

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Japan's economy in the 1940s experienced a boom, it is known for its Japanese Economic Miracle, GDP growth was 7.1% by annual rate.¹ Making an increase in birth rate and working-age population which lasted only 3 years from 1947 to 1949 as fertility rates have been a long-term decline. Later in the 1990s, Japan's economy faced stagnation after the "Lost Decade" or the Japanese economic bubble burst, Japan's economy only grew 0.5% from 1991-2000 creating deflation.² Japanese Government had attempted to tackle the stagnation by using Quantitative Easing (QE) policy, which is a monetary policy of the central bank of buying government bonds or other assets in order to boost the economy's activity and increase the money supply in the market.³ Unfortunately, this policy did not bring such a significant change for Japanese economy and the government had also implemented the zero-rate policy to boost investment, however it failed to generate such a big change to its stagnation problem until 2005.⁴

Labor force in Japan is one of the most important factors in their economy, since the decline in their birth rate and fertility rate, Japanese economy is known for their aging population, making life expectancy reach 65 years of male and

¹ Okazaki Tetsuji, "Lessons from the Japanese Miracle: Building the Foundations for a New Growth Paradigm," nippon.com, May 30, 2020, <https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/a04003/>.

² Harari, Daniel. "Japan's Economy: from the 'Lost Decade' to Abenomics." *House of Commons Library, Standard Note SN06629*. London: Oct 24 (2013).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

female. In recent years, more than 20% of the population in Japan is over 65 years old which accounts for the highest proportion in the world and it is predicted by 2030, one third of the people in Japan will be 65 years old or even older.⁵ The IMF had predicted that the impact of its aging population will trail down its annual GDP and other economic outputs for the next decades.⁶

Compared to other developed countries, such as the United States, Japan is the one that always had a slow growth in their labor force since 1998, accounted for 67.8 million to 66.4 million in 2004 and kept declining for years.⁷ Japan also experienced such a wide wage gap between men and women for decades, according to the IMF, Japan is the second highest country to have a high gender wage gap out of OECD countries.⁸ Japanese workforce system is based on seniority, in which wages increase in proportion to length of service with a company, this way, Japanese women are unable to attain wages as much as men because most women in Japan only make 60% of men in terms of salary.⁹ In other words, Japanese culture on gender roles exist; Women are more utilized to cook at home, remain in the house and look after their children after they give birth. While Men are usually work

⁵ Simran Walia, "How Does Japan's Aging Society Affect Its Economy?" November 13, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/how-does-japans-aging-society-affect-its-economy/>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Clark, Robert L., Naohiro Ogawa, Makoto Kondo, and Rikiya Matsukura. "Population Decline, Labor Force Stability, and the Future of the Japanese Economy." *European Journal of Population / Revue Européenne De Démographie* 26, no. 2 (2010): 207-27. Accessed September 27, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40784186>.

⁸ Kazuo Yamaguchi, "Japan's Gender Gap – IMF Finance & Development Magazine: March 2019," Japan's Gender Gap – IMF Finance & Development Magazine | March 2019, accessed October 28, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2019/03/gender-equality-in-japan-yamaguchi.htm>.

⁹ Clark, Robert L., Naohiro Ogawa, Makoto Kondo, and Rikiya Matsukura. "Population Decline, Labor Force Stability, and the Future of the Japanese Economy." *European Journal of Population / Revue Européenne De Démographie* 26, no. 2 (2010): 207-27. Accessed September 27, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40784186>

for long hour, go to the office, then after work they usually go out with their friends have some alcoholic drinking as a sign of solidarity, including the uptight long working hours that did not permit people to adjust their schedule with their children needs. This is seen as culture in the country, in a way that culture make such a great determination on how people with gender interact with one another or how states interact with one another in system or in a social system. The idea of Meiji era in the early 19th and 20th century was one of the contributing factors to the gender distinction.¹⁰ During Meiji period, there is a law that authorize the first-born son to inherit the asset but not to the daughter and other son afterwards.¹¹ This permit women to think that they have a low status in the society. Then after that The Meiji Constitution was amended due to the outdated norms and form the new liberal democracy ideology as the result of the Western influence.¹²

In the era of increasing women trend throughout the World that is closely linked with the topics of women rights and women participation. The 2013 Global Gender Gap also reported in the case of Japan is positioned 105th out of 155 country that is identified has a wide gender gap.¹³ Japan is the second country in OECD

¹⁰ “Dividing the Sexes: The Modern Evolution of Japanese Gender Roles in Marriage,” nippon.com, March 6, 2019, <https://www.nippon.com/en/features/c05604/dividing-the-sexes-the-modern-evolution-of-japanese-gender-roles-in-marriage.html>

¹¹ “Dividing the Sexes: The Modern Evolution of Japanese Gender Roles in Marriage,” nippon.com, March 6, 2019, <https://www.nippon.com/en/features/c05604/dividing-the-sexes-the-modern-evolution-of-japanese-gender-roles-in-marriage.html>

¹² Kyoko Inoue, *MacArthur’s Japanese Constitution*. (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1991), 68.

¹³ “What Is Womenomics?” Consulate General of Japan in New York (Consulate General Japan in New York, 2015), <https://www.ny.us.emb-japan.go.jp/en/c/2015/04-Apr/japaninfo-2015-04/03.html>

countries that identified has wide wage gap between men and women.¹⁴ Noting that Japan had ratified CEDAW back in 1985, whereas at the same time Japan passed the EEOL in which account as the first step in efforts in eliminating and closing the gaps, Abe Shinzo who introduced QE and Zero-rate Policy from 2006 to 2007, again in 2012 to 2020 had put effort in decreasing the wage gap by creating more policies benefiting women, did not put significant change on the wage gap, and women participation force. Recent followed up criticism by Christine Lagarde at the IMF Panel, it continued to create even more international tension. According to the OHCHR, Japan was struggling with women discrimination, whereas women were underrepresented, unequal distribution of wages and many more.¹⁵

Then in 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe from the Liberal Democratic Party introduced new policy called “Womenomics” in the UNGA discussion as a response to the criticism.¹⁶ This emerging policy was advocated in 1999 by Kathy Matsui, a strategist for global investment bank Goldman Sachs who was born in California.¹⁷ This foreign policy are expected to enable women to equally participate more in the workforce, permit women to involve in leadership activities,

¹⁴ Kazuo Yamaguchi, “Japan's Gender Gap – IMF Finance & Development Magazine: March 2019,” Japan's Gender Gap – IMF Finance & Development Magazine | March 2019 (Finance & Development, March 2019), <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2019/03/gender-equality-in-japan-yamaguchi.html>

¹⁵ “Japan’s Record On Women’s Rights to Face Review by Un Committee,” <https://www.ohchr.org>, accessed September 16, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=17028&LangID=E>.

¹⁶ Pamela Boykoff and Cardiff Garcia, “6 Years After Japan Launched Its 'Womenomics' Policy Is It Working?” NPR (NPR, May 23, 2019), <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/23/726294619/6-years-after-japan-launched-its-womenomics-policy-is-it-working>

¹⁷ Macnaughtan, Helen, Womenomics for Japan: is the Abe policy for gendered employment viable in an era of precarity?, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 13, Issue 12, No. 1, March 30, 2015.

in which allow them to work to support the family.¹⁸ And eventually contribute to the rising of the economic, especially in the Gross Domestic Products of the country according to Abe.

This new Policy emphasize on building the new target on the women involvement and improvement of woman working-force, Abe also stated that women is the “under-utilized” source of labor as he also vowed for the rise of women in leadership to 30% from 10% by the year of 2020.¹⁹ This “women-centered” policy also focus on the escalation of the childcare centers for children to play after they finish school before their parents return from work, endorsing women involvement in the government, and adding more advantages to both mother and father leaves.²⁰ In which during the Emperor or Meiji era, would never happened.

According to the Goldman Sachs Group research report, the percentage of the women involvement in workforce has risen sharply for 71% by February 2019, overriding the United States and European Union since the first idea was introduced in 1999.²¹ Another effort concerning the rise of women action in Japan was marked by Women’s Conference in September 2014 that was held in Tokyo that aimed to reinforce the initiative to encourage women equality around the globe that was

¹⁸ “What Is Womenomics?” Consulate General of Japan in New York (Consulate General Japan in New York, 2015), <https://www.ny.us.emb-japan.go.jp/en/c/2015/04-Apr/japaninfo-2015-04/03.html>)

¹⁹ Emma Chanlett Avery, “‘Womenomics’ in Japan: in Brief,” *Congressional Research Service*, August 1, 2014, pp. 6-7, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/182960/230749.pdf>)

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Kathy Matsui, Hiromi Suzuki, and Kazunori Tatebe, “Womenomics 5.0: 20 Years On” (The Gold Sachs, April 16, 2019), <https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/pages/womenomics-5.0/multimedia/womenomics-5.0-report.pdf>)

attended by many Western country.²² These evidenced that Japan as it is mentioned several times, a long history and long economic journey of Japan as the competitive country in Asia and as one the most rapid economic growth in Asia shaped the behavior and decision making for the status of women and the labor force opportunity in the society. Noting that either policy making, rules, law and etc, have impact on their economy, regulation and institution relations, the fact that Prime Minister Abe allegedly introduce a new policy that promote women to revolt was new in Japan. Therefore, these rising of “women-based” policy and women participation in a free-market country such as Japan encourage the more in-depth studies on Japanese Government, Womenomics Policy itself under Abe Shinzo regime and CEDAW itself.

1.2 Research question:

According on the information alluded before, the writer proposed the following research question:

How does Abe Shinzo respond to Womenomics Policy in Japan?

1.3 Research objective

The objective of this research are to analyze the idea behind the emerging “Womenomics” policy where “women can shine” in Abe Shinzo regime despite the issues on women discrimination in modern Japan and the arising international tension. The result of the findings will explain the importance of the emerging Womenomics policy in Japan. The information gathered and analyzed will provide

²² Emma Chanlett Avery, “‘Womenomics’ in Japan: in Brief,” *Congressional Research Service*, August 1, 2014, pp. 6-7, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/182960/230749.pdf>

answers for the programs established as a response to the international tension from CEDAW.

1.4 Significance of Research

This research provide result that I hope will enlighten the readers in International Relation field to pay more attention to the role of women in politics, economy and in the society for the prevention on other issues arising from the problems or prevention on the escalation of issues. I hope this research provide a more comprehensive understanding on the significance of a certain policy-making in certain countries as a response international issues to help build the basis of an awareness on the gender equality issues. I hope by constructing this in-depth research could assist leaders on analyzing the grassroots of problem arising in the international system. This thesis would also be beneficial for the women in business to keep encouraging other women to involve more in the society to sharpen their skills and talents.

1.5 Structure of Writing

The first chapter, whereas the introduction of this research, discuss about the general overview of the thesis topic that include research topic, research objective and the significance of the research.

The second chapter, the theoretical framework, discusses about the grand theories and concepts as a basis to analyze the importance of the emerging Womenomics Policy in Abe Shinzo Government era, the importance of Womenomics policy for Abe Regime and the implementation of the policy as a

response to CEDAW, as it also provides the literature review on the topic of the research.

The third chapter, whereas the methodology, talks about the further research approach, research method, data collection used in gathering the important information and the data analysis needed for the research.

The fourth chapter, whereas the analysis, is the heart of the thesis and analysis. This chapter analyzes and presents all the data that have been collected in regards to the importance of Womenomics policy as a response to the United Nation Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in Abe Shinzo Regime systematically in accordance with the concepts and international relations theories used in the thesis. The analysis' result is sued to address the research question of the thesis.

The fifth chapter, whereas the conclusion and recommendation, concludes and summarizes the previous chapter. This chapter discuss about the recommendations for further research and studies regarding Womenomics policy in the future and until future administrations.