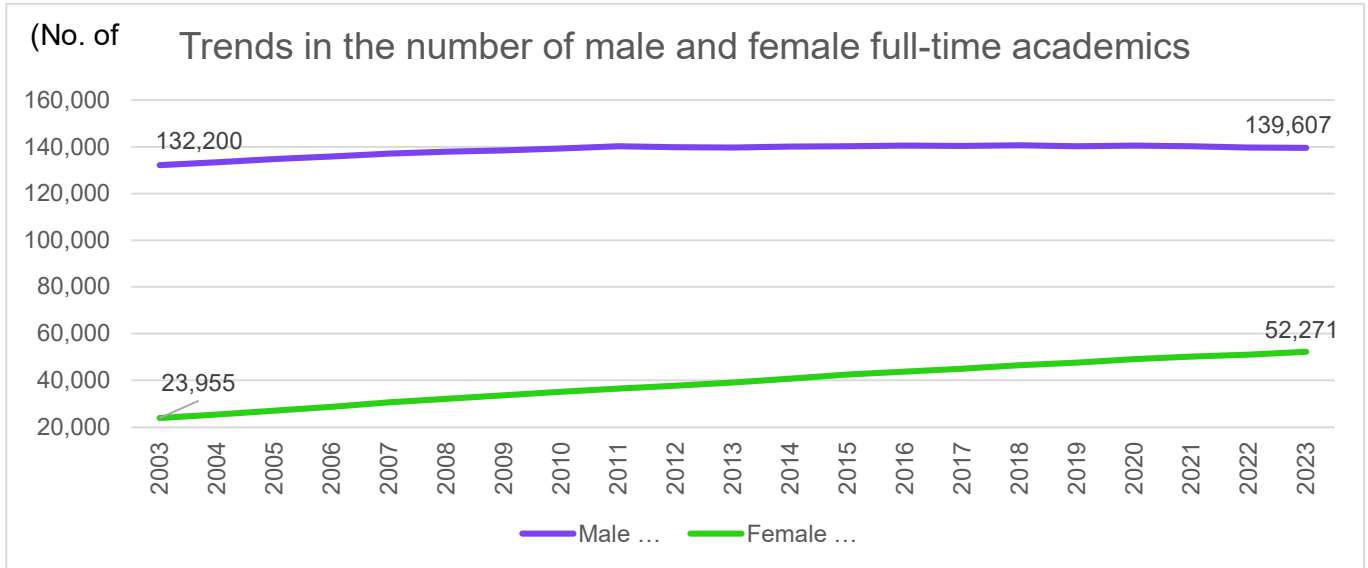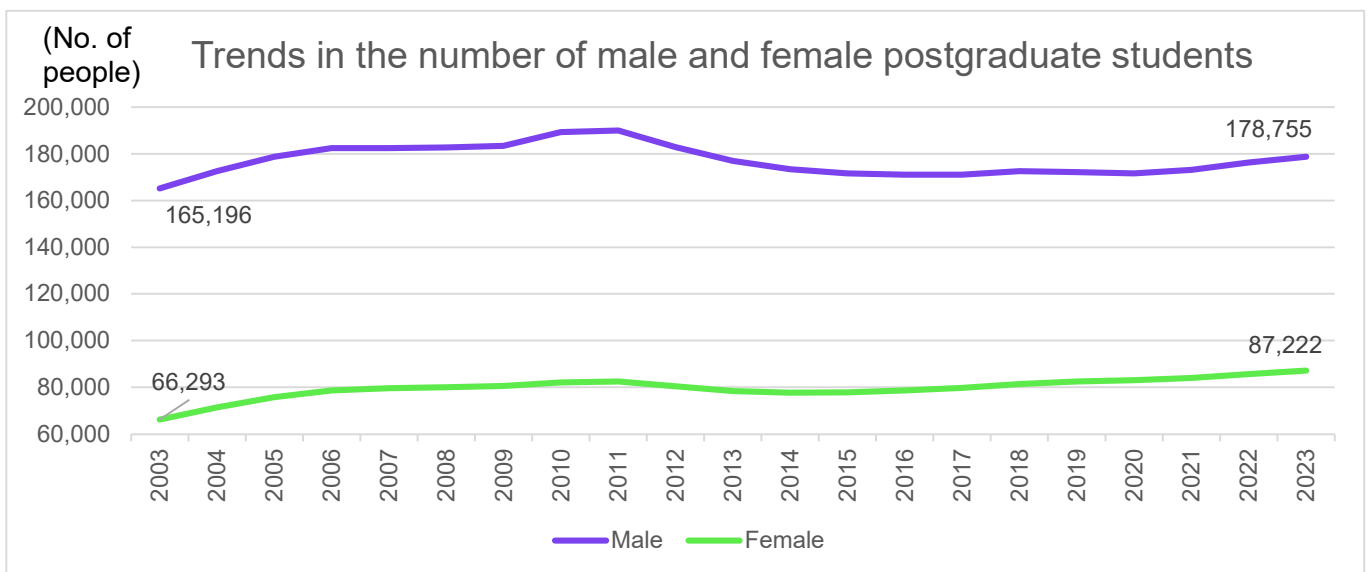

Fig. 5 Trends in the number of male and female postgraduate students
[Graph created by the authors from annual statistics in the Basic School Survey]
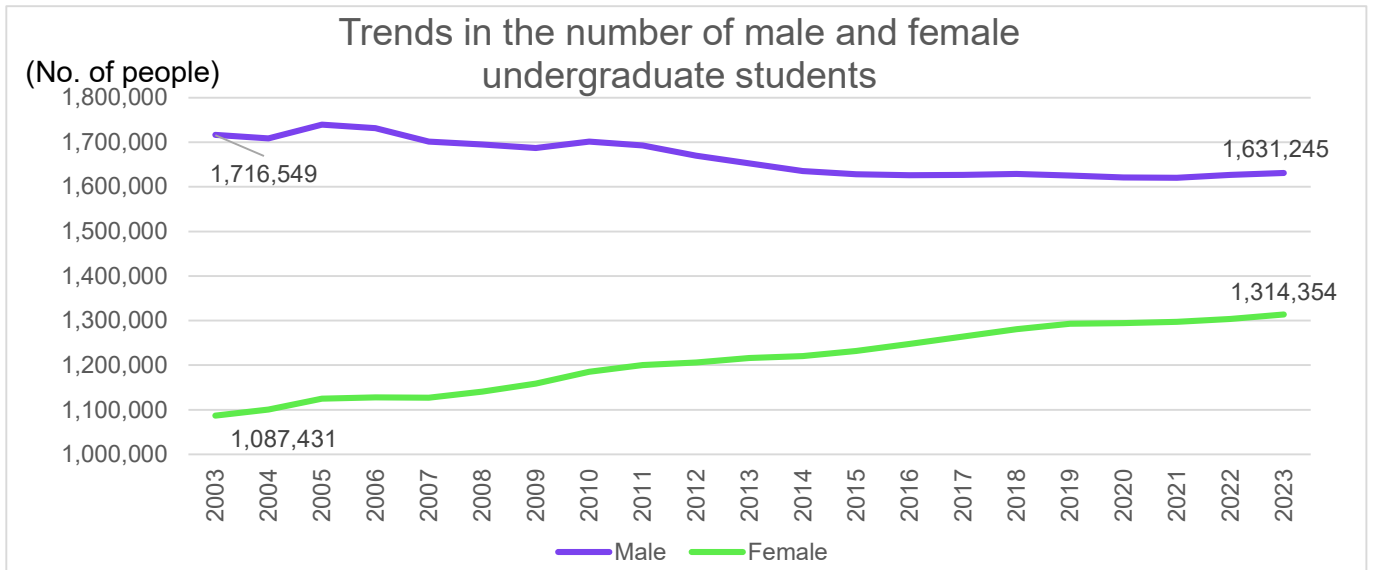
Fig. 6 Trends in the number of male and female undergraduate students
[Graph created by the authors from annual statistics in the Basic School Survey]

Based on the trends detailed above, we can point to the fact that the proportion of women decreases at each successive stage of education and employment, from undergraduate to postgraduate and then university academic staff. Ginko Kawano (2023) has dubbed the above phenomenon the "university education 'entrance problem'", pointing out the influence of the gender balance among academics and the presence of academics who hold gender stereotypes on the educational environment. Such a gender gap in the education arena exists from primary right through to tertiary education, and so it is undeniable that schools are places which reproduce stereotypes. Considering countermeasures to this situation in university education is the specific aim of this research study, which focuses on the gender gap at higher education institutions. To move towards this aim, the next section will cast light on the existence of the gender gap from the standpoint of academic fields at universities.

2.1.2 The gender gap in the choice between the humanities and the sciences

As we saw in the previous section, there are suggestions that the gender gap and the existence of gender stereotypes in the education arena are influencing the career paths of women involved with research. We turn now to the number of male and female undergraduate and postgraduate students, and the proportion of female students, in different academic fields in 2023. These can be shown in the following graphs.

Each graph begins on the left with the field in which the proportion of women is the highest and moves towards the right. We can see that for undergraduate and postgraduate students, there are high proportions of women in fields such as home economics, pharmacy and nursing, the creative arts, the humanities, and education. On the other hand, the proportions of women in the fields of the social sciences, the natural sciences, and engineering are low. In other words, we can detect the influence of the stereotype that the humanities are for women and the sciences are for men.

The number of male and female undergraduate students and the proportion of women by field (2023)

Fig. 7 The number of male and female undergraduate students and the proportion of women by field (2023)
[Graph created by the authors from statistics in the 2023 Basic School Survey][4]

The number of male and female postgraduate students and the proportion of women by field (Masters, 2023)

Fig. 8 The number of male and female postgraduate students and the proportion of women by field (Masters, 2023)
[Graph created by the authors from statistics in the 2023 Basic School Survey]

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[4] In addition to the academic field categories of "the humanities" and "the social sciences", there is also one for "the human and social sciences". In the Basic School Survey, students are classified based on the faculties in place at their university, and so it can be conjectured that "the human and social sciences" refers to faculties including courses from the fields both of the humanities and of the social sciences.

The number of male and female postgraduate students and the proportion of women by field (PhD, 2023)
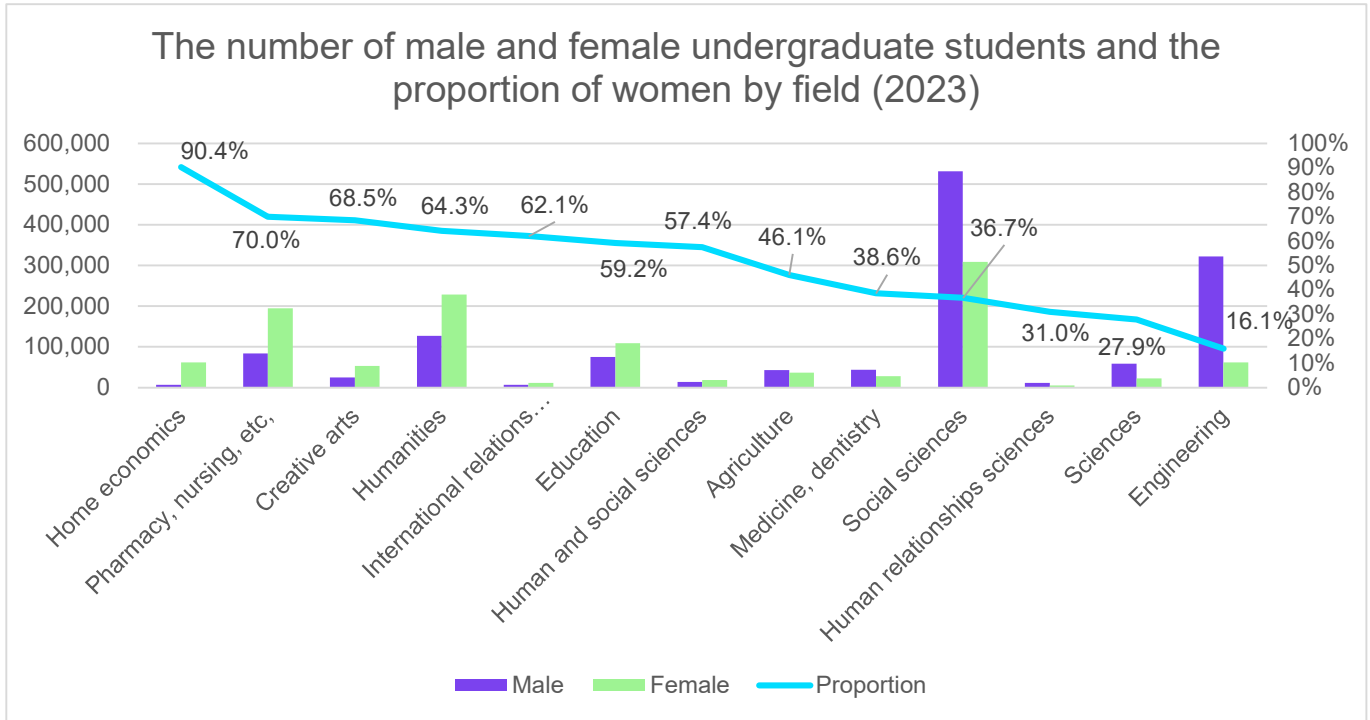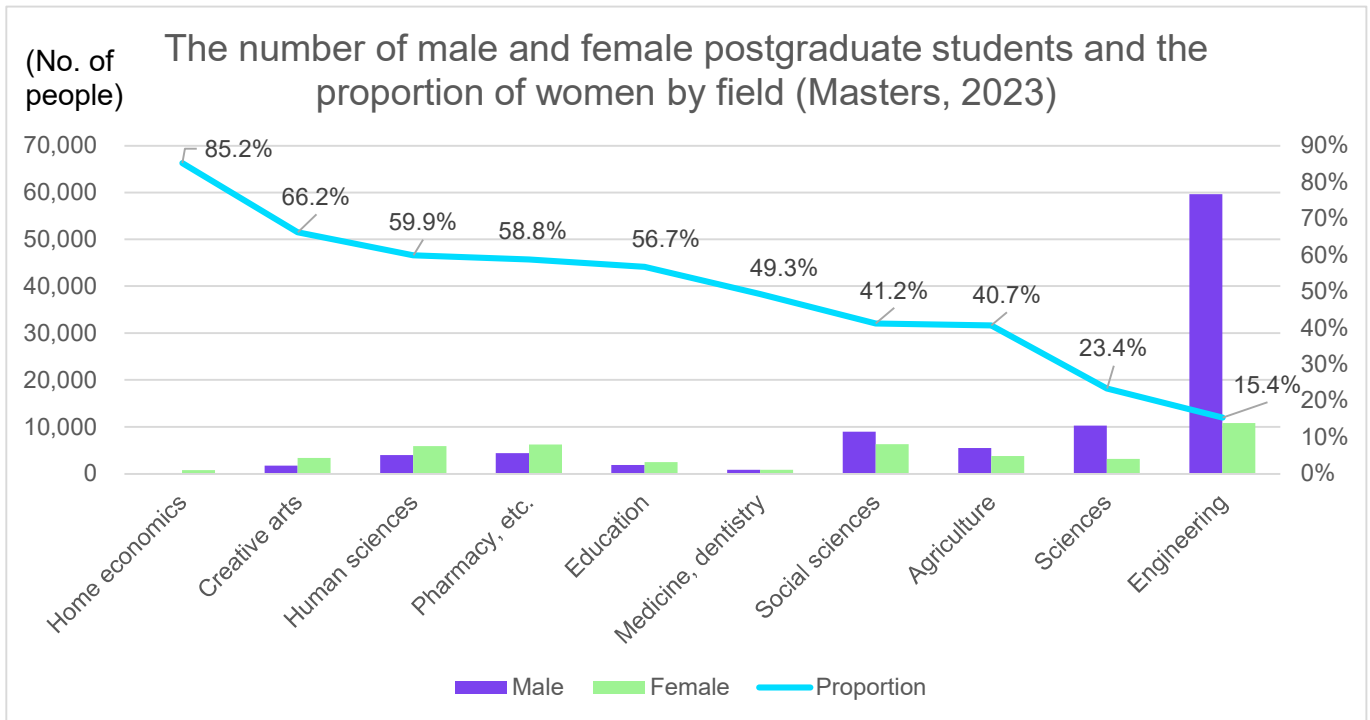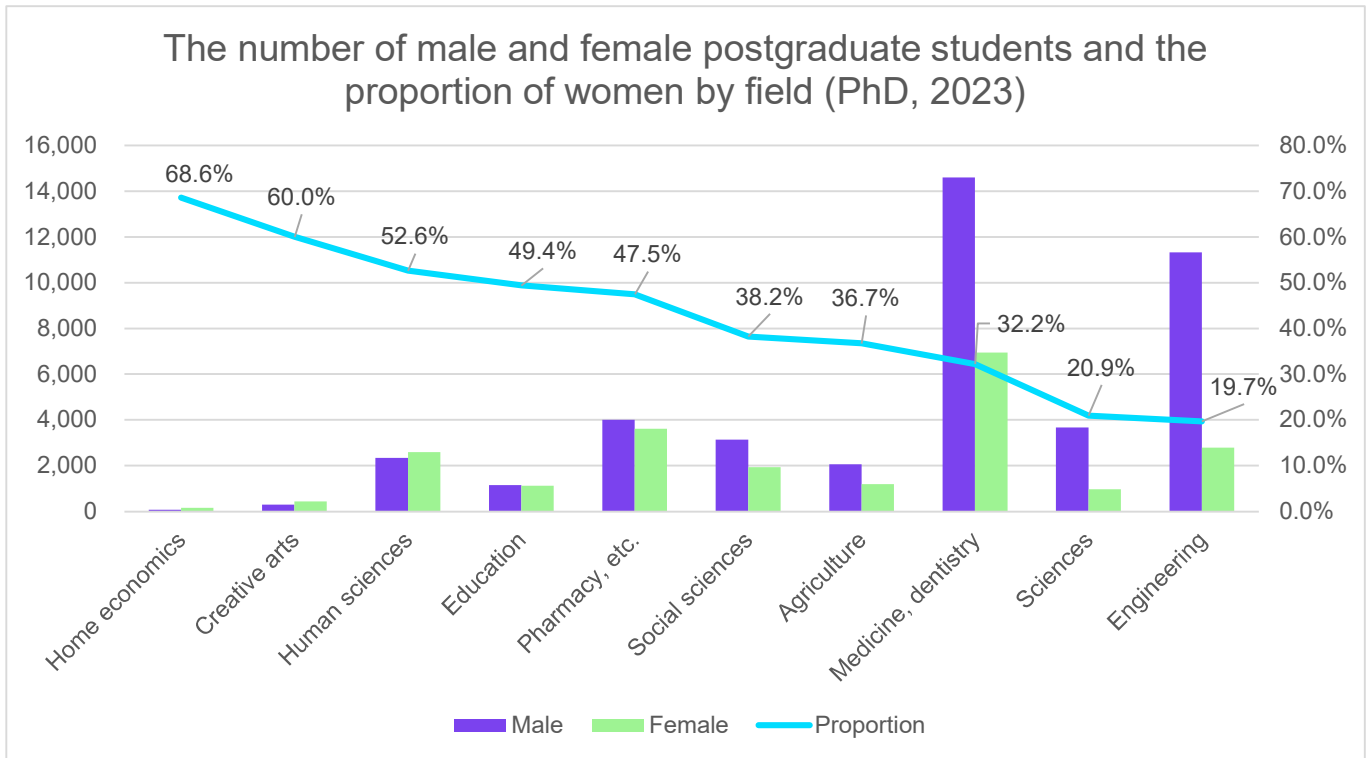
Fig. 9 The number of male and female postgraduate students and the proportion of women by field (PhD, 2023)
[Graph created by the authors from statistics in the 2023 Basic School Survey]

Furthermore, turning our attention to the fields in which the proportions of women are high, it is also important that these are in the domain of the household or in fields adjacent to the realm of hobbies. The social sciences such as politics, economics, or law, and the natural sciences such as physics or engineering are seen as the territory of men, leading to the achievement of male careers. On the other hand, women are involved with research activities in the domains of the household or of hobbies, which is to say, those outside the marketplace. From this fact, we can see the reproduction of stereotypes in terms of attitudes to professions.

The influence of the gender stereotypes which are carried forward from primary and secondary education in Japan remain strongly evident in tertiary education, as seen in the above ways, and are evident particularly in the male-female ratios in different academic fields. These come about because of the overlapping influences of two axes: the choice between the humanities and the sciences, and the choice of careers. It is due to this situation that the increase of female researchers in the sciences was chosen as the target of support by the national government for female researchers. In the next section, we will look at the background to and actual status of the implementation of national government policies, keeping the above point in mind.

2.2 Research into the status of policy implementation

2.2.1 The circumstances leading to support programmes for female researchers

According to Hiromichi Yoshitake (2018), there are two background trends leading to support programmes for female researchers. The first major trend began with the setting of "the formation of a gender-equal society" as a goal by the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society, promulgated in 1999. "Positive action" which would proactively deliver opportunities to redress gender disparities between men and women was prescribed in the article below.

Article 2 In this Act, the meanings of the terms listed in the following items shall be as prescribed respectively in those items.

(i)Formation of a Gender-Equal Society: forming a society in which both men and women, as equal members of society, are given opportunities to freely participate in activities in any fields of society and thereby equally enjoy political, economic, social and cultural benefits as well as share responsibilities.

(ii)Positive action: Positive provision of the opportunities stipulated in the preceding item to either men or women to the extent necessary to redress gender disparities in terms of such opportunities.[5]

The proactive measures for improvement described here are what is known as "positive action". The Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office has the following limited definition of positive action.

It is difficult to provide an unequivocal definition of positive action, but in general terms, it refers to interim measures with the aim of realising substantive equality of opportunity through e.g. the provision of special opportunities within a particular scope to those who are at a disadvantage due to societal or structural discrimination.[6]

Since the Act was passed, the government has drawn up a Basic Plan based on it every five years, with the "Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality – Toward Reiwa Society Where all Women and Girls Can Thrive and Achieve Their Full Potential" receiving Cabinet Office approval on 25 December 2020.

The next factor in the background to support for female researchers is the drawing up of Science and Technology Basic Plans every five years after the passage of the Basic Act on Science and Technology in 1995. According to Yoshitake, promoting the activities of female researchers was taken up in earnest by the "Third Science and Technology Basic Plan", which ran from 2006 to 2010 (Yoshitake, 2018: 55).

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[5] "Basic Act for Gender Equal Society", Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office https://www.gender.go.jp/about_danjo/law/kihon/9906kihonhou.html, accessed 22 February 2024
[English version: https://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/ja/laws/view/2526/en, accessed 25 June 2024]
[6] "Positive action", Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office https://www.gender.go.jp/policy/positive_act/index.html, accessed 22 February 2024 [Japanese-language page]

The relevant parts of this Plan include "expand measures which take into consideration balancing research and childbirth/raising children, such as permitting the suspension or temporary extension of the period for receipt of competitive funding for a certain time associated with childbirth/raising children, etc."; "after seeking a broad range of female researcher candidates from the perspective of advancing the activities of diverse excellent researchers, universities and public research agencies will proactively employ female researchers through a fair selection process"; and "when it comes to promotion and advancement and participation in decision-making bodies, too, it is desirable to proactively appoint female researchers". The Plan then goes on to determine the ratios of female researchers as follows.

In terms of the ratios of female researchers, the targets, ideas, and the actual situation of female researchers will differ between institutions, organisations for each specialism, etc. However, it is expected that each institution will undertake initiatives to advance the proactive hiring of female researchers, e.g. setting numeric targets for the recruitment of women, taking into account the proportion of women on PhD courses in the relevant field, striving to achieve these targets and making their progress public. In view of the current ratios of women on PhD courses, the expected recruitment targets for female researchers are 25% for the natural sciences overall (20% for science and mathematics, 15% for engineering, 30% for agriculture, 30% for health sciences). The national government will gain an understanding of, and make public, the status of initiatives to promote the activities of female researchers at each university or public research agency and the ratio of female researchers at each career stage.[7]

The point upon which to focus here is the setting of an increase in the number of female researchers in the natural sciences as a target. We can also see that this plan focuses on women researchers in the sciences from the sentence which follows, "Furthermore, among the initiatives to expand the horizons of children interested in science and maths, as well as strengthening initiatives which contribute to arousing and raising the interest and curiosity of girls, we will promote the provision of information on familiar examples and role models who can serve as points of reference for women advancing in the field of science and technology".

These numerical targets have been carried forward as far as the Sixth Science and Technology Basic Plan, determined by the Cabinet Office in 2021; however, in the Sixth Science and Technology Basic Plan, numerical targets have been set for the humanities and the social sciences in addition to the natural sciences. It can be supposed that this is connected to the partial revision of the Basic Act on Science and Technology and the changing of its title to the "Basic Act on Science, Technology and Innovation" in 2020. Through this revision, the Act shifted direction to focus on the generation of innovation through the fusion of the natural sciences and the humanities (Nomura, 2020). We can conjecture that this policy was reflected in the Basic Plan drawn up based on this revised Act, too.

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[7] Cabinet Office, "Third Science and Technology Basic Plan" 17 – 18, https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/kihonkeikaku/honbun.pdf, accessed 22 February 2024 [Japanese-language page]

Whatever the case may be, numerical targets for an increase in the recruitment of women researchers have been and continue to be set by the national government, and several programmes to support female researchers have been rolled out to meet these targets. The table below sets out the evolution of these programmes.

Project name	Years adopted	Project aim
Programme to Develop Support Models for Female Researchers (3-year subsidy period)	2006 - 2010	To support excellent initiatives, such as establishment of research environments or awareness-raising, which could become models for the construction of frameworks to enable female researchers to balance research with childbirth, raising children, etc., allowing them to display their abilities to the full in their research activities
Programme to Accelerate the Reform of Female Researcher Development Systems (5-year subsidy period)	2009 - 2010	To accelerate the development of female researchers in research fields where the proportion of female researchers employed is particularly low: the natural sciences, engineering, and agriculture
Project to Support the Research Activities of Female Researchers (3-year subsidy period) 2013: General, Hub 2014: General, Partnership	2011 - 2014	Initiatives to establish environments in which female researchers can balance childbirth, raising children, or eldercare with research, allowing them to exert their abilities to the maximum extent • Initiatives to establish research environments which take into consideration life events and work-life balance and to improve research abilities = "General" • Initiatives to further promote existing initiatives e.g. by disseminating collaborations with other universities, companies, etc. = "Hub" • Initiatives in which universities, research agencies, companies, etc. collaborate to improve the research abilities of female researchers, or initiatives aimed at proactively promoting female researchers to top positions = "Partnership"
Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (6-year project period, of which a 3-year subsidy period) 2015: Distinctive, Partnership 2016-17: Distinctive, Leadership	2015 ~	Establishment of research environments which take into consideration life events and work-life balance; initiatives to improve the research abilities of female researchers; proactive hiring, support with the return to work, proactive promotion to top posts • Initiatives which cut across faculties and departments within a single institution = "Distinctive" • Initiatives in which a university or research agency collaborates with companies, etc. to promote active participation in the local community or field = "Partnership" → "Leadership"

Fig. 10 Changes in national government programmes to support female researchers
(Yoshitake, 2018: 56)

We will focus particularly here on a recent MEXT support project, the Initiative for Realising Diversity in the Research Environment. There is an overview of the project on MEXT's website, as follows.

In order to increase the diversity of the research environment, leading to the generation of excellent research results, this project will support the establishment of research environments which taken into consideration the life events and work-life balance of female researchers, initiatives to raise female researchers' ability to carry out research, those to actively recruit female researchers or support female researchers who have had to pause their research or leave their posts to return, and those to proactively promote female researchers to higher positions.[8]

As shown in Fig. 10, this project is divided into "distinctive" initiatives within single institutions and "partnership" (later "leadership") initiatives in which institutions collaborate with their local communities or businesses. If we look at the FY2022 application guidelines, we find that this categorisation has been revamped, with two additional application categories in place, "development of women leaders" and "investigation and analysis". Initiatives for the development of women leaders are those which "provide subsidies for excellent initiatives by universities etc. which set strategic and ambitious numerical targets to encourage the promotion of female researchers to higher-level posts such as professor or associate professor"[9], and their content is more clearly aimed at encouraging the promotion of female researchers to management positions than the content of past initiatives.

2.2.2 Comparison with overseas initiatives

The insufficiency of statistics on gender

In addition to support projects for institutions led by MEXT, such as the one examined in the previous section, Japanese government initiatives also include support systems for individual researchers, such as the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science's Research Fellowships for Young Scientists: Restart Postdoctoral (RPD) Research Fellowships, which support a return to research after childbirth and raising children[10]. However, as we set out at the start of the previous chapter, the proportion of female researchers in Japan remains low in comparison to those in other countries.

There is prior research into this situation from the standpoint of international comparison, carried out jointly by Ginko Kawano and Mariko Ogawa and their colleagues (2021). According to Kawano, one of the factors behind the lag in Japan's support for female researchers is the

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[8] MEXT, "Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment" https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/jinzai/lifeevent/1418878.htm, accessed 23 February 2024 [Translator's note: Japanese-language page. There is some information in English about the project at https://www.mext.go.jp/en/content/20210315-mxt_kouhou02-000013440-14.pdf, p. 177, as of 9 July 2024].
[9] MEXT, "Recruitment for the FY2023 'Initiative for Realising Diversity in the Research Environment' Subsidy Program for Human Resource Development for Science and Technology" https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/jinzai/lifeevent/1422080_00005.htm, accessed 23 February 2024. [Japanese-language page]
[10] Japan Society for the Promotion of Science "Research Fellowships for Young Scientists" https://www.jsps.go.jp/j-pd/rpd_gaiyo.html, accessed 23 February 2024. [Translator's Japanese-language page. There is some information in English about the fellowships at https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-pd/, as of 9 July 2024.

insufficiency of statistics on gender. For example, the US led the world in starting to collect statistics giving a picture of the participation of women and minorities in the fields of science and engineering in 1982. In Europe, China, and South Korea, too, there are ample gender statistics permitting an understanding of the actual situation regarding female researchers, and these have been reflected in policies (Kawano, 2021: 25). In Japan's gender statistics, on the other hand, there are issues such as "the inability to obtain statistics on female researchers according to field or position", and so there are calls for the national government to prepare and publish these as official statistics (Kawano, 2021: 28).

The lack of a theoretical basis for policies to increase the number of female researchers

In addition, the existence of a theoretical basis for policies to increase the number of female researchers in the US is a major difference from the situation in Japan. According to Yokoyama, the "pipeline theory", applying the analogy of oil or gas delivery to researchers' careers, was put forward in the US from the 1980s. This was used to point out the problem of "the leaky pipeline", whereby the proportions of women and minorities in science and engineering fields fell at each successive educational stage. It was reflected in policy in measures based on the idea that increasing the number of women specialising in science and engineering would naturally lead to an improvement in the gender gap. However, the pipeline theory was criticised from an early stage, with its assumption of a linear career progression and its attempt to make women conform to a male-centric system cited as issues (Yokoyama, 2021: 34-35).

While accepting these criticisms, "The pipeline theory understood the numbers and male-female ratios at each educational or career stage as general trends, and its attention to the issue of the 'leaky pipeline' became a readily understandable metaphor for the phenomenon of the disparity between men and women" (Yokoyama, 2021: 45). This pipeline theory, which attempts to grasp the numerical gap between men and women, has barely been introduced to Japan, and this can be seen in the insufficient development of official statistics within Japan's gender equality plans in the science and technology field and the lack of interest in trends in the West (Yokoyama, 2021: 46).

Issues of balance and structural issues within academia

Kawano organises the issues within Japanese academia brought to light by the accumulated research about female researchers into the categories of "issues of balance" and "structural issues". The former refers to the difficulty for female researchers to achieve a balance between domestic responsibilities/raising children and research, while the latter denotes the issues caused by the closed master-apprentice relationship between professors and students, centred on male researchers, around which Japanese academia is built (Kawano, 2021: 191).

These issues can also be observed in the environments surrounding female researchers in other countries, albeit with some differences in content. Issues of balance exist in China, too, for example: "Life events such as marriage or childbirth and the domestic burden of housework and raising children are major factors impeding the progression of women to PhD courses and the promotion of female academic staff" (Ohama, 2021: 184). When it comes to structural issues, an organisational culture more closely linked to race and discrimination against minorities exists in the US in which "even with affirmative action, it can be difficult for them to receive a fair evaluation" (Yokoyama, 2021: 164).

After considering the initiatives and issues in other countries, and bearing the above in mind, it is necessary to examine the situation of female researchers within Japanese academia in greater detail. To do so, we will begin in the next chapter by analysing the current status of the management organisations responsible for gender equality and diversity promotion at each university and their activities.

Chapter 3: The state of diversity promotion at universities

3.1 The establishment of promotion offices: current status

The trend to establish these has been policy-driven

This section will look at the current state of diversity promotion and gender equality at individual universities. This paragraph begins by examining the establishment of organisations responsible for implementing the above initiatives at each university. A research study carried out by Hiroko Arai et al (2019) serves as a reference for this. Arai and her colleagues divide the management organisations at universities implementing diversity policies into the categories of national/local public and private. According to this, the existence of organisations responsible for diversity was confirmed at 71 out of 179 national/local public universities, and at 24 out of 603 private universities. In response to these results, Akiyoshi Yonezawa stated "National/local public universities and large-scale universities are taking the lead in terms of structural development (…) In other words, it can be thought that policy is a major aspect driving diversity initiatives within university management; and moreover, that a certain level of financial and human resources is necessary in order to develop these as a structure" (Yonezawa, 2022: 9).

This policy-driven present situation can also be seen from the titles given to these organisations. Arai and her colleagues looked at the titles of the organisations responsible at each university and categorised these into universities where the titles feature "diversity" and those where they feature "gender equality" or "support for female researchers". Among national and local public universities, 15 fell into the former category and 56 into the latter. Even where the titles of organisations featured "diversity", in many cases their predecessors had used the term "gender equality". What prompted the changes at many universities were reviews of organisational structures when MEXT's projects to support female researchers were adopted or ended. Moreover, at some of the universities where the titles of organisations featured "gender equality", the establishment of these organisations was prompted by the adoption of projects to support female researchers. In these ways, implementation organisations were established at national and local public universities in response to government-led support for female researchers.

Far fewer private universities than national and local public universities have established promotion offices

In contrast to the establishment of organisations responsible for diversity promotion and gender equality at national and local public universities, albeit driven by the government, the number established at private universities is far lower, as we saw above. While the proportion of national and local public universities at which such organisations have been established is 39.6%, that of private universities is only 3.9% (Arai, Suzuki, Kimura, Takasu, Yaguchi, 2019: 55). Although there are private universities (e.g. Chuo University, Aoyama Gakuin University, Musashino University) which have moved ahead with establishing these since 2019, when Arai and her colleagues carried out their research, their numbers are still small. We can thus point to the

existence of a large gap between the numbers of diversity/gender equality promotion organisations established at national or local public and at private universities. Building the momentum for diversity promotion and gender equality at universities characterised by their high degree of autonomy and their small scale can be cited as one of the issues going forward.

Diversity promotion organisations which go beyond a classification into "men" and "women" are in the minority

However, what can be said about national universities is that even where they have adopted the title of "diversity", the services at most organisations are directed at women or have men and women as their targets. Diversity promotion organisations which do not employ a distinction between men and women but aim at a broader target group such as LGBTQ are still in the minority (Arai, Suzuki, Kimura, Takasu, Yaguchi, 2019: 52-54). Where the titles of organisations at private universities, too, feature "diversity", few carry out LGBT support initiatives; the trend is for most of them to support female researchers or academic and administrative staff (Arai, Suzuki, Kimura, Takasu, Yaguchi, 2019: 56).

From this analysis by Arai and her colleagues, we can first check the presupposition that organisations using "diversity" have as their targets not only support for women but also LGBTQ, disabled people, foreigners, and other students and academic or administrative staff from diverse backgrounds, while those using "gender equality" have as their primary activity supporting female researchers. Furthermore, since 2019, when Arai and her colleagues carried out their investigation, there are organisations which have changed their titles from "gender equality" to "diversity" (e.g. Tohoku University, Iwate University, Yamagata University, Chiba University, Kanazawa University, Shimane University), and as the term "diversity" takes root, we can predict that organisational restructuring to broaden the target group beyond women will continue to take place. This move to incorporate diversity promotion is also a management strategy for the "survival" of universities (Yonezawa, 2022: 11).

3.2 Initiatives by individual universities

3.2.1 List of organisations and activities

This section will look at initiatives for gender equality and diversity promotion at Japan's national, local public, and private universities. To do so, this subsection lists the initiatives at individual universities and classifies them according to the content of these initiatives. The research examined in the previous section by Arai and her colleagues (2019) investigating management organisations at universities implementing diversity measures has been used as the groundwork for this list. Based on the list of universities which they drew up in 2019, a new list has been made of the national and local public universities listed on MEXT's website at which the existence of active management organisations could be confirmed in 2024. This list includes 69 national universities (out of a total of 86) and 20 local public universities (out of a total of 100). For private universities, an online search was used to list 36 private universities

(out of a total of 622)[11] which currently have such organisations. Furthermore, the titles of organisations which have been changed since their inclusion in the list of universities made by Arai and her colleagues have been updated. In addition, the support activities and initiatives stated on the websites of the management organisations at these universities have been listed.

Table 1: Diversity management organisations at national universities, and their main initiatives

Name of university	Name of organisation	Main initiatives
Otaru University of Commerce	Diversity Promotion Office	Support system for childbirth/ raising children/ eldercare; gender equality promotion project; promotion of the elimination of discrimination on the basis of disability
Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine	Diversity Promotion Office	Partnership with non-registered daycare facilities; dispatch of babysitters; research support staff system; employment support system for partners; "home-grown" career path system; women-only recruitment
Kitami Institute of Technology	Diversity Promotion Office	Support for academic staff around the times of life events; career plans for the promotion of women to official and management roles
Muroran Institute of Technology	Office for Promotion of Gender Equality	Assignment of research support staff to researchers around the times of life events; financial support with the cost of babysitters/ eldercare; financial support with the cost of taxis in an emergency; short-term or long-term leave to care for sick children or the elderly; internal mentor system
Hokkaido University	Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Support staff in order to balance research activities and life events/ the activities of women leaders; "Outline of support system for raising children at Hokkaido University" life support leaflet aimed at international students and researchers; support with one-off childcare during university entrance exams; lending of mats for childcare spaces during symposia and conferences; lending of kits for maternity and childcare leave; "Get Connected!" network for female researchers; "RinGS" community for female postgraduate students
Hirosaki University	Office for the Promotion of Gender Equality	University nursery; support for researchers raising children/ caring for the elderly; Hirosaki University promotion mentor scheme
Iwate University	Office for Equality and Diversity	Support with work-life balance; "Expenses to support female academic staff to remain in their posts" system; dispatch system for research support staff and assistants; support for female leaders; Career Planning Support for Women Recurrent Programme 2024;

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[11] The numbers of university in each category nationwide are those listed on MEXT's website as of 1 May 2023. MEXT "Public universities" https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/kouritsu/index.htm (accessed 5 April 2024. Japanese-language page)

		guidelines on LGBT/ SOGI; support for disabled people and those with overseas roots
Tohoku University	Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Development of female leaders; development of the next generation; support with/ preparation of environment for work-life balance; response to internationalisation
Akita University	Gender Equality Promotion Office Korokoni	Support for female researchers; research support system; support project for female academics and researchers
Yamagata University	Diversity Promotion Office	Guidelines on sexual/gender diversity; Colourful Café; gatherings of female researchers; expanding the perspectives of female researchers; Yamagata University JOIN; system regarding childbirth/ raising children/ eldercare; talks by people who have taken maternity and childcare leave
University of Toyama	Diversity Promotion Centre	Internal recruitment for women; research supporter system (for researchers); childcare support system during conferences (for researchers); childcare support during university entrance exams (for academic and administrative staff); eldercare support
Kanazawa University	Institute for Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion	Research support system for female researchers etc.; initiatives for female junior and senior high school students; support to enrich both work and private life; support for international students and foreign researchers; support office for disabled students; LGBTQ+ support
University of Fukui	Diversity Promotion Centre	Dispatch system for research support staff; mentor system; raising children/ eldercare support system; subsidies for the use of childcare facilities for children who are ill; university nursery
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies	Gender Equality Committee	Support system for diverse gender identities and sexual orientations; support system for balancing child raising responsibilities etc. and work; guidebook on hosting foreign researchers and academics; support for foreign academics to bring their families
Nagaoka University of Technology	Office for Gender Equality	Support and advice system for life events; support for men to take parental leave; career support; early career researcher development; information on awards and scholarships for female students; introduction of role models
Ibaraki University	Diversity Promotion Office	Internal awareness-raising; provision of an environment supporting work-life balance; improvement of research ability and development of women leaders; development of the next generation; respect for gender diversity (LGBTQ+)
University of Tsukuba	Bureau of Human Empowerment	Accessibility support team; gender support team

Saitama University	Diversity Promotion Centre	Support with raising children/ eldercare; international exchange; support office for disabled students; initiatives for equality around gender and sexuality; installation of multipurpose toilets; changing room situation; career development support; research assistance system
Tokyo University of the Arts	Diversity & Inclusion	Diversity around gender and sexuality; diversity around disability; cultural diversity; career and work-style diversity; support with raising children
University of Electro-Communications	Gender Equality and Diversity Strategy Promotion Office	Support around life events; Artisan Girls; support with research career development; basic guidelines on gender identity and sexual orientation
Utsunomiya University	Headquarters for the Promotion of Diversity in the Research Environment; Gender Equality/ Female Leaders Development Office	Project to Support the Research Activities of Female Researchers; female leader development office; LGBT study group; gender equality promotion office
Gunma University	Diversity Promotion Centre	Work-life balance support division; financial assistance with childcare; career development promotion division; Nijiro Line advice
Chiba University	Diversity Promotion Division	Child raising support (distribution of babysitter money-off coupons); support with childcare for children who have been ill; support system for pregnant women; support system for raising children; infertility treatment support system; internal facilities (nursery, baby seats, women-only lounge, etc.); dispatch system for research support staff; career support for academic and administrative staff and postgraduate students
University of Tokyo	Office for Gender Equality	Support for female researchers; support project to increase the number of female academics; Kurumin child raising support certification
Tokyo Medical and Dental University	Diversity and Inclusion Office	For Your Life career and life advice office for female researchers aiming for promotion to higher posts
Tokyo Gakugei University	Gender Equality Promotion Headquarters	Consideration of/ requests for measures to realise a work-life balance; Kurumin child raising support certification; action plan to promote the activities of female researchers; action plan to support the development of the next generation; guidelines on gender and sexuality diversity
Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology	Women's Future Development Organization	Support around life events; childcare support system; advice on childbirth, child raising, and eldercare; system to share knowledge about eldercare; loan of pushchairs

		and highchairs; career path support; internal research support system; menstrual support
Tokyo Institute of Technology	Diversity and Inclusion Section	Work-life balance support division; women's active participation support division; foreigners' active participation support division; disabled people's active participation support division
Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Support for female researchers to balance life events and research and education in order to continue in research and education; creation of an environment in which people can achieve a work-life balance; broadening the perspectives of female researchers
Ochanomizu University	Institute for Global Leadership	Ochanomizu University index; work-life balance promotion activities; researcher support activities; Ochanomizu University personnel bank; Institute for Gendered Innovations
Hitotsubashi University	Diversity Promotion Headquarters	Child raising and eldercare support system; support with using babysitters (university contract); mentoring; research support staff system
Yokohama National University	Diversity Strategy Promotion Headquarters	Child raising and eldercare support; support with career planning and balancing work and family; support for LGBTQIA+ and disabled students
Niigata University	Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Construction of the Challenge Smile system to support the flourishing of Niigata's female researchers; SOGI; international affairs; disability; social engagement; health
University of Yamanashi	Gender Equality Office	Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Leadership)
Shinshu University	Gender Equality Promotion Center	Mentor system; compilation of role models; child raising and eldercare support; university nursery; research assistant system; policy of respecting SOGI diversity, etc.
Shizuoka University	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Research support staff system; childcare and eldercare support system; mentor system; Rike Shizu project to encourage women in the sciences; submission of a diversity report related to the academic staff personnel plan
Nagoya Institute of Technology	Center for Diversity and Inclusion	Female researcher mentor system; system to promote research by female researchers; maternity and child raising support system; childcare for children who are or have been ill; eldercare support system; subsidy system for the use of babysitters; subsidy system for the use of childcare services during conferences
Toyohashi University of Technology	Diversity Promotion Centre	PRIDE Index 2023 silver status; declaration promoting the active participation of women; Ikeboss ["Child raising boss"] declaration; Kurumin child raising support certification
Nagoya University	Gender Diversity Centre	Action plan to support the work-life balance of academic and administrative staff; maternity and child

		raising support; eldercare support; university nursery; installation of multipurpose toilets; Red Apple Squad [support for female students]; academic staff mentoring programme; Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment
Osaka Kyoiku University	Diversity Promotion Committee	Guiding principle and basic guidelines on respect for diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity, e.g. LGBT; general employer action plan based on the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children; Kurumin child raising support certification
Hyogo University of Teacher Education	Gender Equality Office	GENKi Hyogo University of Teacher Education child raising support room; Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children
Wakayama University	Headquarters for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Guidelines for dealing with SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) at Wakayama University, gender equality promotion office
Kyoto University	Gender Equality Promotion Center	Money-off coupons for babysitters; child raising/ maternity/ eldercare leave; system of support for one-off childcare during conferences or study meetings; nappy-changing facilities and lounge; research support
Osaka University	Diversity & Inclusion Center	Child raising/ eldercare support; career development support; respect for diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity; free sanitary products in toilets
Gifu University	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Development of support models for female researchers; mentor system; research assistant dispatch system; lounge; nursery and childcare for children who are ill
Mie University	Diversity & Inclusion Promotion Office	Upgrading of the research and education environments and initiatives to support work-life balance; work-life balance support handbook; Ikeboss ["Child raising boss"] declaration; Tomoshoku [drive to enable fathers to spend more time with their families] declaration; Kurumin child raising support certification
Shiga University of Medical Science	Office for Gender Equality	Skills development programme to support female doctors; dispatch of research support staff; "win-win staff bank"; Ayukko university nursery; child raising support, advice system
Kyoto Institute of Technology	Gender Equality Promotion Centre	Support with balancing research activities and life events; construction of a female researcher network
Kobe University	Inclusive Campus & Health Care Center; Gender Equality Office	Child raising/ eldercare support; Project to Support the Research Activities of Female Researchers; training on sexual diversity and gender; Rikejo no Susume! [project to encourage women to study science]
Nara Women's University	Center for Diversity and Inclusion	Enhancement of support for research start-ups; expanding the perspectives of early career researchers; support for cross-disciplinary exchange and joint research; career development support for researchers and technicians employed by private companies;

		acceleration of the recruitment and support of female researchers under the President's action plan
Nara Institute of Science and Technology	Gender Equality Office	Support system to balance work and home life; child raising leave system; Plus α childcare; lounges; multipurpose toilets; start-up research fund; dispatch of academic assistants and subsidies for subcontracting tasks; mentor system; Keihanna [Kyoto-Osaka-Nara] female researcher network
Okayama University	Organization for Diversity Management	Recruitment open only to female researchers; maternity/ child raising/ eldercare support; project to send women overseas as part of leadership development; project to support female researchers with research funds
Naruto University of Education	Gender Equality Office	Support for work-life balance; joint mentor system across the five national universities in Shikoku
Yamaguchi University	Diversity Promotion Office	Promotion of work-life balance for academic and administrative staff; consideration of sexual minorities; female researcher mentor scheme; research assistant system; international student supporter system
Ehime University	Gender Collaboration Promotion Centre	Life career advice office; female researcher mentor scheme; career path support for female students; university nursery and childcare for children who are ill
Tottori University	Diversity Campus Promotion Office	Researcher support; career support for female students; life event support; creation of an environment in which diverse members coexist
Shimane University	Diversity Promotion Office	Support for work-life balance/ child raising support; career development support; support for female researchers; support for LGBT students and staff; support for disabled students and staff; support for international students and foreign researchers
Hiroshima University	Research Center for Diversity and Inclusion	Hiroshima multicultural coexistence study group; CEDAR Hiroshima [Communities Engaging with Difference And Religion workshop]; disability, ageing, disease; principles and guidelines on handling sexual/ gender diversity – in order for LGBT etc. students to study; Hiroshima University female researcher support project; holding and facilitating of workshops on careers for women in the sciences
Tokushima University	AWA Support Center	System for promoting female researchers to top positions; support with expanding researchers' horizons; mentor scheme; female researchers' diversity promotion joint research scheme: support for work-life balance
Kagawa University	Diversity Promotion Centre	Accessibility support office; multicultural coexistence; sexual and gender diversity; diversity promotion joint research scheme; female researchers' group; research assistant dispatch system

Kochi University	Office for Promotion of Gender Equality	Short-term childcare; gender equality support station; Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children
Saga University	Diversity Promotion Office	Summer childcare for school-age children; nursery; conference childcare; research assistant system; Chika Kuroda Award; support with research costs of female researchers; use of common names; universal design
Nagasaki University	Center for Diversity and Inclusion	Support for female researchers; life event support; putting in place a diverse environment
Oita University	Diversity Promotion Headquarters; Gender Equality Promotion Office	Career/ personnel development project; work-life balance support project; collection of role models
Kyushu University	Office for the Promotion of Gender Equality	System of employment for accompanying spouses of faculty members; leave to accompany spouse on overseas transfer; financial support for children to accompany parents on overseas transfer; research assistant employment system; support for the raising of the next generation of children
Kyushu Institute of Technology	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Researcher support programme; consideration of life events under the tenure track system; work from home system; response to entrance exam work at weekends
Kumamoto University	Diversity Promotion Office	Research assistant employment programme; female researcher research activities and joint research support programme; introduction of role models; awards for female researchers
University of Miyazaki	Kibana Athena DEI Promotion Office	Athena Plan; Step by Step formula; Athena research assistant system; child raising/ eldercare support
Kagoshima University	Gender Equality Promotion Centre	Research support staff system; mentor scheme; childcare support system; research professor/ research associate professor system

Table 2: Diversity management organisations at local public universities, and their main initiatives

Name of university	Name of organisation	Main initiatives
Osaka Prefecture University	Research Center for the Diversity Research Environment	Support for female research leaders; support with work-life balance for women in top positions; skills improvement support programme; RESPECT (research skills enhancement support programme); female researcher support centre
Nara Medical University	Mahoroba support centre for female researchers and doctors	Dispatch of research support staff; advice and consultation for researchers; symposia, study sessions; creation and lending of pamphlets and DVDs; university nursery; academic research incentive awards for female researchers at Nara Medical University; career education

Fukuoka Women's University	Women's Leadership Center	"Leadership development"-type courses as part of the general education curriculum; Global Leader minor programme; welcome back support programme for women; programme to develop female leaders with innovation generation skills; top female leaders' development courses; academic research subsidy programme; support staff for female researchers system; short-term childcare
Sapporo Medical University	Employment Support Committee for Female Doctors (commonly known as Diversity Promotion Committee)	Systems regarding pregnancy, childbirth, and child raising; system regarding eldercare; system regarding sick leave; support with balancing work and home responsibilities
Iwate Prefectural University	Gender Equality Promotion Centre	Opportunities for children to visit the workplace during the summer holidays; child raising support activities by staff volunteers; one-off childcare provision on weekends and holidays; lunch meetings for academic and administrative staff to share opinions; informal discussions of child raising by male staff
Fukushima Medical University	Diversity Promotion Office	Suginokoen childcare facility; Sukusuku childcare facility for children who are or have been ill; subsidy programme for babysitters and child raising support; women's lounge; research support staff; support with returning to work; support with remaining at work
Ibaraki Prefectural University of Health Sciences	Diversity Promotion Committee	Diversity seminars
Saitama Prefectural University	Diversity Promotion Committee	Research support staff system; child raising support office/ child support office; child raising/ eldercare support; Platinum rank under the certification system for companies implementing diverse ways of working; registered as a Saitama Prefecture Ally Challenge company
Tokyo Metropolitan University	Diversity Promotion Office	Research support system in order to achieve work-life balance; mailing list of female academics and postgraduate students; short-term childcare; guidelines for academic and administrative staff to promote the ending of discrimination on the basis of disability at Tokyo Metropolitan University; development and dispatch of support staff; exchange sessions for culturally diverse members; mailing list; talks and film showings on sexual minorities; guidelines on dealing with sexual minorities at Tokyo Metropolitan University
Toyama Prefectural University	Gender Equality Promotion Headquarters	Research partner system; babysitter money-off coupon project; "Beauty in Science, Technology and Engineering" photography exhibition; support system for

		joint research by female researchers; seminars to improve research skills; management role training
Gifu Pharmaceutical University	Diversity Promotion Office	Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (partnership); research assistant dispatch system; mentor scheme
Nagoya City University	Diversity Promotion Headquarters	Project to Support the Research Activities of Women Researchers (partnership); leadership programme; skills development support; mentor scheme: Kurumin child raising support certification; work-life balance advice office; nursery; research support staff system; female researcher exchange; Ikeboss ["Child raising boss"] declaration; encouragement of the promotion of female academics
Kyoto Prefectural University	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Financial support for the use of babysitters; research support staff system; Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine Kogamo childcare facility for children who are ill; Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine Kusunoki nursery; Aoi career support seminar; action plans within each department and graduate school to encourage the appointment and promotion of female academics
Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine	Miyako Work-Life Balance Support Centre	Child raising support; Kogamo childcare facility for children who are ill; Kusunoki university nursery; subsidy programme for the use of babysitters (child subsidy coupons); lounge for female staff; childcare for school-age children during long holidays; employment support; researcher support
Osaka Metropolitan University	Support Office for Women Researchers	Research support staff system; babysitter money-off coupon programme; childcare support programme; eldercare advice counter; in-house nursery; initiative to increase female researchers; development of female researchers to take up top posts
Osaka City University	Female Researcher Support Office	Research support staff system; Suginoko nursery; guidebook on childbirth and child raising (for internal use only); joint research project by the Industry-Academia-Government Partnerships Women's Unit; subsidy project for joint research through partnerships; career training/ management role training in order to develop female managers; promotion mentor scheme
University of Hyogo	Diversity Promotion Office	Childcare support; babysitters; eldercare support; grants for research activities by female researchers; support to improve English skills; presentations of research by female researchers; support for disabled students; basic guidelines on respect for diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity; study sessions to think about diversity through familiar examples; SOGI Month
Wakayama Medical University	Work-Life Balance Support Centre	Childbirth/ child raising support system; eldercare support system; Crayon university nursery; support with

		returning to work; support for female doctors to continue their careers
Okayama Prefectural University	Diversity & Inclusion Room	Guidelines on student support around sexual and gender diversity at Okayama Prefectural University
Sanyo-Onoda City University	Diversity Promotion Office	Research support for female researchers; child raising/ eldercare support; online counselling for female researchers; universal design map; installation of multipurpose toilets

Table 3: Diversity management organisations at private universities, and their main initiatives

Name of university	Name of organisation	Main initiatives
Kyorin University	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Research support staff system; childbirth and child raising support navigation system; eldercare support navigation system; advice and mentoring system
Keio University	Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	Support programme for balancing work and areas of concern; disabled student support; women's physical health support
Shibaura Institute of Technology	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Promotion Office	Increasing female academics; building networks of women; mentor and advice programme; teaching and research support staff
Juntendo University	Diversity Promotion Centre	Child raising support; research support staff; female researcher support programme: Specially Appointed Associate Professors
Sophia University	Sophia University Diversity Promotion Office	Global mentor scheme; research support staff; subsidies for childcare services at conferences etc.; minority support
Tsuda University	Female Researcher Support Centre	Support for partnership research projects; research support staff dispatch programme; mentor advice
Teikyo University	Female Doctor/ Researcher Support Centre	Research support staff dispatch programme; subsidy system for the use of childcare facilities; babysitter money-off coupon programme
Tokyo Medical University	Diversity Promotion Center	Child raising family support; research assistant dispatch system; research cost follow-up grant; diversity education
Tokyo Woman's Christian University	Empowerment Centre	Female researcher research support staff system; life career course
Tokyo Women's Medical University	Career Design Centre for Female Medical Personnel	Research support staff system; family support; hospital in-house nursery
Tokyo City University	Gender Equality Office	Support system for researchers to return to work; use of company-led childcare facilities; child raising/ eldercare advice counter; map of multipurpose toilets
Japan Women's University	Modern Women's Career Research Institute	Recurrent educational curriculum; female researcher multiple career paths support model; Raicho Hiratsuka Award

Hosei University	Diversity Promotion Council Gender Equality Promotion Team	Childbirth support leave; babysitter dispatch programme money-off coupons; subsidy for use of childcare/ eldercare services related to specific duties on Sundays and holidays
Meiji University	Center for Gender Equality and Diversity	Research supporter system
Waseda University	Office for Promotion of Equality and Diversity	Child raising/ eldercare support; female researcher mentoring system; women-only exchange and relaxation space; multipurpose toilets and changing rooms
Kyoto Sangyo University	Diversity Promotion Office	Breastfeeding space/ breastmilk storage service; subsidy for the cost of babysitters; childcare service support; dispatch of research support staff
Doshisha University	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Child raising/ eldercare support; support system for researchers to return to work; research life support grant programme; support for disabled people
Ritsumeikan University	Research-Life Support Division for Promotion of Gender Equality	Child raising support system; system for research support staff around life events; extramural research system (early career category, work-life balance category); career path support programme for female researchers
Kwansei Gakuin University	Gender Equality Promotion Headquarters	Emergency substitute system; childcare space (schools of science and engineering); women-only nap room (schools of science and engineering); priority postdoctoral places for women (schools of science and engineering)
Mukogawa Women's University	Institute for Women's Career Advancement and Gender Equality Development	Child raising/ eldercare support; research support staff system
Fukuoka University	Office for Female Researchers	Research activity support by research collaborators; subsidy for one-off childcare costs when attending conferences etc.; mentor academic introduction system; holding of "Gatherings for Female Researchers"
Musashi University	Diversity Centre	Advice counter
Ryutsu Keizai University	Diversity Co-creation Centre	Free distribution of sanitary napkins; multipurpose toilets
Toho University	Diversity Promotion Centre	Associate physician system [support for doctors who struggle to carry out their duties as before due to child raising/ eldercare responsibilities]; babysitter/ child raising support system; mentor scheme
Soka University	Diversity and Inclusion Promotion Centre	Soka University Female Postgraduate Fellowship system; work-life balance advice counter
J. F. Oberlin University	Student Diversity Support Office	Advice counter

Hyogo Medical University	Diversity Promotion Office	Yurikago childcare for children who are ill; research cost subsidy for female researchers; Restart-up research cost subsidy, Diversity Project academic staff system
Kobe Gakuin University	Gender Equality Promotion Office	One-off childcare when working on Sundays or holidays; subsidy for use of one-off childcare; child raising network; mentor scheme
Jissen Women's University	Gender Equality Promotion Office	Flexible working system (for administrative staff); child raising/ eldercare support
Chubu University	Women's Active Participation Promotion Office	University nursery
Aoyama Gakuin University	Schoonmaker Memorial Center for Gender Studies	Research projects
Ferris University	Gender Studies Center	Gender café
Rikkyo University	Gender Forum	Mitchell scholarship students
Okinawa Institute of Science & Technology	Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Flexitime system; mothers' room; preschool, elementary, and junior high school programme
Nippon Medical School Foundation	Happy Career Support Centre	Research support staff dispatch system; joint research assistance; financial support system for female researchers to attend overseas training; childcare support system for children who are or have been ill, or when working on holidays; Nippon Medical School Foundation women's fellowship system
Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University	Happy Career Support Centre	Research support staff dispatch system; financial support system for presenting at overseas conferences; support for university research costs (strengthening research ability); childcare support system for children who are or have been ill, or when working on holidays

3.2.2 Trends in activities

This subsection categorises the initiatives at each university listed in the previous subsection according to type. The five categories used here are work-life balance support; research support; career support; diversity promotion; and health support. They refer to the following contents.

- **Work-life balance support:** initiatives supporting the balance between child raising or eldercare and research/ other work tasks

- **Research support:** provision of research funding etc. for female researchers

- **Career support:** quota for hiring of women, introduction of role models, exchange between female researchers, etc.

- **Diversity promotion:** initiatives which consider LGBTQ, disabled people, etc.

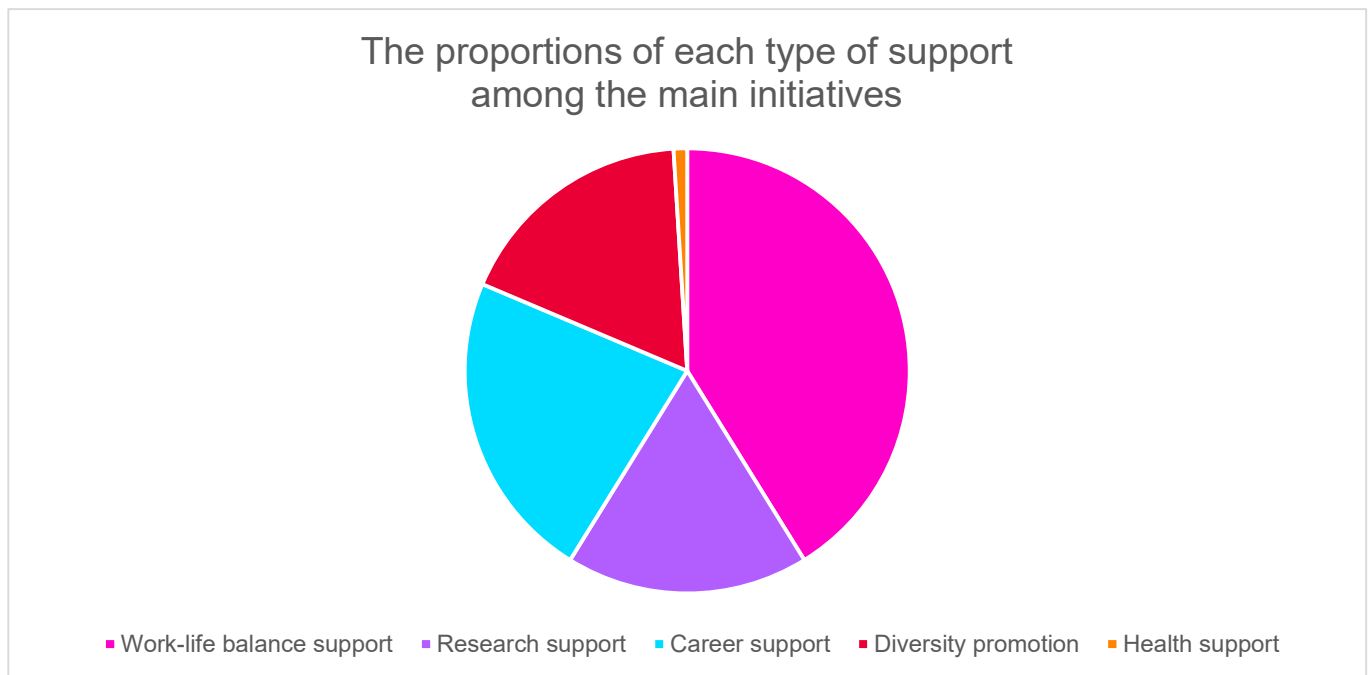- **Health support:** initiatives which consider women's health

Fig. 11: The proportions of each type of support among the diversity promotion activities at individual universities

Looking at the proportions of each type, the most common among the initiatives at the universities investigated here was work-life balance support. Research support staff systems aimed at researchers and staff with child raising or eldercare responsibilities existed at most universities, and national and local public universities, as well as private universities with healthcare-related departments, offered support through university nurseries and childcare for children who were ill. At other universities, too, there were a plentiful range of services aimed at women with young children, such as subsidies for the use of babysitters.

After work-life balance support, career support and research support were the next most common types. In addition to the direct provision of employment opportunities such as women-only recruitment or the promotion of women to senior positions, systems for female researchers

to share and get advice on career-related worries, such as the introduction of role models and mentor schemes, were also prominent in the career support category. Besides mentor schemes, the provision of lounges specifically for women or of networks for female researchers were measures aiming to encourage exchange among female researchers.

In terms of research support, there were subsidies with research costs and scholarships for female researchers. Private universities with gender research institutes provided support systems targeting gender research. The above initiatives are mainly being carried out by national, local public, and some private universities as an aspect of MEXT's support programmes for female researchers.

As well as these support activities and systems primarily targeting female researchers, there exist a minority of diversity promotion activities aimed at LGBTQ, disabled people, and foreigners. Since the investigation by Arai and her colleagues, an increasing number of universities have changed the names of their organisations from "gender equality" to "diversity promotion", showing that universities as a whole are moving from measures targeting solely women to those targeting people from diverse backgrounds. In the context of this move to put diversity-promoting environments in place, there are a small number of universities which are supporting women's health, such as through the free distribution of sanitary products.

As we have seen above, various initiatives are taking place at each university, and at national universities in particular, selection for female researcher support projects has been the stimulus driving forward these initiatives. For this reason, although systems primarily supporting work-life balance are plentiful at national universities, only a limited number of the private universities which make up the majority of Japan's universities are making serious efforts to expand support systems. Bearing in mind the contents of this chapter, the next chapter will consider the cases of individual universities based on research interviews.

Chapter 4: Results of the research interviews

In Chapter 3, we undertook an overview of gender equality and diversity promotion initiatives at each university, showing that characteristics differ in particular between national/local public universities and private universities. In this chapter, keeping that point in mind, we will consider the current state of and issues with these initiatives, looking at the contents of interviews with five university staff.

The five interviewees were academic A, who specialises in issues facing female researchers at universities; academic B, who belongs to the diversity promotion organisation at a national university (University X); administrative staff C, who works in the diversity promotion organisation at a private university in Tokyo (University Y); academic D, who was involved with setting up the diversity promotion organisation at a private university in Tokyo (University Z); and academic E, who is involved with the gender equality promotion organisation for the humanities and social sciences at the same University Z.

4.1 Overall picture surrounding support for female researchers at universities

Recruitment of female researchers and establishment of environments at national universities, encouraged by numerical recruitment targets

We will start by gaining an overall picture of the issues for female researchers at Japanese universities from the interview with Interviewee A. As confirmed in Chapter 2, the government has set numerical recruitment targets for female researchers nationwide. According to Interviewee A, national universities are very aware of these numerical targets. This is because there is a requirement to state the proportion of female academic staff when applying for competitive funding. In addition, there are agreements in the governance codes for national universities, and the Japan Association of National Universities (JANU) had set numerical targets before the government set theirs. All these show that national universities are in a position where they must be conscious of the recruitment of female researchers.

Therefore, the establishment of environments for female researchers is advanced at national universities. As we confirmed in the previous chapter, almost all national universities have put in place management organisations, and they have also set up nurseries on campus, research support staff systems, subsidies for childcare costs during conferences or business trips, mentor schemes, networks for female researchers, and so on. Nevertheless, precisely because these kinds of work-life balance support have been put in place at almost all national universities, highly able female researchers look purely at the research environment, tending to move to universities with excellent, international-class research environments.

This situation is a result of the positive actions undertaken over the past few decades. According to Interviewee A, until recently, not even excellent female researchers were necessarily able to find employment opportunities. Through the establishment of recruitment quotas for women, researchers who are highly able but are at a disadvantage because they are female have come to be employed. Concerning this asymmetry between men and women

surrounding researcher advancement, Interviewee A explains "Men can become researchers even with ordinary abilities. In the case of women with ordinary abilities, they have dropped out. So how far we can increase the number of ordinary people is important." In this sense, the substantial expansion of numbers on doctoral courses which took place in the 1990s has broadened the horizons of postgraduate students, even though not all of them aim to become researchers.

Private universities are not as aware of the issue as national universities

At private universities, in comparison, Interviewee A points out a fundamental difference: unlike national universities, which are run by national university corporations, each university corporation has maintained its autonomy in running the university. Moreover, humanities and social science faculties are in the majority at private universities, and female academics are comparatively frequently employed, so Interviewee A states that they are probably not as aware of the issue as national universities.

Although recognition of the need to increase female researchers is growing, there are issues with the recognition of their contribution to the development of scholarship

Turning next to recognition of female researchers in university circles, according to Interviewee A, an understanding that it would be best for the number of female researchers to grow is definitely more widespread than it was 20 years ago, before the policy began. In the past, even among female researchers, there were concerns that "I was hired because of my excellence; what will happen if the number of not-so-excellent female researchers increases?" Now, however, it is usual for researchers to be positive about nurturing their successors. On the other hand, Interviewee A says, it is doubtful whether there is a recognition of the essential aspect of the need for female researchers, the birth of diversity in and improvements to scholarship itself through an increase in female researchers.

This is because the proportions of female academics and of female managers are among the evaluation points in the management expense grants made to national university corporations. Therefore, Interviewee A explains that the sense that "It's not that we want to increase the number of women, it's that we want to get the money" is probably strong among managers, albeit not held by everyone. In addition, Interviewee A points to the generational issue. The boards of national universities include elderly members in their 70s and above, and some have prejudices about women's abilities. Even though this group will gradually be replaced by the next generation, Interviewee A is concerned that since male researchers in the younger generations have experienced a reduction in posts due to recruitment quotas for women, there is a possibility that they may become sceptical about the increase in female researchers in a different sense than the generation above them were.

The emergence of a structure which enforces competition for women-only posts through the administration of human resources via a points system

Moreover, the administration of human resources at national universities using a points system has become one of the factors behind a structure in which there is a fight for a limited number of posts. A points system is one in which points are allocated to each position, and promotions are managed within the points allotted to each university. Interviewee A emphasises, "If you want to increase the number of female academics, you need to increase the number of points", but in

reality, these points are instead being reduced because of budget cuts, leading to a situation in which "What is being said and what is being done are different". From this perspective, too, it is difficult for national universities to carry out human resources activities to attract researchers from other universities by valuing their abilities, as private universities do, making it hard for the former to increase the number of female academics.

Given the existence of this situation, Interviewee A points out that "Support for female researchers through policy-driven competitive funding reaches a dead end sooner or later". This is because, at the outset, the proportion of women on doctoral programmes in Japan is stuck at around 30%. Even if projects to support female researchers are adopted and the number of female researchers increases, this is no more than fighting with other universities over the limited 'pie' of female researchers. The acquisition of female researchers by one university means that the number of female researchers at other universities has decreased, so that if there are universities at which the proportion of female researchers grows, there will be others at which it falls. In other words, this brings about a situation in which excellent personnel flow towards national universities within Tokyo or those with strong brands, and regional universities cannot recruit people. Interviewee A's position is that if the policy is not changed before this polarisation advances, the proportion of female researchers in Japan as a whole will not rise.

Interviewee A states that such a polarisation is already beginning to take place. At universities in inconvenient locations, which require work connected with community partnerships as well as research and researcher development, the number of applicants for women-only recruitment is sometimes zero or one. For this reason, a second recruitment with no gender conditions takes place, but this takes time and recruitment is delayed, disadvantaging students. According to Interviewee A, "If the government writes 'For example, putting in place a quota for women', everyone puts a quota for women in place", but since conditions differ from university to university, the effects of putting a quota for women in place also differ. Therefore, Interviewee A points out that it is necessary for each university to analyse their current situation and consider whether a quota for women would be effective; it would be better for the government to support the setting of strategies like these by each university than to issue a uniform policy.

4.2 The actual situation at national universities

Various initiatives to promote gender equality, and criticism of preferential treatment for women from the standpoint of meritocracy

From the interview with Interviewee B, who belongs to the diversity centre at national University X and carries out research into the state of gender equality promotion at universities, it is possible to gain a more detailed understanding of the situation at national universities. University X, like other national universities, is enhancing support with work-life balance, including through the establishment of an on-campus nursery and a research support staff system. There is also an awards system for outstanding female researchers as an example of an effective positive action. Which researchers are excellent is known within each faculty, but to share this across the whole university, the president gives awards to female researchers selected from among those recommended by their faculty. By doing so, this functions at

University X as a system for "making potential management candidates visible", such as candidates for important posts or committee members.

Like other national universities, University X also has experience of carrying out women-only recruitment. However, the number of applicants was low, and this recruitment did not increase the proportion of female researchers.

University X is also proactively promoting women to important committees within the university. The increase in the proportion of female members participating in important meetings has changed the atmosphere.

Initiatives like those above have been carried out at University X, but there was resistance to the policy of increasing female academics from among male academics. According to Interviewee B, at the very least, there were some critical voices saying that women arriving via women-only recruitment might be labelled negatively. This kind of reaction to the initiatives to increase the number of female academics was seen not only among the older generation but also among the younger one, Interviewee B says. This is because the number of university posts is already shrinking and it is increasingly difficult to become a university academic; given this, there is a criticism among young male researchers that "There's something wrong with receiving preferential treatment just because you're a woman".

Interviewee B points out that meritocracy, the dominant value system at universities, is at play here. From a meritocratic standpoint, there is a tendency towards criticising and questioning whether it is right to employ researchers with "inferior ability" simply because they are women. In the face of this criticism, Interviewee B explains that it is necessary to reexamine whether the "ability" evaluated here is really gender-equal, re-examining evaluation for example by incorporating the perspective of work-life balance into the evaluation axis. On the other hand, Interviewee B says that the female researchers who in fact entered via women-only recruitment are all excellent. They are outstanding in the areas of papers published and winning external funding, so that looking at this track record, male researchers probably cannot criticise them on the grounds of ability.

The atomisation and silo structure of universities, which impede the hiring of female researchers

One of the factors in this failure to employ excellent female researchers so far has been the silo structure of universities. University systems have a tendency towards atomisation into faculties, departments, and majors, and there is a culture of recruiting within narrow fields of specialism in science and engineering faculties, in particular. If open recruitment is carried out in a niche field, for example, the researchers who apply will be very limited, so this recruitment is based on the hiring side's expectations of who will apply. In this way, only a limited number of people (mostly men) apply, and there is no competition. Therefore, broadening the recruitment fields in women-only recruitment is an ingenious way to expand the scope and make it easier for women to put themselves forward.

Over the last few years, the atmosphere towards the recruitment of women has become positive

As seen above, there was at least some opposition towards the recruitment of women from male academics, but Interviewee B says that this atmosphere has changed quite a lot over the

last few years. Until then, the reasoning was "We'd like to take on female academics, but there are no candidates". The current reality is that the actual existence of excellent female researchers who ought to be hired has been made visible through various schemes. Also, there are those with progressive ways of thinking among the male academics, too: researchers who have an awareness that there is a need to discover excellent personnel for their fields of study to continue. In fact, it is clear that without taking on female students, the scores achieved by applicants in entrance exams will fall. Moreover, looking at Japan as a whole, the proportion of girls entering science courses at university has remained around 30% since about 2003, and Interviewee B says that there are male academics who look at the big picture and feel a sense of urgency about the inability to utilize half of the excellent human resources available.

The merits of being chosen for MEXT's programmes to support female researchers

In these ways, awareness within the university of nurturing and increasing the number of female researchers is an effect of the initiatives undertaken by University X over the past years, but it is MEXT's programmes to support female researchers which underpin these initiatives. Interviewee B cites "standing out within the university" and the financial aspect as merits of being chosen for the project. Selection brings with it subsidies on a scale of several tens of millions of yen, making it possible to put in place the various systems detailed above. Furthermore, the expansion of these systems brings recognition of these initiatives within the university, making it possible to see that "gender equality is important".

The demerits of subsidies which are difficult to use and evaluation indices which look only at the increase in the number of female academics

On the other hand, Interviewee B cites the poor usability of subsidies as a demerit. There are restrictions on the purposes and methods of usage, and so "We cannot do 100% of what we would like to do." Interviewee B also views the project evaluation method, in which only the single point of "how far the number of female academics has expanded" is evaluated, as a problem. This is because the adoption period for each project is a few years but introducing a system to support work-life balance and continuing this for a few years does not result in large growth in the number of female academics. Moreover, it is impossible to tell how far the output of female academics increased because of using these support services in just a few years. The support systems themselves are also supported by the academics using them, but Interviewee B points out that since "MEXT's evaluation axis only looks at how far the proportion of female academics has expanded", this is not an accurate evaluation of the actual state of the initiatives. Furthermore, MEXT's support programmes are time-limited, and although subsidies are provided during the first few years of the programme, after that the university must become "self-propelled", taking on the financial burden, which is significant.

Interviewee B points to these circumstances as examples of the insufficiency of Japan's national initiatives for gender equality, raising the issue of the underdevelopment of gender statistics in comparison with those in other countries. Although the proportions of female academics at each university are publicly available, almost no universities publish statistics by faculty, office, or post level. The ratios of men and women applying to public recruitments are surveyed by JANU, but hardly any private universities issue similar figures. By rights, the national government should impose the responsibility for carrying out such investigations on all

universities, including private ones, and put in place a mechanism for publishing the data, Interviewee B says.

4.3 The actual situation at private universities

4.3.1 Case study: University Y

Until now, we have looked at the situation primarily at national universities from the interviews with Interviewees A and B. However, as Interviewee A pointed out, the situation differs at private universities. We will first introduce the interview with Interviewee C, director of the promotion office at University Y, a private university within Tokyo. University Y applied for the "Programme to Develop Support Models for Female Researchers" under MEXT's Special Coordination Funds for Promoting Science and Technology in 2008, and the university's plan was selected. Using the opportunity provided by the programme, the Gender Equality Office was then set up, aiming for a permanent system to maintain an environment in which not only female researchers but also male researchers, administrative staff, postgraduate students, and the other various people involved with the university could balance child raising with research, work, and studies. The General Affairs Division became responsible for the work of the office, and Interviewee C, who belonged to the General Affairs Division at the time, was put in charge of the office alongside their other responsibilities. As we saw in Chapter 2, this was the period in which similar offices were set up at many universities, based on the Third Science and Technology Basic Plan, which raised the issue of promoting the activities of female researchers. Given that most of these were national universities, University Y can be said to have tackled gender equality from an early stage among private universities.

Initially, in partnership with the Human Resources Division, the Gender Equality Office put in place various schemes related to raising children, held seminars and other awareness-raising activities, drew up a related Basic Plan, and so on. However, structurally it was an extremely small organisation, with a committee made up of some academics and an office staffed by administrators who also had other roles, and so promoting projects more proactively was difficult in terms of manpower. Also, given that "The Gender Equality Office was localised, and there were limits to how far it could be extended", and that the Accessibility Committee, which supported disabled students at the university, was also experiencing problems with the support system it provided while only a committee, a working group of academics and administrative staff was set up to consider the nature of a diversity organisation which could bring both together and carry out a wider variety of initiatives. After around a year of study sessions and discussions, the Diversity Promotion Office was established in 2018.

A characteristic of the Diversity Promotion Office at University Y is that it carries out projects in three areas: work-life balance, accessibility, and diversity. Interviewee C and colleagues looked at the organisations at various other universities when setting up theirs. They used as a particular reference one university which had developed three different projects under one large umbrella. However, the establishment of diversity sections including multiple related themes and projects was subsequently also seen at other universities, and Interviewee C is proud to think that University Y may have unintentionally become a model for others. According to

Interviewee C, at most universities at the time, separate, independent organisations oversaw initiatives related to gender equality, support for disabled students, and diversity, and various problems were caused by this silo structure. In this context, "We were probably a rare case at the time, in terms of bundling together organisations dealing with topics that differed at first glance". Interviewee C thinks that aiming for synergy by having one organisation take charge of three topics turned out to be the right solution because there was a lot of overlap in the issues being addressed.

The limits of thinking about support for female researchers in terms of women only

University Y has thus been at the forefront among private universities in tackling these issues. Through carrying out these activities, Interviewee C feels that "'Support for female researchers' is a popular buzzword in society, but it's not possible to think about this if we just think about women. We probably have to think about it in broader terms". This is because among the users of the support programmes which University Y offers, such as subsidies for the employment of research assistants for academics balancing work and child raising, money-off coupons for babysitters, subsidies for setting up temporary childcare facilities during conferences, subsidies for using babysitters when working on holidays, and a support desk (for advice on raising children), there are far more men than women. Many of the young male academics have partners who are also researchers, and because an environment in which they are also using support with child raising exists, no prejudice towards female researchers is said to be seen.

The generation gap is bigger than the gender gap

However, in terms of obstructions at present, Interviewee C says, "The generation gap is perhaps bigger than the gender gap". Seen from the perspective of older people, who "grew up in a world where it was a given that women would make the tea, that they would be at home doing the housework", there is a feeling that it is "unbelievable that men and women would cooperate in raising children". There are many academic and administrative staff who have not even noticed what the problem with the gender gap is. For this reason, "If you ask whether everyone is completely in agreement [with the increase in female researchers] and thinks that it is the right way to go, this is probably not the case depending on the generation".

The particular perspective of a private university, where numbers are not everything

These kinds of generational values eventually create a university culture which it is extremely difficult to alter until the next generation takes over. For this very reason, Interviewee C says about the increase in female researchers, "I wonder if just making the numbers match is enough". This is apparently particularly evident at national universities. At meetings in which national and private universities take part, "the topic of numerical targets, increasing the number of female researchers by however many percent, often comes up". Interviewee C says in response to this, "I'm left with doubts about this tendency to say that getting together enough women is enough […] if the numbers simply increase, will this bring about an environment in which women play an active role, develop their careers, and experience empowerment? Without building an environment, a structure, and a culture in which women can naturally perform, the original aim of creating a place in which women can play an active role is surely difficult".

This point can also be seen as a sign of the difference between private and national universities. Interviewee C says that since national universities have an overwhelming majority of men in the sciences, they probably worry about the numbers, thinking that they must increase the number of women at any cost. In comparison, private universities come in a variety of formats (women's universities, single-subject universities, etc.), sizes, and philosophies, and there are some universities which already have very many female researchers. Interviewee C emphasises that when it comes to increasing the number of female researchers, it is necessary to take the perspective that "numbers are not necessarily everything. It depends on the environment, culture, and organisations".

The perception that the promotion of women to higher positions is an increased burden rather than a merit is an issue

Nevertheless, this of course does not mean that the present situation should continue just as it is. There are problems particularly with the promotion of women to higher positions. According to Interviewee C, when it comes to appointing people to top positions such as a faculty head, there is a set period of office, and when the time for a replacement comes, a fair selection method such as an election takes place, so the precondition of this organisation is that it is difficult to reliably secure a certain proportion of women each time. The implementation of positive action, such as happens at other universities, faces "issues of generations and values" at University Y. This is a thorny problem: "Do we change people's awareness, or will these issues disappear when the next generation takes over?" In addition, in Japan there is the preexisting societal problem that the number of female researchers going on to PhD programmes and obtaining degrees is very small. Interviewee C points out that without increasing this overall pool of female researchers, female academics who can become future officeholders will not appear.

Interviewee C adds that when it comes to the promotion of women to higher positions, there is a concrete issue that the merits of (incentives for) becoming a university officer are not recognised. Unlike at regular companies or overseas, becoming an officeholder at a university in Japan does not mean that one's future career path is secured, and does not function as a means of moving up the ladder. Serving as a committee member "does not lead to the next career stage, responsibilities just become heavier. Also, holding several committee positions can become difficult to balance with research activities. And then, when your term is over, you go right back to your former position". Some posts carry an allowance, but the amount is very small compared with that at private companies, and some positions such as committee members do not come with any allowance. Interviewee C feels that not many people currently show any motivation to become an officeholder, nor any sense that there is any merit in this. Therefore, for female academics who are already struggling to balance research and home responsibilities, promotion to an official post merely means an increased burden. This is a problem particular to universities, which have a different organisational management to private companies; at the same time, it is a problem with Japan's social structure, in which the burden is concentrated on women, Interviewee C points out.

4.3.2 Case study: University Z

In the previous section, we introduced University Y, which has been addressing gender equality and diversity promotion since a relatively early stage among private universities. In this section, we will next introduce University Z, where a diversity centre was established and promotion activities began over the past few years, based on the interview with Interviewee D, the chair of the centre's steering committee.

In 2017, University Z issued a "Diversity Declaration", but there was initially no concrete action plan based on it. Moving backwards in time, an incident took place in 2015 in which a graduate of University Z was outed as gay without their consent while studying at another university's law school, and killed themself. Interviewee D, who was a professor in and Assistant Dean of the law faculty, planned a series of lectures to promote understanding of LGBT among law students. When setting such activities in motion within the university, "without a venue, people, or money, there is no progress". At the time, there was nowhere within the university to support disabled students or students with diverse origins who were not international students, either, so the conversation about establishing the centre emerged as a way of filling this gap. The centre was set up in April 2020.

Two diversity promotion currents, driven by gender studies and by the introduction of gender equality

Interviewee D divides gender equality and diversity promotion initiatives at Japanese universities into two methods: "Creating a gender studies institute, giving it a budget and staff, and carrying out activities while pursuing gender research", and "as we see particularly among national and local public universities, focusing particularly on staff support, such as personnel and research support, while making use of the framework of a gender equality division". Neither of these trends was visible at University Z, and no effort had been made to address the issue of the staff gender ratio. At University Z, a major private university, each faculty had a great deal of authority over academic personnel matters, and there was no strong overall move to promote any gender equality initiatives.

The slow progress of promotion initiatives given the dominance of male researchers

Nevertheless, policies existed in some faculties, and in the law faculty to which Interviewee D belonged, there was a line in the policy saying that diversity would be promoted in the hiring of personnel. However, Japanese universities are inevitably centred on male researchers, and so progress was slow. For example, "If the number of female academics changes from zero to one, people feel as though even that is an enormous change. So female academics join one by one, but this does not lead to any greater change in some cases".

Understanding of the gender gap among staff also has an influence on the provision of the student environment

Interviewee D believes that in such circumstances, within the large organisation which is University Z, the role of the centre is not to do everything related to diversity and inclusion on behalf of the university. Given an awareness that the motive for its establishment was the inadequacy of the environment from the perspective not only of gender equality but also from those of LGBTQ and disability, the diversity centre at University Z has a greater focus on

support for minority students than on gender equality. However, put another way, the diversity centre is an organisation which exists to create the environment for students, and there are naturally many academic and administrative staff in this environment. Therefore, "if staff are unable to squarely face and handle student diversity, this is not a desirable learning environment for students", so there is an awareness of the gender gap as an issue, Interviewee D explains.

Concerning the existence of this gender gap, Interviewee D points to the different understandings between generations, as Interviewee C did in the previous section. When Interviewee D was a postgraduate student, it was still said that "men have to feed their families, so we have to have an awareness of their need to get a full-time job from early on, but women may quit once they marry, so they don't need a full-time job". Interviewee D explained that in the world of university academics, "even those in their 50s have a sense of still being the core [of the organisation], and the overall age range is high, so generational changeover is clearly slow, and there was probably no opportunity for a major shift in the world of researchers".

4.4 The gender gap in the humanities and social sciences

4.4.1 The situation for female researchers in the humanities and social sciences

As was mentioned in the interview with Interviewee A, humanities and social sciences faculties predominate at private universities and so, as we can see in the situations at Universities Y and Z, they are not as conscious of numerical targets as national universities, where science faculties make up the majority. Nevertheless, from the interview with Interviewee D introduced in the previous section, we can surely point to a need to eliminate the gender gap in the humanities and at private universities. Turning here to the interview with Interviewee E, a professor in the humanities faculty also at University Z, as well as what we learned from Interviewee D, we will look at the situation surrounding female researchers in the humanities and social sciences.

Interviewee E carries out research on the topic of professional education and gender and is one of the members of the investigative working group Gender Equality Association for Humanities and Social Sciences (GEAHSS). GEAHSS was established in 2017 and is made up of academic societies in the humanities and social sciences. There is a board member responsible for GEAHSS at each academic society, with responsibility rotating each year, and members get together once a year to exchange information and present their results. In 2018, GEAHSS carried out a "fact-finding survey into gender equality among researchers in the humanities and social sciences", and talk of carrying out a second survey arose two or three years ago. Ideally, each academic society would take their turn to carry it out, but there are both large and small societies among the membership, and division of responsibilities for activities is difficult, so each academic society called for participants. Interviewee E responded to this call and took part. The survey has now finished, and the interim report is being released.

According to Interviewee E, there are issues with the management of GEAHSS going forward. "In each academic society, there are people who are interested in the research, or have struggled because they are women. If these people hold positions within academic societies, they work hard on initiatives to eliminate the gender gap". These people include those who worked to set up GEAHSS. However, this generation has begun to retire, and so Interviewee E senses a concern about "what will happen in the future". There are differences in the levels of enthusiasm displayed by the participants from the various academic societies, and Interviewee E explains that "there are some people who were made responsible for GEAHSS as part of their work at their academic society".

The gender disparity in academia has become a factor inhibiting the entry of the young generation to research posts

This difference in enthusiasm was also evident when analysing the GEAHSS survey results. In both the first and second surveys, around 60% of respondents were women which, considering the male-female ratio in the humanities and social sciences, means that relatively few men responded. Interviewee E also points out a bias in the responses: the response rate was high among academics who had already got tenure, showing that "people who have worked hard this far worked hard to respond".

However, excluding this bias among the respondents and looking at the results, there is a tendency for relatively young women to feel that there is still a gap, and for older women to feel that things have become equal. Therefore, we can see that the gender disparity in academia has become a factor inhibiting the entry of young people to research posts. In concrete terms, the systems and environment related to raising children, such as child raising leave and nurseries, have developed compared with the past. However, the young generation are uneasy about whether taking child raising leave will be viewed positively in terms of career development, Interviewee E says. For young female researchers without tenure, such as part-time lecturers, taking child raising leave in an environment in which people are evaluated according to the volume of their track record is bound to cause anxiety.

The bias towards science-centred evaluation axes in research evaluation and the need to introduce the perspective of gendered innovation

Interviewee D points to a similar situation, citing the difference in ways of counting research results as a major difference between the humanities and the sciences. The same kind of evaluation axes are employed in the humanities as in the sciences, including the number of research papers and the international reputation of the journals in which they are published. If the research achieves results based on these axes, it becomes easier to get research funding, but if not, the current situation is that the research ends up being seen as not producing results. In this context, if a researcher is in an environment in which the time they can devote to research is limited in various ways, it becomes difficult for them to participate proactively in international conferences and work trips, and these things become handicaps, one by one. Interviewee D states that an opportunity to change these science-centred evaluation axes and re-examine value in humanities research is needed.

On the other hand, speaking from the standpoint of gendered innovation, which has become a focus in the scientific field in recent years, Interviewee D points out that it is obviously important

to liberate studies from male-centred ideas and introduce the perspectives of women and minorities in the humanities and social sciences, too. For example, the law faculty at University Z focuses on developing practitioners, but the legal profession remains a male-centred world, Interviewee D says. However, at recent trials, verdicts without the perspective of women have been criticised, and cases which come to trial have included harassment or sexual violence, so that "people have come to say that this society, which has ignored women and minorities, cannot continue in its present state". Interviewee D explains that "there is nothing for it but to change things little by little" by continuing to say that these things which disciplines built around men have overlooked are extremely important.

4.4.2 The position of gender in academia

In this way, gendered innovation initiatives, which incorporate the perspectives of women and minorities that had been hitherto overlooked for learning to develop, are still in the process of development in Japan. Referring to the interview with Interviewee A on this point, at the Science Council of Japan, which formulates the nature of academic study in Japan, a few gender topics have existed among the subcommittees set up under committees, but the number of these is being reduced. Moreover, it has become difficult to submit gender-related themes in applications for research funding, and Interviewee A points out that "the nature of Japanese academia is backward-looking in terms of gender".

These trends are also appearing in actual systems. According to Interviewee E, courses on gender are held in social sciences faculties. However, when putting together a social sciences department in a social sciences faculty, "this does not mean that at least one" researcher specialising in the sociology of gender is needed as a full-time lecturer. Having gender-related slots "as courses and having a full-time lecturer in charge of those courses do not equal the same thing. So people who specialise in gender research tend to fall into becoming part-time", Interviewee E points out. This is because, in the end, universities are still a men's world, and "if you say that you do gender theory, people think that you can't do anything else".

Interviewee D touches on a similar point. Interviewee D feels that the number of people who believe that they need to know a little about gender is growing even within Japanese academia but says that this does not mean that there are people specialising in this research and full-time posts within academia. For example, if there were a researcher within political science who dealt with European politics, they might have a certain country's parliamentary system as the centre of their research topic, "and I feel that the number of people who can touch on an analysis related to this topic from the perspective of gender is growing". However, there are very few positions in which someone could be employed specialising in gender studies, dealing with gender as the central piece, and place this topic centrally in continuing to research and teach classes. In this way, the reality is that "Gender-type research is permitted to exist on the fringes but has not been able to make inroads into the centre".

4.5 Towards diversity as an educational environment

4.5.1 Awareness among university students

There is insufficient awareness of the gender gap among students themselves

It has become apparent from the interviews so far that precisely because humanities and social sciences faculties predominate at private universities, these universities do not focus solely on the increase or decrease in female researchers but, to borrow the expression used by Interviewee D, they think about the internal gender gap from the perspective of "academic and administrative staff as the environment in which students develop". Having said this, however, an understanding of the university gender gap issue from the perspective of the students' educational environment of course exists at national universities, too. If we take this perspective, the current awareness of the gender gap among students, who are constituent members of that educational environment, is still insufficient.

The interview with Interviewee B provides a useful point of reference. This interviewee belongs to University X, where natural sciences faculties make up the overwhelming majority, and there are few humanities and social sciences. Therefore, there are more male students, with the proportion of female students remaining around 30%. A gender gap unavoidably exists around this point. In the face of this situation, University X has set up a student circle where female science students get together, making a venue for female students, who can tend to become isolated within science and engineering faculties, to interact.

Sexist systems which exist within the student community, and the reproduction of old value systems

In addition, female students who have come from all-girls schools and have hitherto received an education aiming at independence, suddenly enter organisations which are full of men and become aware of how much they are in the minority. Moreover, just like the case which came to light concerning the refusal to admit female University of Tokyo students to the inter-collegiate circle at the University of Tokyo, Interviewee B has heard of clubs and circles where women cannot become leaders (traditionally, there have not been any women) at University X, too, though is unsure whether this is still the case, and feels that gender inequality exists.

Even so, an awareness that they are being discriminated against is not yet often seen among undergraduate students. Interviewee B says that they probably first notice it when they go out into society and their abilities are limited, or they come up against situations in which they are forced to balance home and work responsibilities. Nevertheless, over the last few years the number of students taking the gender theory classes for which Interviewee B is responsible has increased very rapidly, giving the sense that interest is growing among the public.

This kind of situation is also occurring in University Y, a private university in Tokyo. According to Interviewee C, there are students who obviously have a strong degree of interest in diversity, and they participate in events held by the promotion office; but it cannot be said that awareness of the gender gap is high among the student body as a whole. Old-fashioned aspects of some student circles and sports clubs, in particular, can still be seen: for example, ideas like "women are the ones who look after us" or "at drinking parties, women pour the drinks" persist. While

questioning whether such situations "remain unchanged at other universities, too", Interviewee C explains that old value systems tend to be reproduced when getting together with former generations precisely because University Y has particularly strong ties with alumni.

Diversity promotion starting from support for female students

Considering this current situation, Interviewee C explains that what the promotion office aims for is "going beyond diversity to steadily nurture students with an awareness of living their lives in society together with others". In doing so, approaches to male students are important, but University Y is choosing rather to consciously provide support for female students. For example, in the form of "support with physical health", they carry out initiatives such as holding seminars by gynaecologists at Y University Hospital to disseminate knowledge about pregnancy, childbirth, and menstruation, or placing free dispensers of sanitary products inside the cubicles of women's toilets on campus. They also hold "life planning seminars" for female students by graduates who are not far removed from them in age. According to Interviewee C, there are quite a few female students who are anxious because they cannot see their futures after graduation. In these seminars, female alumni who graduated 10 or 20 years previously and are at the stage of balancing child raising and work are invited to talk from a perspective which is close to that of students.

4.5.2 The perspective of student life planning support

Support which links to post-university destinations

We can see that the community provided for female science students by University X and the support initiatives for female students by University Y serve as opportunities for university systems and support structures to bring pluralistic possibilities to the environments in which students find themselves. To go even further, such initiatives do not stop at merely showing possibilities, but can also change students' lives in the present. The consolidation of the common name system by the diversity centre at University Z, about which Interviewee D talks, shows one aspect of this. Faculty rules about "the use of common names" already existed at University Z, but they were decided according to set patterns of gender dysphoria issues, nationality issues, or divorce issues, and had not been aligned for consistency and shared issues. By consolidating these and changing the rule which had not allowed a person to revert to their previous name after applying to use a common name in order to allow further modification, they adjusted the system and gave it a little flexibility.

According to Interviewee D, when someone wants to change the name in their family register because of gender dysphoria issues, and appeals to a court, whether or not they have a track record of living under that name becomes one of the grounds for the judgement. At that time, already using that common name at university, for example, can become material supporting their case. Already having the university approve the use of this student's common name at the stage before acceptance by the national government in the form of the family register becomes future support for the student. "From a student's perspective, a university is a place they pass through, and it leads to their lives beyond, so in that sense, altering university systems is not confined to the university, but links to the next destination. For example, support for

postgraduate students obviously also connects to the development of future researchers, and is very important", Interviewee D says.

Obstacles to increasing the number of female researchers due to the overlap of the system of gendered labour roles and the humanities-sciences problem

The interview with Interviewee E is suggestive from the perspective of developing researchers from the undergraduate stage. According to Interviewee E, there is no clear awareness of the gender disparity within research posts, such as the scarcity of female researchers, among undergraduate students of the humanities faculty of University Z in particular. The majority of students progressing to postgraduate courses are male. There are differences between the ways in which they express this progression: the number of boys who "move up saying they want to become researchers are slightly greater", while girls "say that they want to study a bit longer, but might stop after a Masters". Regarding the context behind these differences in expression, Interviewee E suggests the following possibility. There are fewer male students on humanities undergraduate courses to begin with, so at the point at which boys enter humanities courses, they are seen as students who could not get onto social sciences courses. Therefore, when asked what they want to be after leaving their postgraduate course, they have to say that they will become researchers. For girls, on the other hand, there is always the possibility that they may not be able to become researchers, so there is no need for them to strongly state that they are aiming to do so.

The overlap of the social system of gendered labour roles and the so-called "humanities-sciences problem" can be seen here. Because of this, such student consciousness "will not change drastically, precisely because it is a big topic. However, for this very reason, small initiatives are important". Interviewee E gives the examples of residential camps and events for female junior and senior high school students who have chosen science courses, saying that they tackle these girls' isolation and lead to the provision of role models, and that it would be good to have these kinds of opportunity for female humanities students, too. In the case of female humanities students, they experience isolation later than science students do when choosing between the humanities and sciences at high school, which is to say at the stage of considering progression to postgraduate courses. "Since they have no picture of becoming researchers, girls who want to go on to postgraduate courses are lonely". Because of this, "it is important to make friends with whom they can say they want to go on to postgraduate studies and create older role models", Interviewee E points out.

The need for female researcher role models

Interviewee E supports the point about role models from the GEAHSS survey results. According to Interviewee E, in response to the question "was your PhD supervisor male?", 90% of men responded that their supervisor was a male academic, while around 30% of women responded that their supervisor was a female academic. This result suggests that female researchers are needed as role models to develop female PhD holders. In this sense, "the positive nature of the promotion of female managers can also be emphasised in the rationale for student-facing management strategy", Interviewee E says. As has become apparent from the various things we have heard so far, in academia, where male researchers take up centre stage, women researchers are still viewed as a cause of concern because of the problem of balancing child raising and their work duties. However, Interviewee E emphasises that "there are rewards which

can be gained from having child-raising and family responsibilities", "raising children can generate positive feedback for research. Situations in life within society and in the family can help to develop you as an education and a researcher", and "recognising that there is value in proactively employing human resources with these kinds of experiences is true diversity, isn't it?"

4.5.3 The potential of the external gaze

As we have seen above, there is still a need to work on awareness of the gender gap and diversity among students and male staff at Japan's universities as a whole. When doing so, activities within the university are of course effective, but on the other hand, support from external organisations may also bring about results. Interviewee D makes a point about this based on personal experience. As we touched upon in 4.3.2, before setting up the diversity centre at University Z, Interviewee D held a series of lectures which were concerned with support for LGBT students. What prompted this was a case in which a student who had graduated from University Z and gone on to study at the law school at another university was outed and died. At that time, Interviewee D, who was already conscious of the problem of the closed nature of law schools through experience working in the undergraduate law faculty, became acutely aware that if the relationships formed within the communities at professional graduate schools continued and this kind of situation arose in that environment, it would be a matter of life and death.

Just around that time, LLAN (Lawyers for LGBT and Allies Network), a group working to make same-sex marriage a reality in Japan, approached the university. Then "our wish to change the closed nature of law schools and the desire of LLAN members to move marriage equality in Japan forwards matched up", and they held the aforementioned lecture series jointly, each supplying half of the lecturers.

Interviewee D says "if we do something together with a group outside the university, the participating students and lecturers can also glimpse the outside world", citing this as a result of the lecture series. For the university side, they experience pressure that "This is how things are outside the university, so we need to change, too". For students, too, "even if university is tough now, once they go into the outside world, there are positive spaces like this one, so that might become a source of hope". From this experience, Interviewee D points out that for external organisations and groups to hold activities such as lectures and seminars together with universities is meaningful.

Chapter 5: Results of this investigation and future approaches

In this chapter, we will summarise the things which have become apparent through this research thus far, point out the current issues, and suggest a few approaches which could be considered effective in tackling them.

5.1 Research results

5.1.1 Chapter 2: Figures for female researchers and policy implementation status, as seen from statistical data

In Chapter 2, we began in the first section by clarifying the number of female researchers in Japan, based on various statistical data. In comparison with OECD countries, Japan ranked at the bottom in terms of the proportion of female researchers, with 17.8% as of 2022. If we look at the latest data, from 2023, the proportion has risen to 24%, but still has not reached MEXT's target figure of 30%.

Looking next at the figures concerning higher education institutions, over the past 20 years the number of full-time academic staff has increased, and the proportion of women among postgraduate students has also been rising over the last decade. However, if we approach these in terms of the decrease from the proportion of women among undergraduate students, the 44.6% ratio of female undergraduates in 2023 becomes 32.8% of postgraduate students and 27.2% of full-time academic staff, with the proportion of women declining at each stage on the way to becoming a researcher. This kind of situation is what has been explained using the metaphor of the "leaky pipeline" in the US.

Moreover, the gender gap also interacts with the humanities-sciences axis: in home economics, pharmacy and nursing, the creative arts, the human sciences, and education, the proportions of women are high, while in the social sciences, the natural sciences, and engineering, the proportions of men are overwhelmingly greater. We pointed out how this shows the influence of the stereotype that humanities = women, sciences = men, and furthermore of the dual asymmetry caused by the male and female stereotypes around career choice.

Keeping the above in mind, in the second section we reviewed national policies focussing particularly on support for female researchers in scientific fields. We looked at the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society promulgated in 1999 and the Science and Technology Basic Plans drawn up every five years based on the Basic Act on Science and Technology promulgated in 1995. Of the latter, the Third Science and Technology Basic Plan of 2006 to 2010 in particular raised the active participation of female researchers as a serious issue and laid down specific numeric targets for the proportion of female researchers. MEXT has been running support programmes for female researchers since 2006, based on the targets set, and universities which apply for and are selected for these programmes have used the grants to put in place internal support systems.

Despite this, the proportion of female researchers in Japan remains low. Concerning this point, the inadequacy of gender statistics and lack of a theoretical basis when implementing policy have been pointed out as the result of comparisons with policies in other countries. In addition, prior research has made clear that the two problems of work-life balance and of the structural issue created by the male-dominated master-apprentice system are factors behind the low number of female researchers in Japanese academia. These standpoints need to be reflected in policy.

5.1.2 Chapter 3: The state of diversity promotion at universities

In Chapter 3, we listed up and analysed the diversity promotion situation at each university based on data from prior research. Specifically, we made lists of universities with gender equality or diversity promotion management organisations. This gave a result of 69 such national universities, 19 local public universities, and 36 private universities. We went on to look at each university's website, draw out the main initiatives aimed at gender equality or diversity promotion, and categorise them into five types: work-life balance support, research support, career support, diversity promotion, and health support.

The above task highlighted the following points. Firstly, most national universities have management organisations in place, prompted by MEXT's support programmes for female researchers. Moreover, support systems falling into the "work-life balance support" category are plentiful at almost all national universities. These points show the policy-led move to eliminate the gender gap at national universities.

In comparison, few private universities have management organisations in place. Among those which do, large-scale universities and those with healthcare faculties are prominent. Different initiatives from those at national universities can also be seen: there are private universities which have gender research institutes and award systems for female researchers carrying out research into gender.

Moreover, among universities, irrespective of type, those which have removed the term "gender equality" from the titles of their management organisations and replaced this with "diversity" are noticeable. At the very least, initiatives which take into consideration students who have diverse backgrounds, such as the use of universal design and the installation of multipurpose toilets, are being carried out, and it can be thought that the provision of environments which emphasise diversity as a university management strategy will increase from now on.

5.1.3 Chapter 4: Results of the research interviews

The current situation and issues at national universities

In Chapter 4, we clarified the actual state of the gender gap at universities more concretely from interviews with five members of academic and administrative staff who were involved with gender equality and diversity promotion work at universities. The current situation and issues which became evident from the interviews are summarised below.

Beginning with the current situation, support for female researchers at national universities is quite thorough in terms of facilities and systems, as we pointed out in Chapter 3. This is because national universities often find themselves in situations where they must be conscious of competitive funding and grants.

At national universities, there have been attempts to make excellent women more visible as a strategy to increase the proportion of female researchers, such as through the positive action of women-only recruitment. There are some male researchers who are critical of this increase in female researchers because of doubts about their ability or fears that their own posts may be cut, but there is also a welcoming atmosphere based on the big picture of developing scholarship and nurturing human resources.

An issue which emerged from academic staff at national universities interviewed for this research was MEXT's uniform implementation of support programmes for female researchers. Even among national universities, there are variations in terms of location, student and staff numbers, environment, and so on. In acquiring female researchers, the absolute number of whom is small, these different conditions risk leading to fights over human resources, and there is a fear that polarisation among universities may increase.

The adoption periods for these programmes are also short, just a few years, making it difficult to measure the impacts which various support systems have on female researchers. MEXT looks only at the growth rate of the proportion of female researchers, and so in this sense, the failure to make an accurate assessment of the actual state of these initiatives is problematic. In this way, MEXT's support programmes for female researchers have been effective to a certain degree, in the sense of enriching support systems at national universities, but the policy overlooks the actual situation at each university, and it has become evident that there are many problems in terms of the original objective of increasing the number of female researchers.

The current situation and issues at private universities

At private universities, on the other hand, management methods differ from those at national universities, with relatively more humanities faculties compared to science-dominated national universities, making it hard to feel any kind of numbers-related pressure to increase the number of female researchers. Of course, notwithstanding the large number of humanities faculties at private universities, gender gaps exist among academic and administrative staff and among students – there is an awareness of the need to increase the number of female researchers, but there is also a generation gap between older and younger academics, and so immediate progress is difficult in this situation.

Moreover, looking at the current state of the humanities and social sciences, posts specifically for gender researchers have not been made available and science-leaning evaluation axes are employed. As a result, in a performance-based system, female researchers must produce results and face difficulties around work-life balance. These issues surrounding female researchers in the humanities were apparent from the interviews.

The current situation of and issues for students

At the same time as being research institutions, universities are also educational institutions, and so the issues surrounding female researchers become part of the background as seen by students. Irrespective of whether they are at national or private universities, and except for a

few students, the great majority of students are not particularly attuned to gender, according to the interviewees for this study. The reproduction of traditionally sexist values in student circles and clubs was cited as an issue.

Against this background, a variety of initiatives have been carried out from the standpoints of student learning environments or life planning, and with the term "diversity", support for minority students in addition to women has taken place.

5.1.4 Summary of the issues indicated by the research results

The results of this research investigation have been outlined above. Issues indicated when aiming to eliminate the gender gap at Japanese universities are listed below.

- Since MEXT's target figure of 30% women has not been achieved, and the proportion of women falls at each stage on the way to becoming a researcher, fights arise over the limited pool of female researchers

- Due to the uniform numerical targets and short-term evaluation of MEXT's female researcher support programmes, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of support systems

- There is a lack of gender statistics, making it difficult to grasp the actual situation at each university and formulate improvement strategies

- Generation gaps exist among academic and administrative staff and between students and alumni, reproducing sexist values within universities

5.2 Approaches required going forward

Bearing in mind the above overview of this research, we will lay out some approaches which the British Council could take going forward from the standpoint of action plans to tackle the issues which have become evident particularly through the interviews. We will divide our explanation into the categories below.

1. Recommendations to MEXT for policy revisions

2. Analysis of the situation at each national university

3. Overhaul of gender-related statistics at each university

4. Provision of courses on gender as an external organisation

5.2.1 Recommendations to MEXT for policy revisions

Issues with the uniform numerical targets and evaluation for MEXT's female researcher support programmes were raised. These can be thought to have been brought about by a failure of those setting policies at MEXT to recognise the situations of universities. An explanation to MEXT of the actual situation surrounding national universities and an indication of the issues with current subsidy projects are called for. On top of this, it could be considered effective to

present recommendations for policy improvements, such as setting numerical targets for usage rates of support systems or volume of research results as well as for the proportion of female researchers, thus adding an evaluation axis measuring the degree to which improvements to the environment have been achieved.

5.2.2 Analysis of the situation at each national university

At the same time as approaches to MEXT like the ones in the preceding section, approaches to each national university are also required. As became clear from the interviews, national universities are under pressure from the government to increase the number of female researchers. However, understanding of the current situation at universities is insufficient, and the situation at present is such that even if positive actions such as quotas for women are implemented, they do not yield the expected results. Therefore, offering funds or consulting work to assess the current situation to small-scale national universities with limited budgets could be one way of assisting the appropriate implementation of support projects.

5.2.3 Overhaul of gender-related statistics at each university

As was pointed out during the desk research and interviews for this investigation, the underdevelopment of Japan's gender-related statistics is problematic. This point needs to be included in the submission to MEXT, but supporting each university to overhaul their gender statistics could be a more concrete method of action. In addition to the numbers of female researchers recruited and employed, detailed figures by faculty, field, career stage, and so on, as well as the ratios of male and female applicants, would make the current status of female researchers visible. Support could be provided in terms of grants or the provision of human resources to enable each university to produce such statistics. Proactively approaching private universities, over whom the national government and JANU have little power, could be considered a particular contribution to the consolidation of gender-related statistics at Japan's universities as a whole.

5.2.4 Provision of courses on gender as an external organisation

It was evident from the interviews that universities have roles to play not only as research institutions but also as educational institutions, and that there is a need to aim for gender equality and diversity as the environment in which students learn. It is hard to call for drastic changes to the structural problems within university organisations, such as staff generation gaps or the absence of posts for academics specialising in gender. Moreover, values including the gender gap which are reproduced in social life or within communities solidify students' awareness, and these are not issues which can be resolved through initiatives by universities alone.

On the other hand, as was touched upon during interviews, student awareness of gender is growing year by year, and participation in lectures and seminars on gender theory is also rising. Increasing the opportunities which can lead to these kinds of change in student awareness is important, and interviews pointed out that the involvement of external organisations can make

them aware of the external gaze, and can give students hope about the society which awaits after graduation. If researchers develop from among students who have experienced such opportunities, Japan's male-dominated academia may change. Therefore, support in the form of the provision of opportunities by holding gender lectures open to students and staff, whether in partnership with the university or as a course provider, can be considered concrete and effective.

5.2.5 Co-creation activities to promote the realisation of these approaches

The approaches which are called for going forward, based on the results obtained from this research, have been laid out above. In aiming to resolve the issue of gender inequality raised here, which is to say, a complex problem to which there is no one optimal solution, it is essential to work across the sectors of industry, government, academia, and the public to build co-creative relationships. Therefore, as the British Council, making cross-sectoral networks which might become involved with gender equality visible and working to build a "co-creation platform" which will tackle the activities listed in 5.2.1 to 5.2.4 are also very important.

For "5.2.1 Recommendations to MEXT for policy revisions", drawing up an ideal vision for gender equality in higher education together with diverse members involved with the co-creation platform and creating a policy co-creation project to generate policy recommendations should be feasible.

For "5.2.2 Analysis of the situation at each national university" and "5.2.3 Overhaul of gender-related statistics at each university", the British Council could consider a plan to start up a research grant co-creation programme together with the Gender Equality Association for Humanities and Social Sciences (GEAHSS), which collaborated with the interviews for this investigation, and make grants for research by universities or gender-related researchers.

Furthermore, the idea that "5.2.4 Provision of courses on gender as an external organisation" was important to raise awareness among students, the potential researchers of the future, was shared by the experts interviewed for this investigation. In addition, in a situation where it is difficult to envisage female researcher role models, gender courses could be thought of as serving as opportunities to generate an awareness of companionship which could provide support along the path to becoming a researcher. Organisations and groups providing such courses already exist, and collaboration with them could make it possible to efficiently produce results.

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