

Abstracts

Female Labor from a Union Perspective

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With the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law and the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace, there has been considerable progress in realizing equality in the workplace, and in terms of numbers, the promotion of women seems to have increased accordingly. However, it is questionable whether participation by women is progressing in the true sense of the word. In this paper, based on issues in the distribution industry (one, the ratio of female managers; two, long working hours; three, construction of personnel systems and organizational culture; and four, employee awareness), the following three courses of action are proposed as solutions: first, equal pay for equal work (treatment) ; second, changing awareness among male and female employees and managers; and third, realizing single categories of employment and freedom in work styles. Many women are employed at workplaces in the distribution and retail industry, and participation by women in this industry has been progressing for some time. Nevertheless, although I have been tackling these issues myself for more than 20 years, there is still a mountain of problems needing to be resolved. Revisions of the law will contribute to the realization of equality, but it is working people themselves who will change the reality at worksites. Equality cannot be achieved without effort and changes in awareness by the people involved. Moreover, labor unions should also face up to the fact that the unions themselves, which have been demanding gender equality from management, have become the most unequal organizations in terms of gender, and realize equality in their own organizations. Both labor and management need leaders who can formulate policies to raise the awareness of the people involved and realize equality, as well as transpose these policies to more concrete levels of action.

Gender Equality in the Workplace from the Legal Perspective: Current Situation and Issues of the Japanese Equal Employment Opportunity Act

Hiroya Nakakubo (Hitotsubashi University)

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA), which is at the center of Japan's gender equality legislation, evolved from its previous one-sided nature into a law prohibiting discrimination "on the basis of sex" regardless of gender with the 2006 amendments to the law. And the enactment of the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace in 2015 has brought the legal system to a state of completion. However, as "equality" legislation, EEOA still has issues to be addressed. For example, the items subject to the prohibition of discrimination are enumerated rather than comprehensively defined, and wages are left to Article 4 of the Labor Standards Act; the rules for proving discrimination have not been established; the subject of indirect discrimination is narrowly defined by ministerial ordinance; the prohibition of disadvantageous treatment of pregnancy and childbirth is not clearly situated as a measure for equality; the same is true of the employer's duty regarding sexual harassment. In the future, further strengthening of the law, including remedies for violations, should be considered.

Gender Inequality in Japan: Focusing on the Determinants of Gender Wage Gap

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This article analyzes the determinants of gender wage gap in Japan. The article clarifies that gender inequality of opportunity in promotion to managerial/administrative positions, the custom of long working hours, and gender segregation of professional occupations are among the major determinants. Furthermore, the article also shows that firms' personnel management policies also affect gender wage gap, and the fact that the policy that "encourages employees to fulfill their potential regardless of gender" (gender equality of opportunity policy) is crucial and that the policy to support employees' work-life balance is "a double-edged sword" which has opposite effects on gender wage

gap depending on the presence/absence of the gender equality of opportunity policy. Finally, with some additional insights from recent trends, the article discusses policy implications of the findings toward a realization of gender-equal society.

Career Differences between Men and Women as Seen from an Examination of Indexes of Women's Participation

Akira Wakisaka (Gakushuin University)

This paper identifies a number of points to keep in mind regarding indicators of gender equality. One is the problem of overly high ratios of women and ratios of women in management positions. If the ratio of women is too high, it means that women are unevenly distributed in certain fields, which indicates that occupational segregation on the basis of gender is progressing. This is why it is desirable to use the “managerial appointment ratio,” which is the ratio of male and female managers divided by the ratio of male and female employees. From this, it can be seen that the ratio is high in the construction industry and transport and postal activities industry, where the ratio of women is low, while it is low in the finance and insurance industry. Therefore, measures are needed to increase recruitment itself in the former industries, and to address the problem of promotion to managerial positions in the latter. In addition, the definition of a managerial position varies from country to country, and in Japan, the percentage of employees who are classified as managers tends to be low to begin with. The narrow range of the scope of managerial positions is shown in data from the OECD, which has prepared a set of definitions. The reason for focusing on promotion to managerial positions is that it is an important factor in the male-female wage gap. There are two main points regarding why women are not gaining promotion to managerial positions. The first is the implementation of training in the workplace, such as on-the-job training (OJT), in the same way for men and women. There is a problem of insufficient research that thoroughly examines the careers of men and women and the actual status of OJT at the workplace level. The second is to allow flexible work styles common to both men and women. Increasing flexibility in the time and place of work can be expected to be effective for workers who face constraints such as household chores and childcare.

The Decision-Making Process and its Effect on Job Transfers in Double-income Families

Haruka Koyama (Hosei University)

This paper examines the decision-making process and its effect on job transfers in double-income families, which have been increasing in recent years in Japan, and elucidates the decision-making mechanism based on cognitive dissonance and cultural variation. There are two phases in the decision-making process regarding a job transfer. The first phase occurs when deciding to accept the company's order of a job transfer, and the second phase occurs when deciding whether or not the partner will quit his/her job and whether or not the family will move together. In the first phase, subjects had a sense of values and feelings regarding the job transfer system, which had been formed through their past experience. Also, regardless of whether their feelings regarding the job transfer system were positive or negative, they had discomfort and resistance to the job transfer system. However, they had a tacit perception that they would lose an opportunity for promotion if they did not accept the order. This perception overwhelmed their discomfort and resistance to the job transfer system and led to a decision to accept the company's order. The results of this research show that an endless loop of cognitive dissonance occurs in the decision-making process, and a cultural characteristic of an interdependent view of the self affects the occurrence of cognitive dissonance.

Organizational Adaptation, Work Engagement and Retention of Mid-Career New-Comers in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Japan

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In this study, we investigated the factors that promote adaptation, commitment and work engagement of mid-career new-comers in Japanese SMEs. Also, we analyzed the effects of these factors on their willingness to continue working at the companies. As

the result of the analyses, it was clarified that the support from the supervisor strongly promotes the understanding of the organization and enhances the attachment to the organization as an organizational adaptation for mid-career new-comers in SMEs. It was also revealed that as the understanding of the organizational policy and the motivation to work increase, the willingness to continue working in the organization also increases. In addition, it was shown that their work engagement enhance both job satisfaction and willingness to continue working. The results of analyses suggested that, in many SMEs, only boss support may work in the organizational adaptation of mid-career new-comers. In order to solve these problems, SMEs should build and share measures and initiatives that can be implemented by employees other than their supervisors in organizational adaptation (e.g. co-workers, mentors). As a labor policy, it may be a good idea to permanently hold seminars to support for the organizational adaptation of mid-career new-comers working in SMEs.

Wage Determination for Agency Workers through Collective Agreements in Sweden

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In the name of “equal pay for equal work,” efforts are being made in Japan to correct disparities in treatment between types of employment. This covers a wide range of non-regular workers, from directly employed fixed-term contract workers to indirectly employed workers. Such a movement has already been seen in European countries. However, the actual situation of treatment and their impact on industrial relations have not been clear. Therefore, this paper first clarifies the rules of wage determination for agency workers in Sweden, and then considers the impact of these rules on the structure of Swedish industrial relations. The findings of this paper are as follows. (1) Wages of agency workers are determined based on collective agreements. (2) Agreements are concluded between central-level unions and employer’s organizations of agency workers, and cross-cutting rules are formed from manufacturing to non-manufacturing industries. (3) Wages of agency workers are determined by the average wage of workers who are directly employed by user company. (4) Unlike regular employees, wage negotiations are not conducted in the workplace for agency workers. Thus, there is no scope for negotiation of the wages level of agency workers at company level. The diversification of forms of employment is an aspect contributing to centralization of industrial relations in Sweden. The above findings indicate that although Swedish industrial relations continue to show a tendency toward dispersion, there is progress in dispersion accompanied by centralization, rather than decentralization only.

Diversity and Collective Labor-Management Communication: Function of the Collective Voice of Minorities

Tamie Matsuura (Hosei University)

The main concern of this paper is the question of how collective labor-management communication can function effectively under conditions of worker diversity. From a worker's perspective, for example, how can diverse minority groups within a larger group such as a corporation speak as a group and increase the influence of their voices within the corporation, and how can this be achieved? Through interview surveys of minority groups, this paper examines the ways in which minorities can effectively have a “collective voice” in expressing and adjusting their opinions. As an example of a minority group exhibiting the function of a collective voice, I also focus on employee resource groups (ERGs), which is a type of employee organization that has developed mainly in global companies in Western countries. The interview survey subjects were ERGs, employee organizations that are not ERGs, and labor union-led activities. The main issues and suggestions extracted from the interview surveys are as follows. First, the negative influence on the collective voice due to homogenization accompanying deep internalization, and of regular staff transfers. Second, initiatives that encourage self-growth and organizational change activate the collective voice of minority groups. Third, the mobility and collective voice skills of active members become more important

because of the minority status of a group. Fourth, the limitations of ERGs and employee organizations, and the role of labor unions. Fifth, diversification of those who bear the collective voice of minority groups, and expectations for future synergies.

Effects of Caregiver Fatigue and Stress on Employment in Balancing Work and Care:
Focusing on the Potential for Turnover and Presenteeism

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The number of caregivers among all workers is increasing, and since the number of those leaving the workforce has not changed, it can be assumed that many workers continue to work while dealing with caregiving without leaving their job. Thus far, attention has been focused on “caregiving turnover,” but in the future it will be essential to focus on the majority who do not leave their job and continue working. One concern in this regard is a decline in work performance. This paper examines the effects of caregiver fatigue and stress on employment among the majority who are balancing work and care, and specifically focuses on an analysis of the potential for turnover and presenteeism. The results of the analysis suggest that caregiver fatigue and stress affect the potential for turnover and presenteeism, and that there are differences in the effects between men and women, as well as differences depending on the nature of the caregiver fatigue and stress. There is a need for companies to strive to establish measures for the majority who will continue to work in the future.