

Abstracts

Firms' Optimum Generational Composition of the Workforce and Human Resource Strategies: Economic Analysis of the "Year 2007 Problem"

Naoki Mitani (Kobe University)

The paper analyzed the effects of the mandatory retirement of the mass-generation from the year 2007 and onwards on the generational composition of the workforce and firms' human resource strategies. The results show that the future firms' strategies may not be largely affected by the influence of the mandatory retirement of the mass-generation on the firms. Rather, regardless of such influences, firms are preparing strategies to utilize older workforce as well as female one and to intensify training. And human resource strategies are planned in accordance with the characteristics of each group; older workers, female ones and young ones. Especially, since firms' are reinforcing the screening criterion in the case of hiring young part-timers into regular positions, policies to support them are needed to enable them to take careers with full skill developments.

Skill Succession and Youth Employment: The Relationship and Promotion Policies

Souichi Ohta (Keio University)

This paper examines the relationship between succession of job skills and employment of youths. The efficient succession of job skills can negatively affect the employment of youths due to its labour-saving effect, but it can also yield positive effects via cost reduction and complementarity. On the other hand, the employment of youths may facilitate the succession of job skills. The feedback mechanism by which improved corporate achievements increase the efficiency of succession of job skills was also reviewed. The empirical analysis using corporate-level data revealed a positive relationship between efficient succession of job skills and employment of youths. In terms of policy implications, active efforts for succession of job skills is likely to encourage the creation of a better environment for employment of youths, so policymakers should take this into consideration when planning policies.

Legal Problems of the Old-Age Employment-Stabilization Measures

Noboru Yamashita (Kurume University)

The Dankai generation workers – postwar baby boomers – are reaching their final days of employment. The term "retirement" used to mean that, under the mandatory retirement system, a new life without a job starts after retiring from a company at 60 years old. The system is determined by the public pension system rather than by labor law, and the age at which pensions are paid is politically set to the retirement age. The system is based on Law concerning Stabilization of Employment of Older Persons. This law required employers to extend the employment period to 60 years old, thus creating the system of retiring at 60. However, with the start of the system, strong demands were made to raise the pension payable age to 65 years old, and so the law was changed again to a new approach: the introduction of the continuous employment system. This new system not only extends working life uniformly by raising the retirement age, but also allows senior employees to choose a flexible job life through labour-management consultation, such as semi-working life (gradual retirement), according to the person's intentions or physical strength. But ideal and reality are different. Various problems with the system are expected to arise, such as personnel or cost arrangements for employers, and unfavorable working conditions for employees. This part reviewed the following cases in terms of legislative remedies: 1) the case that the continuous employment system is not adopted, 2) the case

that there is a problem in the selection criteria of the continuous employment system, and 3) the case that an employment contract is terminated before the pension eligibility age.

Labour Substitutability by Age Group and Wage Gap by Education Level

Saori Noro (Toyota Motor Corporation) and **Fumio Ohtake** (Osaka University)

This part used the Card and Lemieux (2001)'s assumed model of imperfect substitutability by labour age group to conduct a cohort-based analysis on wage gap by education level. The results revealed that the difference of wage gap by education level among age groups is attributable to imperfect substitutability among age groups: imperfect substitutability among large age groups, such as young, middle-age or senior-age, rather than among each group. This explains the fact that changes of wage gap by education level differ between the young, and the middle or senior-age group because the progress toward higher education differs among generations.

Family Life after Mandatory Retirement

Kiyoko Okamura (Tokyo Woman's Christian University)

The family relationship of *Dankai* generation (Baby Boomer in Japan) shows a clear division of labour by gender between husbands who have sustained the post-war high economic growth and their full-time housewives. The International Woman's Year in 1975 followed by the enforcement of the new laws such as "The Law for Equal Employment Opportunity of Men and Women" and "The Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society" became a turning point for the promotion for an equal opportunity at workforce and an equal sharing for household duties. However this movement has been mainly initiated by females. This trend represents a wide perception gap by gender over family values and marriages of this generation. A husband may stick to the division of labour by gender and joint activities with his wife, even after retirement, while the wife wants to abandon such traditional customs and values her own personal life. To bridge the gap, both men and women need to respect each other's attitude and to compromise with each other. In the later years, the bereavement after caregiving for ones partner forces a couple to live alone. Therefore, it is the developmental task in later life for elderly couples to throw off the traditional fetters such as gender roles and family standards.

Retirement and *Ikigai* of Baby Boomer in Japan

Shinichi Sato (Meiji Gakuin University)

This article discusses the current life and future plans regarding *ikigai* (the feeling that life is worth living) before and after retirement, based on a variety of research data for the elderly including baby boomers. The results show that the feeling of *ikigai* is not only affected by historical effects but also strengthens with aging. Though there were individual differences as to what was selected as the object of *ikigai*, the proportion of those selecting personal activities such as hobbies became higher with aging. The percentage of people selecting sense of usefulness to others as a meaning of *ikigai* also increased with aging. Thus, a new way of living after retirement, different from the conventional way, may emerge and provide a "soft-landing" for life in retirement, through new methods of working such as work-sharing after the mandatory retirement system in Japan. If baby boomers expect to lead a happy life after mandatory retirement, it is important for them to achieve *ikigai* through a variety of support and their own efforts.