

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo) Business & Economics Study Group



March 19, 2024, 18.00h (JST) / 10.00h (CET)

Japanese Career Women's Persistent Identity Conflict

Helene Tenzer, LMU Munich School of Management

This study explores how career-minded Japanese women experience and respond to identity conflict. Our findings are based on 125 in-depth interviews with Japanese women who face incompatible expectations for their roles in their professional and private lives. We show how this dilemma leads to an identity conflict to which the women react with different identity work strategies: Individuals may either sacrifice their career ambitions or forego starting a family; alternatively, they might attempt to reconcile professional and personal role expectations by relinquishing perfectionism in both spheres, or seek partners whose personal expectations align more closely with their career objectives. While these strategies may resolve incompatible external role expectations, our study reveals that they do not effectively diminish internalized dilemmas. As a result of these persisting dilemma situations, many Japanese women experience increasingly entrenched negative emotions such as regret, guilt, frustration and disempowerment. Possible solutions to resolve the dilemma will be discussed.

Helene Tenzer is Associate Professor of International Management at LMU Munich School of Management in Germany. Her research interests include language diversity in multinational organizations, multinational and virtual teams, leadership in multinational organizations, international human resource management and Japanese human resource management. Helene is on the Editorial Review Boards of *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of World Business* and *Management International Review*. Her work has been published in journals such as the *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Leadership Quarterly*, *Journal of World Business* and *Academy of Management Learning and Education*.

About:

The DIJ Business & Economics Study Group is a forum for scholars conducting research on contemporary Japan. Meetings are open to speakers from all disciplines related to economics and business studies. Participation is open to all.

Hybrid Event:

For **on-site participation** please register via email at heckel@dijtokyo.org until March 18, 2024.

For **online participation** please register via our [webpage](#).