

Abstracts

“Career” in Japanese Labour Legislation: A Crucial Legal Issue on Human Resources Development

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The word “career” was translated into Japanese as “shokugyou seikatsu,” literally meaning “occupational life,” when the concept was intentionally introduced in several labour laws and orders in 2001. There are already 31 laws and orders as of 1st October 2011 which refer to “shokugyou seikatsu” or career. In fact, 62 articles in 19 laws and 25 articles in 12 orders embrace the word 120 times. “Right to a career” has been gradually implanted into positive laws. In order to clarify its implication and find an axis of vocational education and training, this paper precisely examines contexts in which the word is contained. The core of human resources development is career development that today’s labour legislation should support by providing people with its basis and frameworks. Through such an analysis emerge various meanings. First, “shokugyou seikatsu” is basically defined by two fundamental laws regulating employment policy, labour market and vocational education and training. Second, it treats only the occupational aspect of career in a broad sense. Third, it is used very often in laws and orders regarding external labour market, while laws on internal labour market are rather reluctant to directly intervene taking account of Japanese employment practices.

Public Training for the Unemployed: Differences in the Outcome Depending on Who is Providing the Training and How it is Provided

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Public training system for the unemployed in Japan has been experiencing lots of changes recently, and this paper, in particular, focuses on the following three: (1) abolition of the organization which used to be responsible for the public training courses provided by the national government, the likely result of which is an increasing role of local governments in the provision of public training, (2) expansion of public training courses that are commissioned to private training institutions, (3) introduction of training courses which combine vocational (off-the-job) and on-the-job training. The paper estimates the differences in the effectiveness of training depending on who is providing the training and how it is provided, controlling for factors that affect training outcome, including any endogeneity arising from the worker selection process. The paper further discusses the factors behind the estimated differences by utilizing the results of a survey conducted of prefectural governments.

The Workplace as a Learning Environment: The Intersection between Management Research and Learning Research

Jun Nakahara (The University of Tokyo)

In recent years, research in the fields of human resource development which empirically sheds light on possibilities and actual conditions within the “workplace” from the perspective of “learning environment.” These research efforts have identified learning possibilities and actual conditions within the workplace that had tended to be overlooked under the discrete concepts of OJT (On the Job Training) and Off-JT (Off the Job Training) in the past. To begin with, this research paper will point out and identify the problem with the OJT and Off-JT concepts, even though they have long been employed in conventional discourse of human resources development. First, the general understanding of the concept of “OJT” normally has the connotation of a “superior-subordinate instructional guidance relationship.” But that approach can lead to overlooking the skill development dynamics realized through “learning that results from the support of various coworkers” — in other words, workplace social networking. Second, the concept of OJT and Off-JT, lacking mutually dependent and collaborative relationships, might have resulted in a failure to create effective learning opportunities. In order to solve the following problems, in recent years, many researchers have paid attention on the re-

search of workplace as a learning environment including the following. 1) Research on how the reciprocal social interactions among coworkers contribute to the development of employee competency. 2) Practical research that links learning through corporate training to actual workplace practice. Here the aim is to revamp the forms for corporate training. Finally, there will be discussion of future research topics, and cultivation of new interdisciplinary areas for research through collaboration between researchers on learning and researchers on management.

Methodology for Measuring the Effect of Job Training: Cases of Japanese Automobile Makers

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This paper discusses how to collect an original dataset to investigate the effect of job training on an employee's individual productivity improvement. It has been very hard to gauge when and how often an employee is provided an opportunity of job training in a Japanese establishment. Our project team conducted three-consecutive-year surveys of both foremen and employees within selected establishments in collaboration with two Japanese automobile makers. We employed subjective indices to measure the extents of job training and productivity improvement under technical, time and budget constraints. We confirm that subjective and objective measures are complements in measuring the extent of productivity improvement. Our research findings (Ariga *et al.* (2010)) showed that organizational changes induced employees to continue job training.

Human Resource Development in the Small- and Medium-sized Metal and Machinery Industry

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This paper, based on the data that JILPT (2011) conducted the research, discusses recent real circumstances and problems concerning human resource development in small- and medium-sized Japanese companies. The analysis reveals the following: (1) Previous studies have shown the skill formation in manufacturing industries requires OJT plus long-term career formation in specific companies (so-called Internal Labor Market, ILM). However, ILM-based method does not apply to every employer and employee in small- and medium medium-sized manufacturing companies. About 15% or more researched companies express that most effective method about skill and career formation is not ILM-based type but OLM-based (Occupational Labor Market) type. And employers and employees in OLM-based type companies need more training opportunities including OFF-JT. (2) The important point that makes training environment effective is the concept "visibility of competencies" required in each workplace. The more visible work-related competency, the more punctually functioning so-called PDCA cycle. Therefore, in terms of employment policy, the important thing is the concept "visibility of competencies" should be introduced in OLM-type companies in order to complement lack of training opportunities.

Supply and Demand Adjustment Mechanisms in the Physician Labor Market: A Focus on Postgraduate Training (Clinical Training Programs and the Specialist System)

Hisao Endo (Gakushuin University)

Although there is currently a shortage of physicians in Japan, it is necessary to consider the shortage of physicians in i) specialties such as obstetrics and emergency and ii) specific regions such as rural areas separately, in addition to the absolute shortage in the total number of physicians. While increasing the capacity of medical schools is the only way of overcoming the absolute shortage, the shortage of physicians in specific regions and specialties is affected by mechanisms of physician postgraduate training. Prior to 2004, clinical training of resident physicians was primarily conducted at university hospitals. However, a new clinical physician training program was introduced in 2004 for the following reasons: i) training of physicians was feasible only in a narrow area of expertise, ii) resident physicians were forced to select a course without fully

understanding the working of each specialty and iii) resident physicians were poorly treated. The features of this updated system are as follows: i) physicians are obliged to receive clinical training, ii) if certain criteria are met, clinical training can be conducted at a non-university hospital, iii) physicians rotate through several clinical departments during their two years of clinical training, and iv) the Japanese government subsidizes resident physicians' salaries. Since the introduction of this system, resident physicians have been able to undergo clinical training in a wide range of clinical specialties; however, the following adverse outcomes have been identified: i) because of a decrease in the number of resident physicians undergoing clinical training, it has become impossible to transfer physicians from university hospitals to regional hospitals, which in turn has accelerated the shortage of physicians in regional areas, and ii) resident physicians understand the working of each clinical department while undergoing clinical training, which may result in a decrease in the number of physicians desiring placement in rigorous departments such as surgery and obstetrics. Because of these criticisms, partial amendments were made to the new clinical physician training program in 2010. Conversely, medical specialist systems certified by each academic society play an important role in correcting the uneven distribution of physicians between specialties. In the U.S. and France, the distribution of physicians in each specialty is even because the number of specialists in each department is adjusted to levels required in society as a whole and is certified by the relevant academic society. However, because all academic medical societies in Japan apply a high degree of discretion and do not make huge adjustments with regard to specialist certification, there is significant variation in certification requirements with regard to becoming a specialist, the number of certified specialists, and the certification rate (number of specialists/members) between societies. Because of this, the current specialist system does not contribute to correcting the uneven distribution of specialists between specialties. Under such circumstances, we would like to reconsider the medical specialist system operated by academic societies.