Abstracts

Working Environment that Achieves Work-Life Balance (a Publishing Company's Case)

Junko Kato (Hosei University)

Recently, researchers have pointed out that a company policy on environmental improvement is effective for helping to achieve a work-life balance. This study attempted to identify quantitatively what factors affect employees' views on how to achieve a work-life balance by focusing on one company and conducting a survey of its employees working under the same work-life balance policy. It also explored how the three environmental factors of work characteristic, workplace characteristic, and manager characteristic affect realization of a work-life balance by the employees. The results showed that each of the three factors influences realization of their work-life balance. In particular, the following factors were particularly influential: work with high flexibility in terms of process, quantity and object, workplace where employees feel it is easy to take leave or to leave work, and a manager who supports subordinates' work and helps them achieve a balance between their work and personal lives. Whereas earlier studies stressed that aspects such as gender of the manager, and his/her level of understanding of relevant policies and encouragement of such policies are related to realization of a work-life balance, this study clarified that the characteristics of the management style of the manager is another factor. For achieving a work-life balance, it is suggested that not only should a policy be introduced but also the working environment should be improved.

Business Performance decided by WLB Support Systems and Base Systems

Yumi Nishioka (Shohoku College)

This paper discusses the influence of WLB support systems (which support WLB directly) and base systems (which help the function of the WLB support systems effectively) on business performance, after clarifying the mutual relations between WLB support systems and base systems. A meaningful correlation is identified between WLB support systems and base systems by analysis. Furthermore, WLB support systems and base systems have an influence on business performance, but the degree of influence depends on the field of systems. In addition, the influence on business performance, especially on the security of talented persons, is confirmed by not only the systems of either but a combination of both systems.

Employment Status of Professionals in Organizations and their Career Attitudes: Case Study of Consultants who are Non-regular Workers and Independent Contractors

Yukiko Sakai (Hosei University)

Recently, in the Japanese labor market, there are various employment status, and non-regular workers are increasing. The differences between regular workers and non-regular workers such as wage, personnel system and work style are being discussed. Non-regular workers are often in a weak employment status. However, there are non-regular workers who actively select their employment status, and who also feel highly satisfied with the work. This paper focuses on non-regular employment professionals and investigates the reasons for employment selection, and the impact on working style and subsequent career attitudes. For this study, the author interviewed consultants from three different employment types － regular employees, non-regular contract employees and independent contractors － which company A prepares for the consultant profession in the personnel system. The results indicated that they selected their employment type based on risk, wage system, professionalism,

organizational commitment and future career plan. It was also shown that they were satisfied with their new employment situation and work style after shifting from regular to non-regular contract or independent contractor status. The author concludes that non-regular employees or independent contractors can be suitable as professional workers.

To What Extent should Governments get involved in Skills Development?: The Grounds and Methods of Governmental Involvement, and the Role of Public Vocational Training Institutions

Katsuhiko Iwata (Polytechnic University)

The government gets involved in skills development in various ways including: (a) providing information on training, (b) providing criteria (skill tests, qualifications, etc.) for vocational capability and training results, (c) developing professionals, agencies, and associations that provide education and training, (d) personnel liaison between vocational training institutions and workers, (e) assisting companies and individuals with training expenses, and (f) providing opportunities for receiving direct training (training given directly by public vocational training institutions or training given by outsourced educational institutions and companies). Regarding government involvement in skills development, the theoretical grounds and methods of involvement can be summarized as the following four issues: (1) It is vital to utilize government-led methods to provide unbiased opportunities for everyone to develop their potential based on the basic right and the right to develop one's career, (2) It is vital to provide public vocational training in some regions and some kinds of occupations to supplement the imperfect market mechanism for youths and non-regular employees who often do not receive adequate training by themselves or from their companies (3) Public vocational training institutions play a major role in organizing the development of human resources necessary to maintain and develop society (training which is highly effective for people other than trainees themselves and cost-beareres), and (4) Public vocational training should play an increasingly important role in providing the socially vulnerable with a safety net (securing impartiality of resource distribution) as the employment situation deteriorates rapidly. Public vocational training will remain important in the future, although demand for active disclosure of training contents, ex-post evaluation of training results, and dynamic review of the organization and operation is expected to grow stronger.

Competency Development and Citizenship: from Career Education to Citizenship Education?

Toshiro Kameyama (Ochanomizu University)

The increasing number of 'freeters' (youths who are part timers or unemployed) has become a major issue in Japan, and training on career development is very important. However, youth problems have many aspects, and require comprehensive human resource development. Key competency of OECD and 'Shakaijin-Kisoryoku' (adult basic ability) in Japan are both comprehensive concepts of education, but the former has clear social values, whereas the latter does not. The goals of education for citizenship in Japan are also vague, and Japanese citizenship education is very non-political compared with that in Britain and America. However, citizens' political participation and democracy are necessary conditions for introducing a comprehensive human resource development policy.