



How does gender affect the life choices of student loan borrowers in Japan?



1. Background/Motivation

Recent news: Student loan borrowers are struggling



Source: NHK (03/08/21)



Source: Gentosha Gold Online (08/11/21)



Source: Yomiuri Shimbun (29/10/21)

Japan's ranking on the Global Gender Gap Index 2021



Source: WEF, 2021

Women's earnings in Japan as a percentage of men's...



Source: Recruit worker institute, 2019

2. Research question

How does gender affect the life choices of student loan borrowers in Japan?

3. Methodology

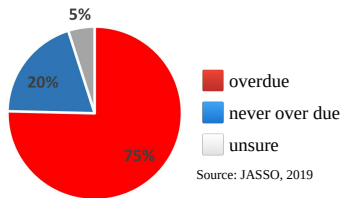
Methods	Details
Interview	Phone interview with JASSO's PR dept. representative (05/11/21)
Case studies	Semi structured phone interviews with student loan users (Nov 2021)
Literature review	Survey of research reports available on the JASSO website (Oct-Nov 2021)

4.1 Findings: JASSO's research and position

Report: 「奨学金の返還者に関する属性調査」 (Survey of student loan recipients' attributes)



Student loan repayment status



Source: JASSO, 2019

3 in 4 people couldn't repay their student loan on time

what is the ratio by gender?

Interview with a representative from JASSO's PR dept.

JASSO have data on repayment status by gender, **but they will not disclose it**

Reasons for non disclosure

They feel that:

- The gender gap does not impact repayment
- Occupation and employment status impact repayment

4.2 Findings: The reality for borrowers

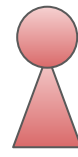
① Tetsuya



Gender: male / Age: 51 / Family: wife and 2 children
Loan type: interest free Payment method: monthly

- "I had an inferiority complex since university due to the loan"
- "If I get married, my lifestyle will change"
- "I don't want to start my married life with student debt"
- "I made a final lump sum payment"

② Yuko



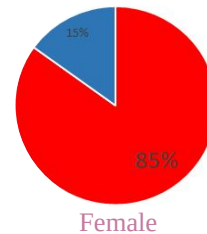
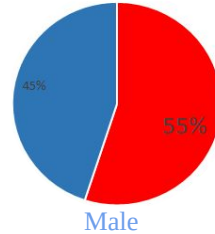
Gender: female / Age: 43 / Family: husband and 2 children
Type: student loan (interest-bearing) Method: monthly

- "I was afraid of the increasing interest"
- "I felt the loan was a burden as I had to restrict my spending"
- "I was worried about the impact of the loan on my future plans for marriage and children"
- "I made a final lump sum payment"

5. Discussion:

1) Does the gender gap really not have an impact?

Annual income of over due borrowers by gender

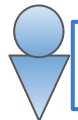


The wage gap likely has an impact on loan repayment

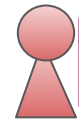
under 3 million/year
over 3 million/year

Source: JASSO, 2019

2) Do student loans affect only women's life events?



Paid his loan when he faced a major life event



Paid off her loan in full before making concrete plans

Men's life events are also impacted

Anxiety about the future: marriage, childbirth, childcare

Women are impacted more

6. Conclusion

Having a student loan affected the life choices of both **men and women**, but **women were more seriously impacted.**

7. References

- JASSO (2019) 「令和元年度 奨学金の返還者に関する属性調査結果」 (Accessed 21/10/21) https://www.jasso.go.jp/statistics/shogakukin_henkan_zokusei/2019.html
- Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office (2021) 「共同参画 2021年5月号」 (Accessed 09/11/21) https://www.gender.go.jp/public/kyodosankaku/202105/202105_05.html
- Recruit worker institute 「女性の賃金 (2020年11月版)」 (Accessed 20/10/21) <https://www.jasso.go.jp/shogakukin/about/kyufu/kingaku.html>
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- 読売新聞 「奨学金 > 若者の返済負担を軽く」 (Accessed 10/11/2021) <https://www.yomiuri.co.jp/election/shugiin/20211029-OYT1T50408/>