

Abstracts

The Changing Roles of Managers and Accompanying Issues: Examination Through Literature Review

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Managers are often criticized for failing to fulfill their expected roles. Responding to the question of whether the changing roles of managers have made it more difficult for them to fulfill their expected roles, this study uses a literature review to examine management roles and changes in these roles as well as the challenges posed by these changes. We note the following three findings from the literature review. First, while many manager roles have remained stable, the responsibility for departmental performance has become more burdensome with the newly added role of effective management of HR policies. Second, in addition, communication with subordinates, which takes up much of managers' time, has undergone a qualitative change from instruction to thoughtful two-way dialogue. Third, with these changes, the role of managers, which is characterized by considerable pressure and a busy work schedule, is more difficult because of a heavier workload and more pronounced conflict. Based on the above, we show that to support managers, there is a need to reexamine the support received from top management and human resources departments, as well as management roles and authority.

Comparative Study of Working Styles of Managers in Japan, the United States, and China: Suggestions for Japanese Companies Aiming to Introduce Job-type Employment

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In this study, we compare and analyze working styles of managers in Japan, the United States, and China using the "Survey on Managers in Five Countries" and "Survey on Human Relations in Five Countries" conducted by the Recruit Works Institute. In Japan, the role of managers is ambiguous, but their ability to deal with business uncertainties is high. Japanese managers and subordinates work in a similar way, and managers recognize themselves as employees rather than management members. In addition, their loyalty to the company and their intention to leave their jobs are low. In the U.S., the role of managers is clear and there are few business uncertainties. The attitude toward risk in the U.S. is positive compared to Japanese managers. For most comparison, Japan and the U.S. had opposite results. Chinese managers behaviors are partly similar to both Japanese and the U.S. managers. Managers with job descriptions in the U.S. and China have high loyalty to the company and low intentions to leave the company, while only Japanese managers with job descriptions had high intentions to leave the company.

Training for Senior Management Positions at Universities: Current Status and Prospects

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Even in universities, there is an increasing need for managers who will take the lead in management. One of the characteristics of university management is that it requires business management from both academic and management perspectives. The university organization is divided into a faculty group and a group of administrators and staff members, and the culture and values within the organization differ greatly. It is difficult to coordinate and integrate such a complex and multi-layered institution as an organization. In Japan, the training of senior university managers has fallen behind compared to other countries. Regarding business managers, there are still issues that make it difficult for mid-career employees to be promoted internally in national and public universities. Although training opportunities for senior academic managers have been enhanced, mainly at national universities, there is a tendency to avoid becoming a university president, which is a position that faces a great variety of worries.

Changes in Promotion Strategies for Managers in Japanese Firms

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Previous literature has suggested that “late promotion” in Japanese firms has merit; for example, it motivates workers to accumulate human capital for an extended period of time. However, it has recently been noted that “late promotion” can also be problematic due to the globalization of businesses and changes in the social environment, and the early selection of core human resources is gaining attention as an important management issue for Japanese firms. This article reviews the previous literature and surveys on recent changes in managerial promotion strategies in Japanese firms and discusses the theoretical background on, degree of penetration of, and characteristics of a new promotion style and the impact of these change on workers’ careers. The results suggest that early selection, which is the process of selecting candidates for future executive and management positions, is widespread to an extent, especially in large companies, through the allocation of job experiences necessary for skill accumulation. Three characteristics of the companies adopting early selection were confirmed. These companies are large-scale, are global, and have introduced performance-based systems. However, this result may be due to large companies becoming more active in early selection because of their past use of late promotion. The results from analyzing census wage data suggest that there has been a delay in managerial promotion in recent years. It is necessary to pay close attention to whether the introduction of early selection will continue and lead to the early promotion of managerial positions in Japanese firms.

Gender Inequality in Access to Managerial Positions from a Cross-national Comparative Perspective: The Role of Labor Markets and Welfare States

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This article looks at cross-national variation in gender inequality in transitions into managerial positions and explores the role of state-level institutions in shaping this gender gap across countries. From the “varieties of capitalism” perspective, we aim to discuss how the formation of firm-specific skills plays a significant role in making the transition into a managerial position and how opportunities to obtain firm-based training are allocated unequally between men and women. We also focus on welfare state policies that were planned to boost labor force participation among women, which generate a disadvantage for females in attaining high-authority positions in organizations. We need to account for two sets of factors in this paper, such as states as implementers of policies that help women with infants work outside the home and states as employers hiring these women for providing care-related services to women. Based on our considerations regarding the state-level institutional arrangements, we provide an overview of trends in the ratio of female managers to the total number of managers in each country between 2000 and 2019, using the International Labour Organisation database of labor statistics. Finally, we discuss the gender gap in access to higher-authority positions in Japan, based on a model of event history analyses combined with the decomposition technique as proposed by DiNardo and his collaborators.

Do “Staff Positions” Apply to “Positions of Supervision or Management” in Article 41 of the Labor Standards Act? Changes in the Employment Environment in Japan Should Be Considered

Masayuki Numata (Hosei University)

In the wake of the Nissan Motor Case, the question of whether “positions of supervision or management” in Article 41 of the Labor Standards Act are “staff positions (professional staff)” has come into focus again. This is because if a “staff position” applies to a “position of supervision or management,” the employer is exempt from paying extra wages. Since the employment environment in Japan is changing, such an interpretation should be accepted under certain conditions.

The Health of Administrative and Managerial Workers in Japan: Comparison with other Workers, Trends, and Future Tasks

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We present epidemiological data on the health status of managers from an analysis of national statistics, focusing on comparisons with other workers, trends, and future tasks. We analyzed self-rated health, prevalence of diabetes and hypertension, smoking habits, drinking habits, and mortality by occupations. We observed small differences that did not support the conclusion that managers were clearly in better health than other workers. The mortality rate of managers was lower than that of other occupations from the 1980s to the mid-1990s, but the mortality rate increased rapidly after the latter half of the 1990s. As a result, the pattern of differences in mortality was reversed after 2000. This tendency has continued, and the mortality rate of managers was relatively high compared to clerical and professional workers in 2015, unlike other highly industrialized countries. Such phenomena were peculiar to Japan and South Korea, and appeared to be triggered by economic crises in each country. However, the exact mechanism of the mortality increase remains unknown. There are few studies focusing on the health of female managers. Improving the accuracy of health statistics is an important future task for better understanding of health status among working-age generations in Japan.

Effects of Maternity Leave Duration on Female Employees' Work Satisfaction after Returning to Work

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Using data for women who gave birth after they joined their present firms, we examine the determinants of maternity leave duration and how this duration affects job satisfaction using an original questionnaire. The sample size is small (143), so caution is required in interpreting the results, but with regard to the determinants of job satisfaction, the main results are as follows. First, the longer the maternity leave becomes, the lower the job satisfaction, but we did not find that those who have high job satisfaction tend to get longer maternity leaves. Second, we did not find indirect effects of maternity leave on job satisfaction through changes of hourly wages, promotion expectations, and working hours. Third, taking maternity leave until the child becomes one year old was associated with the highest job satisfaction. Concerning these results, to make job satisfaction higher after a return from maternity leave, support is required to make it easy to take maternity leave until the child becomes one year old. We also suggest that job satisfaction can be made higher according to how work is assigned after a return from maternity leave.