

Abstracts

Wage Inequality and its Determinants in the 1980s-90s

Takehisa Shinozaki (Gakushuin University)

This paper examines the reasons why the wage inequality did not increase in the 1990s in Japan. It was found that an increase in older workers had less impact on the degree of inequality in the 1990s compared with the longer period including the 1980s and 1990s. A more extensive examination of wage data, including wages in very small firms and bonus payments, provides results quite similar to previous studies. I find, however, that the wage inequality among female employees grows at a constant rate, including non-regular workers.

The Impacts of Computer Use on Wage Structure

Miki Kohara (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies)

Fumio Ohtake (Osaka University)

This paper examines how much wages increase as workers begin using computer at work. We first find the existence of this computer wage premium when we use normal cross-sectional estimation, following most past studies. The computer premium is, however, diminished and statistically insignificant once controlled for individual unobserved ability utilizing information on the same individual over two periods. In Japan, there exists no computer premium, something which has been pointed out in past studies. There is one exceptional group whose wages are actually raised by computer use—college graduates (especially young male full-time workers). As for computer training, we find that it yields significant positive effect on computer usage but little or no effect on wage increases.

Development of Quantitative Utilization of Part-time Workers

Kazunari Honda (The Japan Institute of Labour)

As part of the preparation for accurate discussion concerning qualitative utilization of part-timers as core workers, in which the job contents of part-timers are similar to those of full-time regular employees, the present paper focuses on the quantitative utilization of part-timers which should be considered similarly significant. Taking into account the fact that the working hours of individual part-timers vary substantially, the quantitative utilization of part-timers (expressed by the percentage of hours worked by part-timers against the total input working hours of full-time and part-time workers) was estimated. The result has revealed that employment opportunities are increasing due to flexible time shifts which allow part-timers to select an optimum time period for work. In addition, the quantitative utilization rate is higher for wholesale, retail and restaurant industries which actually rely on part-timers up to a particular level. In the future, an important factor for the development of quantitative use of part-timers with an extended variety of working time periods, will be to what extent the labour demand is met by part-timers. A case analysis of working hour compositions at "family restaurants" suggests that a high level of quantitative utilization of part-timers requires a division of labour among the different part-timer groups. Nevertheless, the required management of part-timer groups with different qualities may in general restrict extensive utilization of part-timers in terms of quality. In the future a study to examine part-time workers envisaging the above two aspects of their utilization will be required.