

Abstracts

Absence from Work and Leave of Absence in Japan – Understanding through Official Statistics

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In this paper, we review the situation surrounding absences from work and leaves of absence in Japan through official statistics. The results of the analyses of the rates of absence from work revealed several facts. Firstly, the rates of absence from work among the elderly and among women of the age group involving childbirth and child-rearing are high. Secondly, the overall rate of absence from work is on an upward trend. The upward trend has been influenced by the aging of male employees and the increase in the rate of absence from work for women between the ages of 25 and 44. The latter has been affected by women taking child care leave and longer periods of absence from work. Thirdly, since the absence from work due to the circumstances of operating an office decreases during boom periods, the series of unemployment rates for men moves counter-cyclically. Fourthly, the results of the study of the relationship with industrial accidents have shown that in industries where the frequency of industrial accidents is high, the rate of absence from work for men of older age groups also tends to be high.

Legal Issues with Sick Leave

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Employees do not have the right to sick leave on a legal basis. The rights and details pertaining to sick leave are determined by the contract between the employee and the employer (or collective agreement, etc.). The typical practice with sick leave is to exempt the employee's work after the employee has been absent for several months due to an illness. The employer waits for the employee to recover and defers dismissing the employee. Failure to be reinstated by the end of the sick leave period brings serious disadvantage to the employee such as retirement or dismissal. The criteria for reinstating the employee is whether he/she can perform the same duties as before, within normal limits. With reference to Supreme Court rulings, the recent trend in court cases has been to decide cases based on whether there is actual work that can be arranged for the employee upon reinstatement. Employers must actively try to reinstate employees. Employers shall make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in accordance with the 2013 Amendment of the Act on Employment Promotion etc. of Persons with Disabilities. Even in the case of reinstatement after sick leave, employers need to consider reasonable accommodations.

Health Capital Investment and Productivity

Sachiko Kuroda (Waseda University)

Given the acceleration of an aging society, there is a growing interest in Japan about how people can maintain a state of health that can allow them to work throughout their lifetime. The Japanese government is implementing various policy measures to promote health, including endorsing firms' health and productivity management. The idea is that maintaining and promoting employees' health will lead to not only the suppression of medical expenses, but also to an increase in productivity. Why does good health increase productivity? Who should pay the cost of capital investment to maintain health? What is the cost effectiveness of promoting health? While this question of health is attracting great interest, there is not much research that has systematically examined the relationship between health, labor, and productivity from the viewpoint of economics. In this regard, this paper aims to survey the previous literature, mainly in the field of economics, as well as studies in other related fields with regard to health and productivity. In the paper, we first look at research related to health and productivity across the field by picking up primary keywords used in the preceding research regarding "health" and "productivity." Then, with a brief review of how economics views capital investment in health as human capital, we survey why productivity rises as health capital increases, from the macro, individual, and enterprise-level viewpoints.

Finally, we will review the accumulation of research conducted thus far on who should bear the cost of health capital investment and consider the points left for future work.

Loss of Labor Productivity in Small and Medium Businesses and Its Influencing Factors

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With the continually declining birthrate and an aging society, 60% of small and medium businesses are facing personnel shortages. In the 40 years since 1970, the average age in the workplace has risen by seven years, and the mortality rate due to causes such as myocardial infarction has doubled, causing structural changes to occur in the workplace. Accompanying these changes in the societal environment, employee health is becoming a more serious issue for businesses than it has ever been before. To counter these problems, the government adopted a serious policy of encouraging businesses to invest in employee health through strategies such as the "Japan Revitalization Strategy, Revised 2014." Against this background, this research analyzes the relationship between health risks and loss of labor productivity through a survey of health and productivity management in small and medium businesses implemented in collaboration with Yokohama City. First, the research found a significant relationship between employee health risks and absenteeism/presenteeism. It was demonstrated that absenteeism has a structure in which once a health risk exceeds a certain critical point, it immediately rises, while presenteeism has a structure in which there is a short-term increase accompanying an increased risk. Second, a significant negative correlation was observed between work engagement and feelings of identification with the workplace and presenteeism. These findings suggest that both establishing increasing employee health and improving workplace communication and employee enthusiasm for work will lead to improvements in the loss of labor productivity. Third, in the interview survey of employees it was found that workplace programs led to improvements in employee health consciousness, lifestyle habits, physical condition, job performance, and workplace communication.

The Present and Future of the Rework Program

Yoshio Igarashi (Japanese Association of Rework for Depression)

This paper describes a rework program for affective disorders as its main subject. It is important that the structure of the program is integrated as psychotherapy that includes group therapy, not simply group therapy. The need for such a program stems from a social background of an expanding number of diseases categorized as atypical affective disorders and an increasing number of people taking sick leave suffering from developmental disabilities. In terms of rework, the paper identifies 3 types, each with playing a different role in rehabilitation. The first, "medical care rework," is the psychiatric treatment provided by a medical institution. The second type, "occupational rework," refers to the occupational rehabilitation performed by a person at a vocational center for persons with disabilities, and the third, "workplace rework," is the rework done in assessing whether the person can return to the workplace or EAP and work. In the summary of the program, it mentions the treatment structure of the program using Medical Care Toranomon as an example, and touches on the importance of follow-up and the treatment after reinstatement, in the sense that reinstatement is only the starting point of complete rehabilitation. The paper also shows the outcome data, which assumes working continuity beyond the end of the program as an index of rehabilitation. Finally, it reports on the incorporation and establishment of the Japanese Association of Rework for Depression, based on the 10 years of activity of the Depression Rework Association, as well as the purpose of incorporation and future challenges of the program.

The Relationship between Labor Market Experience outside the Firm and Promotion in the Internal Labor Market

Kaori Sato (Kokushikan University)

Previous literature has shown that among those with equivalent general human capital, companies prefer to promote "stayers" from the internal labor market rather than job changers. However, there are few studies that have examined the relationship between

occupation, firm-size, and promotions in the internal labor market. This paper focuses on technical workers and specialized professionals because they are likely to accumulate occupation-specific human capital and their labor market tends to be established. Then it examines whether the probability of promotion for managers and senior professionals depends on job change experiences, occupation, and firm-size using the "Working-Person Survey." The main conclusions are summarized in the following three points. First, the probability of promotion for managers of job changers is lower on average than that of stayers. This result is consistent with previous findings. Second, among non-technical and non-specialized professionals, it becomes more difficult for job changers to be promoted to managerial positions as company size increases. This result supports the theory of DeVaro and Morita (2013) . On the other hand, this trend was not seen among technical workers and specialized professionals, suggesting that the theory of DeVaro et al. applies only to non-technical and non-specialized professionals. Third, in terms of promotions to senior professionals, it turns out that job changers are not disadvantaged compared with stayers.