

Abstracts

To What Extent is Occupational Experience Important?

Akihito Toda (Works Institute, Recruit)

Amid the weakening job security and rising awareness of obtaining good job skills, to what extent is occupational experience important for careers? To answer this question, this paper evaluates the importance of occupational experience based on published aggregated data, with an emphasis on occupation-specific human capital. We find evidence of the importance of occupational experience as follows. First, if we look at the ratio of job changers whose occupation remains the same after changing job, its ratio for professional and clerical workers increased from 1991 to 2007, but its ratio for other occupations remained constant. Second, if we investigate the determinants of its ratio, we find that job changers who were in occupations with relatively high human capital in their previous job tend to stay in the same occupation, for both genders. For males, it is undeniable that the labor market conditions also affect the choice of occupation for job changers. Third, if we estimate the effect of occupational experience on wages, the effect is larger than that of age. Especially for female professionals, the effect of occupational experience has increased in recent years more than for other female occupations.

How should We Recognize the Utility of Vocational Qualification in Japan?

Kenji Agata (Doshisha University)

This article examined the “utility” of the vocational qualification (VQ) in the labor market in Japan with some data analysis, in addition to reviewing this field of study, providing a framework of recognizing the utility of the VQ. This framework consists of two axes. One of the axes is whether “individuals” or “organizations” utilize the VQ. The other is functional aspects of the VQ: “selection” in recruitment of new employees versus “fosterage” of the employee’s vocational capabilities. I proposed three types of utility with combining these axes. According to this typology of utility, I made it appear that some studies found “instrumental” utilities of the VQ in the labor market. After reviewing this field of study I reaffirmed the weak utilities of the VQ in the labor market with some data analysis. The VQ allowed to have a monopoly to do one’s business aims smooth interaction between the service provider and service user through guarantee of quality by nation. When the market-based principles pervade the society, this type of the VQ breeds discord with freedom to choose one’s occupation. Because service demand varies across the ages, it is necessary for us to consider how do we design desirable qualification system where guarantee of quality consists with providing enough quantity of service supply.

Career Building of Physicians and Their Shortages

Atsushi Yoshida (University of Tsukuba)

Physicians build their careers based on the network between the division of faculty of medicine to which they belong, named “Ikyoku”, and hospitals. They enhance their skills through experience gained by changing hospital approximately every five years. Some male physicians quit a hospital to start their own clinic in their forties, while female physicians quit in their thirties. The age of quitting has been rising recently. The network is beneficial both for the “Ikyoku” and hospitals: the former can select a capable physician to be a professor by monitoring their performance in the hospitals, while the latter can decrease the cost and uncertainty of recruiting new physicians. The network, however, will play a smaller role in physicians’ career-building following the introduction of a new intern system in 2004. Nearly 55% of newly graduated physicians take intern courses in hospitals other than universities, though nearly three fourths took post-graduate courses in universities before the system was introduced, and only 60% of physicians select universities for post-intern residents. The shortage of physicians is said to be serious, but this is not supported

by the internal rate of return of being a physician. There should be a mismatch of physicians among specialties or between hospitals and clinics. This may be caused by female-specific preferences for some specialties and clinics.

Labor Law Issues on Hospital Physicians

Ikuko Mizushima (Osaka University)

This article examines the labor law issues concerning doctors who work at hospitals. They usually work long hours and are under stress. However, their labor situation has rarely been discussed with reference to labor law and there have been few legal disputes. In recent years, there has been a shortage of doctors in obstetrics and pediatrics, partly due to the severe labor situation of hospital physicians. This article examines the concept of employee, working hours, work-related accident and dismissal. Hospital physicians are employees and they are afforded the same legal protection as other employees (workers). Their professional character is taken into consideration only in some cases.

The Japanese Law School System: From the Perspective of Human Capital Investment Theory

Tomio Kinoshita (Musashi University)

A recent judicial reform in Japan has created a new law school system which came into effect in 2004. However, it has a serious drawback, which is the very low pass rate of the bar exam (27.6% in 2009). It takes 2 or 3 years and almost 100 thousand dollars for a student to finish law school. Therefore, under the new system, entering law school is a very costly and risky investment. The main cause of this low pass rate is that the Ministry of Education (MOE) has authorized too many law schools. This is probably because the MOE wished to see an increase in law schools because of their new graduate school policy, while many universities desired to have a law school for commercial reasons. It should be stressed that neither the MOE nor universities took into consideration the interest of the students who are the main human capital investors in the system. In terms of human capital investment, the pass rate of the bar exam should exceed around 80%. Students are risk-averse investors and without significant financial endowments. If the pass rate is too low, many excellent students who are risk averse will be discouraged from becoming lawyers. Therefore, there is an urgent need to reduce their capacity from 6000 to 4000.

Ph.D. as a Professional: Issues in the Early Careers of Doctorate Holders

Shinichi Kobayashi (University of Tsukuba)

This article examines the popular views on doctorate holders and post-docs based on academic investigations. The author describes the present situation of the early careers of doctorate holders in Japan, and examines the professions of doctorate holders. The author analyzes the status of the labor market for doctorate holders, in which there is sometimes judged to be an excess supply of doctorates. However, international benchmarks suggest that the labor market for doctorate holders in Japan is not unique, but similar to that in major western countries. The author introduces the new idea of doctorate holders as "one profession, multiple careers," which is different from either the traditional concept of doctorate holders or professionals. Based on this model, the author reexamines data on new entrants to doctoral programs. Although the simple new enrollment rate has fallen rapidly in recent years, the expectation of lifelong enrollment rate is not declining so much compared with the former indicator. Thus, the recent decline of new entrants to doctoral programs should not be seen as a signal of an adjustment to an excess supply of doctorate holders.