

Series: Human Capital Management

Session 6: Introduction to Human Capital Management: Survey
Results on Reskilling (Part 1)

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1. Introduction

The “Series: Introduction to Human Capital Management” is a series of articles that aim to present the basic concept of human capital management and systematically suggest issues companies should address to implement it. In the fifth issue, we focused on “corporate culture,” essential for building a dynamic human resource portfolio, focusing on its overview and how to utilize it in practice.

Based on the results of an independent survey conducted by the Japan Research Institute, we will discuss “reskilling” in Parts 6 and 7, which has recently drawn attention in Japan and abroad, and explain the actual situation of reskilling in Japanese companies as well as the measures that the HR department should take.

2. Summary of the survey on reskilling

This survey aimed to determine the implementation status of employee reskilling and the factors that promote reskilling and contribute to considering corporate policies. Table 1 summarizes the survey results. The survey was a web-based questionnaire administered to 3,000 employees working for companies with at least 300 employees. The survey covered weekly study duration, study content, work environment, human resource development systems, and transfer experiences. The survey also asked, “On average, how many hours per week in the last few months have you spent on learning that will lead to your job or career three to five years from now?” For this survey, “learning” was defined as both company-initiated and voluntary learning, both inside and outside of work hours.

Table 1: Summary of employee survey on Reskilling

Investigators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000 corporate employees working for companies with 300 or more employees • Full-time employees 20-50 years old, male and female
Survey Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2022
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the 2009 Basic Survey of Employment Structure, by 10-year age group, male and female, assigned to a total of 8 cells.
Main questions asked during the survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about personal characteristics: gender, age, number of employees, position, job title • Questions about study habits: weekly study time, increase/decrease in study time compared to previous year, motivation to study, content of study, concerns about transfer, etc. ("Study" in this item includes both inside and outside working hours, company-initiated and voluntary study) • Questions about work environment and experiences: availability of various systems, frequency and content of interviews, experiences with transfers and second jobs, etc.

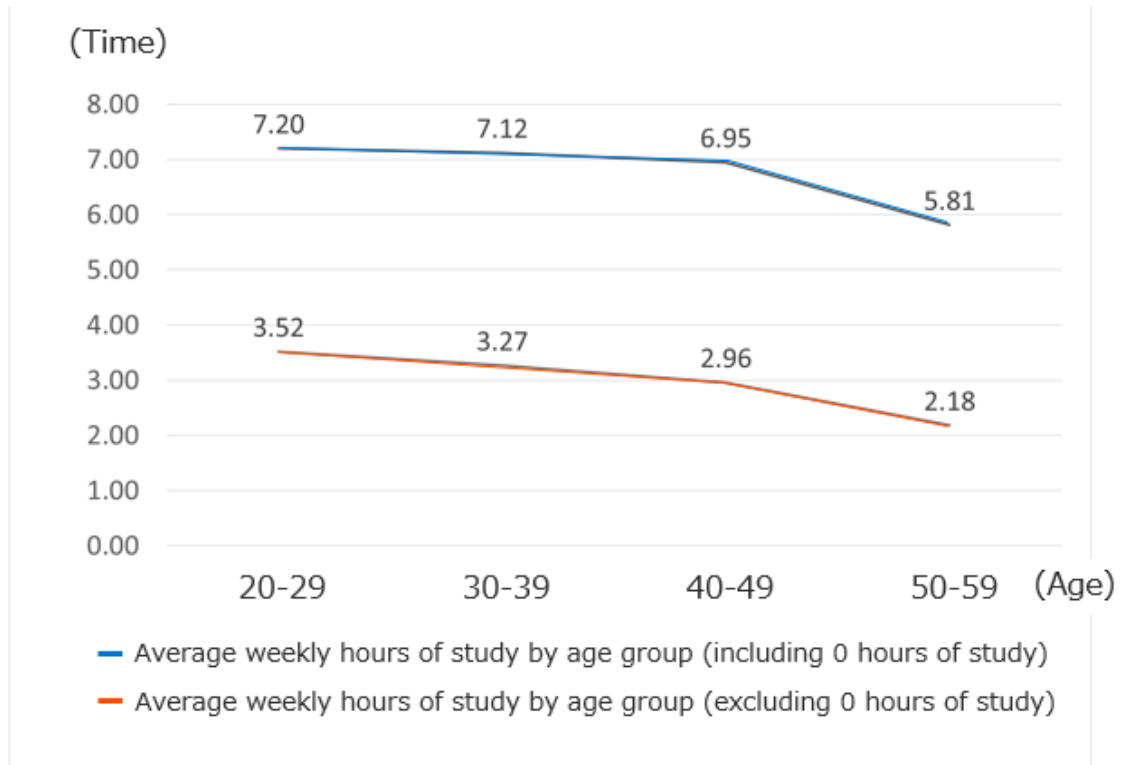
Source: The Japan Research Institute, Limited.

3. The reality of reskilling for company employees

The following is an overview of the actual state of reskilling among employees of Japanese companies, as revealed by this survey. Of the 3,000 participants, 56.4% answered that they spent zero hours per week studying, indicating that more than half were not engaged in learning for the future. Furthermore, the average study time by age group decreased from those in their 20s to those in their 50s (Figure 1). In particular, learning time declined significantly among those in their 50s. The same trend was confirmed in a separate survey on proactive behavior conducted by the Japan Research Institute. Proactive behavior is defined as "the overall behavior in which an individual actively engages in the surrounding environment to create his or her future work and career. Based on previous research, four behaviors that form proactive behavior (innovative behavior, external network exploration behavior, organizational behavior, and career development behavior) were indexed. The results of this survey and the Proactive Behavior Survey are presented in Table 1. Based on the results of this survey and the Proactive Behavior Survey, it can be inferred that middle-aged and older employees in their 40s and 50s tend to be reluctant about their future jobs and careers in Japanese organizations and that raising the motivation of middle-aged and more

senior employees toward learning that will lead to their future careers is an essential matter for future organizations.

Figure 1: Average weekly study time by age group



Source: The Japan Research Institute, Limited.

Therefore, what perspectives are necessary to increase learning duration among middle-aged and older employees? Aggregating the reasons for the increase in learning time from the previous year by age group, we found that the most significant percentage of respondents in all age groups answered, "Because I have a purpose for learning" as the reason. Among them, more than 60% of middle-aged employees in their 40s and 50s answered that the increase in study time was "because I now have a purpose for learning," a higher percentage than for other age groups (Table 2). This result reveals that intrinsic motivation to find a purpose to learn is more necessary for reskilling than extrinsic motivation, such as financial incentives or internal evaluation.

Table 2: Reasons for the increase in study duration by age group

Reasons for increase in time spent studying for the future compared to previous year (multiple answers)

Age:	20-29 (N=135)	30-39 (N=126)	40-49 (N=88)	50-59 (N=94)
Find new purpose to learn.	51.9%	54.8%	63.3%	60.7%
Get an incentive to learn (better pay, career advancement, and other benefits).	38.5%	43.7%	31.6%	22.6%
Feel evaluation by company on learning	38.5%	36.5%	23.5%	16.7%
Obtain Time to spare learning	29.6%	38.9%	28.6%	22.6%
Established new habit of learning in company	17.8%	8.7%	15.3%	4.8%
Obtain financially secure for learning	4.4%	4.0%	5.1%	0.0%
Other	3.0%	0.0%	4.1%	4.8%

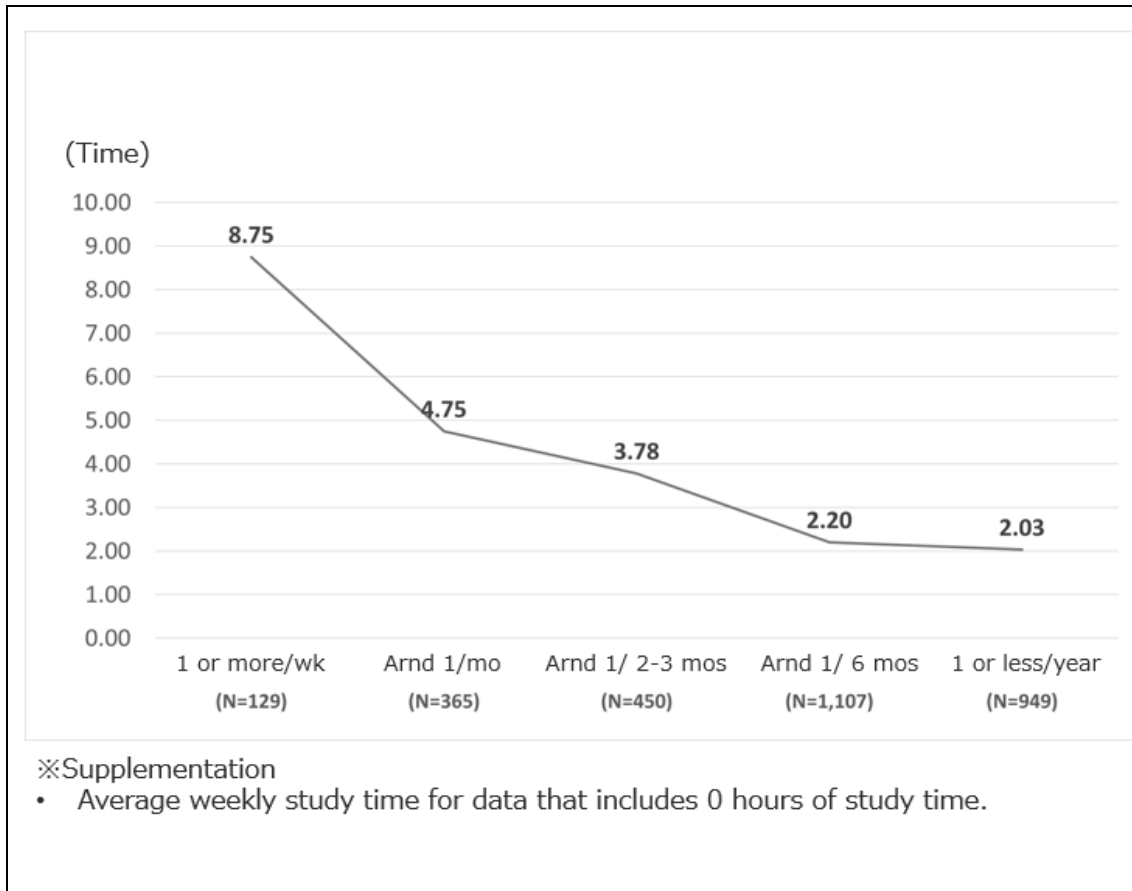
Source: The Japan Research Institute, Limited.

4. The 1-on-1 way to promote reskilling

Next, we present the results of our analysis of specific measures to promote reskilling. The appropriate implementation of “1-on-1 meetings” (after this referred to as “1on1”), which have been attracting attention in recent years as a one-on-one communication method between supervisors and subordinates, is conducive to promoting reskilling. In this section, we look at 1on1 from the quantity and quality perspectives and explain the effects of 1on1 on promoting reskilling.

First, the more frequent the 1on1s, the longer the average weekly learning duration (Figure 2). Particularly, those who conduct 1-on-1s more than once a week display significantly longer learning times.

Figure 2: Average weekly study duration by 1-on-1 frequency



Source: The Japan Research Institute, Limited.

Next, to assess the quality of 1-on-1, we analyzed the results from two perspectives: the content of the consultation and the 1-on-1 partner. Regarding the former, the survey asked what they discussed with their superior during the 1-on-1. We then divided the groups into those who consulted on each content and those who did not and calculated the average weekly study time, as presented in Table 3. We found that those who consulted on their future careers within the company and those who consulted on their future careers, including those outside the company, spent significantly more time studying than those who did not (5% level of significance).

Table 3: Average weekly study hours by 1-on-1 consultation

	No	Yes
Feedback on periodic and bonus reviews	3.2	2.8
Consultation about future internal career	2.5	3.6
Consultation about future career including internal and outside	2.6	4.6
Consultation on private matters	3.1	2.6
Other	3.0	1.7

※Supplementation

- Average weekly study time for data that includes 0 hours of study time.
- The comparison confirmed a statistically significant (5% significance level) longer learning time on Yes group against No group in these of [Consultation about future internal career] and [Consultation about future career including internal and outside].

Source: The Japan Research Institute, Limited.

Regarding the 1-on-1 partner, those who had a 1-on-1 with people other than their supervisor, such as “the HR department,” “a person designated by the company as a consultant other than the supervisor (career counselor, HRBP, etc.),” or “a previous supervisor or senior colleague,” had statistically significantly longer average weekly learning times than those who had 1-on-1 with only their supervisor (5% level of significance) (Table 4).

Table 4: Average weekly learning duration with 1-on-1 partner

	(Hours)	
	No	Yes
Current supervisor only	3.7	2.4
Personnel Dept.	2.7	7.2
A person designated by the Company as a consultant who is not a supervisor(as Career Counselor and/or HPBP etc.)	2.7	8.7
Former supervisors and executives	2.8	4.1
Co-workers of the same age	2.7	3.3
Other	2.7	1.7

※Supplementation

- Average weekly study time for data that includes 0 hours of study time.
- The comparison confirmed a statistically significant (5% significance level) longer learning time on No group against Yes group of [Current supervisor only]
- The comparison confirmed a statistically significant (5% significance level) longer learning time on Yes group against No group in these of [Personnel Dept.] , [A person designated by the Company as a consultant who is not a supervisor(as Career Counselor and/or HPBP etc.)] and [Former supervisors and executives]

Source: The Japan Research Institute, Limited.

Thus far, we have presented the results of our analysis of the frequency of 1-on-1 sessions in terms of quantity, the content of 1-on-1 sessions, and the people with whom 1-on-1 sessions were conducted in terms of quality. From these analyses, appropriate 1-on-1 in quantity and quality increases learning time for the future; that is, they can promote reskilling. The following two-step process is involved in this phenomenon. First, appropriate 1-on-1 increases the resolution of future careers and work, which leads to intrinsic motivation to find a purpose for learning. Then, inherent reason increases learning time, which promotes reskilling. The relationship between intrinsic

motivation and knowledge has been studied extensively in psychology, and intrinsic motivation is believed to be a motivator for learning. In other words, the purpose of the knowledge discovered by the participants through the 1-on-1 process led to their motivation to learn and increased their time spent learning.

5. Summary

Based on the survey results introduced thus far, the role of the HR department is to plan and manage a 1-on-1 program to ensure that it is implemented desirably from the viewpoint of quantity and quality.

First, regarding quantity, the HR department needs to support both implementers to ensure that 1-on-1 can be conducted at least once a week, if possible, or at least once a month. However, it is essential to ensure that the frequency of 1-on-1 sessions is known to all employees and to create an environment in which 1-on-1 sessions are conducted habitually, even if each 1-on-1 is short.

Next, from a quality perspective, when the HR department conducts 1-on-1, it is necessary to create a place where subordinates feel comfortable discussing their future careers. For example, before the 1-on-1, the assistant should fill out a form in which they should write down their "image and plan the career he/she wants to realize in 5 to 10 years," "gap between the current situation and ideal career and issues," etc., and based on this form, the subordinate can discuss their career during the 1-on-1. Additionally, a system that allows employees to request a 1-on-1 with someone other than their direct supervisor would also effectively promote reskilling. Another possible measure is to create an in-house counselor to provide career counseling to employees and offer advice from a perspective different from that of their supervisors.

In the first part, we explained the relationship between reskilling and 1-on-1. In the second part, we will present suggestions based on the survey results regarding the relationship between vision, philosophy, purpose, and reskilling.