

Abstracts

Rationality of Dismissal based on Evaluation of Ability in Japanese Companies

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This paper intends to analyze court cases occurring so far regarding the validity and the rationality of dismissals based on the ability evaluation of workers, taking into account recent measures to deregulate employment and the fact that Japanese employment often involves unclear work descriptions. As the current personnel management systems evaluate employee abilities in terms of (1) potential ability, (2) work motivation, (3) competency, by examining what part of these abilities was focused on and the rationality recognized even in cases of a judgment of effectiveness for dismissal by the court, my approach is to clarify the validity of judgments of users in dismissals due to reasons of insufficient ability. This examination shows that cases where the rationality of dismissal is recognized due only to a pure lack of potential ability are exceptional, and that in most cases the ruling is a comprehensive one combining a lack of ability with insufficient work motivation or problems in competency. In addition, depending on their employment status, the potential for improvement by redeployment and education are considered in terms of social appropriateness. In conclusion, judging by the light of these points, employers must clarify the competency and also refine the dismissal provisions of their employment regulations.

Features of Human Resource Management on Restricted-regular Employees: Is It a Signal of the Changing Japanese HRM System?

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This article attempts to reveal the human resources management of restricted regular employees, particularly at companies which exploit employees under the Japanese employment system. In this article I classify restricted regular employees into three types. Type 1 refers to restricted regular employees who moved from unrestricted regular employees, Type 2 to those who moved from traditional restricted employees (so-called "*ihpannshoku*"), and Type 3 to those who moved from non-regular employees. The findings are as follows. There are differences between Type 1 and Type 2 and Type 3. While Type 1 and Type 2 are exploited widening the limits of their tasks, Type 3 retain limits on their tasks. So it can be said that those in Type 1 and Type 2 make their careers by being generalists, while those in Type 3 make their careers by being specialists. In addition to the above findings, I show that by introducing restricted employees, the working style of employees moves not only toward limited roles but also toward unlimited roles to seek more effective internal job training systems.

The Effects of Non-cognitive Abilities on Labor Market Outcomes

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While it is widely recognized that measured cognitive ability is a strong predictor of labor market outcomes, less attention has been given to the role of non-cognitive ability in economics. However, several extant studies have attempted to elucidate how non-cognitive abilities, measured by personality traits, act as an important predictor of labor market outcomes. Non-cognitive ability, compared to cognitive ability, has been found to be more malleable at a later age and enhanced by parental investments in education and policy interventions. This paper introduces some recent studies that focus on non-cognitive ability to analyze sources of and mechanisms behind the individual differences in labor market productivity. It then reviews several studies that attempt to conceptualize, formalize, and integrate concepts from personality psychology into economic models. After discussing the controversy involved which research on non-cognitive ability often encounters, pertaining to the stability of the personality traits, measurement errors and reverse causality, this paper introduces some recent studies that have attempted to resolve controversial issues by examining the reliability of measures of personality traits and/or by applying alternative models and estimation methods.

Narratives on "Ningen-Ryoku": An Analysis of Magazine Features

Tomokazu Makino (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)

The actual usage of many "powers" and the context in which they are used are unknown. In this article, I will analyze the actual usage of "Ningen-Ryoku (Human Being Power)" and consider what our society wants to say through these "powers." Looking at 47 magazine feature articles using the word Ningen-Ryoku, I found three usage patterns. The first, was context-dependent use, fitting the meaning of Ningen-Ryoku to the magazine's special feature arbitrarily. Second was bushing and comprehensive demand, lamenting over the "degradation" of youth, businessman and managers, then defining Ningen-Ryoku and the way to get it comprehensively. Third was praise of the project itself, praising the practice that going on to promote Ningen-Ryoku without empirical examination. I found such patterns in the discourse on Peter F. Drucker too. So it can be said that our society may have enthusiasm for raising the targets for self-development in some vague way, and for disseminating standards to belittle someone in a vague way, but may not have enthusiasm for working out the details on the targets and standards.

The Comparison of the Mental Health of Full-time Workers, Part-time Workers and Unemployed People: Focusing on the Voluntariness of the Employment Situation and Attitude towards Work

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the mental health and related factors of employees and the unemployed, focusing on the voluntariness of their employment situation. The research was conducted through an Internet survey with the participation of 573 full-time workers, 263 involuntarily part-time workers, 333 voluntarily part-time workers, 195 involuntarily unemployed people and 220 voluntarily unemployed people. Anxiety/depression and disturbance of activity were examined to grasp the subjects' mental health, and also examined was the relationship between these factors and their attitude towards work and demographic data. Though it was supposed from preceding studies that the unemployed would have poorer mental health than the employed people, the involuntarily part-time workers showed almost the same level of mental health as voluntarily unemployed people. In addition, involuntarily unemployed people were lower in activity than voluntarily unemployed people. Therefore, for both part-time workers and unemployed people, the voluntariness of their employment situation could be a significant factor for their mental health. Furthermore, it was suggested that it was important to have an outlook on one's career not for evading criticism but for the sake of fulfilment for involuntarily part-time workers, and to have an outlook on careers not for evading criticism but for their own growth for involuntarily unemployed people, to keep their mental health in a good state. It means that, regardless to the current working situation, it is important to have a positive attitude towards work for the sake of their mental health.