

Abstracts

Labour Market of New Graduates in Japan : From Corporate Hiring Practice

Hiromi Hara (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training)

This paper reviews the current situation of the labour market for new graduates in Japan and proposes ways to secure greater employment opportunities for them. The paper found that the labour market for new graduates has been decreasing since 1990, and large-scale companies, unprofitable companies and those with a high rate of employees aged more than 50 years old have tended to stop hiring new graduates. Furthermore, among companies hiring new graduates currently, the characteristics of the company and the basic ability of new graduates are the important factors that influence graduate recruitment. Identifying the personnel needed by companies and reducing mismatches between new graduate job seekers and employers are considered to be effective for increasing job opportunities for new graduates. Enhancing the abilities of new graduates will also become necessary to secure employment opportunities for them.

The Sociology of Cognition of the Relationship between Employers and High Schools: How and Why It Is Difficult to Comprehend 'The Substance of Quality' of Labour Force

Miki Tsutsui (Kyoto Women's University)

Recently some researches have suggested that the labour market for high school graduates will recover if their quality is improved, and thus have insisted that exchanges between employers and high schools such as job fairs and internships should be increased. However, this suggestion does not address the difficulties of cognition and verbalization of the quality of labour force, and so is not a meaningful direction. This paper will clarify how and why it is difficult to comprehend 'the substance of quality' of labour force among employers and high school teachers, from the standpoint of the sociology of cognition, because the first step toward constructing desirable relationships between employers and high schools is to recognize the difficulties. A common understanding of 'the substance of quality' will strengthen not only 'the labour demand and supply linkage', but also 'the curriculum linkage', through which high schools can teach students useful knowledge and skills.

The Human Resource Industry and Labour Market for New Graduates

Tetsu Sano (Hosei University)

A new business sector targeting the labour market for new graduates is expanding. There has been a rapid growth of businesses which provide employment information and process job applications via the Internet. However, these businesses handle employment information and job applications in very large quantities. This has generated some problems, and there have been problems in how firms interview workers. Services supporting job-seeking students with professional counselors trained in psychology have been growing rapidly as well. However, these services have not been very effective in supporting jobseekers: they have been unable to satisfy users who seek comprehensive support including the provision of specific information about companies and extensive labour market information. In contrast, some businesses have managed to establish themselves in the business sector. Utilizing their expertise in worker dispatching and job placement businesses, these businesses provide long-term support for the career development of young jobseekers including students, and are finding acceptance among firms which continue to make innovations.

Recent Roles and Developments of the Special Training Colleges in Japan

Shuichi Tsukahara (National Institute for Educational Policy Research)

This paper describes the recent trend on special training colleges (regular courses for high school graduates) to reflect the relationship with the labour market for new graduates. Recent conspicuous characteristics of these courses include the high employment rate and increasing advancement rate. Moreover, the level of education is tending to improve, such as an increase in the number of three or more-year courses and the appearance of courses which require college graduation to enter; these courses are improving the place of special training college both in quality and in quantity in the higher education system. In terms of subjects, those in the field of qualification education which are designated as staff-training courses for official qualification, such as medical care, hygiene and social welfare, are increasing. Since special training colleges are somewhat outside of the typical Japanese employment system, few graduates get a place in a large company. The latest policy trend includes such projects as upgrading special training colleges to higher educational facilities equivalent to universities, enhancing e-learning, ensuring confidence in society by generalizing self-study and evaluation, and developing new enterprises to support job-hopping workers and adult education. Measures to strengthen the advantages of special training colleges in the labour market for new graduates differ depending on the subject. Those colleges related to engineering or commercial business are trying to raise their academic level because the declining number of students is likely attributable to competition with universities. On the other hand, subjects related to official qualifications retain advantages because they are conducive to the acquisition of qualifications, even though these are limited to specific vocational fields. Several measures to cope with the weakening traditional Japanese employment system, such as support for job-hopping workers and adult education, will help develop a lifelong learning process and contribute to the future of special training colleges.