

Abstracts

The Current State and the Future Direction of Fringe Benefits

Koji Nishikubo (University of Yamanashi)

At present, there is a tendency of changing traditional way of employee benefits among Japanese company due to the long recession and consecutive raise of a legal welfare expense. The programs related "housing" are intensively being reduced which has been over the half of proportion of employee benefits cost so far. Instead of that, "Health and medical programs", "self-education programs" and "childcare and nursing care programs" expenses are increasing. On the other hand, there are companies which make use of comprehensive outsourcing service. And also companies which additionally adopt cafeteria-plan on it are increasing. The points of the CHANGE are the priority of employee benefits allocation and a way of allocation with involving outsourcing services and expanding self-choice system (scope) by employee. But, it occurs another problems. For example, the CHANGE in itself makes discrepancy between employee needs and company's ones especially in the fields of "housing", "property formation" and "life security". While the labour force declining, part-time workers and women's employee are growing. Although a good use of both human resources should be expectable, it is insufficient to adapt to recent labour force market changes in the respects of how to apply employee benefits to part time workers and how to meet women's expectations for it and so forth. Now we should consider an adaptive evolution in employee benefits system from traditional style by management decision to new one by both of employee and management participation in planning.

Economic Analysis of Fringe Benefits

Souichi Ohta (Keio University)

This paper provides an overview of the economic analysis of fringe benefits, paying particular attention to the reason why firms offer such benefits to their employees. This paper argues that factors such as tax incentives, economies of scale, and specific technology of each firm are responsible for the existence of such benefits. Moreover, a firm will use fringe benefits to self-select labour force, to prevent job separation, and to elicit effort from their employees. This paper also contains some discussion on the recent empirical literature. Furthermore, the role of unionism on fringe benefits and the effect of fringe benefits on compensation inequality are also discussed. Regarding the latter, this paper points out the danger of discussing compensation inequality by only focusing on wage inequality.

Labour Law Problems involved in Fringe Benefits

Takayasu Yanagiya (Kwansei Gakuin University)

Fringe benefits have not been examined sufficiently from the viewpoint of Labour Law in Japan. This study examines two points concerning fringe benefits. Firstly, it analyzes fringe benefits as a complete system from the viewpoint of labour law legislation, work rules and collective agreement, labour contract and voluntary conferral of benefits. Secondly, it examines labour law problems related to housing loans, group term life insurance, and inland and foreign study loans as individual fringe benefits.

The Problems of Measures including Shortening of Working Hours for Childcare

Shingou Ikeda (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training)

The object of this paper is to reveal how the measures including shortening of working hours in the Child-care and Family-care Law and companies' voluntary supports

for childcare can function more effectively. The analysis focuses on shortening of working hours, exemption from overtime work, late starting and early finishing times which are taken advantage of less, although they have been more widely introduced than other types of measures. The analysis shows that 1) the number of younger cohort workers in regular employment who adjust their working hours with no support system provided by their companies is on the rise, while the number of those who adjust their working hours using the childcare support systems of their companies is increasing compared with their older cohort; 2) an increasing number of younger cohort workers who send their babies and little children to childcare center adjust their working hours now due to the declining effects of family support, and 3) work-hour adjustment for younger cohort workers varied depending on the kind of job the individual was engaged in. The results indicate that it is crucial for individual companies to introduce and implement childcare support programs in a flexible manner that suit their workers' family environments as well as consider regional and workplace environments in order to improve the effectiveness of their voluntary support systems.