

German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo (DIJ)

DIJ Social Science Study Group

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Culture at work.

On the interplay of cultural change and job satisfaction in a Japanese multinational company

Job satisfaction in Japan has become a widely-debated issue, especially since research findings indicated that it ranks among the lowest in the world (e.g. Hipp and Givan Kolins 2015). Moreover, surveys suggest that compared to other aspects of life, such as family or education, Japanese are least satisfied with their working lives (Holthus et al. 2015).

At the same time, global megatrends and market forces are reshaping Japanese workplaces, for example in the form of international mergers and acquisitions, which lead to direct confrontations of different cultures and elicit inevitable changes to the existing work culture. So far, however, the implications of such changes for organizational cultures and employee satisfaction have rarely been addressed in qualitative research. My study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the interrelations between job satisfaction, globalization and culture and asks to what extent job satisfaction interacts with and depends on culture.

The presentation will focus on preliminary findings from qualitative empirical research in a Japanese manufacturing company that was bought out by a foreign competitor over a decade ago. Based on a praxeological approach based on Pierre Bourdieu, it draws from field notes and interviews with employees and managers, which were generated during participant observation in the personnel department of the company.

Matthias Huber is a sociologist and doctoral assistant at the East Asian Studies Department of Vienna University, specializing in cultural sociology. He is also a contributor to the department's research projects "Parental well-being in Japan" and "Aso 2.0". At present, he is conducting field research in Japan on a scholarship by the German Institute for Japanese Studies.

Presentation and discussion will be in English. All are welcome to attend. Prior registration is not necessary but appreciated (heinrich@diptokyo.org).

Event takes place at the German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo (DIJ)
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