

Abstracts

Transformation and Persistence in Japanese Youth Labor Market

Yasutaka Fukui (Nagoya University)

This paper looks back on youth labor from a long-term perspective and examines the challenges faced. While youth employment measures initiated around 2000 have provided support for young people in precarious employment and strengthened the function of the new graduate labor market, the Japanese employment practice of hiring new graduates immediately after graduation from a high school or university has remained. After the Lehman Shock, the employment rate of new graduates, especially female new graduates from technical schools and universities, has been recovering. Although the labor demand for regular employees is also recovering, there has been no significant change in the tendency of young people to leave the workplace early. Low income and poor working conditions are the main reasons for young regular employees leaving their jobs, and these reasons are increasing among young female workers in particular. The share of nonregular employment has been slightly increasing among young male workers and shrinking among young female workers. Among young people, there has been no increase in the share of young people changing from regular to nonregular employment, and the rate of unemployment among young people has increased slightly. While the number of middle-aged and older workers in regular employment is increasing, there is no indication that the share of regular employees among young people is declining. In changing youth labor circumstances, we must reexamine the explanation of youth labor formed during the “ice age” of youth employment and consider wage disparity based on employment status and employment support with income security.

Why Are Young People Leaving Good Workplaces?

Shoto Furuya (Recruit Works Institute)

The issue of early resignation among young workers in Japan is a multifaceted problem influenced by changes in the labor market, legal reforms, and the internal training environments of companies. Despite improvements in working conditions such as reduced working hours and a more positive communication style within companies, early resignation rates among young employees, especially at large companies, have not decreased as expected. This phenomenon is partly attributed to the duality of reasons for resignation: some young workers leave due to feeling overwhelmed (“too hard”), while others leave in search of greater challenge (“too easy”). Furthermore, the amount of social experience before joining a company significantly impacts young workers’ perceptions of their jobs and career satisfaction. However, more social experience before employment does not directly correlate with lower resignation rates. Instead, it introduces complexity to the young workers’ engagement and retention. To retain and empower young workers, workplaces must foster both psychological and career safety. Psychological safety encourages open communication and risk-taking, while career safety assures employees of growth and marketability. Both factors are crucial for enhancing work engagement and reducing turnover intentions. This understanding of resignation and retention among young workers highlights the need for tailored approaches that consider individual experience, labor market dynamics, and labor law changes.

Emerging Legal Issues in Job Hunting Among the Younger Generation: Clarifying Issues Stemming From Internships as an Unspoken Initial Selection Stage

Hiroaki Konya (Kumamoto University)

It is widely known that much of the later stage of university life in Japan is spent on job hunting. A new institution of job hunting called the internship has now emerged as an initial selection stage. Through internships, employers ‘pre-select’ students ‘individually’ to understand their employability and vice versa for students. This system fundamentally aims to avoid early resignation due to the incompatibility, but raises several issues such as fairness in determining eligibility and possible deprivation of trial periods for students. The question is whether current employment laws providing legal

protection for new workers in the pre/early stages of their employment are sufficient enough to support them in this new tide of job hunting. Job hunting is transforming at a fast pace from group-oriented methods long supported by universities or companies to an individual approach through new systems such as internships. New employment laws may be necessary in the near future to measure up to the new era and protect students being judged individually and not as a group.

Empowering New Female Graduates: Investigating the Impact of Pre-Employment Career Perspective and Post-Employment Environmental Factors on Career Development

Misa Takasaki (Ochanomizu University)

The Japanese government has promoted policies to encourage active participation by women in professional life, but the results have not been as promising as hoped. Women are less motivated to advance in their careers than men. Efforts to motivate women toward promotion have had limited results, indicating the need for a new approach. This study focuses on the early stages of a woman's career, which has not received much attention in the context of women's promotion, and seeks answers to two important questions: 1) What is the career development trajectory of women in the early stages of their careers? and 2) Does the trajectory of career development differ by gaps in this early career perspective, and if so, how? Through analysis of longitudinal survey data using a multigroup confirmatory path analysis, this study draws the conclusion that aspirations for career development prior to entering the workforce significantly affect the ability of both men and women to gain meaningful work experience. Women's career perspective varied, with some having somewhat negative career perspective. Individualized training and support in the early stages of women's careers can effectively promote their career development.

Short-Cycle Higher Education and Occupational Career: Focus on the Link between Fields of Study and Occupational Qualifications

Hirofumi Taki (The University of Tokyo)

In this paper, we focus on short-cycle higher education and occupational careers since the mid-1970s, with a focus on the link between fields of study and occupational qualifications. We utilize data obtained through an online monitor survey targeting individuals who attended Professional Training Colleges (PTCs) and Junior Colleges (JCs) born between 1957 and 1986. The results of our basic analysis align with previous studies that used reliable data and found that PTC graduates are more likely to work in relatively small-sized companies or become professionals, while female JC graduates are more likely to work in large companies or clerical positions. We also verified that PTC graduates have lower current unemployment rates compared to JC graduates. Based on these results, we further examined the relationship between educational backgrounds and careers by categorizing them into vocational qualification related or non-related based on field of study. As a result, vocational qualification was closely associated with becoming a professional or having a regular employment position for current status among only women and not for men. The fact that whether the field was qualification-related was clearly linked to career differences among women suggests that under Japanese employment practices where company-specific skill formation predominates, women are compelled to have a clear awareness of their careers. Amid the shrinking pie of stable employment opportunities, designing the relationship between education and occupational qualifications in the future is a challenge.

A Comprehensive Analysis of Job Support and Early Career Development for College Graduates

Minoru Tazawa (Hosei University)

This paper provides a comprehensive perspective on the relationship between employment support for university graduates and their early careers. The main findings are as follows: first, based on government statistics, it was shown that there are differences in the timing of job offers and employment rates depending on the field of study, region, and university administration. In particular, it was shown that male liberal arts students

attending private universities outside the Kanto area tend to experience delays in receiving job offers, potentially increasing their risk of unemployment. Additionally, it was shown that students majoring in arts, dentistry, fashion, and pharmacy have lower employment rates. Second, a review of prior research found that a good relationship with supervisors and recognizing changes through job-seeking activities inhibit resignation. This suggests that the early careers of university graduates involve not only the active involvement of supervisors after entering the workforce but also the potential involvement of career center counselors and faculty members before employment. Third, it suggests that informing unemployed graduates that they can use the New Graduate Support Hello Work program provided by the government may lead to more new graduates using Hello Work. This indicates that public employment services function according to the situation faced by university graduates.

Effects of Career Education on Obtaining Initial Employment in the Japanese Youth Labor Market

Tomotaka Hirao (Setsunan University)

This study examines the effect of career education on obtaining initial employment in the Japanese youth labor market. Since the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s, the Japanese government has promoted higher education reforms with the aim of creating career development programs for university students. In response to this policy, Japanese universities have reformed their educational functions, including developing career-oriented education, career guidance, and internships. However, there is little evidence regarding the effects of such career education in Japanese universities on various labor market outcomes in the Japanese youth labor market. Basically, measuring the impact of education on labor market outcomes is difficult because of data limitations. Even if the details of the education that students are currently receiving can be observed, obtaining information on labor market outcomes is a laborious job. Conversely, even though some information on various labor market outcomes is available, information on the education that individuals received in the past is very difficult to obtain. Although this study does not fully eliminate these limits, empirical results of this study show that the effect of career education on obtaining initial employment in the Japanese youth labor market is barely distinguishable from zero. However, career education can promote students' understanding of career development in areas such as knowledge of employment rights and public pensions. Additional discussion is required in the future to refine the estimation and definition of the impact of career education in Japanese universities.