

SALES QUOTAS EXPLOIT CONVENIENCE STORE WORKERS

Vocabulary

- convenience
- part-time work
- broadcaster
- salaries
- expert

Convenience stores provide many of us with a handy place to pop into 24 hours a day to buy things we have forgotten or didn't have time to get from other stores. They also provide part-time jobs for thousands of people. A new report from Japan suggests that some convenience stores are not so convenient for their workers. The report, from Japan's national broadcaster NHK, says overbearing and unrealistic sales quotas are being imposed on many part-time workers. Labor rights experts are calling on store bosses to stop what they deem to be an exploitative practice. There are reports of workers having hundreds of dollars deducted from their salaries and having to buy unsold stock for failing to meet the quotas. An expert on Japanese labor law Professor Mitsumo Uematsu said deducting a quota's worth of unsold products from salaries violated labor laws. He also questioned why so

many part-timers felt compelled to buy unsold stock, which could be "seen as being forced to take on an economic burden because of pressure from stores".

Professor Uematsu urged the headquarters of convenience store chains to tackle this problem so that part-timers are not exploited. One part-time worker said he was "drowning in quotas". Another said that workers can lose up to 20-30% of their monthly salary. The biggest losses come with quotas for unsold seasonal items like Valentines and Christmas goods and special sushi rolls.



A green rounded rectangular button with a black border containing the text "Share Your Thoughts" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How convenient are convenience stores?
2. Why don't convenience store workers sue their employers over quotas?
3. What kind of company pressures staff to buy unsold stock?
4. In what ways are part-time workers exploited?
5. What do you think of workers having money deducted from their salary?

A red, slanted graphic with the text "HOW Do You Rank?" in a bold, sans-serif font. "HOW" is the largest, "Do You" is smaller and in a lighter red, and "Rank?" is the largest and most prominent.

CONVENIENCE

Rank these with your partner.

Put the most convenient things about convenience stores at the top.

- ◆ location
- ◆ fresh food
- ◆ price
- ◆ drinks
- ◆ opening hours
- ◆ range of products
- ◆ extra services
- ◆ essential items