

Women Empowerment in Japan: policies and public's reaction

Irina ROIBU¹, Paula-Alexandra ROIBU (CRUCIANU)²

Traditionally, Japanese women are seen as subservient, dominated by men inside and outside the household and very dedicated to their families, leaving their jobs and careers after getting married or having children. This image is attributed to Confucianism and to the Samurai-based feudalism, both of them positioning women on an inferior level within the society. In 2013, Prime Minister Abe addressed the idea of “women empowerment” and the necessity of women being more involved in economy in order to revive Japan. Although the idea is not new and many countries around the world are trying to implement many changes in this field, the Japanese are famous for their unwillingness to modify mentalities and for the traditional ways of getting things done, aspects that might slow down real actions and developments. This paper analyzes the reactions of the Japanese citizens (women and men) to the idea of women empowerment for a stronger economy and a better future for the country. The research is based on a questionnaire administered to 36 Japanese nationals (men and women) living in Japan, working in private and public sectors. The findings indicate a desire to change women's place in society and economy but also a difficulty in what it concerns changing mentalities and acceptance of women as equals at work. Changes will happen but a long time is required.

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¹ Assistant Professor. Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, South Korea, roibuirina@gmail.com

² PhD Student. Doctoral School of Economic and Business Administration. Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași