

**Freeters' and Part-timers' Challenge to
Human Resources Management in Japan**

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Freeters' and Part-Timers' Challenge to Human Resources Management in Japan: Development of an Appropriate Training and Education Model to Promote Freeters and Part-timers into Regular Employment

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Abstract:

Based on secondary sources, this paper examines the challenges that the freeters and part-timers pose to traditional HRM in Japan, and suggests training and education measures to promote full-time employment of such freeters and part-timers. Using a structured questionnaire survey, it examines the type of facilities and supports that freeters and part-timers need at pre-employment, job search, and post-employment phases, and from management, employers, trade unions, business chambers, government organizations, and civil society to help them secure lifetime career employment. Finally, the paper postulates a schematic framework of training and education which, if applied as envisaged, will increase their employability and elevate their positions into full-time regular employment.

Keywords: Freeters and part-timers, HRM, Japan, lifetime employment, schematic framework, training and education.

Definitions of Freeter, *Arbeiter*, and Part-timer

Working population in Japan includes freeter, *arbeiter*, dispatched worker, part-timer, and seasonal worker, which denote different categories and styles of employment that can be found outside the domain of regular and full-time employment. Until now lifetime employment, a system whereby graduates from different academic institutions enter in the employment of companies and organizations and under normal circumstances continue to work with the same employer until retirement, is regarded the most characteristic form of employment in this country. This form of employment resembles full-time and regular and/or tenure employment in the West as well as in other Asian countries. Freeters and other categories mentioned above to denote people who work on non-full time basis also constitute a part of the national active labour force.

Freeters are the people who work on temporary arrangements and change jobs very frequently. Combining the English word “free” or “freelance” that denotes non-permanent or non-contractual relation with German word *arbeiter*¹ (worker) or *arbeiten*² that denotes “employment, work, occupation, or job”, the term “Freeter” has been developed to denote that section of the workforce who change job very often, and do not commit to any particular employer or employment for a long time. This word was first used during the bubble economic period in the late 1980s to refer to those young people who deliberately used to remain unemployed or sought part-time employment, despite huge job-offers available in the market. Freetering was even viewed in those days as a glamorous denomination of people who were devoted to pursue “new dreams” and “new life-styles”, and was enviously

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attributed to by scholars and the baby-boomer workaholic generation as *shinjinrui* (people of new generation). However, in course of time it has degenerated into an irony and defamatory connotation, and presently it points to people at the age between 15 and 34, who either do not possess full-time employment or are unemployed. It excludes students and housewives. In general, freeters are employed in low status jobs that do not require any specialized skills, and a group whimsically hops in the labour market if the jobs do not fit into their mental state of a particular moment.

As a technical term “freeter” is very confusing in Japanese labor statistics provided by the government, which includes other terms like “jobless youth”, “part-time work”, and “unemployed”. Jobless youths belong to the age bracket of 15 to 34, and consist of a part of the national labor force, which is completely unemployed, and a part from the non-labor force, which is neither in education, employment or training (called NEET) and even does not help in household chores (JILPT, 2005). Thus jobless youth means both completely unemployed young people and NEET in the age group of 15-34. *Japanese Working Life Profile of 2004/2005 and 2005/2006* provide the definition of “unemployment” or “unemployed” as “people of 15 years old and over who are able to work, have sought work, and are out of work at the time of the survey, and includes people who are waiting for results of the job searches” (JILPT, 2004).

Although very similar and sometimes confused to be different, part-time workers are also a type of “freeters”, and is defined as people who work less than 35 hours a week (excluding temporary withdrawal) during a particular reference week (JILPT, 2004). Thus, part-time workers and freeters connote same the status and attribute of the working people. JILPT (2005) cites the definitions in government documents as follows:

White Paper on the Labour Economy 2003.

Those between the ages of 15-34 who are not students, and for women, are unmarried (1) who are referred to as “arbeit worker or part-timer” at their places of employment, and are (2) unemployed persons who desire to work as “arbeit worker or part-timers”, and are not helping household chores or are attending school.

2003 White Paper on National Life.

Due to the reality of the many people who are forced to work as part-timers and arbeit workers even if they desire to become full-time employees, we widely consider people who would like to work but cannot gain full-time employment jobs as freeter. Therefore “freeter” has been defined as, “a young person between the ages of 14 to 34 (excluding students and housewives), who work in part-time or arbeit jobs (including dispatched works) and unemployed persons who wish to work”.

The above documents indeed has widened the scope and definition of freeters to include dispatched workers, temporary workers, and even the jobless people who seek *arbeit* or part-time work and dream to become full-time employees some day (JILPT, 2005). Under all circumstances students and housewives who do *arbeit* to supplement either pocket money or household income is not freeters even though they may change jobs quite frequently. As Kosugi (2005) defines, freeters refer to those youth who do not find employment as *seishain* (full-time employees) and work in untenured short-term and/or part-time jobs after leaving school (either by graduation or by dropping out). Compared with NEET, the problem of freeter, in terms of employment, is that of the income and status gap with regular employees, the problem of transition to regular employment from *arbeit* and part-time, and the consequent difficulty in forming a stable career as those in regular employment (Kosugi, (2004).

Type of Freeters

In the literary and research world, freeter has been widely defined and classified into groups and sub-groups depending on their attitude, work behavior, income, mental and other attributes. The *Labour Force Survey* of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW and formerly the Ministry of Labor) with its adjunct think-tank, the Japan Institute of Labour Policy and Training (JILPT), based on the survey of the actual situation of freeters in 2000, have published a report, which has classified the freeters into three categories. These are, namely the “moratorium type”, the “dream pursuing type”, and the “no alternative type” (Kosugi, 2004). The first type takes up *arbeit* that fit in to the psychic and mundane reservations as moratoriums or stopgap arrangements before finding regular jobs, but usually avoids strict and conservative companies. Very similar to the first, the second type is prone to enjoy life, but remains out of the main stream of employment for dreams that are not compatible to ordinary Japanese career pursuing norm. The third type becomes freeters after failing to find full-time employment right after graduation from academic institutions, and ultimately takes up low-paid jobs to earn some income (Wikipedia, 2006; Japan Information Network 2002; JILPT, 2000 and 2004).

The above categories are sub-categorized in many ways, e.g., the moratorium group into dropout moratorium and job-quit moratorium — the former points out to those who turn freeters either after dropping out from school or completing school education, and the latter to those who become freeters after quitting jobs, but both groups lack any vision for the future career (JILPT, 2000 & 2004). The “dream pursuing type” is categorized into art performing oriented and workman and freelancer oriented groups. The “no alternative type” is categorized into regular employment-oriented, time limited, and private and troubled groups (Uenishi, 2005).

Freeters are in general also known as “temps”, “job-hoppers”, “freelancers”, “part-time workers”, and “furita”, who move among a series of temporary jobs. They are also humorously called “parasite singles”, since they mostly remain unmarried and live with their parents where food and lodging are free, and especially single women—either freeter or full-time worker—do not want to marry such people who do not have any commendable job or income. A group of freeters, called peripheral freeters, work a very short period or time, and dwells in and around NEET; they are neither students nor housewives but work in *arbeit* and part-time jobs, and the number of days they work in a year is below 99 days and the number of hours they work in a week is below 21 hours. This group consists of about 410,000 people (JILPT, 2005). As found in JILPT (2000 & 2004), many freeters long for a stable carrier and family sometime in life and to earn steady income to support family. This is, in fact, a standard norm of Japanese national and social life.

Number of Freeters and Field of Employment

Depending on the way of defining, the number of freeter population varies; it was 1.01 million in 1992, 1.93 million in 2000, and 2.01 million in 2005, but those who graduated college and university in March 2006 has decreased by 99,000 or 33 percent compared to the previous year. Freeters and part-timers are not evenly distributed through out all industrial and occupational categories (MHLW, 2006), and the majority are employed in food and beverage selling shops, wholesale and retail trade, health care and welfare facilities, and education and learning support facilities. They are most visible in family restaurants, super markets, convenience stores, telephone sales, construction sites, traffic monitoring, and

similar other places which require no specialized skills. Jobs in these positions do not assist them in acquiring specialist skills (Japan International Network, 2002). In 2003, about 77.2 percent of all part-timers were employed in small to medium size enterprises employing 5-99 persons (MHLW, 2003).

Table 1, cited from another source, shows that the number of freeter has increased constantly from 1982 to 2002. Although both male and female freeter population is increasing alarmingly, the situation of female is very frightening. Academic background shows that in both cases the number of junior and middle high school graduates is high, which implies that people with lower education are more prone to be freeters.

Causes of Becoming Freeters

The causes of turning freeter have been attributed to from “status symbolic” apathy toward the traditional work career and life style of baby boomers to “hardship” of economic slumps that swept Japan in the 1990s and in the first few years of the current decade. In the

Table 1: Number of Freeters by Gender, Age, and Academic Background

	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002
Total (thousand)/ (a) + (b)	59	95	110	173	251
Male (thousand) (a)	27	42	49	73	106
% of total	2.4	4.0	4.4	6.4	9.3
Age (%):					
15-19 Years	7.8	14.8	15.7	24.4	32.0
20-24 Years	3.8	6.1	6.6	10.6	17.8
25-29 Years	1.7	2.5	3.0	4.4	7.3
30-34 Years	1.3	1.6	1.5	2.4	4.0
Education (%):					
Junior High School	4.3	9.1	12.3	15.6	21.7
High School	2.4	4.4	4.9	7.2	10.7
Junior/Technical College	2.2	3.3	3.1	5.1	7.6
College/University	1.2	1.4	1.4	2.7	4.5
Female (thousand) (b)	32	53	61	100	145
% of total	7.3	10.8	10.2	16.3	21.9
Age-wise break-up (%):					
15-19 Years	6.7	14.4	15.1	29.2	43.7
20-24 Years	6.1	8.9	9.2	16.9	24.2
25-29 Years	9.6	12.1	10.2	13.6	17.7
30-34 Years	10.5	13.4	10.8	14.3	20.0
Education (%):					
Junior High School	12.9	27.2	32.1	42.4	50.2
High School	6.5	10.7	11.1	20.0	30.4
Junior/Technical College	7.3	8.2	6.9	12.1	16.0
College/University	8.0	8.9	6.8	9.6	9.6

Source: JILPT (2005).

post-bubble period, fewer jobs were available in the market than the number of job seekers. Young people worked as freeters for freedom and to pursue dreams in the 1980's (Japan Information Network, 2002). Japan Institute of Labor (JIL, 2000) survey of career decisions behavior of the high school students (general, commercial, and technical) in Metropolitan Tokyo in 2000, shows that, irrespective of genders and type of schools, desire of income for that time only (43.1 percent), desire for free time (42.8), higher cost of further education (41.4 percent), lack of good place for employment 40.1 percent), and inability to select suitable job (38.3 percent) are the principal causes of becoming freeters other than carrier employees. Other important reasons found in this survey for all three categories of schools were family circumstances hindering further education, lack of desire to receive higher education, comfortable human relationships in non-permanent jobs, difficulties in getting full-time jobs, and ease in changing jobs.

Due to sluggish growth of the economy and enterprises, employers in many cases slashed down recruitment of fresh-graduates. An absence of sound cooperation among hiring companies and placement centers at high schools at about this time had obstructed the development of occupational skills, especially among high school graduates. Furthermore, employers developed a strong preference to recruit young people on short-term arrangements and university graduates in jobs that were formerly offered to high school graduates. This situation in the job market had an opposite and reverse impact on the increase of part-timers leading to decrease of full-time employments, and a consequent increase in the number of jobless youth (JILPT, 2005). Mismatch between skill requirement of employing firms and scholastic ability of middle and high school graduates (Yasuda, 2003) compelled some low-grade school-graduates to turn freeters, vagabond, and even parodist pleasant seekers, since they could not get jobs, nor could go to higher educational institutions.

MHLW'S *Employment Status Diversification Survey* in 2003 shows that part-timers and dispatched workers, both atypical non-regular staff and freeters, consist of 34.6 percent of all workers (MHLW, 2003), which was 27.5 percent in 1999 (MOL, 1999). The part-timers group in 2003 stated the most important reasons to choose such employment as, can choose own hours, want to defray educational or household expenses, short commuting time, short working hours and days, desires to earn money for free personal use, possibility to strike a good balance between home life and other activities, and inability to find permanent position. The dispatched workers group mentioned inability to find permanent position, possibility to strike a good balance between home life and other activities, untied down employment relationship, possibility to use special qualification and abilities, desire to earn money for free personal use, and freedom of choosing own time, and short working hours and days, etc. The *Employment Status Diversification Survey of 1999* categorized the part-timers into "short-time" and "other part-time" sub-groups. The short-time group states freedom to choose own time, desire to defray educational and household expenses, and short working hours and days as the three most important reasons of working part-time. All these bring to light some or other aspects of the background of freeters and part-timers in the concurrent Japanese job market. These surveys with varying degree of responses show almost the similar pattern and causes of working as freeter, but given that the number of such non-regular employment is constantly on the rise³, it can be concluded that the challenges that come from such employment relationship are aggravating and may further engrave the situation of the national labour market.

From the employers' side, the most important reasons for resorting to such non-regular

employment relations (both freeter and dispatched worker) were namely, the need to control wage costs, to control labour costs other than wages, to adjust hiring practices due to changes in business conditions, to meet additional daily/weekly personnel requirement, and the requirement of people with experience and expertise⁴ (MHLW, 2003). It can be deduced that, employers attach more importance to practical reasons on their part due to the cost aspect of employment. Other than the above, it is plausible that employers can also reduce employment related costs (insurance, tax, pension, allowance, etc.) by employing more freeters on daily or weekly basis.

Japanese Human Resources Management and Freeters and Part-timers Challenges

Basic Features of Japanese HRM

Japanese human resources management (HRM) is known for its three sacred-treasure characteristics, namely lifetime employment, seniority-based wage and promotion, and enterprise-wide trade union (Abegglen, 1984; Ohashi & Oda, 1996, OECD, 1973; Khondaker, 1997). The lifetime employment indeed refers to lifetime commitment to the same employer after recruitment from academic institution. This lifetime employment by a company and lifelong commitment by the cohort means *de facto* job and employment safety for both (Ouchi, 1982), and is embedded in a historical culture employment relationship like tenure or contractual system in other countries especially the USA, the UK, and Europe.

In its fundamental stature, the employer does not attach much importance to academic institutional qualification, rather provides wide range of job-specific and function-specific training and education, both on-and off-the job (OJT and Off-JT) inside and outside work premises, and thereby develops a company-specific skill and personality. The employees are retained until the mandatory retirement age (Ouchi, 1982: 15) and if either parties do any blunder at the entry point it is not at all remediable. The employer has to carry along a sub-standard or unneeded person in the employment, while the employee has to remain satisfied with forbearances in the unmatched job. Particularly if the employee quits a job voluntarily, it is impossible to get a similar job. In the contemporary labor market, although mid-career employment opportunities and their social frameworks are flourishing gradually, indeed, most such people end up in freeter, part-time, and other non-regular employment arrangements, and some in NEET. Although the post-bubble economic hardship and job market conditions in Japan are said to be improving gradually, paradoxically the number of freeters and other non-regular employments in aggregate is increasing. It registered 34.6 percent in 2003 (JILPT, 2006) compared to 27.5 percent in 1999 (JILPT, 2004) of all workers. And all three major groups, namely part-time workers, temporary workers, and dispatched workers in the non-regular worker category, are increasing, irrespective of age brackets and genders (JILPT, 2006).

In the above employment system, the employer in general implements a career program with pre-designed steps in the hierarchy and provides requisite training and education for each such steps (Amaya, 1983). The pre-employment training is provided to bridge the student life with the practical work life, and is precise. The cohorts receive information materials, correspondences and study materials, meet senior employees, and visit plants and offices. This is done to release would-be employees from tension and/or excitement of forthcoming work life and get them mentally prepared (Khondaker, 1997).

Post-employment training in fact coincides with stages in the career, but training for the new recruits and those at relatively higher stages includes job and company orientation,

experience at shop-floor levels, *taiken kyouiku* (education through experience), OJT, Off-JT, job-rotation, and company supported but employees' self-initiated self-development education and training. Especially, company orientation, experience at shop-floor levels, and *taiken kyouiku* in Japan build far reaching personality and skill, and success or failure in those by an employee becomes a decisive factor of his/her continuity and sustainability in the job. As mentioned in Tanaka (1981), these forms of training and education are formalized procedures of collective orientation, socialization and indoctrination, and cultivate a spirit of harmony and teamwork among employees. These build company-specific skills and nurture a company-specific personality and aptitude, and go all the way in the career until mandatory retirement. Traditionally, lifelong employment fosters a relationship called *oyabun kobun kankei* (parent child relationship) among employers and employees, whereby both appreciate and support each other and endeavor to increase mutual welfare on long-term basis.

Freeters Impact on and Challenge to Japanese HRM

Freeters and other part-time employments have posed a severe thrust on Japanese HRM and labour market. While increasing availability of people in freeter and non-regular employment has developed apathy among employers in some industries and businesses toward increasing full-time employment, since by such measures they can employ young people and women at cheap rates without much investment in recruitment. Secondly, by these measures they can avoid payment of high salary, bonus, insurance, tax and pension, which indeed bluff the national exchequer and negatively affect its revenue. Thirdly, laboratory like experiment in other countries found that the productivity of non-regular employees is much lower than that of the regular employees, who also possess low work morale and are less motivated to increase skill and efficiency.

The *2005/2006 Labour Situation Analysis* (JILPT, 2005) has summarized four important vices associated with freeters and non-permanent employment. Firstly, the cohort cannot accumulate vocational skills, and end-up carriers in repetitive temporary works, and thus waste the most productive time of life for imparting skill. Secondly, during career evaluation for full-time jobs, companies usually do not count experiences in *arbeit* and part-time work. Furthermore, compared with a full-time work, wage increase and promotion opportunities are extremely low in part-time assignments. Thirdly, the acceptability of the cohort in the society is tremendously low in terms of identity and security, and thus creates psychological problems. Fourthly, the cohort faces difficulties in attaining self-reliance and in planning a standard lifestyle, since wage in such jobs is low, and the possibility of getting wage-increase is also very slim. Consequently, the cohort may drop out from pension, national health, and social security schemes.

Other problems are (a) the employer and the nation have to put up with low value added from its active human resources; (b) prolonged employment in non-regular jobs has given rise to a class called "working poor", which toils hard but cannot make all ends meet and ensure a secured life for them and their dependants, (c) problems associated with a mentally collapsed and frustrated class, who turns to violent activities like serial theft, burglary, robbery, killing homeless, or teasing people, (d) increase of homeless, prostitutions, and heinous activities, (e) addiction to drug, alcohol and other vices, (f) derogation and reclusion of a class from the national human development standard, and (h) pressure on the national security and welfare system. The Japan that has been always at the top of few countries in terms of low crime rate, high social security, and other positive indicators in the 1980s and

the early 1990s has lost its ground to other developed and even to some developing countries. Social alienation also crops up from remaining jobless or from involvement in a low-profile job.

The crux with the evolving modernization of traditional employment practices is that companies adopt job reduction, fill up daily slots, and adjust hiring practices through striking a ratio of regular and non-regular work forces to adjust with changes in business conditions or to control high personnel costs (*jinkenhi*), but very few jobs are offered to reemploy the people once laid-off (*ichijiteki kaikou*) or increase mid-career employment. This signifies that once out of regular employment it is almost impossible to recoup that, and this mostly occurs due to lack of policies in the enterprises to reemploy such laid-off employees.

For the companies, the problem is that freeters quit jobs frequently if the job does not match his inner requirements (dream pursuer, habitual, or freeters with reason) and personal and social circumstances, thus increase the labour turn-over rate which under normal circumstances implies problem in management or in the very enterprise, and ultimately reflects in national labour market as underemployment, seasonal unemployment, structural unemployment, or high unemployment. The high rate of freeters with middle and high school diplomas indeed occur due to an abrupt transformation of the process of job hunting, especially decrease of job offers, job-offers through schools rather than to students, and schools' emphasis on academic performance and attendance and consequent degradation in the willingness of the students to seek career guidance and support at schools. The long job-hunting procedure is found as the cause of giving up job-search activities and to turn to freeters. Due to this situation, some also cannot make the right carrier decision (JIL, 2000).

Research Methodology

Methodology of this research includes administration of a pre-designed structured questionnaire on twenty business companies and two academic institutions. The two categories employees, full timers and freeter/part-timers, were taken as samples. The questionnaire was designed in Japanese and the samples were requested to give answer to eight different questions with multiple-choice answers. We requested management of the respective companies to select the freeters and part-timers from their current employment rosters. The criteria used in general to select a respondent were age, number of years worked, and job positions.

For freeters and part-timers, we requested management to select respondents of the age 25 and above with relatively long work experience, and for full time employees, who hold similar, supervisory, and managerial positions. However, all full-time regular workers appeared to be experienced senior workers, owners, and managers, in-charge of the surveyed companies or outlets. These people are in frequent interactions with the part-times and freeters in their workplace, and we took their responses reliable in getting first-hand impression on the nature of jobs, skills required to do those jobs, and on the methods of training and education needed to build up needful skills for those jobs. Also they have good experiences in hiring and interviewing freeters and part-timers in their companies and giving such people orientation and basic training for doing their assigned jobs. Although we did not make any specific request for a male-female ratio, however, in total about 41 percent of the respondents were female.

The sample companies consisted of first food shop and family restaurant, cleaning and linen servicing shop, supermarket, bookshop, hospital and pharmaceutical, food maker and

bakery, convenience store, parts manufacturer, footwear selling, gasoline stand, university, and recycle shop. The author personally visited the office/ outlet of the samples and collected the filled up questionnaires. The rate of response was about fifty percent, and although initially agreed, three companies and one academic institution did not give any reply and returned the questionnaires. Some questionnaires were excluded, as those did not comply with our requirements.

Throughout the research, the author made references to archival materials and information from government agencies, regional and local (Aichi/Nagoya) job placement centers (*shokugyou anteisho*), NGO, trade union (*Rengo*), JILPT office, and opinion leaders at universities, schools and colleges, employers and retired people, and current and former students. For data analysis and interpretation we used simple statistical method of frequency distribution. Although this may raise question on the reliability of our findings, however, we feel that these would not be much different even if we used more advanced research tools.

Analysis of the Survey Results

We assumed that the freeters/part-timers know better their requirements for full-time jobs and the hindrances to them, and the full-time timers, on the other hand, being in regular jobs and some of them due to their direct interactions with the part-timers, understand their deficiencies and requirements. Therefore, we draw conclusions after combing the responses of both categories.

(a) Facilities Needed for the Preparation of Job Search

Whatever might be the arrangement, the freeters are in employment, and the basic objective is how to make them ready to undertake efforts and activities to search permanent and regular positions, when job offers in the market do not commensurate with the number of fresh job seekers from schools, colleges, and universities. Since they do not belong to the first choice category of the employers, it is presumed that they should possess some favorable qualities other than formal education to make themselves lucrative to the prospective employers. Therefore, in order to increase comparative qualifications over their disqualifications as freeters, they need preparations. Table 2 shows their important requirements in that regard. Freeters need more vocational and other training facilities (52.5 percent), specialized trainer and adviser (32.7 percent), and want to learn from experiences of those who have graduated from freeter positions (32.5 percent). Some of them need supports for their households and want loan facilities (32.5 percent). Full-time employees' category, as seen, also attaches importance to vocational and similar training facilities (50.0 percent) and increase of trainer and adviser in such facilities. The pattern of response by this group resembles that of the freeter group. 27.5 percent of the freeters and 30.8 percent of the full-timers are of the opinion that the children of families where the heads have lost jobs should be given stipend to enable them to pursue training and education, which ultimately will save them from plunging in the pool of freeters and other non-regular employment categories.

Table 2: Physical Facilities Needed for Preparation before Launching Job Search Activities

Facilities Needed	Responses		
	Freeters	Full-timers	Total
More training especially, vocational facilities	21 (52.5)	13 (50.0)	34 (51.5)
Specialized trainer and adviser in such facilities	13 (32.5)	12 (46.2)	25 (37.9)
More private organizations/ citizens forum to extend support	8 (20.0)	5 (19.2)	13 (19.7)
Financial support to such private organizations from central and local government	4 (10.0)	4 (15.4)	8 (12.1)
Creation of supporting organization jointly by citizens forum, local/central government, and knowledgeable person and activities all over the country through setting branches	2 (5.0)	4 (15.4)	6 (9.1)
Arrange lectures in the training facilities by people who have experience as freeters once and now work as full-timers	13 (32.5)	6 (23.1)	19 (28.8)
Introduce stipend system for children if the household head loses job for any reason	11 (27.5)	8 (30.8)	19 (28.8)
Introduce borrowing system for a household if the head is in search of job	13 (32.5)	6 (23.1)	19 (28.8)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: Figures within brackets indicate percentage of responses, and are rounded to the nearest decimals.

(b) Facilities Needed for Psychological Support for Job Search

Increasing research supports that freeters suffer from low mental health and weak spirit to search full-time tenured employment. We asked the samples to inform the type of supports they need to get rid of such a situation and launch job search activities with confidence. The answers are shown in table 3. In order of preference, the freeters need

Table 3: Facilities for Psychological support Job Search Activities

Facilities Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-timers	Full-time	Total
Education to increase knowledge and ability	26 (65.0)	15 (57.7)	41 (62.1)
Training to enrich communication skills	18 (45.0)	13 (50.0)	31 (47.0)
Medical treatment system for health related problem and keeping up health	18 (45.0)	8 (30.8)	26 (39.4)
Give proper information to specialists in such facilities and institutions from family	9 (22.5)	3 (11.5)	12 (18.2)
Education to strengthen awareness of jobs	18 (45.0)	12 (46.2)	30 (45.5)
Education to build up pride in holding d job	10 (25.0)	7 (26.9)	17 (25.8)
Opportunities to create understanding of the significance of holding job	18 (45.0)	9 (34.6)	27 (40.9)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: Same as table 2.

education to increase knowledge and ability on job seeking (65.0 percent), training to build up communication skills (45.0 percent), medical treatment and education for health (45.0 percent), training to build up job awareness (45.0 percent), and education to deepen understanding of the significance of holding employment (45.0 percent). Full-timers provided almost the similar impression with different degrees of importance. This similarity of responses leads us to conclude that freeters' need is understood by the full-timers as they work with or above them.

(c) Vocational Skills Needed for Job Search

Since most freeters and part-time workers normally do not acquire regular employment after graduation, rather look for such employment after 2-3 or more years in jobs, the prospective employers do not treat them as fresh graduates. Employers rather want to see them holding reasonable practical skills. Thus, training for vocational skills is essential before launching search for full-time jobs. As seen in table 4, freeters and part-timers most importantly need vocational training and education at cheap costs (62.5 percent) and more vocational training institutes and facilities (50.0 percent). They need such training facilities and opportunities even after getting employment (27.5 percent). The full-timers also attach importance to reduction of training and educational expenses (42.3 percent), and give further emphasis on increasing staffs, who can understand training needs and plan and implement training programs efficiently and effectively, at such training facilities (34.6 percent).

Table 4: Support for Vocational Skills Development to Prepare for Job Search Activities

Facilities Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-timers	Full-timers	Total
More vocational training institutes and facilities	20 (50.0)	9 (34.6)	29 (43.9)
Experienced staffs who can understand skill needs and plan and implement schemes to develop such skills at the above institutes	8 (20.0)	9 (34.6)	17 (25.8)
Reduction of expenses for such training and education	25 (62.5)	11 (42.3)	36 (54.5)
Shortening of time for training and education	4 (10.0)	4 (15.4)	8 (12.1)
Expansion of public support for such institutions	9 (22.5)	6 (23.1)	15 (22.7)
Contacts by vocational institutes with employers to understand their skills requirement, and impart training to develop such skills	4 (10.0)	5 (19.2)	9 (13.6)
Expansion of training opportunities after employment	11 (27.5)	6 (23.1)	17 (25.8)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Notes: Same as table 2.

(d) Supports Needed for Actual Job Search

Success in the actual job hunting proves the efficiency and effectiveness of all other preparations done in this regard. We asked the samples of their opinions regarding the support they need and their answers are seen in table 5. According to the freeters, the most

Table 5: Supports Needed for Actual Job Search

Supports Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-Timers	Full-timers	Total
Inculcation of communication skills	21 (52.5)	21 (80.8)	42 (63.6)
Training for direct interview and conversation and answering to phone calls	24 (60.0)	15 (57.7)	39 (59.1)
Training for writing curriculum vitae	15 (37.5)	4 (15.4)	19 (28.8)
Nurturing oral and written skill for self-PR	20 (50.0)	12 (46.2)	32 (48.5)
Imparting of job record PR skill	12 (30.0)	6 (23.1)	18 (27.3)
Skill to search job and vacancy information	15 (37.5)	9 (34.6)	24 (36.4)
Education on written and oral job examination	20 (50.0)	5 (19.2)	25 (37.9)
Training on dress-up, manner, movement, and speaking during job interview	17 (42.5)	8 (30.8)	25 (37.9)
Method of telling about choice and motivation	12 (30.0)	7 (26.9)	19 (28.8)
Man-to-man guidance and direct mentoring from supporting organizations	6 (15.0)	4 (15.4)	10 (15.1)
Continuous guidance and mentoring even after obtaining jobs	7 (17.5)	6 (23.1)	13 (19.7)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: Same as table 2.

important needs are respectively, training for interview, conversation and answering phone calls (60.0 percent), inculcation of communication skills (52.5 percent, nurturing of skill for oral and written self-PR (50.0 percent), written and oral examination (50.0 percent), and writing curriculum vitae (37.5 percent), and search job offer and vacancies (37.5 percent). The full-timers view communication skill development (80.8 percent), training for interview, conversation, and answering to phone calls (57.7 percent), and nurturing of skill for oral and written self-PR (46.2 percent) as the most important supports needed for job search. It appears that most of the samples failed in their first attempt to get regular jobs after graduation due to insufficient skills of communication, interview, PR and written exam. Although career development at academic institutions as well as placement centers offer training for such skills, how far realistic those are, and how much the cohort can master those are matters of serious concern. From interaction with freeters, the regular employees feel that their communication skills are not adequately developed, and that might be the reason of high importance they attached to communication skill development.

(e) Supports Needed During Job Search

Job search activities in Japan are very strenuous since employers are very selective on the ground that the people they employ, under normal circumstances, will continue to work until retirement. Freeters and other mid-career job seekers undertake job search activities anytime, and the timing and style are different from that of the fresh graduates. However, many job placement companies recently give advertisement for both fresh graduates and freeters together, while many offer job fairs and other placement services separately for mid-career job changers. As seen in table 6, 72.5 percent of the freeters want more employment opportunities for middle and high school graduates, 47.5 percent want training to increase employability, 42.5 percent want more job opportunities (irrespective of gender

and education level), and 37.5 percent want education to elevate morale toward job. The full-timers put emphasis on education to increase employability (53.9 percent) and job ability (46.2 percent). Replies in this section bring to light that, while the job market is tight, the freeters have low employability. Job-hunting means selling ones prospects and potentials through interview, oral examination, aptitude test, and like other measures. Opportunities to increase the job-seekers ability in all these respects are essentially needed from different quarters. As evidenced in responses of both categories (35.0 percent and 30.8 percent respectively), a congenial job search environment is needed immediately.

Table 6 : Supports Needed During Job Search

Type of Supports Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-Timers	Full-timers	Total
Simplification of job search activities	12 (30.0)	6 (23.1)	18 (27.3)
Shortening of job-hunting time through the mediation of supporting organizations	2 (5.0)	3 (11.5)	5 (7.6)
Increasing job opportunities through more job offers by employers	17 (42.5)	12 (46.2)	29 (43.9)
Increase of employment opportunity for low middle and high school graduates	29 (72.5)	5 (19.2)	34 (51.5)
Establishment of loan advancement system against wages to ensure life standard of job seekers	12 (30.0)	2 (7.7)	14 (21.2)
Education to increase employability of job seekers	19 (47.5)	14 (53.9)	33 (50.0)
Training to elevate job eagerness right after entry in to job/ company	8 (20.0)	7 (26.9)	15 (22.7)
Guidance through in-company mentor right after entry in to job/ company	5 (12.5)	4 (15.4)	9 (13.6)
Guidance for harmonious interaction and living in group in the work place	8 (20.0)	8 (30.8)	16 (24.2)
Promotion of congenial job hunting environment	14 (35.0)	8 (30.8)	22 (33.3)
Education to elevate morale toward job	15 (37.5)	8 (30.8)	23 (34.8)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: Same as Table 2.

(f) Supports Needed to Adjust in the Workplace after Employment

As found before, many young people voluntarily quit jobs and join freeters and other non- regular workforces due to inability to cope up with the requirements in workplace, where a certain degree of discipline different than that in the outside world or in the family prevails, and they are required to comply with a lot of work-related requirements and regulations. They need to adjust with seniors, fellow workers, and formal and informal teams and groups. That does not occur within the twinkle of eyes or with the touch of a magic wand, rather needs effort and perseverance on the part of the employee, and indoctrination and inducement on the part of employers. Regarding supports needed to

Table 7: Supports Needed to Adjust in the Company and with Fellow Workers

Supports Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-Timers	Full-timers	Total
Positive supervision to new entrants by superiors, seniors, and colleagues to adjust in job and work environment	23 (57.5)	16 (61.5)	39 (59.1)
Elevation of professional morale through OJT	16 (40.0)	17(65.4)	33 (50.0)
Elevation of professional morale through Off-JT	10 (25.0)	9 (34.6)	19 (28.8)
Promotion of parent-child (<i>oyabun-kobun</i>) relationship after employment and make that understandable	3 (7.5)	3 (11.5)	6 (9.1)
Introduction of mental-health care facilities and systems in the workplace	19 (47.5)	4 (15.4)	23 (34.8)
Improvement of job adjustability through training and education	12 (30.0)	12 (46.2)	24 (36.4)
Improvement of quality-of-working life (QWL)	10 (25.0)	7 (26.9)	17 (25.8)
Guidance by employer to strengthen body and soul	10 (25.0)	3 (11.5)	13 (19.7)
Making work life cheerful and interesting	22 (55.0)	10 (38.5)	32 (48.5)
Promoting an impression that a place for consultation on job-related stress is available within the company	28 (70.0)	13 (50.0)	41 (62.1)
Adequate guidance from superiors and seniors on collective life in the dormitory etc.	11(27.5)	5 (19.2)	16 (24.2)
Encouragement from family	14(35.0)	1 (3.9)	15 (22.7)
Encouragement from superiors	14 (35.0)	5 (19.2)	19 (28.8)
Encouragement from supporting organizations, if any, before employment	3(7.5)	2 (7.7)	5 (7.6)
Promotion of socialization through functions and events sponsored by employer	5 (12.5)	3 (11.5)	8 (12.1)
Nourishment of needful endurance for social life	19 (47.5)	12 (46.2)	31 (47.0)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: same as Table 2.

adjust after employment, responses of the freeter group in the order of importance are availability of places to consult on job related stress (70.0 percent), positive supervision from superiors and colleagues (57.5 percent), nurturing of cheerful and interesting work life (55.0 percent), nourishment of endurance needed for a social/work life (47.5 percent), and introduction of facilities in the workplace for mental health care (47.5 percent). With the above, the full-timer group added measures needed for the improvement of professional morale (65.4 percent) and job adjustability (46.2 percent). This group attaches more importance to the system of positive supervision from seniors and colleagues than the freeter group (table 7).

(g) Supports Needed for Sustainable Employment

Immediately after entry into the company in April, the new recruits are given orientation and training on different basic requirements at work before final placement to a particular job.

This initial training and job assignment is very important for both employers and employees. Indoctrination to make employees a company man with a mental aptitude that fits into its business and corporate culture starts from this point. If a proper mental make-up does not develop, the question of how long this employee will stick to the job arises. The success or failure in retaining and sustaining a freeter in the regular job depends on many factors. The

Table 8: Supports Needed for Sustainable Employment

Supports Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-timers	Full-timers	Total
Rooting a firm image of regular job like fresh graduate recruits	18 (45.0)	11 (42.3)	29 (43.9)
Relaxation of required conditions for promotion	12 (30.0)	1 (3.9)	13 (19.7)
Establishment of short-term transfer and job rotation	8 (20.0)	2 (7.7)	10 (15.1)
Setting facilities for self-development	11 (27.5)	10 (38.5)	21 (31.8)
Making feel-proud of holding a job	24 (60)	12 (46.2)	36 (54.5)
Education to inculcate importance of being in employment as a means to self-reliance	22 (55.0)	12 (46.2)	34 (51.5)
Education on social importance and viewpoint of holding employment	15 (37.5)	2 (7.7)	17 (25.8)
Education to elevate degree of self complacence on having an employment	12 (30.0)	9 (34.6)	21 (31.8)
Education to make understand the negative image of depending on others for livelihood	4 (10)	1 (3.9)	5 (7.6)
Education to make understand working as a means to remain healthy	12 (30.0)	4 (15.4)	16 (24.2)
Education to infuse civic sense and enlightenment	5 (12.5)	1 (3.9)	6 (9.1)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: Same as table 2.

answers of our samples are summarized in table 8. The freeters feel that educational support is needed to make one feel proud of holding a job (60.0 percent), to inoculate sense of job as means to self-reliance (55.0 percent), to infuse the image of regular job as found in fresh graduate recruits (45.0 percent), and to promote social importance and viewpoint of holding a job (37.5 percent). The full-time group, on the hand, feels that in addition to those mentioned by the freeter group, facilities in the workplace are needed to facilitate self-development (38.5 percent) and alleviate the level of complacence in holding job (34.6 percent). It seems that continuous education, whatever should the method, is essentially needed to build up pro-professional mentality and awareness to sustain freeters in the regular employment.

(h) Supports for Mid-Career Employment of Relatively Older Freeters

According to official definition, status as freeters continues up to the age of 34, and in 2002, 4.0 percent of the male and 20 percent of the female freeters belonged to the age group

Table 9: Supports Needed for Mid-Career Employment of Relatively Older Freeters

Supports Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-timers	Full-timers	Total
Relaxation of severe career competition	5 (12.5)	1 (3.9)	6 (9.1)
Recruitment of freeters with importance to their work experience and length and overlooking past job type and job content	3 (7.5)	2 (7.7)	5 (7.6)
Assignment to important positions right after employment	5 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.6)
Making arrangement for job search like fresh graduates if one cannot find a job right after graduation	29 (72.5)	13 (50.0)	42 (63.6)
Increasing job search age limit of fresh graduates to 30 and making job search easy and comfortable	20 (50.0)	4 (15.4)	24 (36.4)
Making transforming Japanese lifetime employment system like that in the West	5 (12.5)	2 (7.7)	7 (10.6)
Making transforming Japanese seniority-based wage and promotion system like that in the West	5 (12.5)	4 (15.4)	9 (13.6)
Review of current employment regulations and introducing new provisions to make freeters regular employee on their current jobs	17 (42.5)	10 (38.5)	27 (40.9)
Bargaining by unions with employers on the employment problem of freeters and part-timers	8 (20.0)	4 (15.4)	12 (18.2)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: Same as table 2.

of 30-34. People of such age, who possess track record of employment in non-regular positions, are supposed to be mentally matured on the social and economic conditions and own status, and to possess enough social and human skills, even though their professional skills are low. These people deserve regular positions like those full-time jobholders who change jobs for personal and occupational grounds. To support mid-career like employment, the freeter group thinks that there should be facilities to search job like fresh graduates if a regular job is not found right after graduation (72.5 percent), provisions to increase job search age-limit to 30 to make job search easy and comfortable (50.0 percent), and to that direction, systems to review the current employment regulations to introduce new provision to promote long-term freeters to regular position in their current employments (42.5 percent). The responses of full-timers also provide support to the above view of freeters and part-timers (table 9).

(i) Activities for Management and Company Owners

Management and company owners are the most powerful players in the employment market, and any activity to improve the situation of employment will not bear fruit unless the idea is sold to them, and they do take proactive steps to reform the existing pitfalls in the

Table 10: Activities Needed for Management and Owners of Employing Companies

Supports Needed	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-timers	Full-timers	Total
Introducing system to employ spouses of deceased employees to support such families	13 (32.5)	5 (19.2)	18 (27.3)
Provision to extend supports to such families from companies and government to ensure education of children	21 (52.5)	14 (58.9)	35 (53.0)
Relaxation of the system of retirement allowance and pension payment to such families	18 (45.0)	8 (30.8)	26 (39.4)
Introducing system of allowance for children education and cost of living in the social insurance schemes	17 (42.5)	6 (23.1)	23 (34.8)
Arrangement of workshop and public lectures by government, trade unions, and citizens' forums to deliberate on freeter and part-timer issues	5 (12.5)	1 (3.9)	6 (9.1)
Organization of public lectures to make understand the problems that come to the society from freeter etc.	12 (30.0)	1 (3.9)	13 (19.7)
Organization of public lectures to promote environment to convert part-timers to full-time employees	15 (37.5)	8 (30.8)	23 (34.8)
Organization of public lectures to make people understand the effect of freeters etc. on the nation and national economy	6 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (9.1)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: same as table 2.

employment system and its underlying culture and tradition. Both freeter (52.5 percent) and full-time (53.9 percent) groups suggest the introduction of system to extend supports from companies and government to ensure education of children of families, where the principal income earners are sick or dead. Both groups (45.0 percent and 30.8 percent respectively) suggest relaxing the system of payment of retirement benefit and pension to such families, with similar importance (37.5 percent and 30.8 percent) to organize public lectures aiming at management and employers, and at promoting a congenial environment to promote freeters and part-timers to full-time employees (table 10).

(j) Supports Expected of Trade Unions and Civil Society

Trade unions and civil societies play pioneering role in reforming vices in the system and society, and especially, the role of the union is historically important in modeling terms and conditions of employment. At one time Japanese enterprise unions were very reluctant to take up the issues of non-members in the negotiation and bargaining tables with the employers. In order to solve the problems underlying regular employment of freeters and part-timers, both group of samples (50.0 percent and 34.6 percent respectively) believe that unions and civil societies can offer vocational training and education programs to improve their skills. 32.5 percent of the freeters feel that enterprise unions and civil organizations should provide guidance to member unions to make them understand the problem, and almost

Table 11: Training and Education by Trade Unions and Civil Organizations

Training and Education	Responses		
	Freeters/ Part-timers	Full-timers	Total
Vocational training and education targeting freeters and part-timers	20 (50.0)	9 (34.6)	29 (43.9)
Physical and mental support facilities for workers and their families in collaboration with employers	12 (30.0)	8 (30.8)	20 (30.3)
Implement guidance for member unions to make them understand the problem of freeters/ part-timers	13 (32.5)	5 (19.2)	18 (27.3)
Cooperation with government to formulate policy on freeters and part-timers	9 (22.5)	4 (15.4)	13 (19.7)
Organization of public forums on social problems associated with freeters and part-timers	8 (20.0)	2 (7.7)	10 (15.1)
Promotion of preventive social environment to eradicate problems associated with freeters and part-timers	8 (20.0)	2 (7.7)	10 (15.1)
Raising of issues of freeters and part-timers during collective bargaining and joint-consultations	7 (17.5)	4 (15.4)	11 (16.7)
Soliciting importance of “vocational education within family” to members by union	4 (10.0)	2 (7.7)	6 (9.1)
Establishment of supporting institutions at regional and grass-roots levels in the city, town, and village	9 (22.5)	1 (3.9)	10 (15.1)
Total	40 (100)	26 (100)	66 (100)

Note: Same as table 2.

equal percentages of both groups are of the opinion that unions should, in collaboration with employers, organize physical facilities and mental support facilities for freeters and their families (table 11).

Discussions: Induction and Deduction

Innumerable studies by government (ministries and adjunct agencies), private and public research institutions, think tanks, NPOs, and academics and researchers have explained the causes of freeters, challenges to HRM, and elucidated measures to encounter those. Kosugi (2005) and associates have examined actual conditions (Hori, 2005), routes to freeter and entry to full-time jobs (Uenishi, 2005), professional awareness (Shimomura, 2005), gender phenomenon (Honda, 2005), and other aspects of freeters. Taromaru (2006) and associates have conducted similar studies on life, work, and social conditions. Tachibanaki (2004), in particular, has examined roles of business enterprises and the government to youth job market, and has provided policy recommendations to escape from a freeter society.

This research examines the challenges that freeters and part-timers pose to the traditional HRM practices based on findings in research and literary sources. Secondly, it examines the supports and measures that are needed and should be arranged to promote freeters and

part-timers to full-time regular employment, that is, the lifetime employment. This part of the research, as seen in the previous section, has been done through a questionnaire survey on freeters, part-timers, employers and full-time employees who know the issues associated with non-regular employment. It was assumed that both groups know the conditions that lead to freeters and part-timers, and the supports and measures that should be adopted and organized to promote them to regular employment from non-regular positions. The main points are summarized as follows.

Firstly, graduates receive education and orientation on employment and career development at schools, and although sometimes attributed to be de-motivating, however, those activities give them basic knowledge on job market, employment requirement, and *modus operandi* of job search. Search of regular jobs from a non-regular position demands them to exhibit comparative quality and experience over those fresh in the market from schools. Employers show little importance to skills and experiences in non-regular employment, and therefore, the cohort should undergo vocational and other training, and facilities for such training should be made available with adequate staff support.

Secondly, social stigma associated with prolonged non-regular employment, low income and status, lack of formal training and education, frequent job change, etc. cause serious frustration, and injure the mental health of many young people. Most of them cannot show adequate communication skills that can be seen in the people of similar age with regular jobs. In addition to low level of morality and ambition, their awareness toward full-time job and the significance of occupying career, profession, and vocation belong to a precarious stage. Therefore, facilities and opportunities must be made available to make them psychologically strong to search and hold full-time job.

Thirdly, although work as freeter, part-timer, etc. occur at times due to uncontrollable family and social circumstances, the reality of the job market is that, even though more opportunities are available to mid-career job seekers, those usually go to the cohort from regular lifetime employment. To minimize skill gap with such mid-career job seekers, they should seek vocational training and profession-oriented education during off-hours of the working day and weekend.

Fourthly, unlike job search during the terminal phases at schools, freeters and part-timers need extra and up-to-date communication skills in terms of interview, answering phone calls, writing resume and self-PR, manners and etiquette of dress-up, gait, and gesture during job fairs and visiting employers' premises. Such skills need supports from specialists and experienced people at public and private job placement centers.

Fifthly, for a lifelong tenure employment, the would-be graduates depending on the category of school undergo strenuous job search activities for 1-2 years, and this search period is full of study load, *arbeit*, despair, and excitement. Although freeters do not have the load of education, due to morale and ambition gap with the would-be graduates and a situation of low job offers for low qualified middle and high school graduates and women, they need support from current employer, unions, civil society and other private and public institutions to increase their employability. Further training is needed to understand and conceptualize job-ad, job requirement, interview, and test on general knowledge, aptitude, and motivation. While job search age limit should be increased to 30 for university graduates and others taking into account the length of their schooling, arrangement must be made to treat older graduates as fresh graduates when they cannot get job offer right after graduation.

Sixthly, after one enters in a full-time employment, he or she is to be given orientation, on- the-job training, and assignment-specific training. Education from superiors, seniors, and peers in the same job. This will assist in many respects to adjust with the company and work life, to develop professional and vocational skills, and to indoctrinate in company motto and environment. Through a series of OJT, planned job-rotation, and final job assignment, an aptitude of professionalism is being infused, which above all needs individual perseverance and moral and psychological support from mentor and family.

Seventhly, training and education to build up morale for inculcating self-respect, self-reliance, and positive attitude toward social and work norm are gradually thinning out among many young people in Japan. Over indulgence to leisure and carefree life, lack of indignity feeling toward parental support to livelihood, and erosion of social values and national trait are endemic, and these affect work morale. This should be improved through continuous persuasive counseling and enlightenment training and education. An essential prerequisite is making of timely plan and program with facility-support and action program.

Eighthly, freeters track record in employment should be assigned with high points for mid-career jobs, and the government, through the mediation of the business chambers and support from enterprise unions, should install a quota system for them in each year's new recruitment. An incentive scheme to provide tax relief to the amount of training and development cost of freeters should be made for employers. The present employment regulations should be revised with new provisions to promote freeters to regular employees in their current jobs.

Ninthly, at the preparatory stage and during job search, some freeters need financial support, not only for the cost of living but also to pay for technical and vocational training and education. Both central and local governments together with the participation of business chambers and unions and civil society should consider to raise funds, and provide loan to support cost of training, to purchase job-search materials, and to undertake counseling services from specialized organizations/people.

Finally, business owners, management, chambers, and trade unions historically offer and sponsor seminar, workshop, education, and public lecture intended to mend loopholes in the labour market and activate new policies to rejuvenate them. Since the non-regular workforce is alarmingly increasing and posing threats to the national economy, a concerted program involving all parties to make available more jobs and to provide needful training and skill development facilities is needed urgently. National centre of union, namely *Rengo* (Japanese Federation of Workers Union) has adopted programs on freeters, which they call "7-5-3 syndrome" to denote the situation where 70 percent of middle school, 50 percent of high school, and 30 percent of university graduates quit jobs, most of whom ultimately become freeters. More negotiation and consultation among enterprise unions and management may come up with solutions to promote freeters and non-regular workers to the mainstream of regular employment.

Implication and Conclusion

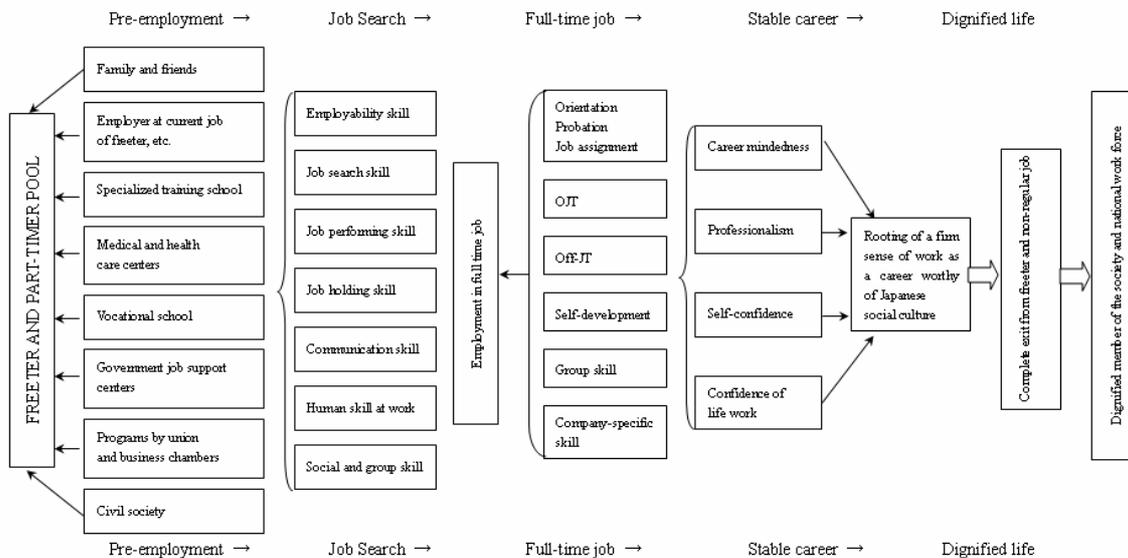
Lifetime or career employment is still the predominant employment system, and the social and economic status and well being of every active member of the national labour force revolve around this system. The *2003 Survey on Corporate Human Resource Strategies and Workers' Attitude Towards Work* of the Japan Institute of Labour (JIL, now called JILPT) shows that 36.1 percent of the responding companies would basically maintain

lifetime employment system, 40.0 percent would make partial review of it, and 15.3 percent would do fundamental review, which means still a vast majority does not show any sign of abolishing the system or replacing it with fluid practices (JILPT, 2004). The *2001 Survey on Working Life* reveals that 33.2 percent of the respondents strongly favored this system, 43.0 percent favored it somewhat, and about 64 to 78 percent, irrespective of age group, had favored it (JILPT, 2004). Under this system through different types of formal and informal OJT, companies train employees and infuse professionalism and career-orientation among them, and especially senior and experienced workers transfer skills to junior workers and subordinates. The MHLW's *Basic Survey of Human Resources Development, 2003* shows that 46.7 percent of the respondents implemented planned OJT and 58.3 percent implemented Off-JT. Workers were found to acquire theoretical knowledge and skills from Off-JT and systematize skills that they imparted through OJT (JIPT, 2006).

As found before, freeters, part-time workers, temporary workers, casual workers, and other non regular workers, accounted for 27.5 percent in 1999 and 34.6 percent in 2003 of all employees in the nation. Of the total national employment, the large-scale enterprises accounted for 25.6 percent, the small enterprises for 74.4 percent in 1986, which remained almost the same in 2004 (29 percent and 71 percent, respectively). Lifetime and other regular employment systems are most visible in relatively large enterprises, whereas small enterprise historically suffers from terrible HRM problems.

From the above findings of different surveys, it is evident that lifetime and regular employment are still the prime goal of working people in Japan. The respondents in this survey showed their interest and favor for different type of supports to alleviate their current non-regular employment status into regular status. It is deduced that training and education and various support programs are needed to improve their employability and skill. Figure 1 shows a schematic framework of training and education which, if implemented, will alleviate skills, improve the current circumstances and deficiencies of freeters and part-timers for a successful transition to full-time job, and will thereby release the nation and the society from the tension about them.

Figure 1: Schematic Framework of Training and Education for Freeters and Part-time Workers



Keeping in view the skill needs of freeters and supports that they perceive needful from different quarters to get out of the current employment condition, the scheme elucidates a phase wise training and education program, which ranges from pre-employment level to job search stage, and from employment in full-time jobs to stable career, leading to the level of dignified social life. It gives low importance to career supports provided at academic institutions, rather postulate importance of new education and training to improve communication skills and employability, job search and job performing skills, and skills needed to sustain in the job. While working in a full-time job, initial training at orientation and probation phase, OJT, Off-JT, self-development, and other type of training will cater to career mindedness and professionalism through promotion of confidence. That will lead to rooting of a strong sense of career, which is acceptable in the society. As envisioned, this will result in the complete exodus of the cohort to dignified membership in the active labor force. As seen above, this framework envisages involvement, ranging from family and friends to civil society.

Footnotes

¹ The German term *arbeit* is used to mean part-time work, and is popularly known as *arubaito*. The famous part-time job magazine the *Form A* first coined this word. It is also spelled in English as *furita*, *furiita*, *freeta*, *furiitaa* or *furitaa* (Wikideia, 2006/ December 8).

² The Babylon German-English dictionary translates *arbeit* as employment, work, occupation, job, task, duty, and assignment, and *arbeiten* (*arbeiter*) as work, operate, or labor. See, www.babylon.com/.

³ For more statistical details, see the *Employment Status Diversification Survey* of the government of Japan for various years.

⁴ For more statistical details, see the *Employment Status Diversification Survey* of the government of Japan and reports and publications of the JILPT for different years.

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