

Report on FY2018
Annual User Satisfaction Survey
on Patent Examination Quality

April 2019

Japan Patent Office

Abstract

I. Introduction

Conducting globally reliable, high-quality examination and properly granting patent rights by the Japan Patent Office (JPO) are keys for supporting domestic enterprises in developing their global business activities, driving innovation, and maintaining sound business practices. In order to grant high-quality patents, it is essential to make efforts to maintain and improve the quality of patent examination¹ based on properly understanding the needs and expectations of users such as applicants and third parties.

The JPO released its Quality Policy on Patent Examination, which outlines the fundamental principles of the JPO's quality management policies designed to achieve the utmost examination quality in the world. The Quality Policy states, in one of its six fundamental principles, "we meet wide-ranging needs and expectations."

Carefully listening to the opinions of users is essential to continuously formulate measures for achieving quality assurance in patent examination. The JPO has conducted its User Satisfaction Survey (the "Survey") annually since the first Survey in FY2012 was conducted, and has reflected the results of the Survey in its quality management initiatives. In FY2018, a question asking how satisfied respondents were in regard to consistency of judgments on each of relevant Articles was added to the Survey. The addition was made in order to identify issues with consistency of judgments among examiners.

Since a great number of users took the Survey, invaluable information was derived as a result. The JPO is committed to making continuous efforts to maintain and improve examination quality in view of the results of the Survey. The following is a summary of the survey results, including analyses of responses, giving details and overall findings.

¹ In this Report, the term "patent examination" means examination on inventions including International Search and International Preliminary Examination under the PCT, and establishment of Reports of Utility Model Technical Opinion, as defined in the Quality Policy. Any reference to "patent examination" in the context of national application means examination on inventions in national applications.

II. Overview of aggregated results and detailed analysis

The following four types of questionnaire sheets were used for the Survey.

- Sheet A: Overall Quality of Patent Examination on National Applications
- Sheet B: Quality of Patent Examination on Specific National Applications
- Sheet C: Overall Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT Applications
- Sheet D: Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on Specific PCT Applications

1. Evaluation and analysis on the overall quality

i. Overall quality of patent examination on national applications

The percentage of positive responses, namely “Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied” with the overall quality of patent examination on national applications in FY2017 was 62.2%, a 4% year-over-year increase compared to the 58.3% recorded last year.

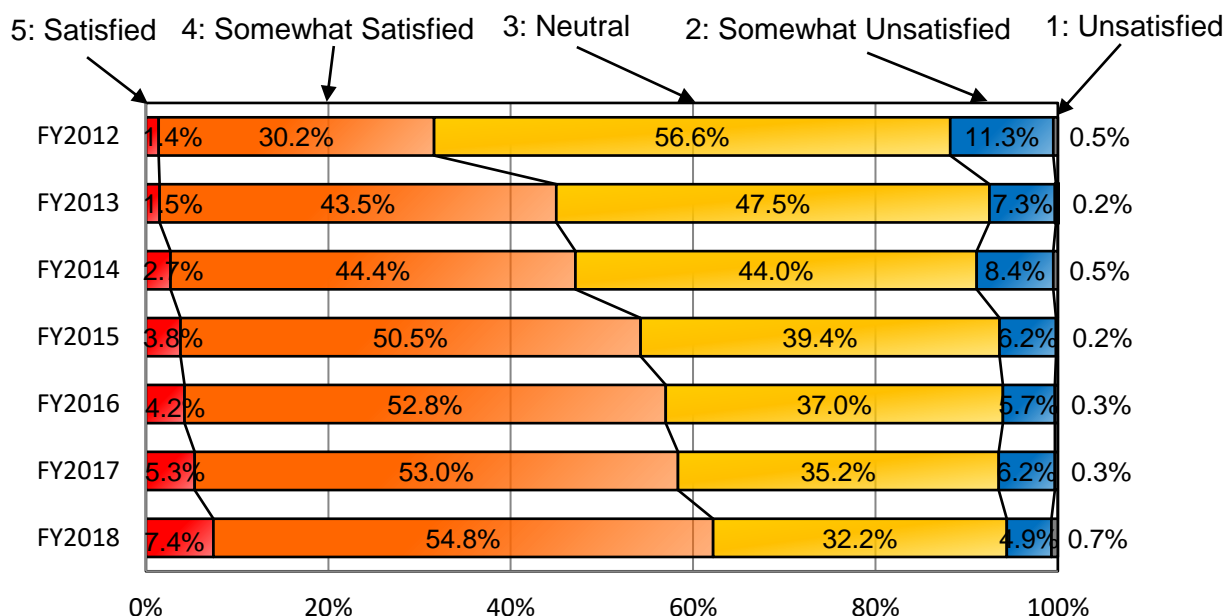


Figure 1: Level of satisfaction on the overall quality of patent examination on national applications

The percentage of positive responses was relatively high in this FY for the following three evaluation items: “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)” (69.8%), “domestic patent literature searches” (65.3%), and “communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations” (61.5%).

On the other hand, the respondents were “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” with “consistency of judgments among examiners” (20.6%), “foreign patent literature searches” (16.4%) and “non-patent literature searches” (16.1%). On the evaluation item “consistency of judgments among examiners,” the percentage of positive responses has steadily been improving and the percentage of negative responses (“Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied”) has been in the downward trend though it was still higher than 20%.

Regarding how appropriately regulations in the Japanese Patent Act were applied toward examination, we found that the percentage of positive responses was on the rise and that the percentage of negative responses were decreasing for “items of Article 29 (1): novelty” and “Article 29 (2): inventive step”. We found also that the percentage of positive responses remained steady for “Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6): descriptive requirements for description and claims”.

ii. Level of Satisfaction on the overall quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT applications

The percentage of positive responses to the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination in the FY 2017 was 57.8%, a 4% increase from the last fiscal year (54.2%).

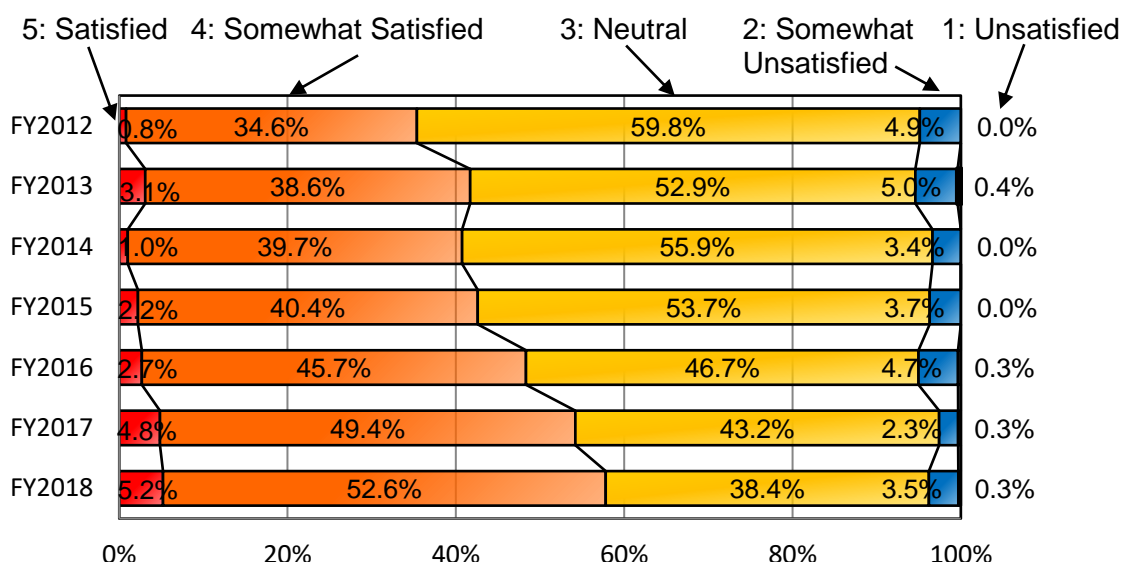


Figure 2: Level of satisfaction on the overall quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT applications

The percentage of positive responses was relatively high in this FY for the following three evaluation items: “domestic patent literature searches” (66.7%), “IPC accuracy” (54.1%) and “Reasoned statement regarding novelty/inventive step” (53.3%).

Meanwhile, the percentage of negative responses was relatively high for the evaluation items “foreign patent literature searches” (18.2%) and “non-patent literature searches” (15.8%).

iii. **Analysis on how the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item affects the overall level of satisfaction**

(1) National Applications: Average level of satisfaction on each item and the correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction

Analysis in this section shows how the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item, such as “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)” affects the overall level of satisfaction on quality. The degree of influence can be analyzed by using correlation coefficients between the overall level of satisfaction and the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item (both evaluated by using a 5-point scale between “5: Satisfied” and “1: Unsatisfied”).

Figure 3¹ shows the relation between the average level of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the correlation coefficients in terms of the overall level of satisfaction on national applications (Sheet A). As seen in this figure, the best approach would be to firstly improve evaluation items which received low levels of satisfaction, in spite of high correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction (i.e., the items seen on the upper left in the figure). The average level of satisfaction on “consistency of judgments among examiners” is relatively low, and the correlation coefficient with the overall level of satisfaction of the item is relatively high among 15 evaluation items. Accordingly, the appropriate action would be to give a high priority for improving this item.

¹ In this Figure, the plots are colored according to the type of evaluation item: light blue for prior art searches, orange for judgements, green for descriptions in notifications, and purple for others.

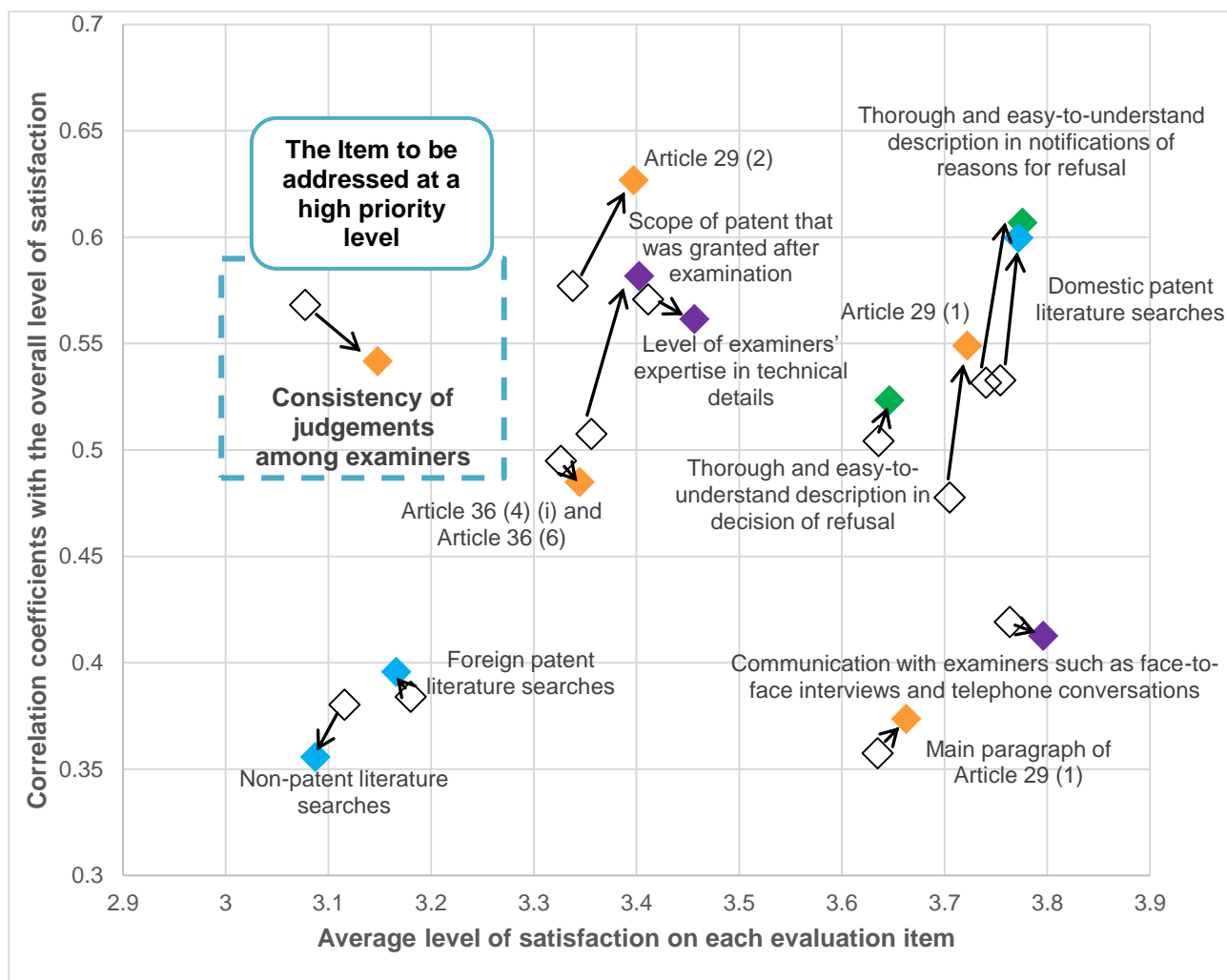


Figure 3: Average level of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction (national applications)

(2) PCT Applications: Average level of satisfaction on each item and the correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction

Figure 4¹ shows the relation between the average level of satisfaction on each item and the correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction, regarding the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination on PCT Applications (Sheet C). The average level of satisfaction on “consistency of judgements in the international search and international preliminary examination” is relatively low, and the correlation coefficient with its overall level of satisfaction is higher than the last fiscal year. As a result, the appropriate action to take would be to give a high priority to improving this item.

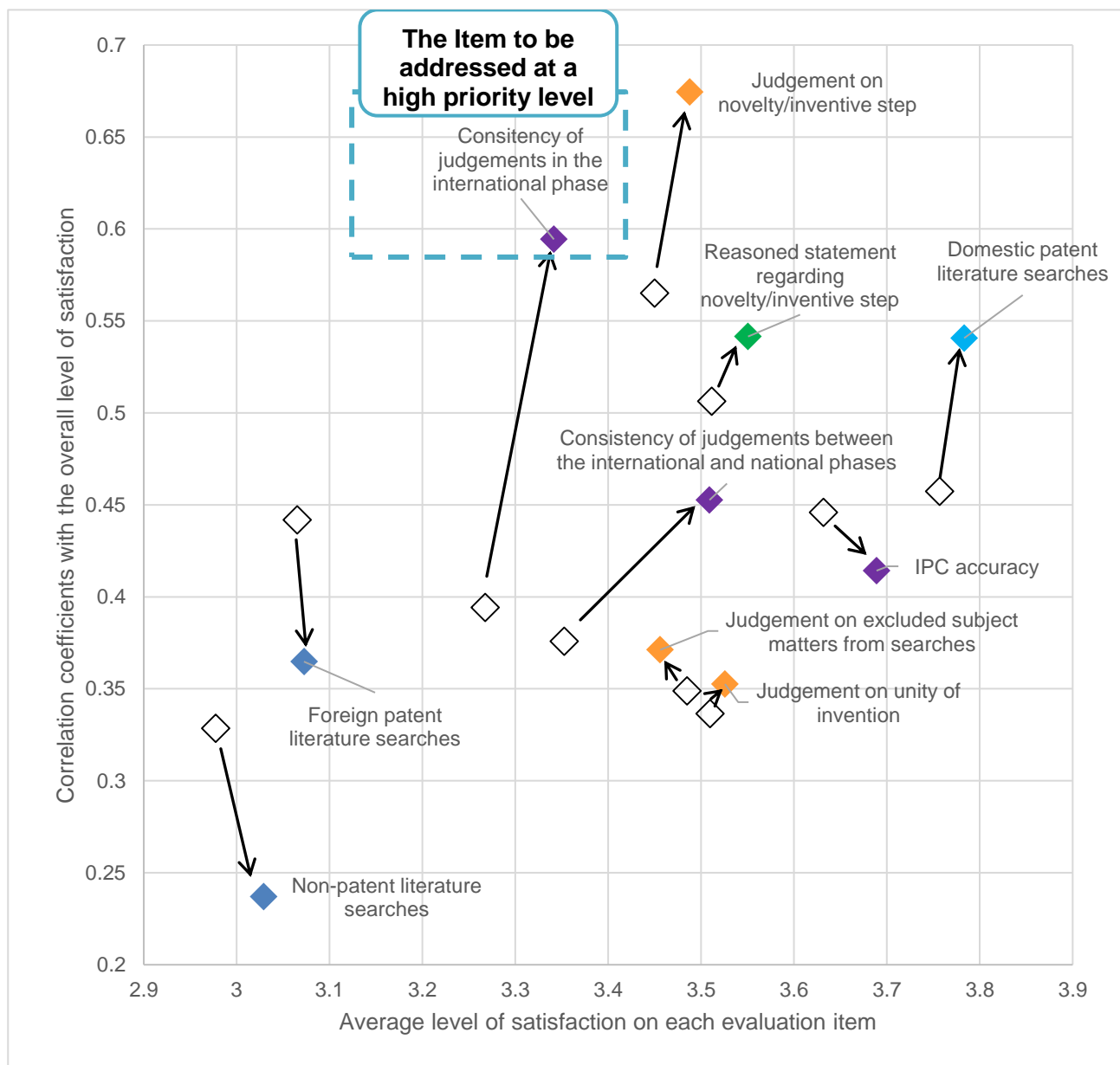


Figure 4: Average level of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction (PCT applications)

¹ In this Figure, the plots are colored according to the type of evaluation item: light blue for prior art searches, orange for judgements, green for descriptions in notifications, and purple for others.

2. Evaluation and analysis on specific applications

i. Patent examination quality on specific national applications

The percentage of “Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied” on patent examination quality on the specific national applications used in the Survey has remained around 55% since the first Survey in FY2012.

“Thorough and easy-to-understand description in the notifications of reasons for refusal” and “proper judgement on novelty/inventive step” were major reasons for their positive responses.

On the other hand, “judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step” and “judgement on lack of descriptive requirements” were major reasons for their negative responses.

Specifically, “identification of cited documents”, “judgement of identical features/differences” and “motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination” were major reasons for dissatisfaction with judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step. In addition, dissatisfaction with “judgement regarding clarity requirements” and “judgement regarding support requirements” were major reasons for dissatisfaction with “judgement on lack of descriptive requirements.”

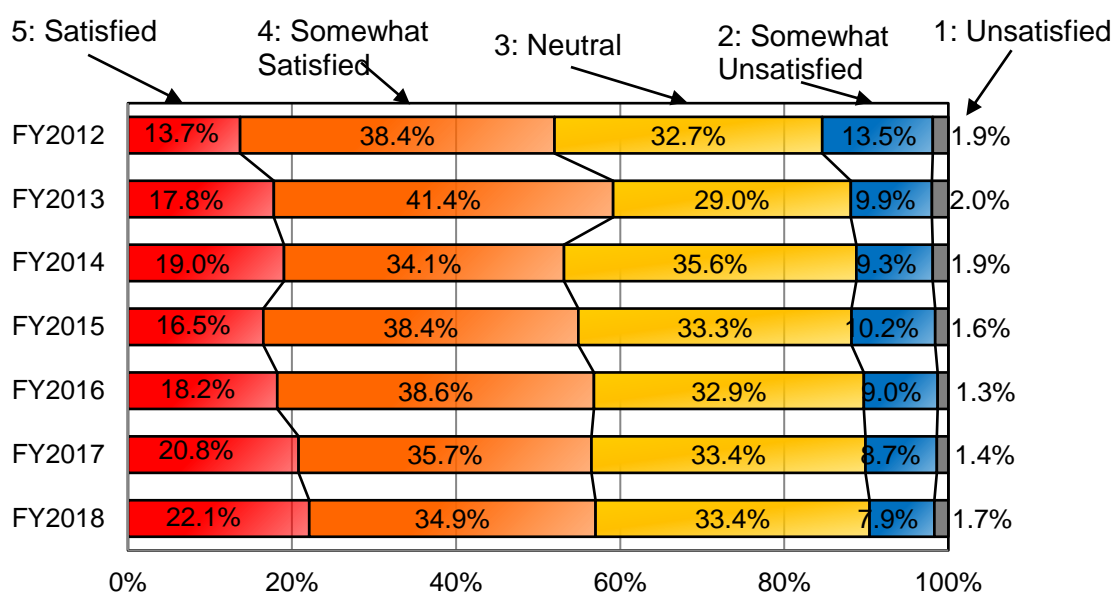


Figure 5: Level of satisfaction on patent examination quality on specific national applications

ii. Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on specific PCT applications

The percentage of positive responses given for international search and international preliminary examination on specific PCT applications used in the Survey has remained about 55% since the first Survey in FY 2012.

“Thorough and easy-to-understand description in ISR, WO/ISA, and IPER” and “proper judgement on novelty/inventive step” were major reasons for their positive responses.

On the other hand, dissatisfaction with “judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step” was the major reason for their negative responses.

Specifically, the respondents were “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” mainly with “identification of cited document(s),” “judgement of identical features/differences” and “motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination.”

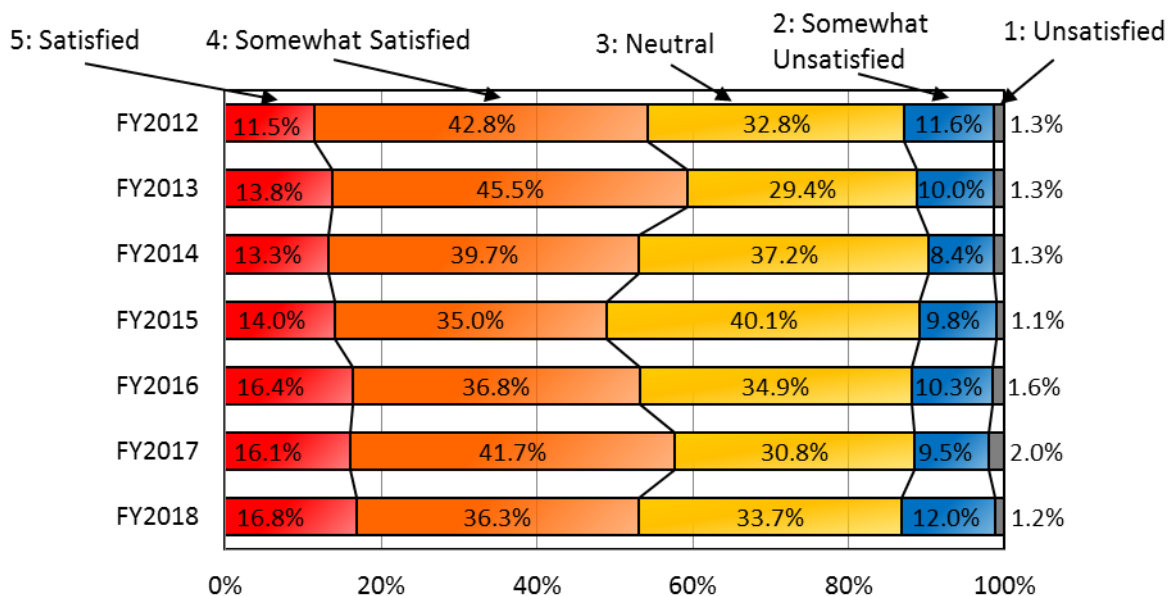


Figure 6: Level of satisfaction on the quality of International Search and International Preliminary Examination on specific PCT applications

III. Main points of the Survey results

The percentage of positive responses to the overall quality of patent examination on national applications (Sheet A) has been increasing year by year, ever since the first Survey was conducted in 2012. The overall level of satisfaction was 62.2% in FY2018.

The level of satisfaction on each evaluation item such as “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)” generally improved. The levels of satisfaction were relatively high for “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)” (69.8%), “domestic patent literature searches” (65.3%), and “communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations” (61.5%).

On the other hand, the respondents were “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” with “consistency of judgments among examiners” (20.6%), “foreign patent literature searches” (16.4%) and “non-patent literature searches” (16.1%). On the evaluation item “consistency of judgments among examiners,” the percentage of positive responses has steadily been improving and the percentage of “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” has been in the downward trend though it was still higher than 20%.

In addition, it was found that the percentage of positive responses was on the rise and that the percentage of negative responses was in the downward trend for the evaluation items on “items of Article 29 (1): novelty” and “Article 29 (2): inventive step”. It was also found that the percentage of positive responses remained steady for the evaluation item on “Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6): descriptive requirements for descriptions and claims”.

Also the percentage of positive responses on the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination on PCT Applications (Sheet C) has been increasing year by year. In this FY it reached a high of 57.8%.

Generally, the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item (such as “IPC accuracy”) improved. In particular, the percentage of “Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied” was relatively high for the three evaluation items “domestic patent literature searches” (66.7%), “IPC accuracy” (54.1%), and “reasoned statement regarding lack of novelty/inventive step” (53.3%). The percentage of “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” was relatively high for the evaluation items “foreign patent literature searches” (18.2%) and “non-patent literature searches” (15.8%). However, it has shown a downward trend since the Survey was first conducted in 2012.

These results show that the measures and initiatives by the JPO to improve examination quality are definitely raising user satisfaction.

According to the analysis, based on the responses to Sheets B and D (related to the specific applications used in the Survey), a greater number of checks or comments were given by the respondents on the aspects related to novelty/inventive step, especially on “identification of cited

documents”, “judgement of identical features/differences” and “motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination” Also on “judgement on design variation etc.” and “judgement on technique generally known to a person skilled in the art”, the percentages of dissatisfaction were relatively high. The correlation analysis showed that inventive step is likely to most affect the overall level of satisfaction and therefore accurate judgements on inventive step are required from the users.

In addition to currently implementing initiatives to improve the quality of examination practices, the JPO has to address also issues found with consistency of judgements, which were identified through the survey in this FY. This will be done by identifying issues to be addressed based on conducting a comprehensive analysis of the correlation between the overall and individual evaluations, as well as other analyses by the JPO.

Acknowledgment

The JPO expresses its gratitude to all the respondents for their generous time in taking the Survey, and appreciates everyone’s continuous support. In order to maintain and further enhance the quality of patent examination, the JPO will continue to conduct its user-satisfaction survey on examination quality, and utilize survey results to continuously enhance its patent examination practices and operating procedures.

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1. Overview of the Survey

(1) Background

Conducting globally reliable, high-quality examination and properly granting patent rights by the Japan Patent Office (JPO) are keys for supporting domestic enterprises in developing their global business activities, driving innovation, and maintaining sound business practices. The JPO released its “Quality Policy” on Patent Examination (the “Quality Policy”) in April 2014, which outlines fundamental principles of quality management designed to achieve the utmost examination quality in the world. The Quality Policy has six fundamental principles. One of the principles states “we meet wide-ranging needs and expectations.” and then “the JPO understands and respects broad-ranging needs of and expectations for patent examination so that it may contribute to the benefit of Japanese society and the satisfaction of people connected with the patent system.”

Carefully listening to opinions of users is essential to continuously formulating measures for ensuring the quality of patent examination. The JPO has conducted its User Satisfaction Survey (the “Survey”) annually since the first Survey in FY2012 was conducted.

This Report gives a summary of the results from the Survey conducted in FY2018 and an analysis on those results, along with details and overall findings.

(2) Purpose of the Survey

In view of the background above, this survey aims to identify the level of user satisfaction in regard to the quality of patent examination and international search and international preliminary examination practices at the JPO. In addition, the survey is conducted to hear user opinions on these topics, in order to identify the current status of the JPO’s patent examination quality. The Survey works as a means for the JPO to improve the quality of its patent examination and the international search and international preliminary examination in the future.

The Survey falls under the “Check” part of the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) Cycle outlined in the Quality Management Manual for Patent Examination, which was created for maintaining and improving the quality of patent examination. The survey results are used to continuously improve patent examination practices and achieve one of the principles of the JPO’s Quality Policy: “We continually improve operations.”

(3) Method of Gathering User Feedback

Questionnaire Sheets (see (4) below) were sent by e-mail to users who were selected based on (5) below, based on their consent given by phone or e-mail.

Users were asked to complete the Questionnaire within about a month and submit it via e-mail or postal service. The Questionnaire Sheets were distributed and the responses were received between May and June, 2018. Users could choose to respond to the questions on Sheets A and C as in (4) below either by providing their names or responding anonymously.

(4) Questionnaire Sheets

The following four types of questionnaire sheets were used for the Survey, which are attached to this Report as an APPENDIX.

Sheet A: Overall Quality of Patent Examination on National Applications

Sheet B: Quality of Patent Examination on Specific National Applications

Sheet C: Overall Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT Applications

Sheet D: Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on Specific PCT Applications

An English translation of the sheets was sent to applicants residing abroad when necessary (see APPENDIX).

(5) Respondents

Table 1 shows the method of selecting applicants/applications and the number of applicants/applications selected to respond to Sheets A and B (national applications). Table 2 shows the method of selecting applicants/applications and the number of applicants/applications selected to respond to Sheets C and D (PCT applications). It should be noted that the respondents to Sheets A and C overlap with each other to some degree. The number of respondents was 731 when the overlap was excluded. Patent attorneys who had filed large numbers of applications were asked to give feedback from their standpoint.

**Table 1: Method of selecting applicants/applications for responding to Sheets A and B
(national applications)**

	method of selecting applicants/applications	Number of applicants	Number of applications	Total
Sheet A	non-individual, domestic residents who filed 50 or more national applications as a lead applicant in FY2016, had been sent one or more final decisions in FY2017 and have one or more published applications	541	NA	657
	non-individual, foreign residents who filed 50 or more national applications who were the lead applicants in FY2016, had been sent one or more final decisions in FY2017 and have one or more published applications	46		
	small-scale applicants (non-individual, domestic residents who filed less than 50 applications) [*1]	20		
	patent attorneys [*2]	50		
Sheet B [*3]	randomly selected, published national applications filed by non-individual, domestic residents who filed 50 or more national applications as a lead applicant in FY2016, to which one or more final decisions had been sent in FY2017	541	1789	2109
	randomly selected, published national applications filed by foreign residents who are approximately the top 140 lead applicants in FY2016, to which one or more final decisions had been sent in FY2017	141	220	
	randomly selected, published lead national applications filed by small-scale applicants[*1], to which one or more final decisions had been sent in FY2017	100	100	

[*1] The small-scale applicants were selected from manufacturers either capitalized at not more than 300 million yen or who had less than 300 employees; and which previously had interviews or discussions with the JPO.

[*2] Approximately the top 50 patent attorneys who filed a large number of applications in FY2016 were selected.

[*3] The number of applications to be surveyed ranged up to five per applicant, in order to make it easier for respondents to take the Survey. One to five Questionnaire Sheets were sent to each respondent in proportion to the number of national applications they filed as lead applicants in FY2016.

Table 2: Method of selecting applicants/applications for Sheets C and D (PCT applications)

	method of selecting applicants/applications	Number of applicants	Number of applications	Total
Sheet C	non-individual, domestic residents who filed 18 or more PCT applications as lead applicants in FY2017 and who also were sent one or more International Search Reports (ISRs) or International Preliminary Examination Report (IPERs) in FY2017.	257	NA	307
	small-scale applicants (non-individual, domestic residents who filed less than 18 PCT applications) [*1]	20		
	patent attorneys [*2]	30		
Sheet D [*3]	randomly selected PCT applications of non-individual, domestic residents who filed 18 or more PCT applications as lead applicants in FY2017, and to which ISRs or IPERs were sent in FY2017	257	513	543
	randomly selected PCT applications of small-scale applicants[*1] as a lead applicant, to which ISRs or IPERs were sent in FY2017	30	30	

[*1] The small-scale applicants were selected from manufacturers either capitalized at not more than 300 million yen or who had less than 300 employees; and which previously had interviews or discussions with the JPO.

[*2] Approximately the top 30 patent attorneys who filed a large number of applications in FY2017.

[*3] The PCT applications were randomly selected from among those of which the lead applicants were eligible to respond to Sheet C, and to which ISRs or IPERs were sent in FY2017. The respondents gave their opinions on only one or two applications, in order to make it easier for them to take the Survey.

(6) Response Rates

The response rates for Sheets A, B, C, and D were quite high, between 87% - 94% (Table 3). This indicates that users were keenly interested to provide feedback.

Table 4 shows a breakdown by type of industry of respondents on Sheets A and C.

“Anonymous” responses given to Sheet A accounted for approximately 54% of the total (approximately 56% in the last FY) and those given to Sheet C accounted for approximately 62% of the total (approximately 61% in the last FY) (Table 4).

Table 3: Response rates of each Questionnaire Sheet

	number of applicants/ applications surveyed	responses	response rate	response rate in FY2017	response rate in FY2016	response rate in FY2015	response rate in FY2014	response rate in FY2013	response rate in FY2012
Sheet A	657	591	90.0%	90.6%	89.3%	85.5%	86.8%	91.8%	91.4%
Sheet B	2109	1841	87.3%	89.6%	88.9%	85.1%	87.5%	90.6%	91.7%
Sheet C	307	287	93.5%	92.3%	91.2%	87.4%	88.7%	90.6%	91.8%
Sheet D	543	493	90.8%	91.0%	93.4%	89.1%	90.4%	90.1%	93.0%

Table 4: Breakdown by industry of the respondents for Sheets A and C

attributes		Sheet A		Sheet C	
	type of industry [*1]	number of respondents	percentage in relation to total	number of respondents	percentage in relation to total
domestic -resident applicant	metal	17	2.9%	7	2.4%
	construction	4	0.7%	0	0.0%
	machinery	65	11.0%	28	9.8%
	chemistry	37	6.3%	22	7.7%
	food/medicine	9	1.5%	3	1.0%
	electronics	72	12.2%	32	11.1%
	other industries	13	2.2%	4	1.4%
	others	6	1.0%	3	1.0%
	institutes/public research organization	12	2.0%	4	1.4%
patent attorneys		26	4.4%	7	2.4%
foreign-resident applicants		11	1.9%	0	0.0%
anonymous respondents		319	54.0%	177	61.7%
total		591	100.0%	287	100.0%

[*1] Respondents are sorted into 9 sectors (10 including patent attorneys) according to the following: TOPIX Sector indices (33 sectors), Teikoku Databank Industry Classification, Japan Standard Industry Classification, Research Report on Practice of Patent Examination so as to Enhance User's Convenience (2011.02), and Research Report on "Quality Management System that Takes into Consideration the Evaluations Made by Patent Applicants and Agents" (2008.03). Note that the term "other industries" means industries such as stationery, toys, sporting goods etc. and excludes the manufacturers named above, and the term "others" means non-manufacturers such as service, transportation, finance, etc.

(7) Definition of “Satisfied” and “Unsatisfied” in this Report

In the Questionnaire Sheets (see APPENDIX), a 5-point scale was used to indicate the level of satisfaction for each evaluation item, in which 5 indicates “Satisfied,” 4 indicates “Somewhat Satisfied,” 3 indicates “Neutral,” 2 indicates “Somewhat Unsatisfied,” and 1 indicates “Unsatisfied.”

In this Report, as long as there is no particular remark stated, the “positive response(s)” consist of “5: Satisfied” and “4: Somewhat Satisfied,” and the “negative response(s)” consists of “1: Unsatisfied” and “2: Somewhat Unsatisfied.”

(8) Changes from the Last Fiscal Year

The following reports the main changes that were made to the Questionnaires in this year’s survey.

- “Article 37 (unity of invention)” and “Article 17-2 (3) through Article 17-2 (6) (amendment of description and claims etc.)” were deleted from the questions in Sheet A asking the following regulations were properly applied. In addition, “Judgement regarding violation of requirements for unity (Article 37)” was deleted from question [2] in Sheet B.
- Check boxes indicating “inventive step” and “descriptive requirements for description and claims” were added to the questions regarding consistency of judgements in Sheet A and Sheet C.
- The questions asking consistency of judgements were deleted from Sheet B and Sheet D.
- Check boxes indicating “judgement on design variation, etc.” and “judgement on technique generally known to a person skilled in the art” were added to Sheets B and D.
- Check boxes including “The scope of prior art search is not proper.” were added to the questions regarding consistency of judgements in Sheets B and D.

2. Aggregated Results

(1) Quality of Patent Examination on National Applications

(i) Levels of Satisfaction on the Overall Quality of Patent Examination on National Applications

The percentage of positive responses¹, namely “Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied”, has increased year by year since the first Survey in FY2012 was conducted, having reached 62.2% in FY2018.

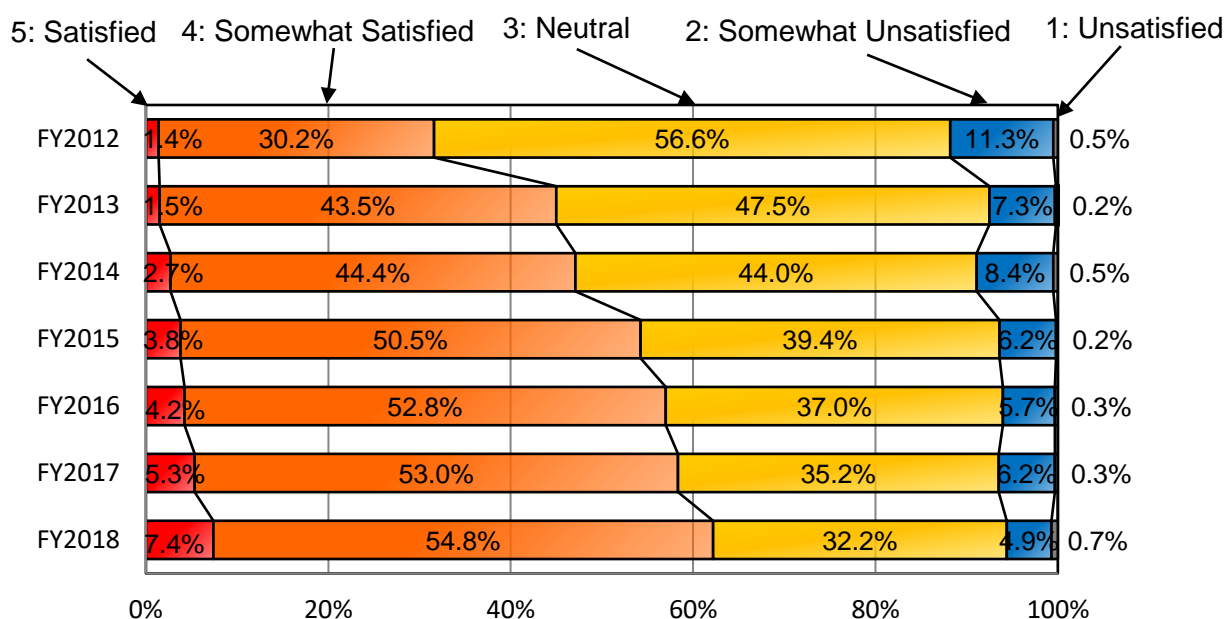


Figure 1: The levels of satisfaction on the overall quality of patent examination on national applications

(ii) Levels of Satisfaction on Each Evaluation Item on Patent Examination on National Applications

Table 5 below shows the number of ticks for each level of satisfaction on each evaluation item. Figure 2 through Figure 14 show the year-over-year changes in the level of satisfaction between “5: Satisfied” and “1: Unsatisfied” on each evaluation item.

The percentage of positive responses in this FY was relatively high for the following three evaluation items in regard to patent examination on national applications: “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)” (69.8%), “domestic patent literature searches” (65.3%), and “communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations” (61.5%).

On the other hand, the respondents were “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” with

¹ The percentages of “Not Sure” and the responses without any checks are excluded from these percentage bar charts.

“consistency of judgments among examiners” (20.6%), “foreign patent literature searches” (16.4%) and “non-patent literature searches” (16.1%). The percentage of positive responses has steadily been improving in regard to “consistency of judgments among examiners,” while the percentage of negative responses has been decreasing. Nevertheless, unfavorable responses were still over 20%.

When it came to whether regulations in the Japanese Patent Act were being properly applied, the percentage of positive responses was on the rise and the percentage of negative responses was decreasing for “items of Article 29 (1): novelty” and “Article 29 (2): inventive step”. Meanwhile, the percentage of positive responses remained steady for “Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6): descriptive requirements for description and claims”.

Table 5: Level of satisfaction on each evaluation item on patent examination

evaluation item		Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Not Sure/No Opportunity
thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)		61 (10.4%)	350 (59.4%)	164 (27.8%)	13 (2.2%)	1 (0.2%)	2
thorough and easy-to-understand description in decision of refusal		55 (9.5%)	290 (50.0%)	212 (36.6%)	21 (3.6%)	2 (0.3%)	10
application of provisions	main paragraph of Article 29 (1) (industrial applicability and judgement of whether the subject matter falls under the concept of "invention")	73 (16.7%)	153 (35.1%)	200 (45.9%)	10 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	155
	items of Article 29 (1): novelty	83 (14.1%)	274 (46.7%)	214 (36.5%)	16 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4
	Article 29 (2): inventive step	45 (7.6%)	227 (38.5%)	241 (41.0%)	69 (11.7%)	7 (1.2%)	2
	Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6): descriptive requirements for description and claims	49 (8.3%)	192 (32.6%)	266 (45.2%)	77 (13.1%)	5 (0.8%)	2
consistency of judgements among examiners		34 (5.8%)	155 (26.4%)	278 (47.2%)	106 (18.0%)	15 (2.6%)	3
prior art searches	domestic patent literature searches	94 (16.0%)	290 (49.3%)	184 (31.3%)	16 (2.7%)	4 (0.7%)	3
	foreign patent literature searches	30 (5.5%)	131 (23.9%)	297 (54.2%)	80 (14.6%)	10 (1.8%)	43
	non-patent literature searches	23 (4.6%)	98 (19.4%)	302 (59.9%)	62 (12.3%)	19 (3.8%)	87
level of examiners' expertise in technical details		51 (8.7%)	221 (37.6%)	265 (45.1%)	45 (7.7%)	5 (0.9%)	4
communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations		101 (20.8%)	198 (40.7%)	175 (36.0%)	11 (2.3%)	1 (0.2%)	105
scope of patent that was granted after examination		39 (6.7%)	222 (37.9%)	269 (45.8%)	48 (8.2%)	8 (1.4%)	5

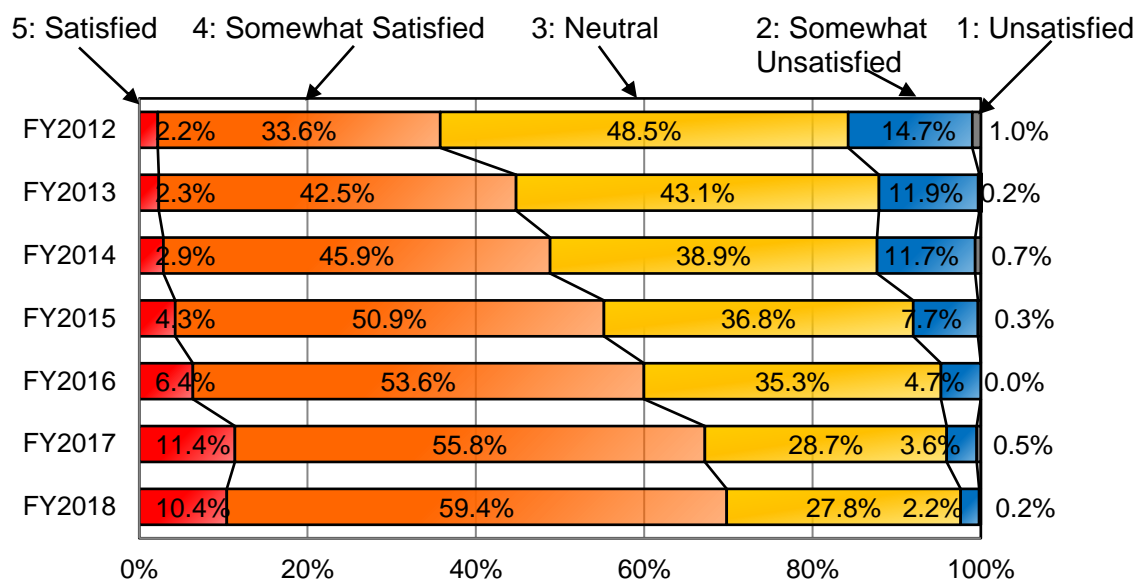


Figure 2: The levels of satisfaction on thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal.

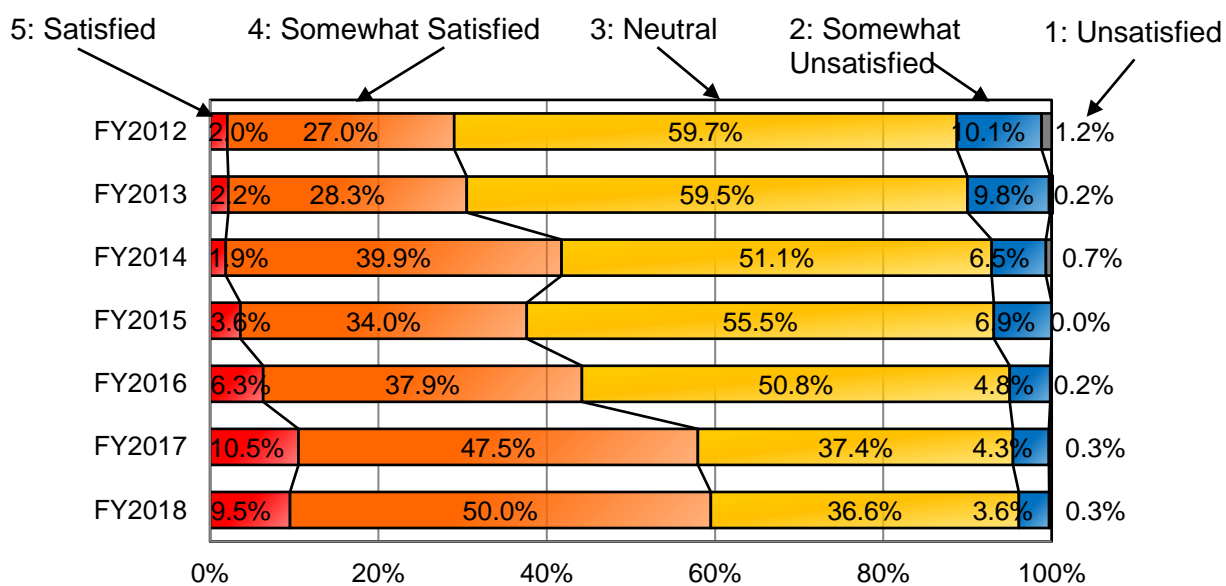


Figure 3: The levels of satisfaction on thorough and easy-to-understand description in decision of refusal

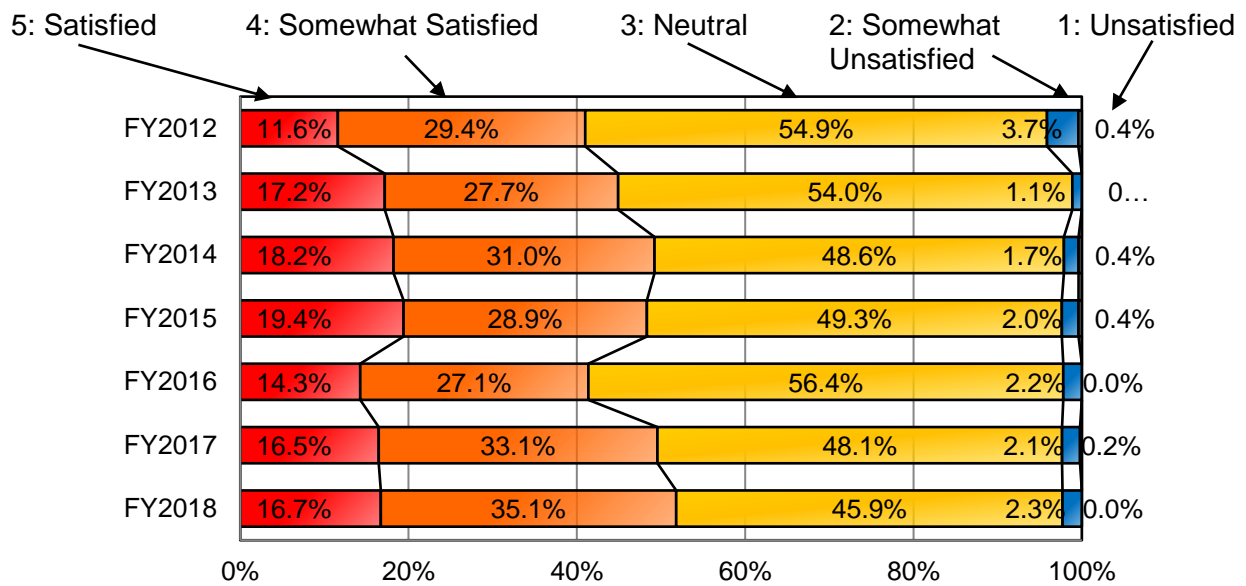


Figure 4: The levels of satisfaction on application of the main paragraph of Article 29 (1)

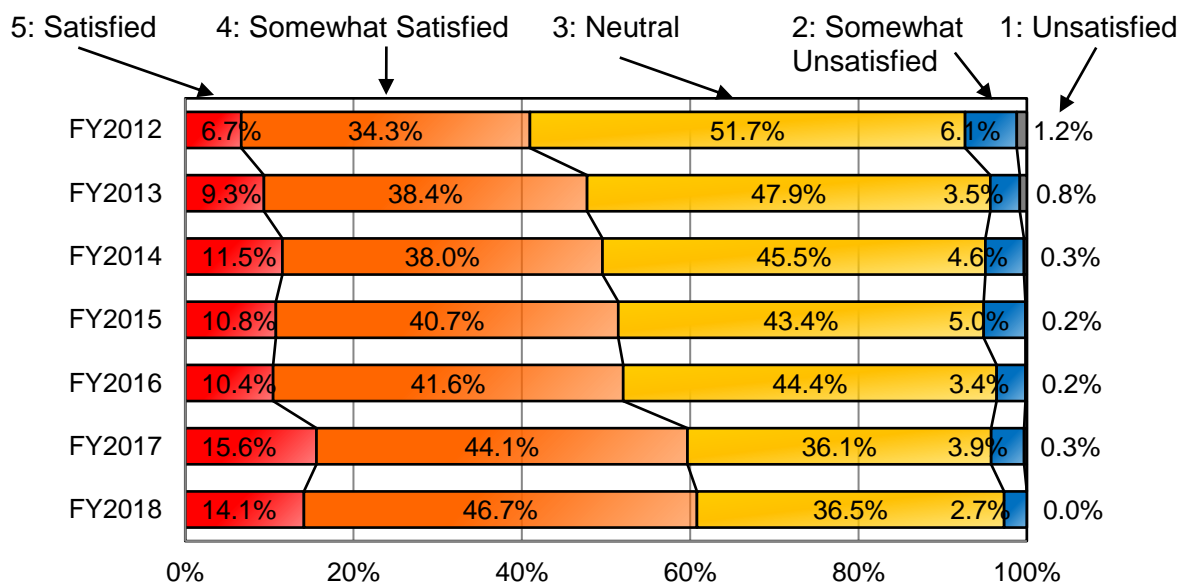


Figure 5: The levels of satisfaction on application of the items of Article 29 (1)

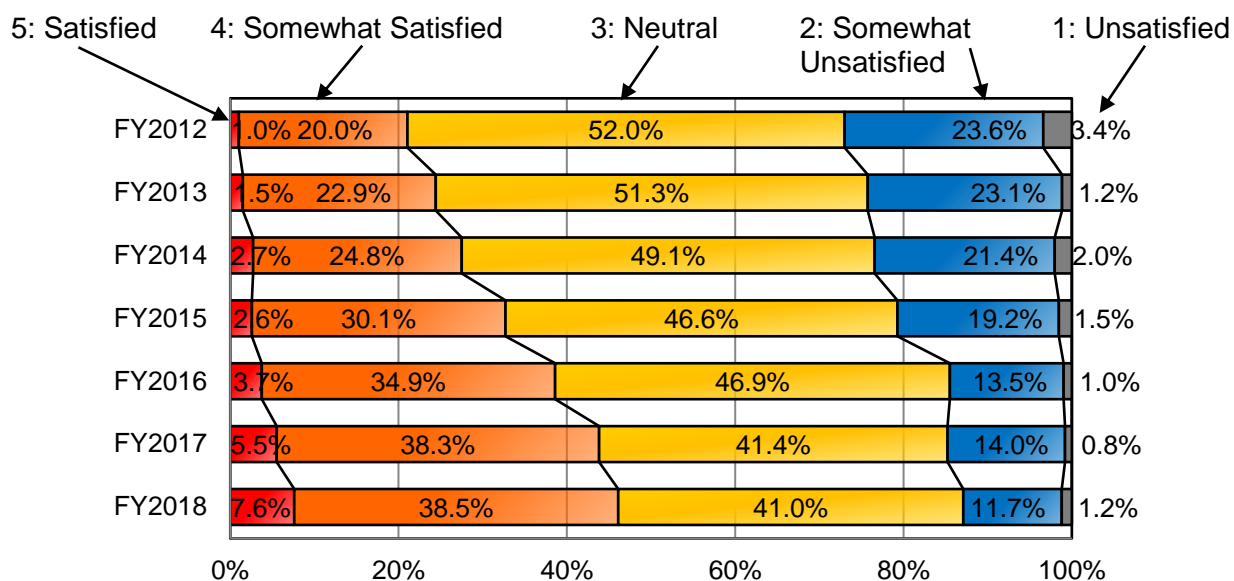


Figure 6: The levels of satisfaction on application of the Article 29 (2)

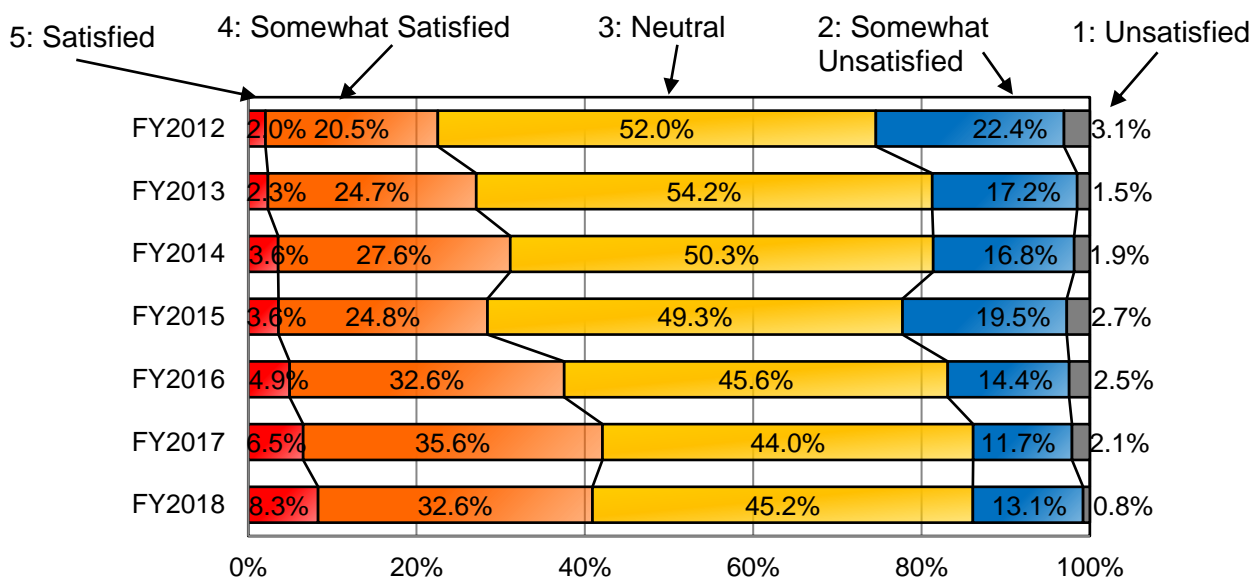


Figure 7: The levels of satisfaction on application of the Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6)

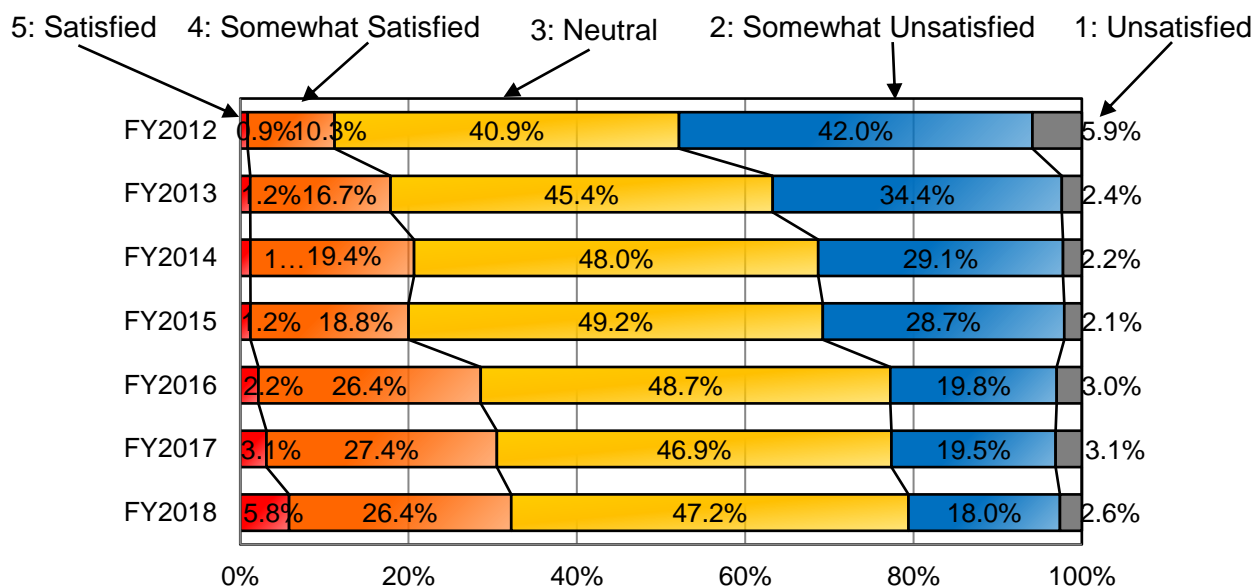


Figure 8: The levels of satisfaction on consistency of judgements among examiners

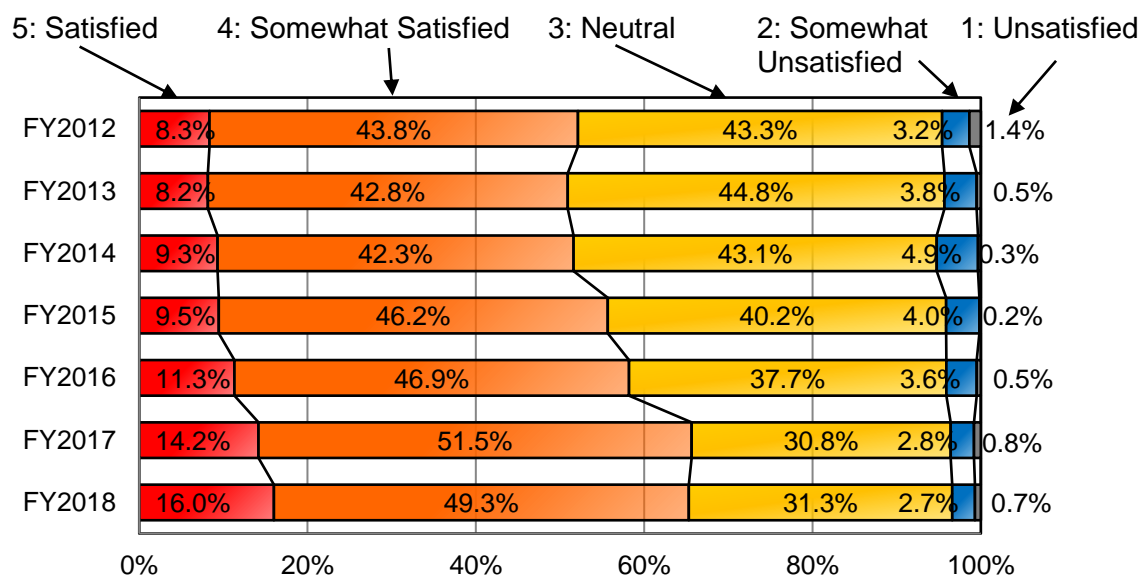


Figure 9: The levels of satisfaction on domestic patent literature searches

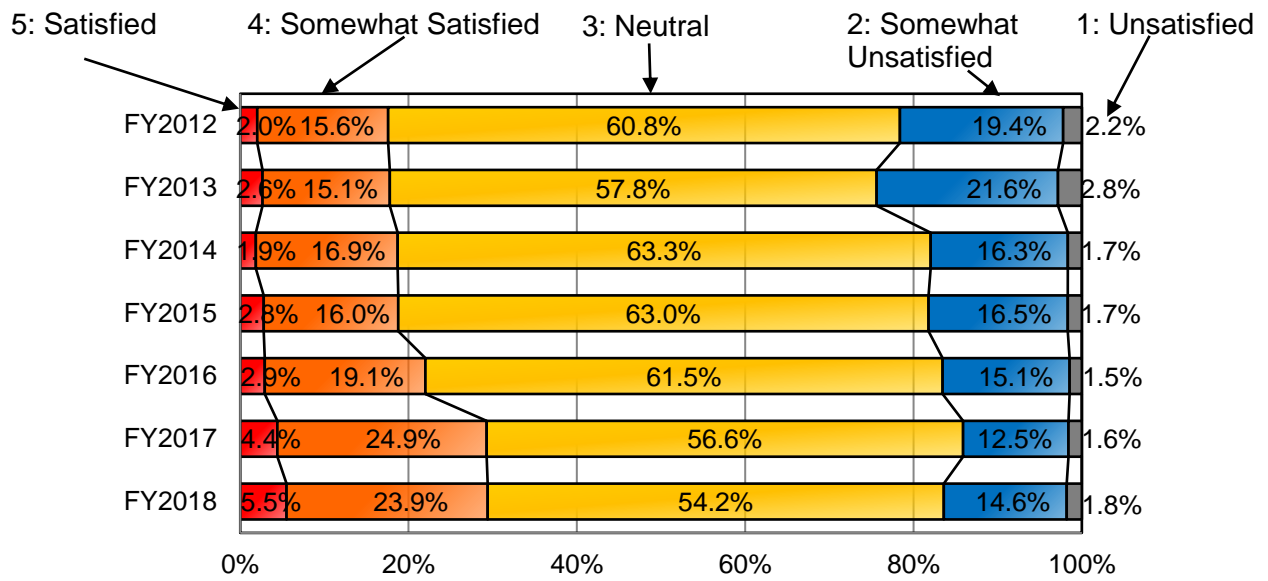


Figure 10: The levels of satisfaction on foreign patent literature searches

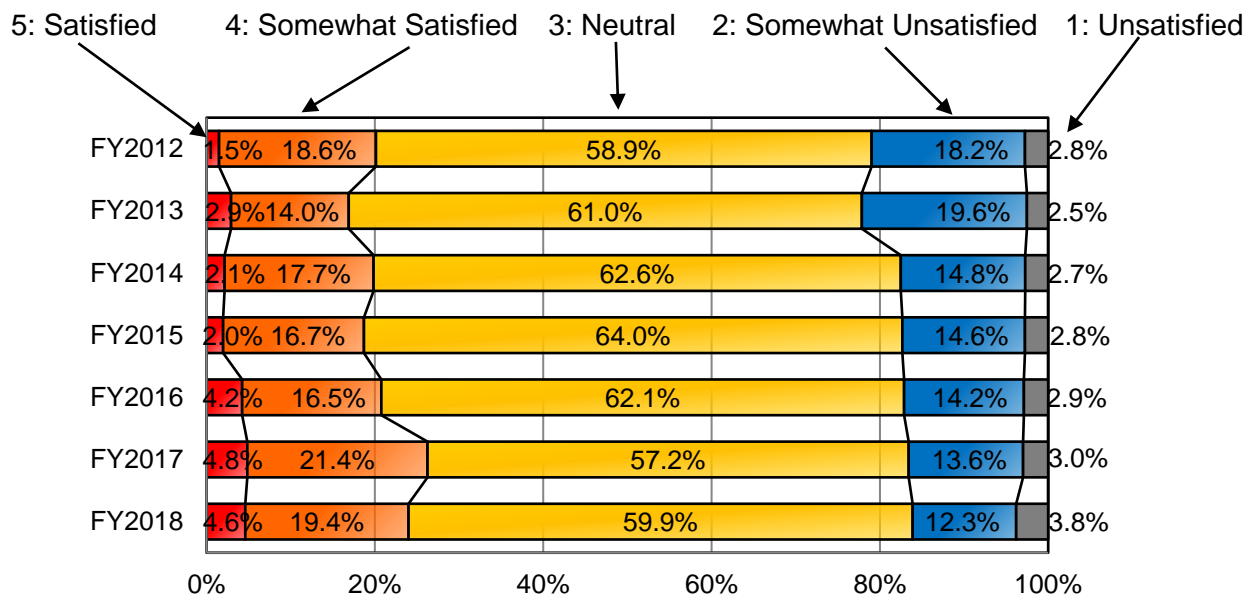


Figure 11: The levels of satisfaction on non-patent literature searches

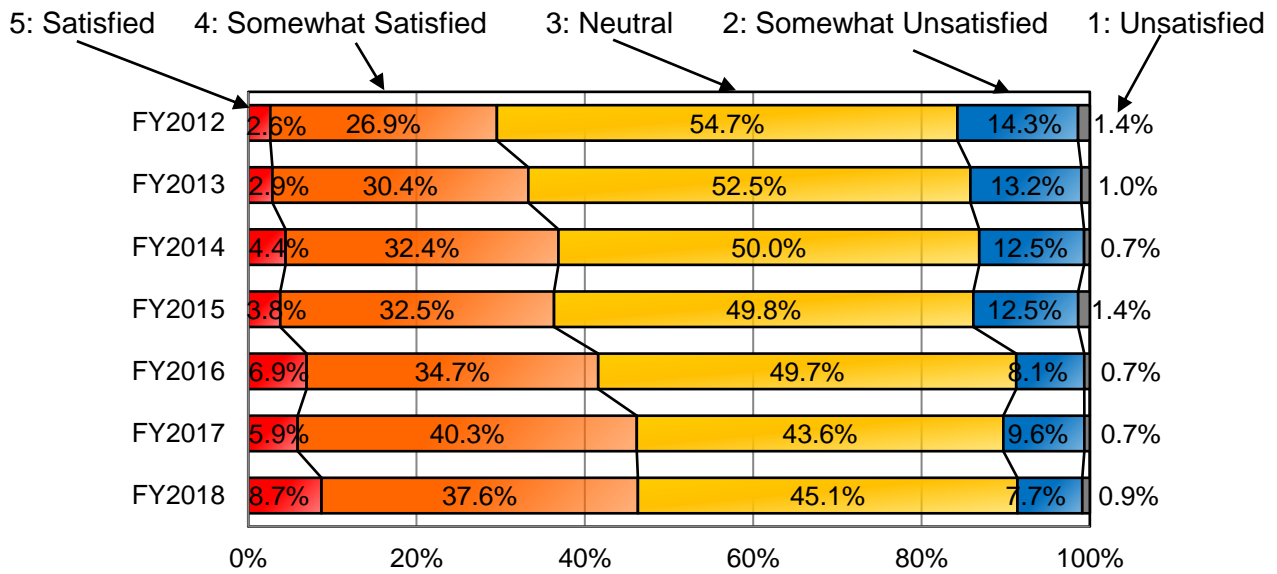


Figure 12: The levels of satisfaction on examiners' expertise in technical details

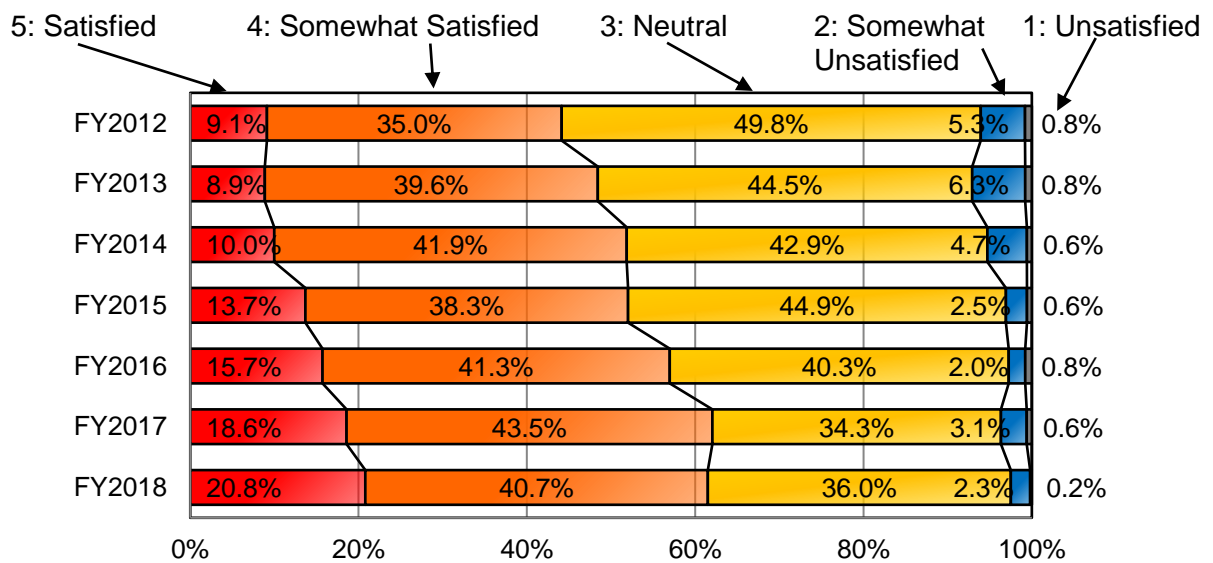


Figure 13: The levels of satisfaction on communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations

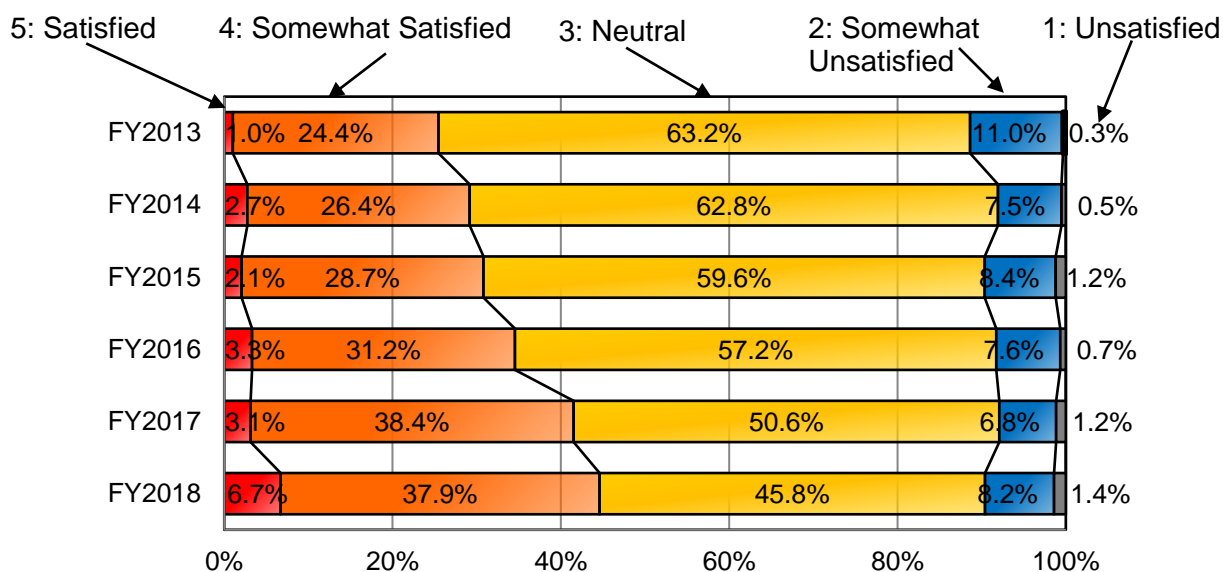


Figure 14: The levels of satisfaction on scope of patent that was granted after examination

(iii) Comparison to other IP Offices

Table 6 shows the aggregated results of aspects that the JPO excelled in compared to Offices in other countries/regions¹ in terms of patent examination quality. The greatest number of respondents felt that the JPO was superior in terms of “examiners’ understanding of technical details”, as seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Aspects that the JPO excels in compared to offices in other countries/regions

	number of responses (response rate ²)	number of responses in the last FY (response rate ³)
examiners’ understanding of technical details	264 (46.6%)	308 (53.0%)
thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal	253 (44.7%)	259 (44.4%)
prior art searches	234 (41.3%)	243 (41.5%)
judgement on novelty/inventive step	206 (36.4%)	224 (38.4%)
communication with examiners such as face-to- face interviews and telephone conversations	171 (30.2%)	159 (27.3%)
nothing in particular	80 (14.1%)	69 (11.8%)

¹ Since 2016, check boxes have been provided for items that were the most frequently commented on by the respondents in the free-writing columns. When multiple checks were given for a single question, each check was counted.

² 566 responses were valid. (Checks given in any of the checkboxes were valid, except for 24 checks that were given to “no opportunity for examination by the other Offices/not sure”.)

³ 583 responses were valid.

Table 7 shows the aggregated results of the aspects the Offices in the other countries/regions excelled in compared to the JPO in terms of patent examination quality on national applications.

Table 7: Offices which have superior qualities compared to those of the JPO

	nothing in particular (did not feel other offices were superior)	EPO	USPTO	SIPO ¹	KIPO	others ²
number of responses (response rate ³)	378 (66.8%)	137 (24.2%)	67 (11.8%)	44 (7.8%)	12 (2.1%)	13 (2.3%)
number of responses in last FY(response rate) ⁴	377 (64.6%)	150 (25.7%)	75 (12.8%)	41 (7.0%)	14 (2.4%)	11 (1.9%)

Table 8: Aspects the offices in the other countries/regions excelled in compared to the JPO

	EPO	USPTO	SIPO	KIPO	others
prior art searches	75	25	22	2	3
thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal	15	22	8	6	1
judgement on novelty/inventive step	22	8	12	2	0
consistency of judgements	9	1	1	0	0
examiners' understanding of technical details	8	4	1	1	0
time length required for examination	2	3	2	1	0
communication with examiners such as face-to- face interviews and telephone conversations	0	1	1	0	0
suggestion for amendment	9	3	2	1	0
judgement on descriptive requirements	2	3	1	1	0
others	8	7	1	0	0

As seen in Table 8, a large number of respondents gave high evaluations to prior art searches, specifically proper foreign patent and non-patent literature searches, conducted by the EPO.

¹ The former State Intellectual Property Office of China (SIPO) was renamed to China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) after this survey was conducted.

² "Others" includes 3 comments on Taiwan Intellectual Property Office (TIPO).

³ 590 responses were valid.

⁴ 584 responses were valid.

Table 9 shows the aggregated results of the responses given to the question asking how often additional, new, better cited documents are presented in the other countries /regions after the JPO issued its examination results on national applications. Figure 15 shows a percentage bar chart of Table 9 showing the frequency by each Office, excluding “no opportunity for examination at the other Office(s)/not sure.”

Table 9: Frequency of additional, new, better cited documents being presented by the Offices in the other countries/regions (national applications)

	often cited	sometimes cited	rarely cited	no opportunity for examination at the other Office(s)/not sure	total
EPO	46	307	127	111	591
USPTO	22	278	209	82	591
SIPO	12	171	313	95	591
KIPO	4	109	285	193	591

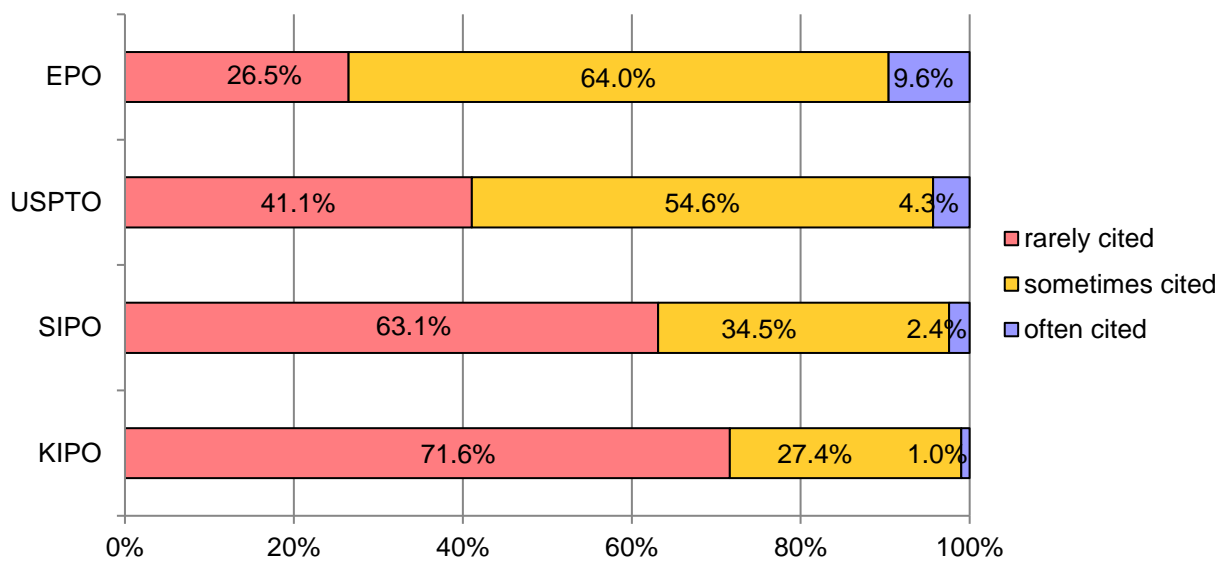


Figure 15: Frequency of additional, new, better cited documents being presented by the Offices in the other countries/regions (national applications)

(iv) Comments in the Free Description Columns

The respondents wrote many comments about judgements on novelty/inventive step (49 comments) and thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (31 comments). The comments on judgements on novelty/inventive step included those stating that the judgement criteria was lax (13 comments) and those stating that there was unreasonable motivation for combination (11 comments). Several comments were made about thorough and easy-to-understand descriptions in notifications of reasons, including seven mentioning insufficient descriptions on judgements regarding identical features/differences.

Politeness in communication such as interviews and telephone conversations received the largest number of positive responses (14 comments).

(2) Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT Applications

(i) Levels of Satisfaction on the Overall Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT Applications

The ratio of positive responses on the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination has increased year by year since the first Survey was conducted in FY2012.

Figure 16 shows the levels of satisfaction on the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination since the first Survey in FY2012. The percentage of “Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied” responses was 57.8%, a 4% increase from the last fiscal year (54.2%).

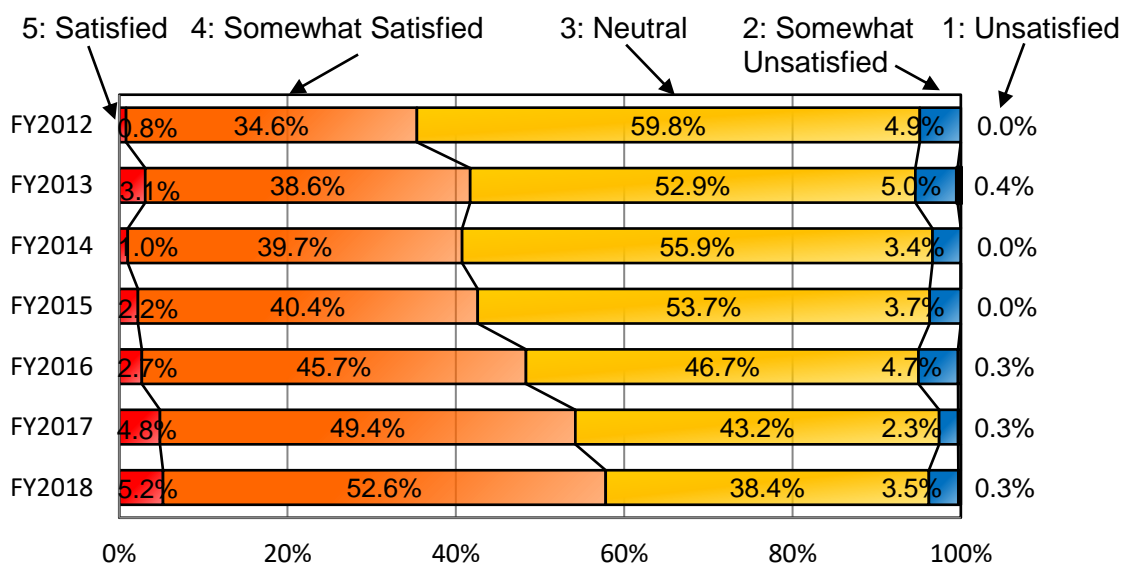


Figure 16: The levels of satisfaction on the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination

(ii) Levels of Satisfaction on Each Evaluation Item on the Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT Applications.

Table 10 shows the number of checks by the levels of satisfaction on each evaluation item. Figure 17 through Figure 26 show bar charts of the year-over-year changes in the percentages of levels of satisfaction between “5: Satisfied” and “1: Unsatisfied” on each evaluation item¹.

Table 10: Number of checks by the levels of satisfaction on each evaluation item on PCT applications

evaluation item		Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Not sure/No opportunity
IPC accuracy		41 (15.2%)	105 (38.9%)	123 (45.5%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	17
judgement on excluded subject matter from searches*		11 (8.8%)	36 (28.8%)	77 (61.6%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	162
judgement on unity of invention		26 (10.3%)	84 (33.2%)	140 (55.3%)	3 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	34
judgement on novelty/inventive step		16 (5.6%)	127 (44.3%)	126 (43.9%)	17 (5.9%)	1 (0.3%)	0
reasoned statement regarding novelty/inventive step		18 (6.3%)	135 (47.0%)	121 (42.2%)	13 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0
consistency of judgements in the international phase		15 (5.3%)	88 (31.0%)	161 (56.6%)	19 (6.7%)	1 (-0.4%)	3
consistency of judgements between the international phase and the national phase		37 (13.5%)	102 (37.1%)	104 (37.7%)	28 (10.2%)	4 (1.5%)	12
prior art searches	domestic patent literature searches	43 (15.0%)	148 (51.7%)	88 (30.9%)	4 (1.4%)	3 (1.0%)	1
	foreign patent literature searches	10 (3.6%)	51 (18.5%)	165 (59.7%)	49 (17.8%)	1 (0.4%)	11
	non-patent literature searches	6 (2.5%)	39 (16.2%)	158 (65.5%)	32 (13.3%)	6 (2.5%)	46

* Excluded because of being a mathematical theory, business operation or mere presentation of information.

¹ The percentages of “not sure/no opportunity” or the responses without any checks are excluded from these percentage bar charts.

The percentage of “Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied” was relatively high in this year’s survey in regard to the following three evaluation items dealing with searches on PCT applications: “domestic patent literature searches” (66.7%), “IPC accuracy” (54.1%) and “Reasoned statement regarding novelty/inventive step” (53.3%). Meanwhile, the percentage of “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” was relatively high for “foreign patent literature searches” (18.2%) and “non-patent literature searches” (15.8%).

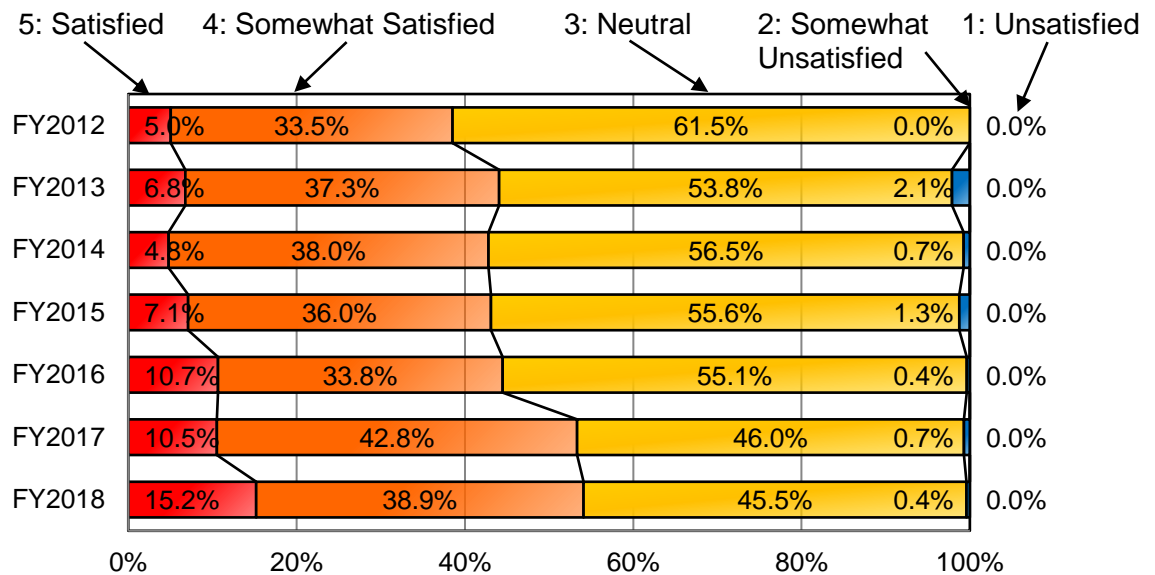


Figure 17: The levels of satisfaction on IPC accuracy in the international search and international preliminary examination

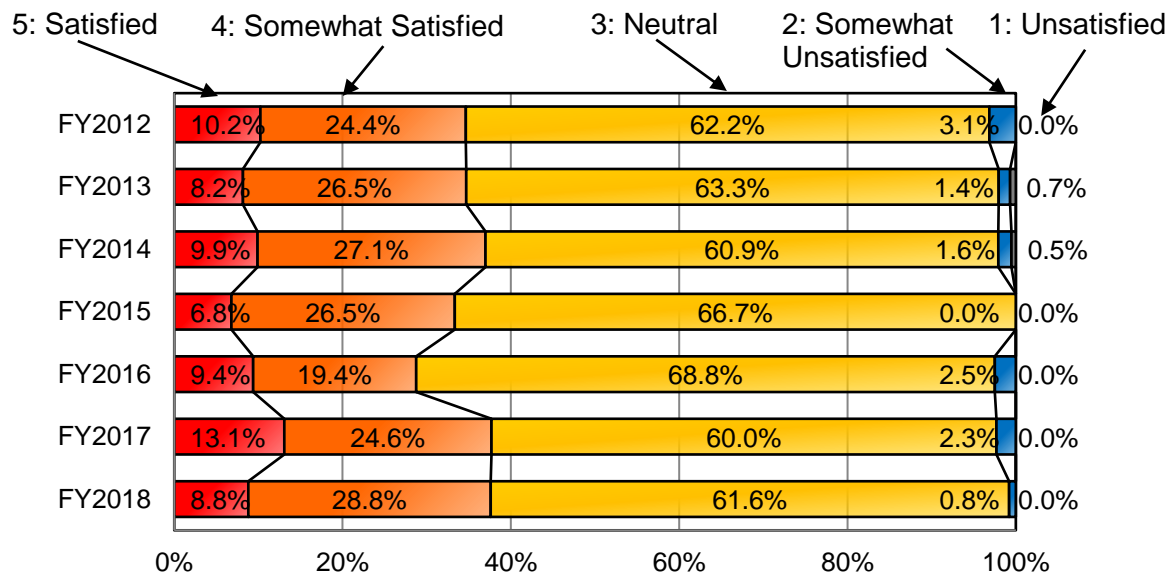


Figure 18: The levels of satisfaction on judgement on excluded subject matter from searches in the international search and international preliminary examination

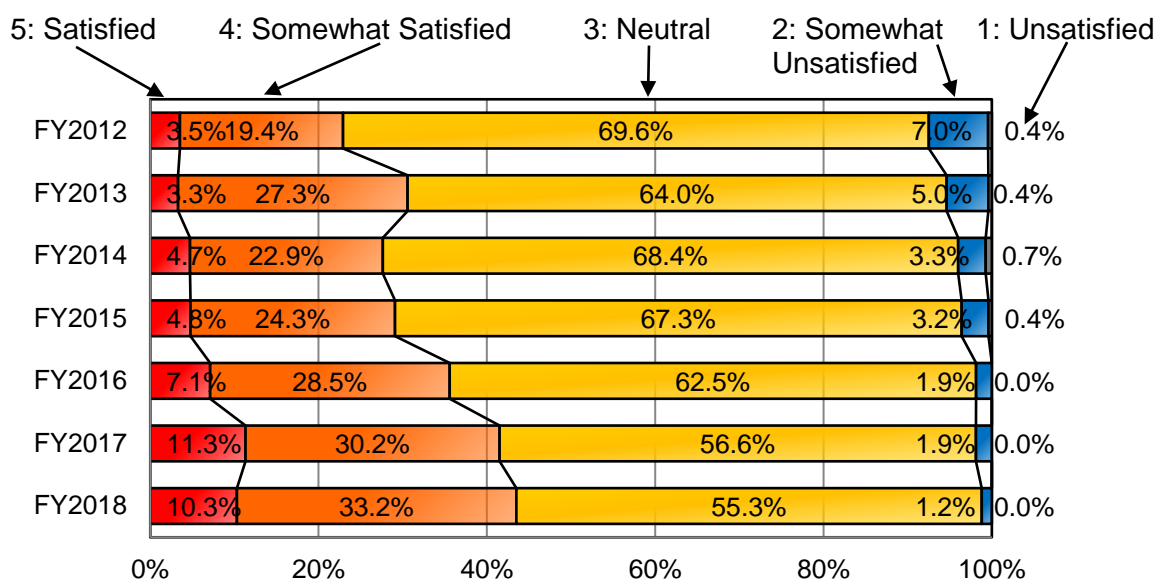


Figure 19: The levels of satisfaction on judgement on unity of invention in the international search and international preliminary examination

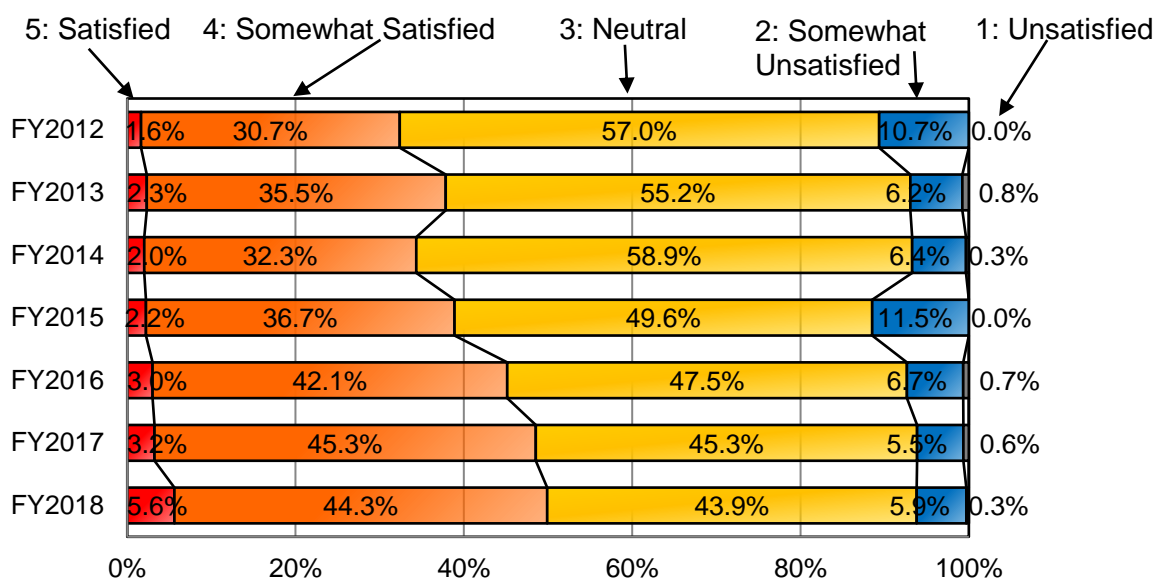


Figure 20: The levels of satisfaction on judgement on novelty/inventive step in the international search and international preliminary examination

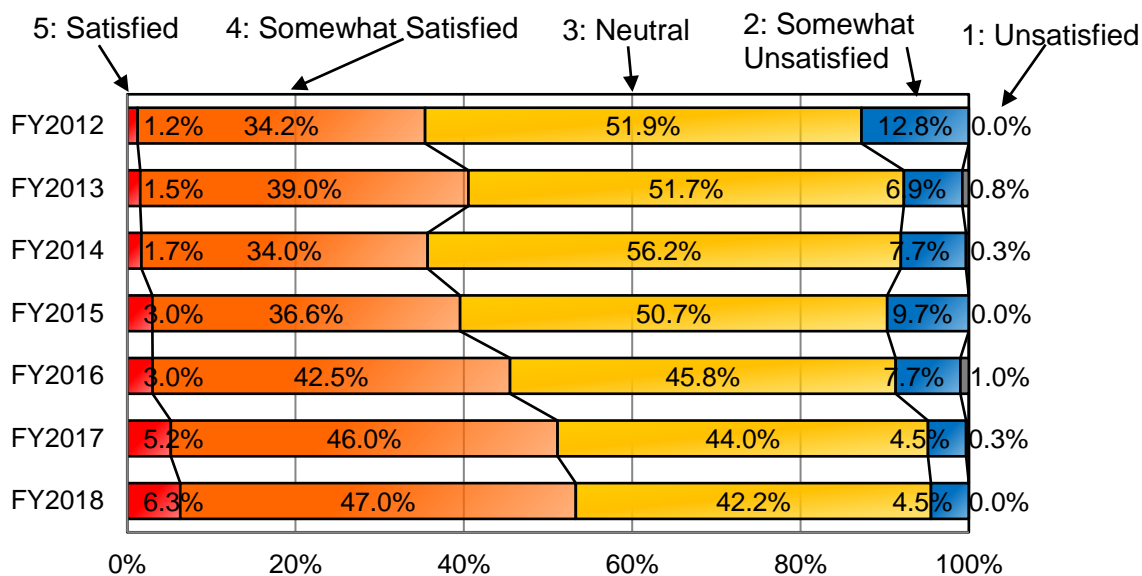


Figure 21: The levels of satisfaction on reasoned statement regarding novelty/inventive step in the international search and international preliminary examination

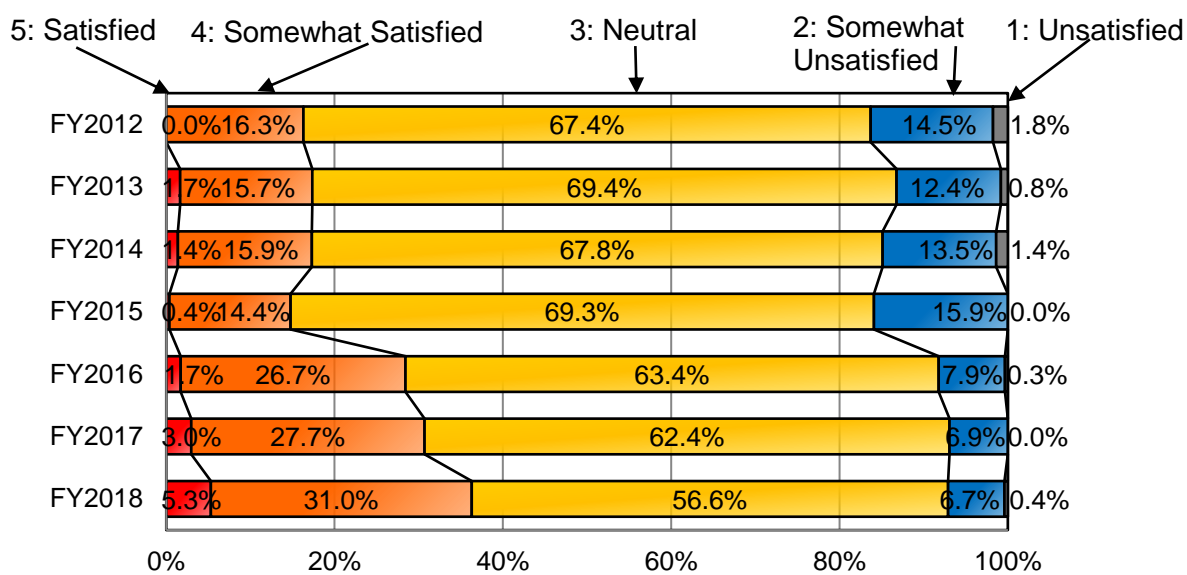


Figure 22: The levels of satisfaction on consistency of judgements in the international search and international preliminary examination

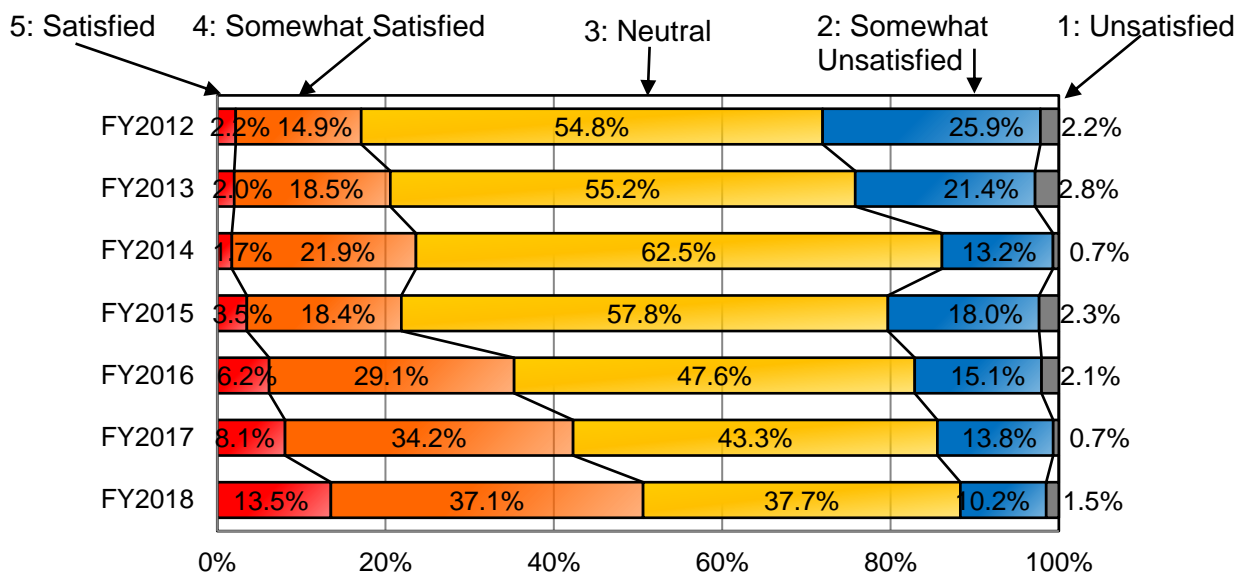


Figure 23: The levels of satisfaction on consistency of judgements between the international and national phases

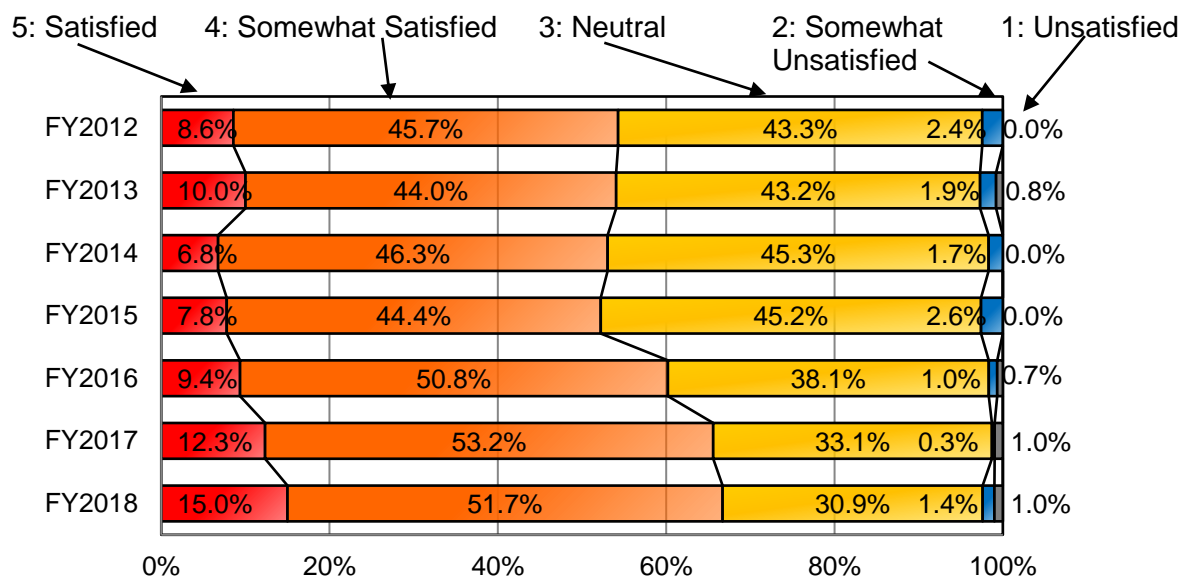


Figure 24: The levels of satisfaction on domestic patent literature searches in the international search and international preliminary examination

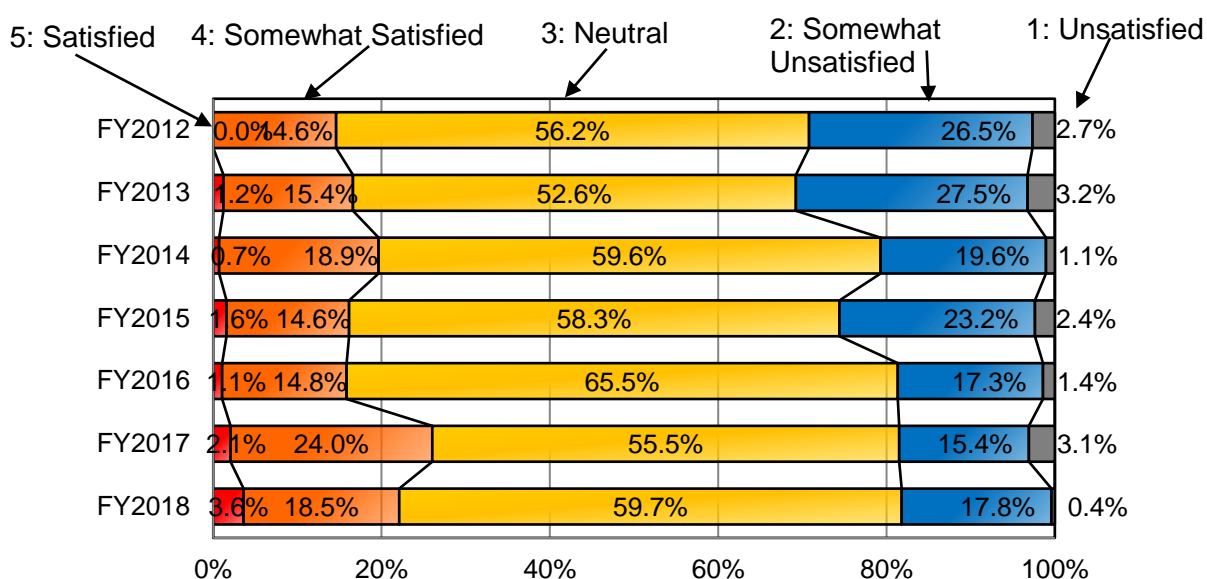


Figure 25: The levels of satisfaction on foreign patent literature searches in the international search and international preliminary examination

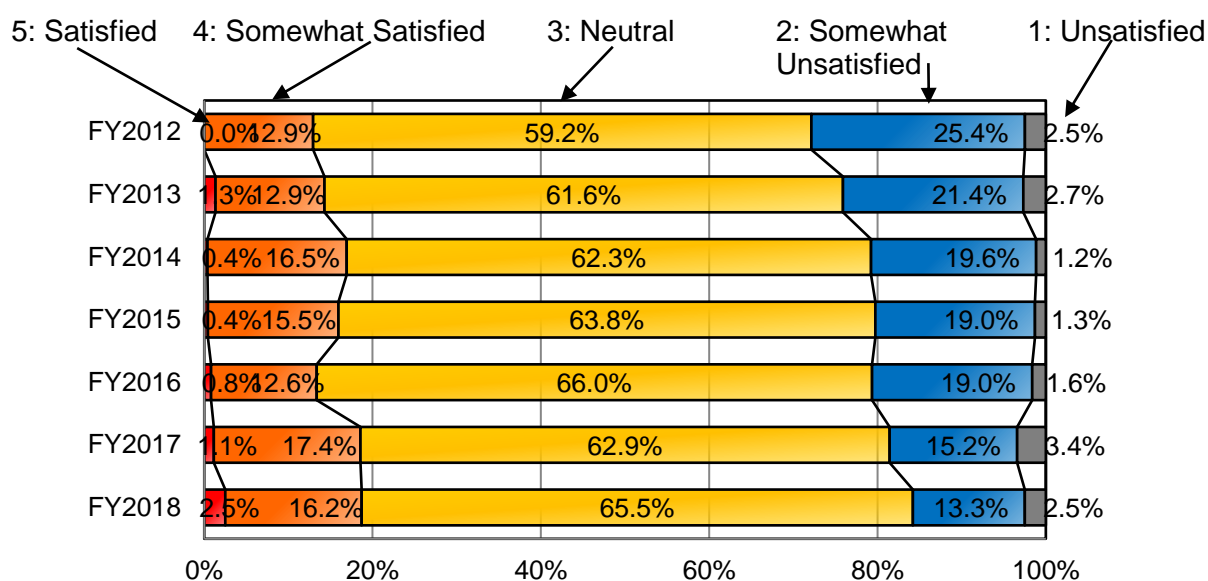


Figure 26: The levels of satisfaction on non-patent literature searches in the international search and international preliminary examination

(iii) Comparison to the Offices in the Other Countries/Regions

Table 11 shows the aggregated results of the responses given to the question asking the frequency of any additional, new, and better cited documents being presented in the other countries /regions in the national phase, after the JPO issued reports or opinions on PCT applications as the ISA. Figure 27 shows a bar chart reflecting the percentages listed in table 11 about the frequency by each Office, excluding “not sure /no opportunity”.

Table 11: Frequency of any additional, new, and better cited documents being presented in the other countries/regions (PCT applications)

	often cited	sometimes cited	rarely cited	not sure/no opportunity for examination at the other Office(s)	total
EPO	38	185	34	30	287
USPTO	20	171	79	17	287
SIPO	9	109	144	25	287
KIPO	3	60	162	62	287

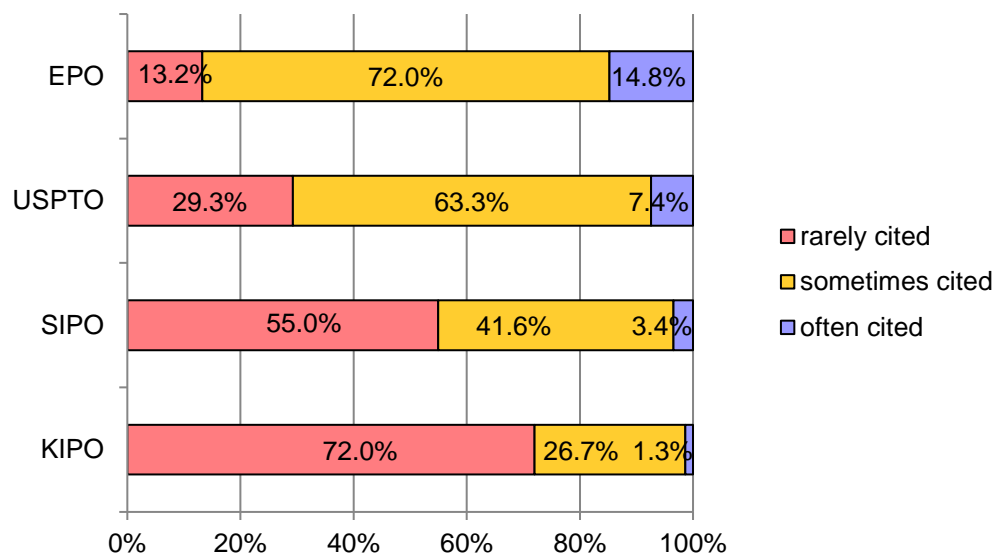


Figure 27: Frequency of any additional, new, and better cited documents being presented in the other countries/regions in the national phase, after the international phase at the JPO (PCT applications)

(iv) Comments on the Free Description Columns

A large number of comments were written in the free description columns about the consistency of judgements between the international and national phases (17); and foreign patent literature searches (24). Some of the comments regarding consistency of judgements between the international and national phases stated that new literature was cited after the national phase had stated in Japan and that different examiners made different judgements in each phase. Some of the comments regarding foreign patent literature searches said that new literature was sometimes given in other countries and that foreign patent literature was not frequently cited.

(3) Quality of Patent Examination on the Specific National Applications

(i) Overall Quality of Patent Examination on the Specific National Applications Used in the Survey

The percentage of positive responses was 57% (56.5% in the last FY) on the quality of patent examination on the specific national applications used in the Survey. The percentages of positive responses hover around 55% since the first Survey was conducted in FY2012.

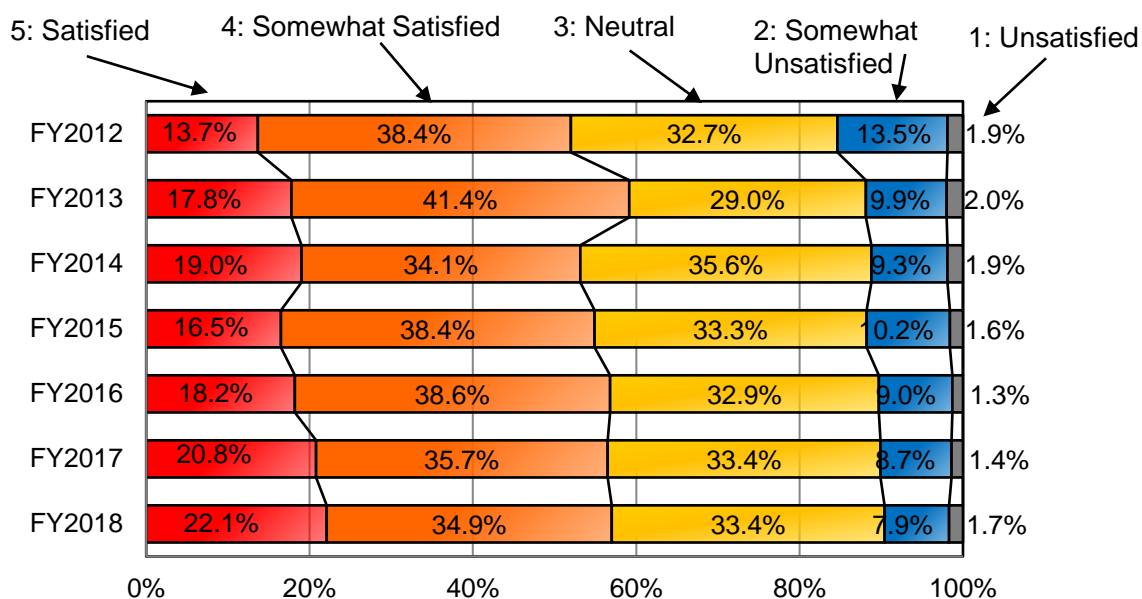


Figure 28: Levels of satisfaction on patent examination on the specific national applications used in the Survey

Table 12 shows a breakdown of the results in Figure 28 by the types of final decision. The percentage of positive responses were high in the order of “decision to grant a patent,” “decision of refusal without any response,” and “decision of refusal after written opinions submitted by applicants” also in this FY.

The following are definitions of types of final decisions.

- “decision of refusal after written opinions submitted by applicants”

Decision of refusal after JPO examiners considered written opinions or amendments submitted by applicants in response to the latest notifications of reasons for refusal.

- “decision of refusal without any response”

Decision of refusal made without any written opinions or amendments coming from applicants in response to the latest notifications of reasons for refusal.

Table 12: Breakdown of the levels of satisfaction on patent examination quality on the specific national applications by the types of final disposition, based on a 5-point scale

5-point scale	number of responses (response rate)		
	decision of refusal after written opinions submitted by applicants	decision of refusal without any response	decision to grant a patent
5: Satisfied	15 (6.7%)	18 (11.5%)	374 (25.6%)
4: Somewhat Satisfied	56 (24.9%)	58 (37.2%)	529 (36.2%)
3: Neutral	95 (42.2 %)	70 (44.9%)	449 (30.8%)
2: Somewhat Unsatisfied	45 (20.0%)	8 (5.1 %)	92 (6.3 %)
1: Unsatisfied	14 (6.2%)	2 (1.3%)	16 (1.1%)
total	225	156	1460

(ii) Reasons for the Positive Responses

Table 13 shows the aggregated results of the reasons for the positive responses to the questions asking the level of satisfaction on patent examination quality on the specific national applications used in the Survey. Table 14 shows the reasons for the positive responses by the types of final decision.

Table 13: Breakdown of the reasons for the positive responses given to the questions asking the levels of satisfaction on patent examination quality on the specific national applications used in the Survey

reasons for the positive responses	number of responses (response rate ¹)	number of responses in the last FY (response rate ²)
thorough and easy-to-understand description in notification(s) of reasons for refusal	634 (60.4%)	656 (65.7%)
proper judgement on novelty /inventive step	623 (59.3%)	618 (61.9%)
proper search scope/search results	363 (34.6%)	297 (29.8%)
communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations	56 (5.3%)	52 (5.2%)

Table 14: Breakdown of the reasons for the positive responses by the types of final decisions

reasons for the positive responses	number of responses (response rate ³⁴)		
	decision of refusal after written opinions by applicants	decision of refusal without any response	decision to grant a patent
thorough and easy-to-understand description in notification(s) of reasons for refusal	48 (67.6%)	48 (63.2%)	538 (59.6%)
proper judgement on novelty /inventive step	38 (53.5%)	51 (67.1%)	534 (59.1%)
proper search scope/search results	26 (36.6%)	36 (47.4%)	301 (33.3%)
communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations	2 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	54 (6.0%)
others	5 (7.0%)	3 (3.9%)	105 1.6%)

¹ The response rate was calculated from the number of positive responses (1050) as a population.

² The response rate was calculated from the number of positive responses (998) as a population.

³ The response rate was calculated from the number of positive responses for each type of final decision as a population, i.e., decision of refusal after written opinions by applicants (77), decision of refusal without any response (76), and decision to grant a patent (903).

(iii) Reasons for the Negative Responses

Table 15 shows the reasons for the negative responses to the questions asking the level of satisfaction on the specific national applications by the types of office action. The major reasons for the negative responses were “judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step” for all of “non-final notification of reasons for refusal,” “final notification of reasons for refusal,” and “decision of refusal.”

Table 15: Reasons for the negative responses given to the questions asking the level of satisfaction on the specific national applications

reasons for the negative responses	number of responses (response rate ¹)			
	non-final notification of reasons for refusal	final notification of reasons for refusal	decision of refusal	decision to grant a patent
thorough and easy-to-understand description in the notification(s) of reasons for refusal/decision of refusal	8 (6.5%)	1 (3.4%)	2 (3.9%)	
the main paragraph of Article 29 (1) (industrial applicability and judgement of whether the subject matter falls under the concept of “invention”)	1 (0.8%)	1 (3.4%)	0 (0.0%)	
judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step	92 (74.2%)	18 (62.1%)	43 (84.3%)	
judgement on reasons for non-compliance with descriptive requirements (Article 36 (4)(i) and Article 36 (6))	23 (18.5%)	3 (10.3%)	3 (5.9%)	
search scope/search results	5 (4.0%)	3 (10.3%)	4 (7.8%)	2 (50.0%)
communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations	2 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
others	10 (8.1%)	6 (20.7%)	8 (15.7%)	2 (50.0%)

Table 16 and Figure 29 show a breakdown of reasons for respondents’ dissatisfaction with “judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step.” The level of dissatisfaction was high with “identification of cited document(s),” “judgement of identical features/differences” and “motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination.” The level of dissatisfaction was also relatively high for “judgement on design variation etc.” and “judgement on technique generally known to a person

¹ Each response rate was calculated from the total number of negative responses for each type of office action as a population (non-final notification of reasons for refusal: 124, final notification of reasons for refusal: 29, decision of refusal: 51 and decision to grant a patent: 4).

skilled in the art.”

Table 16: Breakdown of reasons for respondents’ dissatisfaction with judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step (national application)

reasons for dissatisfaction	number of responses (response rate ¹)
identification of cited document(s)	44 (24.9%)
judgement of identical features/differences	47 (26.6%)
motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination	53 (29.9%)
judgement on design variation etc.	22 (12.4%)
judgement on technique generally known to a person skilled in the art	26 (14.7%)
Other	14 (7.91%)

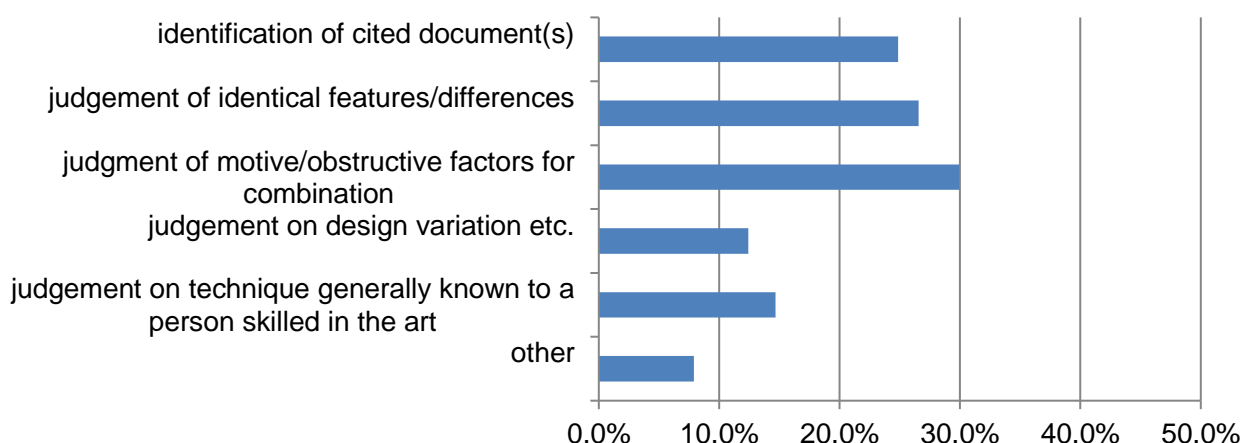


Figure 29: Breakdown of reasons for respondents’ dissatisfaction with judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step (national application)

Table 17 and Figure 30 show a breakdown of reasons for respondents’ dissatisfaction with “judgement on reasons for non-compliance with descriptive requirements (Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6)).” The greatest level of dissatisfaction was with “judgement regarding clarity requirements.”

¹ The response rate was calculated from the number of negative responses (177) as a population, regarding quality of patent examination on national applications.

Table 17: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with judgement on reasons for non-compliance with descriptive requirements (Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6)) (national application)

reasons for dissatisfaction	number of responses (response rate)
judgement regarding enablement requirements	1 (0.6%)
judgement regarding support requirements	9 (5.1%)
judgement regarding clarity requirements	16 (9.0%)
judgement regarding product-by-process (PBP) claims	2 (1.1%)
Others	2 (1.1%)

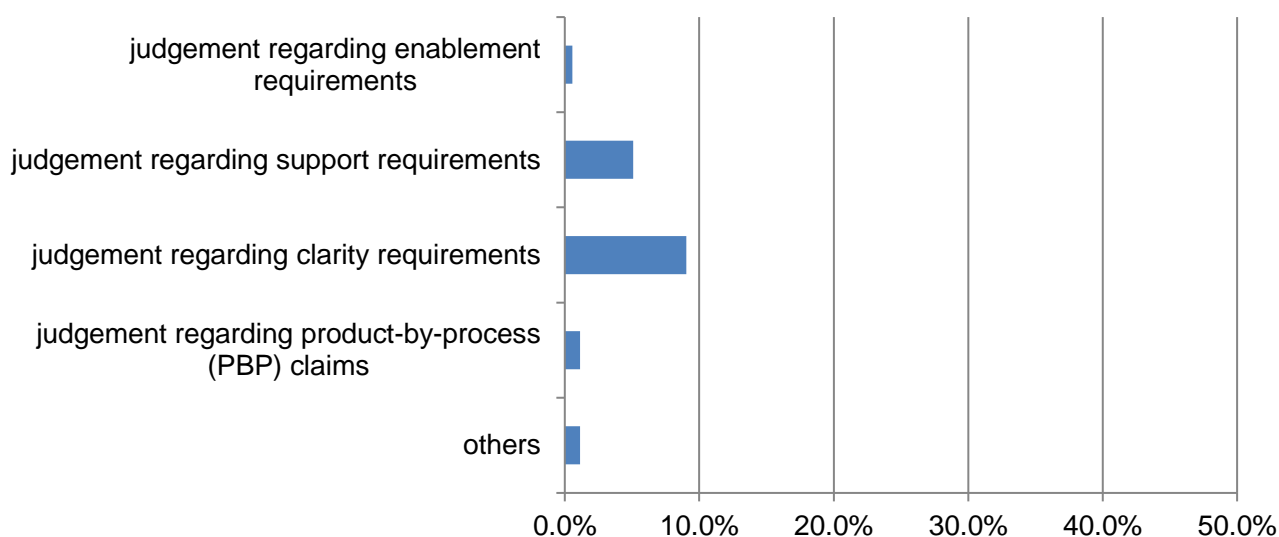


Figure 30: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with judgement on reasons for non-compliance with descriptive requirements (Article 36 (4)(i) and Article 36 (6)) (national application)

Table 18 and Figure 31 show a breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with "search scope/search results" in Table 15. The greatest level of dissatisfaction was with domestic patent literature searches.

Table 18: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with search scope/search results (national application)

reasons for dissatisfaction	number of responses (response rate)
domestic patent literature searches	11 (6.2%)
foreign patent literature searches	1 (0.6%)
non-patent literature searches	2 (1.1%)

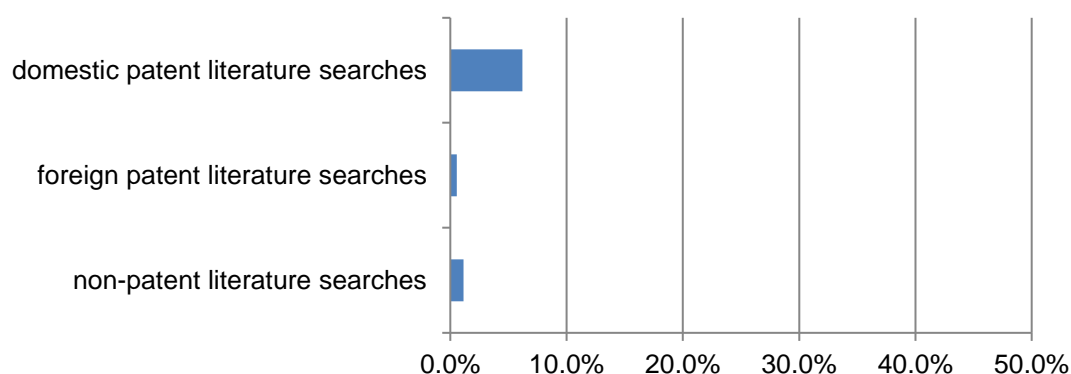


Figure 31: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with search scope/search results (national application)

Tables 19 and 20 show a breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with "domestic patent literature searches" and "foreign patent literature searches" respectively in Table 18. It was found that for "domestic patent literature searches," the most cited reason given was "The scope of prior art search is not proper".

Table 19: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with domestic patent literature searches (national application)

reasons for dissatisfaction	number of responses (response rate)
The scope of prior art search is not proper.	5 (2.8%)
Examination results on related applications revealed better domestic literature than that presented by the JPO	2 (1.1%)
A patent office in another country cited literature that has family documents in Japanese.	0 (0.0%)
others	4 (2.3%)

Table 20: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with foreign patent literature searches (national application)

reasons for dissatisfaction	number of responses (response rate)
The scope of prior art search is not proper.	0 (0.0%)
Examination results on related applications revealed better foreign literature than that presented by the JPO	0 (0.0%)
A patent office in another country cited literature that has family documents in Japanese.	0 (0.0%)
It is not stated in notifications of reasons for refusal that other foreign literature has been searched.	1 (0.6%)
others	0 (0.0%)

(4) Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on Specific PCT Applications

(i) Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on the Specific PCT Applications Used in the Survey

The percentage of positive responses was 53.1% (57.8% in the last FY) in terms of the quality of the international search and international preliminary examination on the specific PCT applications used in the Survey. The percentages of positive responses generally hover around 50% or higher since the first Survey was conducted in FY2012.

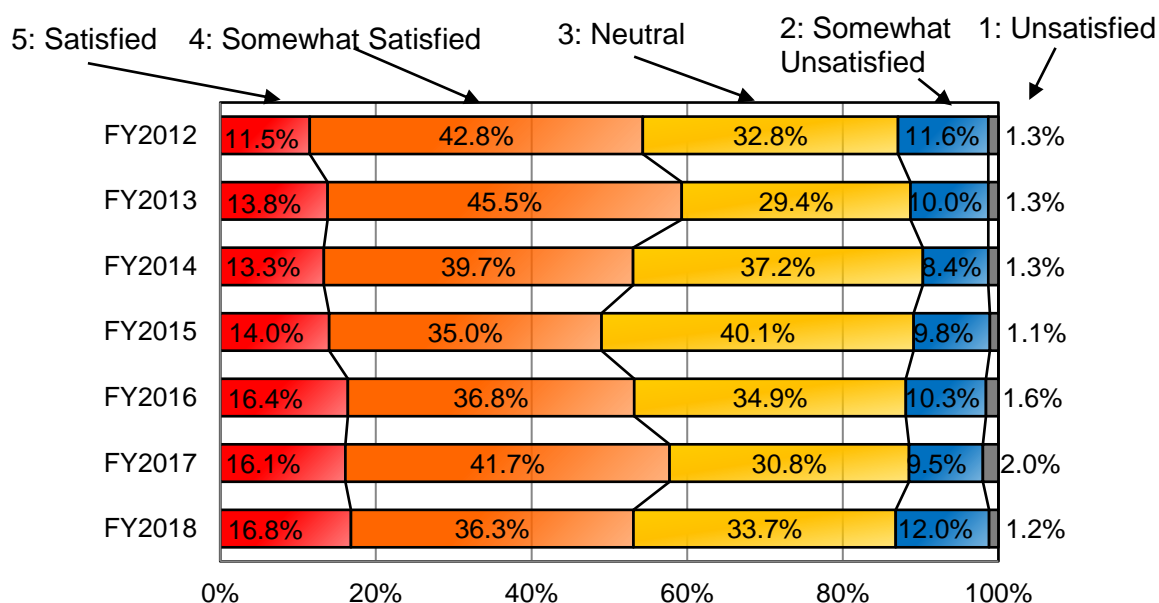


Figure 32: The level of satisfaction on the quality of international search and international preliminary examination on the specific PCT applications used in the Survey

(ii) Reasons for the Positive Responses

Table 21 shows the aggregated results of the reasons for the positive responses on the level of satisfaction on the international search and international preliminary examination on the specific PCT applications used in the Survey.

Table 21: Breakdown of the reasons for the positive responses given to the questions asking the levels of satisfaction on the international search and international preliminary examination on specific PCT applications

reasons for positive responses	number of responses (response rate ¹)	number of responses in the last FY (response rate ²)
thorough and easy-to-understand description in ISR, WO/ISA, and IPER	172 (65.6%)	252 (65.6%)
proper judgement on novelty/inventive step	177 (67.6%)	254 (66.1%)
proper search scope/search results	123 (46.9%)	154 (40.1%)

(iii) Reasons for the Negative Responses

Table 22 shows the aggregated results of the negative responses to the questions asking the level of satisfaction on the international search and international preliminary examination on the specific PCT applications used in the Survey, for each phase of the international Search and the international Preliminary Examination.

The major reason for the negative responses was “judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step” in the international phase (ISRs or WO/ISAs).

Table 22: Breakdown of the reasons for dissatisfaction with the international search and international preliminary examination on specific PCT applications

reasons for negative responses	number of responses (response rate ³)	
	ISRs, WO/ISAs	IPERs
thorough and easy-to-understand description in ISRs / IPERs	6 (9.2%)	0 (0.0%)
judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step	59 (90.8%)	0 (0.0%)
judgement on unity of invention	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
search scope/search results	7 (10.8%)	1 (100.0%)
others	4 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)

¹ The response rate was calculated from the number of positive responses (262) as a population.

² The response rate was calculated from the number of positive responses (384) as a population.

³ The response rate was calculated from the total number of negative responses as a population (ISRs, WO/ISAs: 65 and IPERs: 1).

Table 23 and Figure 33 show a breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with "judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step" in Table 22. It was found that many respondents are unhappy about "identification of cited document(s)," "judgement of identical features/differences" and "motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination."

Table 23: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step (PCT)

reasons for negative responses	number of responses (response rate ¹)
identification of cited document(s)	20 (30.8%)
judgement of identical features/differences	28 (43.1%)
motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination	19 (29.2%)
judgement on design variation etc.	8 (12.3%)
judgement on technique generally known to a person skilled in the art	5 (7.7%)
Others	8 (12.3%)

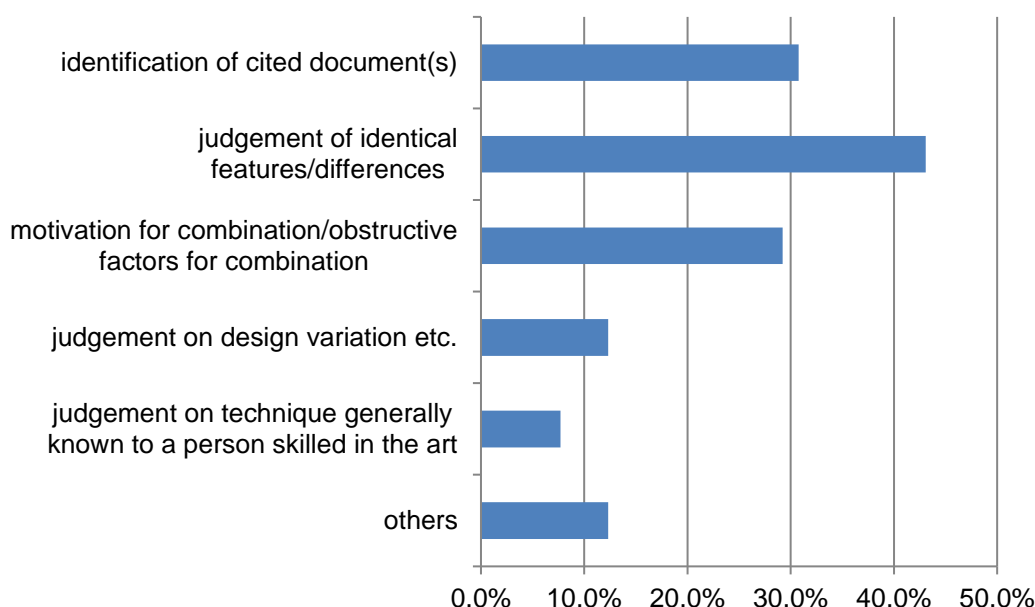


Figure 33: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step (PCT)

¹ The response rate was calculated from the total number of negative responses (65) as a population, regarding quality of international searches, etc.

Table 24 and Figure 34 show a breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with "search scope/search results" in Table 22. It was found that many respondents are unhappy about "domestic patent literature searches."

Table 24: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with search scope/search results (PCT)

reasons for negative responses	number of responses (response rate ¹)
domestic patent literature searches	6 (9.2%)
foreign patent literature searches	2 (3.1%)
non-patent literature searches	0 (0.0%)

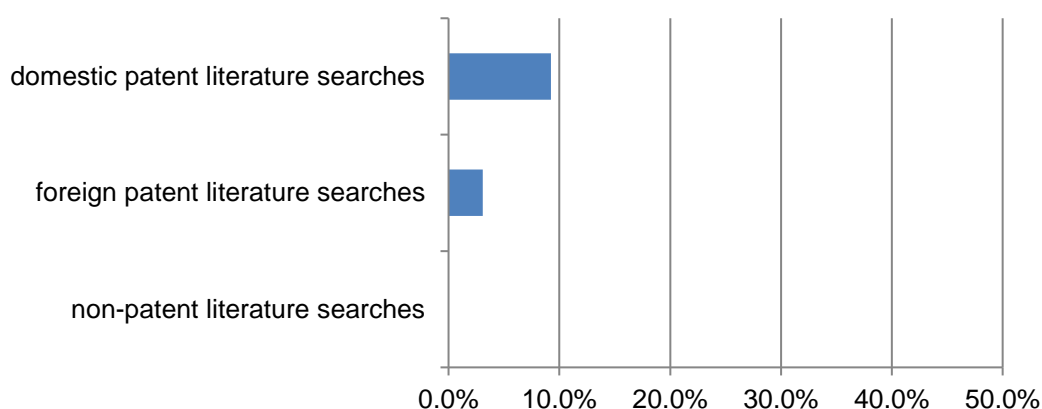


Figure 34: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with search scope/search results (PCT)

Tables 25 and 26 show a breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with "domestic patent literature searches" and "foreign patent literature searches" respectively in Table 24.

¹ The response rate was calculated from the total number of negative responses (65) as a population.

Table 25: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with domestic patent literature searches (PCT)

reasons for negative responses	number of responses (response rate ¹)
The scope of prior art search is not proper	2 (3.1%)
Examination results on related applications revealed better domestic literature than that presented by the JPO	1 (1.5%)
A patent office in another country cited literature that has family documents in Japanese	0 (0.0%)
It is not stated in notifications of reasons for refusal that other foreign literature has been searched	3 (4.6%)

Table 26: Breakdown of reasons for respondents' dissatisfaction with foreign patent literature searches (PCT)

reasons for negative responses	number of responses (response rate ²)
The scope of prior art search is not proper	0 (0.0%)
Examination results on related applications revealed better foreign literature than that presented by the JPO	1 (1.5%)
A patent office in another country cited literature that has family documents in Japanese	0 (0.0%)
It is not stated in notifications of reasons for refusal that other foreign literature has been searched	1 (1.5%)

¹ The response rate was calculated from the total number of negative responses (65) as a population.

² The response rate was calculated from the total number of negative responses (65) as a population.

3. Detailed Analysis on the Responses

(1) Analysis on the Correlation between the Level of Satisfaction on Each Evaluation Item and the Overall Level of Satisfaction on Quality

(i) Details of the Analysis

An analysis was conducted on how the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item, such as “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal, (except for any decisions of refusal)” affected the overall level of satisfaction on quality. This was done to identify high-priority items to improve the level of satisfaction on patent examination.

The degree of the effect can be analyzed through the correlation coefficients between the level of satisfaction on the overall quality (based on a 5-point scale for the overall quality of patent examination) and the level of satisfaction on each item (based on a 5-point scale for each evaluation item), as it is common in general customer satisfaction surveys.

Figure 35 shows the correlation between the level of satisfaction on “through and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)” and the overall level of satisfaction, in which the diameter of the circle represents the number of responses and the solid line represents a regressing line.

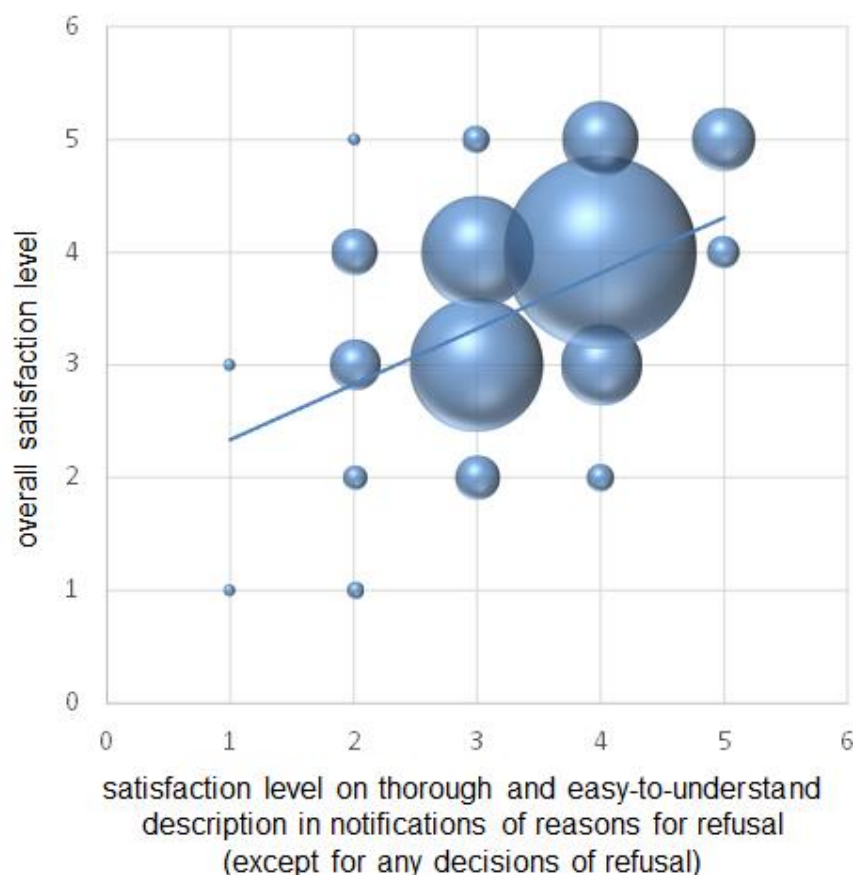


Figure 35: Correlation between the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the overall level of satisfaction

(ii) Analysis on how the Level of Satisfaction on Each Evaluation Item Affects the Overall Level of satisfaction on Examination Quality (National Applications)

Analysis in this section shows how the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item, such as “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)”, affects the overall level of satisfaction on quality. The degree of the effect can be analyzed by using the correlation coefficients between the overall level of satisfaction (evaluated by using a 5-point scale on the overall quality of patent examination between “5: Satisfied” and “1: Unsatisfied”) and the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item (evaluated by using a 5-point scale on each evaluation item between “5: Satisfied” and “1: Unsatisfied”).

Figure 36 shows the relationship between the average levels of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the correlation coefficients in terms of the overall level of satisfaction on national applications. Arrows represent changes in the correlation coefficients from the survey conducted last fiscal year.

As seen in this figure, the best approach would be to firstly improve evaluation items which received low levels of satisfaction, in spite of high correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction (i.e., the items seen on the upper left in the figure).

Out of all 13 items, the average level of satisfaction on “consistency of judgements among examiners” is relatively low, and the correlation coefficient with the overall level of satisfaction of the item is relatively high, compared to the other evaluation items. Accordingly, the appropriate action would be to give a high priority for improving these items.

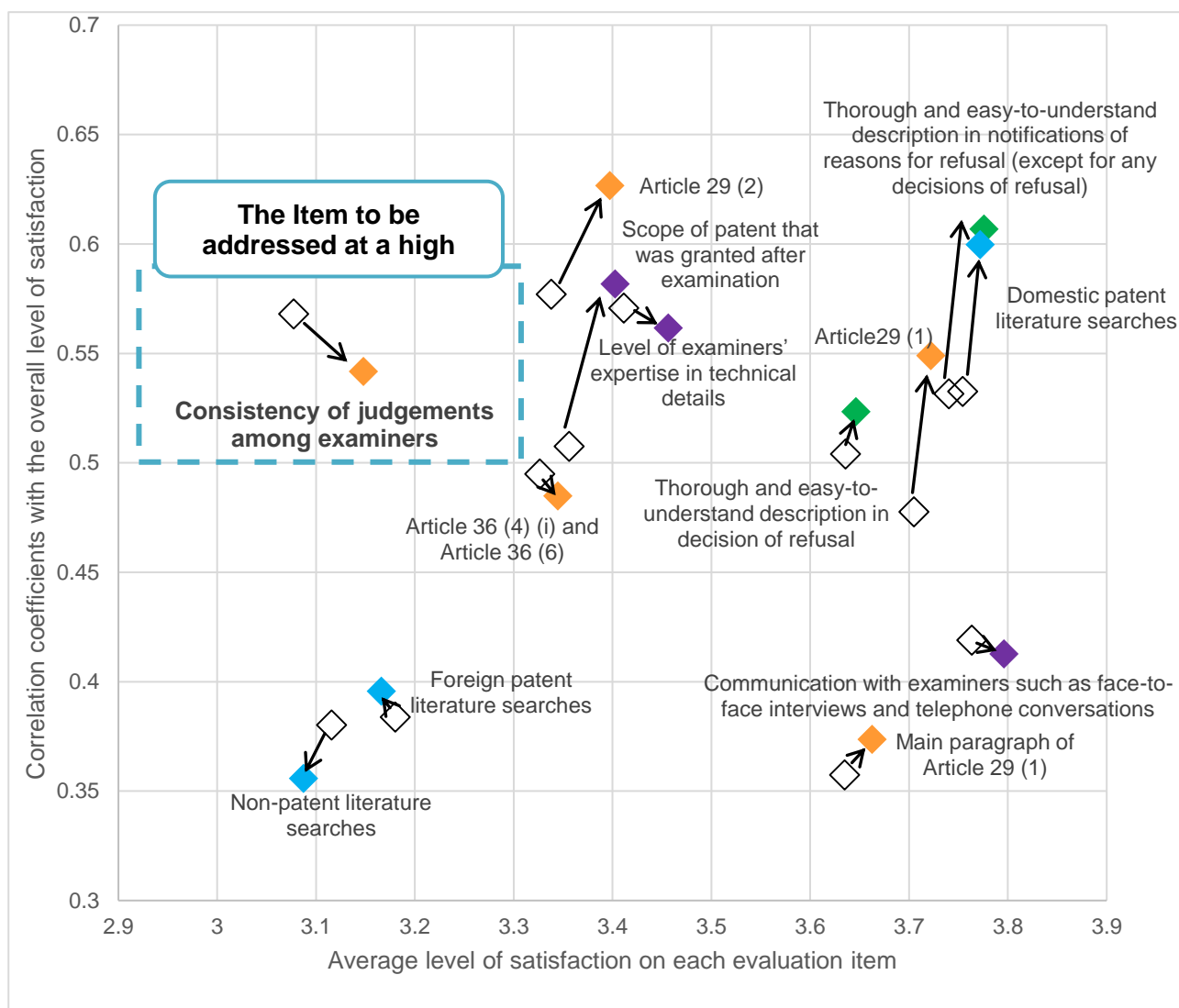


Figure 36: Average level of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction (national applications)¹

¹ In this Figure, the plots are colored according to the type of evaluation item: light blue for prior art searches, orange for judgements, green for descriptions in notifications, and purple for others.

(iii) Analysis on how the Level of Satisfaction on Each Evaluation Item Affects the Overall Levels of Satisfaction on Examination Quality (PCT Applications)

An analysis was conducted on how the levels of satisfaction on each evaluation item, such as “IPC accuracy” affected the overall levels of satisfaction on examination quality, for Questionnaire Sheet C asking the respondents about their levels of satisfaction on the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination on PCT applications. The degree of the effects can be determined by analyzing the correlation coefficients between the overall levels of satisfaction on international search and international preliminary examination, and the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item (both based on a 5-point scale evaluation between 5: Satisfied and 1: Unsatisfied).

Figure 37 shows the relationship between the average levels of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the correlation coefficients in relation to the overall level of satisfaction on national applications. Arrows represent changes in the correlation coefficients from the last fiscal year. The average level of satisfaction on “Consistency of judgements in the international phase” is relatively low, and the correlation coefficient with the overall level of satisfaction of the item has been on the rise since last fiscal year. Based on this, the appropriate action that the JPO should take is to give a high priority to improving these items.

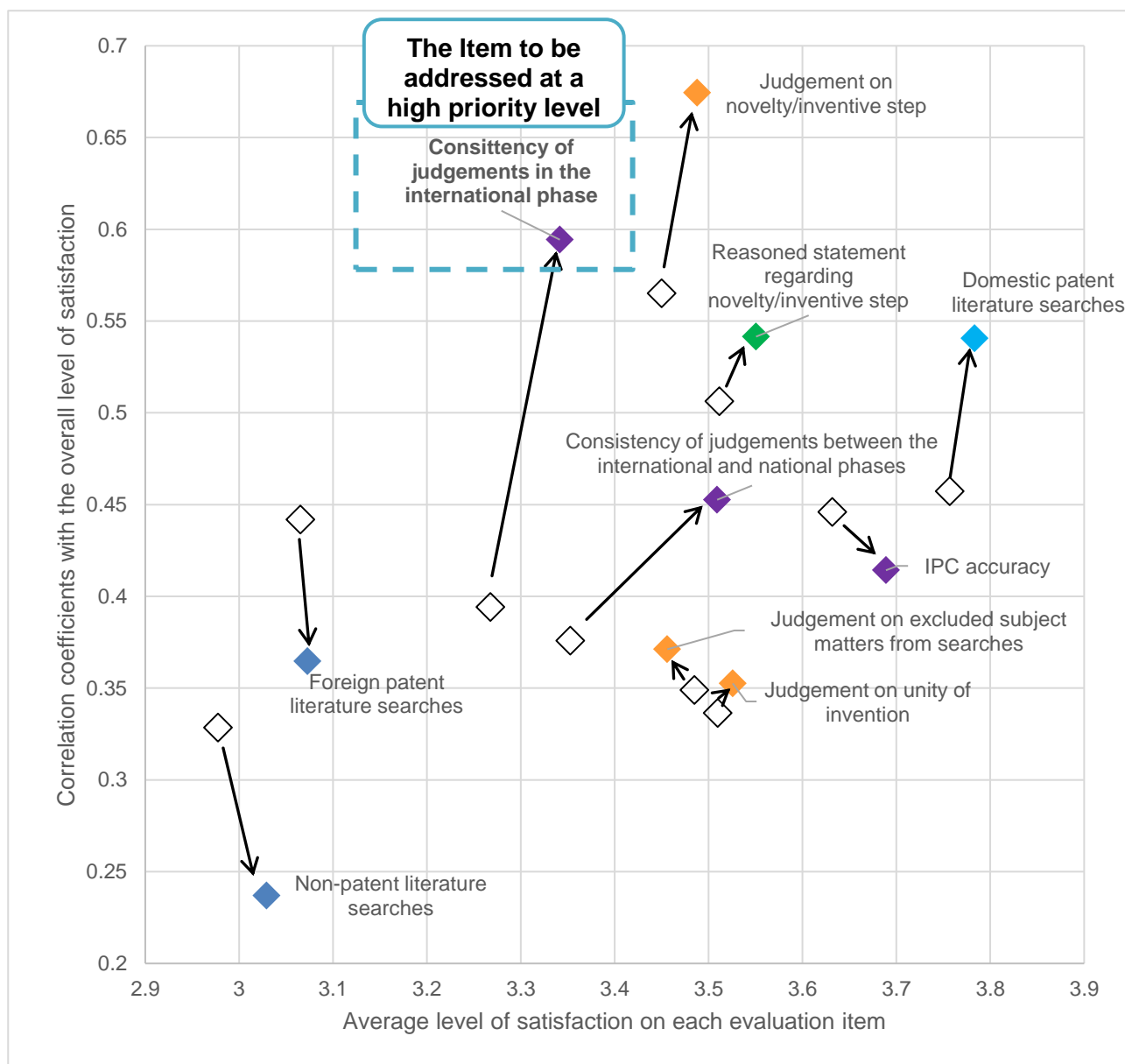


Figure 37: Average level of satisfaction on each evaluation item and the correlation coefficients with the overall level of satisfaction (PCT applications)¹

¹ In this Figure, the plots are colored according to the type of evaluation item: light blue for prior art searches, orange for judgements, green for descriptions in notifications, and purple for others.

4. Main Points of the Analysis Results of the Survey

The percentage of positive responses, namely “Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied”, on the overall quality of patent examination on national applications (Sheet A) has been increasing year by year, ever since the first Survey was conducted in 2012. The overall level of satisfaction was 62.2% in FY2018.

The level of satisfaction on each evaluation item such as “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal).” generally improved. The levels of satisfaction were relatively high on “thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal” (69.8%), “domestic patent literature searches” (65.3%), and “communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations” (61.5%).

On the other hand, the respondents were “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied” with “consistency of judgments among examiners” (20.6%), “foreign patent literature searches” (16.4%) and “non-patent literature searches” (16.1%). On the evaluation item “consistency of judgments among examiners,” the percentage of positive responses has steadily been improving and the percentage of negative responses, namely “Unsatisfied” or “Somewhat Unsatisfied,” has been going down, although it is still over 20%.

The percentage of positive responses given to “Article 29 (1): novelty” and “Article 29 (2): inventive step” has been increasing while negative responses are decreasing. The percentage of positive responses remained steady for “Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6): descriptive requirements for description and claims” (Figures 2-14).

Also on the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination on PCT Applications (Sheet C), the percentage of positive responses has been increasing year by year and, in this FY, reached as high as 57.8% (Figure 16).

Generally, the level of satisfaction on each evaluation item (such as “IPC accuracy”) improved. In particular, the percentage of positive responses was relatively high on the three evaluation items “domestic patent literature searches” (66.7%), “IPC accuracy” (54.1%), and “reasoned statement regarding novelty/inventive step” (53.3%). The percentage of negative responses was relatively high for the evaluation items “foreign patent literature searches” (18.2%) and “non-patent literature searches” (15.8%). However, it has been steadily improving since the first Survey was conducted in 2012 (Figures 17–21).

These results show that the measures and initiatives that the JPO is conducting to improve examination quality are definitely raising user satisfaction.

According to the analysis on the applications that seemed to involve the issues or problems to be addressed in patent examination procedures or quality based on the responses to Sheets B and D (related to the specific applications used in the Survey), a greater number of checks or

comments were given by the respondents on the aspects related to novelty/inventive step, specifically on “identification of cited documents,” “judgement of identical features/differences” and “motivation for combination/obstructive factors for combination” The correlation analysis found out that inventive step is the most likely item to affect the overall level of satisfaction (Figures 29–31). Therefore, users demand that accurate judgements on inventive step be “musts”.

In addition to the current measures and initiatives to improve the quality of examination practices, the JPO has to identify issues or problems to be addressed based on comprehensively analyzing how the level of satisfaction on one evaluation item affects the level of satisfaction overall (Figures 36-37). In addition, the JPO needs to conduct other analyses as well. In particular, the JPO has to address the issues or problems with consistency of judgements, which were identified through the Survey in this FY.

The JPO will continue to conduct the Survey and announce to users the improvements it has made to issues that have been found out by conducting the Survey. Furthermore, the JPO will advise users about its quality management system and the current state of the system on our website and through other media.

5. Future of the User Satisfaction Survey

The pool of users chosen to take the survey, and the corresponding number of respondents, has been basically the same since the first Survey was conducted in FY2012. In this year's Survey, 731 users responded. Every year, approximately 90% of the pool of users respond to the survey. This shows that users understand the purpose of the Survey and have a keen interest in it.

In the FY 2018 Survey, in order to gain a clearer idea as to what items make users feel dissatisfied with consistency of judgements among examiners, the JPO added two check boxes (1) "inventive step" and (2) "descriptive requirements for description and claims" to the questions regarding consistency of judgements. We added them to Sheet A about the overall quality of patent examination on national applications; and to Sheet C about the overall quality of the international search and international preliminary examination on PCT applications.

Going forward, the JPO will continue to conduct the Surveys basically along the same lines and scope, working to grasp users' needs and improve strategies so that users will be able to better evaluate quality. The JPO will continue to improve the Survey by considering the timing for conducting the Survey, as well as give serious thought to operational strategies, methods for selecting applications used in the Surveys, survey questions, and the layouts of the questionnaire sheets.

The JPO established the Subcommittee on Examination Quality Management under the Intellectual Property Committee of the Industrial Structure Council, which discusses the system and implementation status of the JPO's initiatives for examination quality management, and the results of the Survey are used for the discussion.

Acknowledgment

The JPO expresses our gratitude to all the respondents for their generous time in taking the Survey. In order to maintain and improve the quality of patent examination, the JPO will continue to conduct user-satisfaction surveys, and based on the results, improve the quality of patent examination and operating procedures. The JPO appreciates your continuous support.

APPENDIX: Questionnaire Sheets

[Sheet A] Overall Quality of Patent Examination on National Applications							
<p>When responding to the questionnaire, please indicate by checking the box below if you wish your name to be known to us; or if you wish to remain anonymous, i.e., you don't want your name to be known to us.</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Wish your name to be known to us. <input type="radio"/> Wish to be anonymous. </p> <p>*If you choose "Wish to be anonymous," your response will be handled anonymously. However, information such as your e-mail address might disclose your identity, which we will not make note of.</p>							
Your Name			E-mail address				
<p>* If you choose "Wish your name to be known to us," please fill in the spaces above with your name and e-mail address. Please be advised that by providing your name and e-mail address, we may contact you if we have any question about your responses.</p> <p>* We would appreciate it if you would kindly answer all the questions in [1] and [2] below, according to your experience during FY2017(1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018)</p>							
[1] Overall Quality of Patent Examination							
			Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied
			5	4	3	2	1
1) Are you satisfied with the overall quality of patent examination at the JPO during FY2017(1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018)?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) Please evaluate the quality of JPO's patent examination regarding the following aspects 1-11 below.			Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied
			5	4	3	2	1
1.	thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal (except for any decisions of refusal)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	thorough and easy-to-understand description in decision of refusal		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	proper application of the following legal wordings						
3-1.	the main paragraph of Article 29 (1) (industrial applicability and judgement of whether the subject matter falls under the concept of "invention")		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3-2.	items of Article 29 (1) (novelty)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3-3.	Article 29 (2) (inventive step)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3-4.	Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6) (descriptive requirements for description and claims)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	consistency of judgements among examiners		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If you chose "2: somewhat unsatisfied" or "1: unsatisfied" in 4 above, please check the reasons which you are unsatisfied/somewhat unsatisfied with among the choices provided below. (multiple choices allowed)</p> <p>Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied or somewhat unsatisfied with this case.</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> the main paragraph of Article 29 (1) (industrial applicability and judgement of whether the subject matter falls under the concept of "invention") <input type="checkbox"/> Article 29 (2) (inventive step) <input type="checkbox"/> Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6) (descriptive requirements for description and claims) <input type="checkbox"/> others (fill in the space below) </p>							
comments for 4							

5. appropriateness of searches						
5-1.	domestic patent literature searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5-2.	foreign patent literature searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5-3.	non-patent literature searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. level of examiners' expertise in technical details						
7. communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations						
8. scope of patent that was granted after examination (Is the scope of the patent that was granted sufficient in view of the contents of the application and prior art?)						
9. If you have found any qualities that the JPO has, which exceed those of other patent offices, please check the categories below (multiple choices allowed). If you have not found anything superior, then please check "nothing in particular".						
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> prior art searches <input type="checkbox"/> thorough and easy-to-understand description in notifications of reasons for refusal <input type="checkbox"/> judgement on novelty/inventive step <input type="checkbox"/> examiners' understanding of technical details <input type="checkbox"/> communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations <input type="checkbox"/> others (please fill in the space below) </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> have no experience with examinations by the other Offices / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> nothing in particular </div> </div>						
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> comments for 9 </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 30px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>						
10. If you have found other patent office(s), which have superior qualities compared to those of the JPO, please check the foreign patent office(s) below (multiple choices allowed). We also welcome your comment on which area the other offices are superior. If you did not feel that the other offices were superior, then please check "nothing in particular".						
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) <input type="checkbox"/> European Patent Office (EPO) <input type="checkbox"/> State Intellectual Property Office of the P.R.C. (SIPO) <input type="checkbox"/> Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) <input type="checkbox"/> Other Office(s) (Which office(s) is it? Please fill in the space below.) </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> have no experience with examinations by the other Offices / not sure <input type="checkbox"/> nothing in particular </div> </div>						
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> comments for 10 </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 30px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>						

11. What is your feeling about how often more appropriate documents are cited by other countries/regions after the JPO has released its examination results on application(s) filed seeking to obtain the same scope of patent rights at the JPO and other countries/regions?

	more appropriate documents are rarely cited	more appropriate documents are sometimes cited	more appropriate documents are often cited	not sure/have no experience with examinations by other offices
(1)United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2)European Patent Office (EPO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3)State Intellectual Property Office of the P.R.C. (SIPO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4)Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5)the countries/regions other than the above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(countries/regions:)				

If you have any other comments on or requests for improving the quality of patent examination, please let us know in the space below. (If you chose "1: Unsatisfied" or "2: Somewhat Unsatisfied" in 1.-8. above, please comment on your reasons for being unsatisfied or somewhat unsatisfied. We also welcome your opinion / request related to the aspects 1.-11. above.)

[2] Comments/Requests about any other aspects of the questionnaire

We would appreciate it if you would kindly give us any comments or requests you might have about any other aspects of the questionnaire. For example, this could include your opinions about your own or other users' specific application(s); or your comments could be about this Survey itself, such as the format, forms, wording. Please specify here whether you consent to giving your responses to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback, if you give any comments on any specific application.

comments

[Sheet B] Quality of Patent Examination on Specific National Applications

* Application Number

(Title of the Invention)

We would appreciate it if you would kindly answer the following questions in [1], [2] and [3] below about the examination conducted on this specific patent application

[1] We would like to give your response to the examiner in charge as feedback for examination quality improvement, if possible. If you would NOT like to give your response(s) to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback, please check the box on the right side.

☐ I would NOT like to give my responses to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback.

[2] Are you satisfied with the quality of patent examination on this application?

Somewhat Satisfied		Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	
5	4	3	2	1
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you chose "5: Satisfied" or "4: Somewhat Satisfied" ←

please check the reasons which you are satisfied/somewhat satisfied with among the choices provided below. (This is optional and multiple responses are possible.)

Please comment in the space below why you are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with this case.

- ☐ thorough and easy-to-understand description in the notification(s) of reasons for refusal
- ☐ proper judgement on novelty/inventive step
- ☐ proper search scope/search results
- ☐ communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations
- ☐ others (Please write the details in the space below.)

comments

If you chose "2: Somewhat Unsatisfied" or "1: Unsatisfied" : ←

- (1) Please check the procedures in **Column I** with which you are somewhat unsatisfied/unsatisfied (multiple choices allowed); and then
- (2) Check the options in **Column II** from A-G with which you are somewhat unsatisfied/unsatisfied (multiple choices allowed). The descriptions for A through G are listed below.
- (3) Checks on Column I or Column II are not mandatory, but if any, please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.

Column I	Column II																												
<input type="checkbox"/> first notification of reasons for refusal	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">A</th> <th style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">B</th> <th style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">C</th> <th style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">D</th> <th style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">E</th> <th style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">F</th> <th style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">G</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A	B	C	D	E	F	G																							
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																							
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																							
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																							
<input type="checkbox"/> final notification of reasons for refusal																													
<input type="checkbox"/> decision to grant a patent																													
<input type="checkbox"/> decision of refusal																													

- A : thorough and easy-to-understand description in the notification(s) of reasons for refusal / decision of refusal the main paragraph of Article 29 (1) (industrial applicability and
- B : judgement of whether the subject matter falls under the concept of "invention")
- C : judgement on lack of novelty/inventive step
- D : judgement on lack of descriptive requirements (Article 36 (4) (i) and Article 36 (6))
- E : search scope/search results
- F : communication with examiners such as face-to-face interviews and telephone conversations
- G : others(Please fill in the space below)

⇒ Please go on to 4-1.

⇒ Please go on to 4-2.

⇒ Please go on to 4-3.

comments

(4) Please let us know the basis for your choice in (2) above.

4-1.If you chose "C: novelty/inventive step" in (2) above, please check the reasons with which you are unsatisfied.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> identification of cited document(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> identification of identical features/differences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> motivation for combination / obstructive factors for combination | <input type="checkbox"/> judgement on design variation etc.* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> judgement on technique generally known to a person skilled in the art | * (i) selection of optimum materials from publicly known materials
(ii) optimally or preferably modified numerical ranges
(iii) materials replaced by equivalents
(iv) design variation or design choice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> others (Please fill in the space below) | |

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

4-2.If you chose "D: descriptive requirements," in 2. above, please check the reasons with which you are unsatisfied.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> judgement regarding enablement requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> judgement regarding support requirements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> judgement regarding clarity requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> judgement regarding product-by-process (PBP) claims* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> others (Please fill in the space below) | *If you check this box for PBP claims, do not check the box "judgement regarding clarity requirements." |

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

4-3. If you chose "E: searches" in 2. above, please check the reasons with which you are unsatisfied.

domestic patent literature searches

- ☐ The scope of prior art search is not proper.
- ☐ A more proper domestic patent document than the prior art document(s) presented was found through the examination result on a relevant application etc.
- ☐ A prior art document having a family patent document in Japanese language was newly cited at the Office(s) in the other countries/regions.
- ☐ Others (Please comment in the space below)

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

foreign patent literature searches

- ☐ The scope of prior art search is not proper.
- ☐ A more proper foreign patent document than the prior art document(s) presented was found through the examination result on a relevant application etc.
- ☐ A foreign patent document was newly cited at the Office(s) in the other countries/regions.
- ☐ The notification of reasons for refusal does not include a clear description that presents the fact that foreign patent literature searches were conducted.
- ☐ Others (Please comment in the space below)

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

- ☐ non-patent literature searches (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

[3] If you have any further comments or requests, please write them in the space below. You can also write comments/requests about other application(s).

(Please specify here whether you consent to giving your response to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback or not, if you give any comments on any other specific application.)

comments

[Sheet C] Overall Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on PCT Applications

When responding to the questionnaire, please indicate by checking the box below if you wish your name to be known to us; or if you wish to remain anonymous, i.e., you don't want your name to be known to us.

- ☐ Wish your name to be known to us.
☐ Wish to be anonymous.

*If you choose "Wish to be anonymous," your response will be handled anonymously. However, information such as your e-mail address might disclose your identity, which we will not make note of.

Your Name		E-mail address	
-----------	--	----------------	--

* If you choose "Wish your name to be known to us," please fill in the spaces above with your name and e-mail address. Please be advised that by providing your name and e-mail address, we may contact you if we have any question about your responses.

* We would appreciate it if you would kindly answer all the questions in [1] and [2] below, according to your experience during FY2017(1st April 2017 to 31th March 2018)

[1] Overall Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination including ISRs (Form PCT/ISA/210), WO/ISAs (Form PCT/ISA/237), and IPERs (Form PCT/ISA/409)

	Satisfied 5	Somew hat Satisfied 4	Neutral 3	Somew hat Unsatisfied 2	Unsatisfied 1
1) Are you satisfied with the overall quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination during FY2017(1st April 2017 to 31th March 2018)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Satisfied 5	Somew hat Satisfied 4	Neutral 3	Somew hat Unsatisfied 2	Unsatisfied 1	
2) Please evaluate the quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination at the JPO regarding the following aspects 1-9 below on a 5-point scale.						
1. IPC accuracy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. judgement on excluded subject matter* from searches * excluded subject matter from searches falling under scientific and mathematical theories, methods of doing business, and mere presentations of information etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. judgement on unity of invention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. judgement on novelty/inventive step	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. reasoned statement regarding novelty/inventive step	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. consistency of judgements in the international phase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If you chose "2: somewhat unsatisfied" or "1: unsatisfied" in 6 above, please check the reasons which you are unsatisfied/somewhat unsatisfied with among the choices provided below. (multiple choices allowed) Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied or somewhat unsatisfied with this case. <input type="checkbox"/> inventive step <input type="checkbox"/> others (fill in the space below)						
comments for 6						
7. consistency of judgements between the international phase and the national phase (consistency of judgements between the international phase at the JPO and the national phase at the JPO)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. appropriateness of searches				
8-1. domestic patent literature searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8-2. foreign patent literature searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8-3. non-patent literature searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. How often any proper cited document is newly presented in the other countries/regions in the national phase, after the JPO issued the report as ISA?				
	more proper document(s) are rarely cited	more proper document(s) are sometimes cited	more proper document(s) are often cited	no opportunity for examination at the other Office(s) / not sure
(1)United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2)European Patent Office (EPO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3)State Intellectual Property Office of the P.R.C. (SIPO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4)Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5)the countries/regions other than the above (countries/regions:)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If you have any other comments on or requests for improving the quality of patent examination, please let us know in the space below. (If you chose "1: Unsatisfied" or "2: Somewhat Unsatisfied" in 1-8 above, please comment on your reasons for being unsatisfied or somewhat unsatisfied. We also welcome your opinion / request related to the aspects 1.-9. above.)

[2] Comments/Requests about any other aspects of the questionnaire	
We would appreciate it if you would kindly give us any comments or requests you might have about any other aspects of the questionnaire. For example, this could include your opinions about your own or other users' specific application(s); or your comments could be about this Survey itself, such as the format, forms, wording. Please specify here whether you consent to giving your responses to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback, if you give any comments on any specific application.	
comments	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>

[Sheet D] Quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on Specific PCT Applications

* International Application
Number

We would appreciate it if you would kindly answer the following questions [1], [2], [3] below about the examination conducted on this specific PCT application.

[1] We would like to give your response to the examiner in charge as feedback for examination quality improvement.
If you would NOT like to give your response(s) to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback, please check the box on the right side.

☐ I would NOT like to give my responses to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback.

[2] Are you satisfied with the quality of the International Search and International Preliminary Examination on this PCT application?

Satisfied		Neutral	Unsatisfied	
5	4	3	2	1
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you chose "5: Satisfied" or "4: Somewhat Satisfied" ←

"please check the reasons which you are satisfied/somewhat satisfied with among the choices provided below. (This is optional and multiple responses are possible.)

Please comment in the space below why you are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with this case."

- ☐ thorough and easy-to-understand description in the notification(s) of reasons for refusal
- ☐ proper judgement on novelty/inventive step
- ☐ proper search scope/search results
- ☐ others (Please write the details in the space below.)

comments

If you chose "2: Somewhat Unsatisfied" or "1: Unsatisfied" : ←

- (1) Please check the procedures in **Column I** with which you are somewhat unsatisfied/unsatisfied (multiple choices allowed); and then
- (2) Check the options in **Column II** from A-E with which you are somewhat unsatisfied/unsatisfied (multiple choices allowed). The descriptions for A through E are listed below.
- (3) Checks on Column I or Column II are not mandatory, but if any, please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.

Column I	Column II															
<input type="checkbox"/> ISR (Form PCT/ISA/210) or WO/ISA (Form PCT/ISA/237) <input type="checkbox"/> IPER (Form PCT/ISA/409)	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">A</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">B</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">C</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">D</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">E</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D	E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A	B	C	D	E												
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												

A : thorough and easy-to-understand description in ISRs / IPERs

B : judgement on lack of novelty / inventive step

⇒ Please go on to 4-1.

C : judgement regarding violation of requirements for unity

D : search scope/search results

⇒ Please go on to 4-2.

E : others (Please write the details in the space below.)

(comments)

(4) Please let us know the basis for your choice in 2. above.

4-1. If you chose "B: novelty/inventive step" in 2. above, please check the reasons with which you are unsatisfied.

☐ identification of cited document(s)

☐ identification of identical features/differences

☐ motivation for combination /
obstructive factors for combination

☐ judgement on design variation etc.*

☐ judgement on technique generally known to
a person skilled in the art

* (i) selection of optimum materials from publicly known
materials

☐ others (Please fill in the space below)

(ii) optimally or preferably modified numerical ranges

(iii) materials replaced by equivalents

(iv) design variation or design choice

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

4-2. If you chose "D: searches" in 2. above, please check the reasons with which you are unsatisfied.

domestic patent literature searches

☐ The scope of prior art search is not proper.

☐ A more proper domestic patent document than the prior art document(s) presented was found through the
search result on a relevant application etc.

☐ A prior art document having a family patent document in Japanese language was newly cited at the
Office(s) in the other countries/regions.

☐ Others (Please comment in the space below)

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

foreign patent literature searches

☐ The scope of prior art search is not proper.

☐ A more proper foreign patent document than the prior art document(s) presented was found through the
examination result on a relevant application etc.

☐ A foreign patent document was newly cited at the Office(s) in the other countries/regions.

☐ Others (Please comment in the space below)

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

☐ non-patent literature searches (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

comments (Please comment in the space below why you are unsatisfied with this case.)

[3] If you have any further comments or requests, please write them in the space below. You can also write comments/requests about other application(s).

(Please specify here whether you consent to giving your response to the examiner(s) in charge as feedback or not, if you give any comments on any other specific application.)

comments (Please write the details)