

Japan ranks just 21st in quality of life, two notches down from last year

Kyodo

Japan ranked 21st among 36 nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's latest poll to gauge quality of life, the Paris-based group said.

Japan's position in the "Your Better Life Index" survey slipped two notches from last year, scoring poorly on areas of balancing work and family life and people's satisfaction with their lives.

The OECD survey, started only last year, covers 11 areas to gauge people's well-being and perceptions of their living conditions in 34 member countries plus Russia and Brazil.

The poll is based on the concept that macroeconomic indicators such as gross domestic product indexes don't necessarily reflect public perceptions of quality of life.

Japan came in 34th on balancing work and family life due to a high percentage of people who work more than 50 hours a week and take little time for meals, sleep and leisure.

The country ranked 27th in terms of satisfaction with life.

Seventy percent of Japanese polled said they have more positive experiences such as feelings of rest, pride in accomplishment and enjoyment in an average day than negative feelings, including pain, worry, sadness and boredom, lower than the OECD average of 72 percent.

Meanwhile, the nation scored the highest in safety for the second straight year and took second place in education, with people's academic achievements and the literacy rate drawing high marks.

In the overall ranking, Australia topped the list for the second year in a row, followed by Norway and the United States.

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