

Abstracts

Time Poverty Research: Measurement Methods and Challenges

Kunio Urakawa (Kyushu University)

People's working patterns and lifestyles vary enormously, both across households and among members of the same household. Even when income and assets are sufficient, there are cases in which, due to various factors, it is not possible to secure enough time for essential family life activities, such as housework, family care (including childcare, eldercare, and similar activities), and personal care, resulting in a significant deterioration in quality of life. This is referred to as "time poverty." This paper examines the Levy Institute Measure of Time and Income Poverty (LIMTIP), developed by a research group at the Levy Economics Institute, and the Interdependent Multidimensional Poverty (IMDP) approach proposed by Merz and Rathjen (2014) as methods for measuring time poverty, and considers the characteristics of these indicators and examples of their application in practice. Focusing in particular on research that examines how public policy in areas such as childcare, education, and eldercare relates to ensuring adequate time for family life, the paper also reviews representative recent studies on time poverty, discussing an overview of their findings as well as future challenges and prospects. Measuring poverty with a focus on quality of life leads us to reconsider the ways in which people work and organize family life.

Gender Inequality in Time Use in Japan: Current Research, Challenges, and Future Directions

Minoru Yagishita (Bukkyo University)

This paper argues that studies on gender inequality in time use should consider various aspects of time. Previous studies on gender inequality in time use have relied heavily on the total amount of time spent on activities, such as housework or market labor. However, time can be analyzed from multiple perspectives, including when, where, in what way, and for how long it is spent. In this paper, the first part provides an explanation of how people spend their time in contemporary Japan. It goes on to compare the time spent on market labor, housework, and childcare, as well as their timings, to show the importance of other aspects of time when assessing gender inequality in time use. This leads to the conclusion that although time-use research has revealed gender inequality from multiple perspectives, it has failed to integrate its findings into a theory, thus impeding comprehensive sociological research.

Assessing Telework: Implications from Changes over Time in the Japanese Panel Study of Employment Dynamics

Koichi Kume (Toyo University)

Makiko Hagihara (Recruit Works Institute)

This paper provides an overview of research into how the spread of teleworking in Japan has changed people's lives and work, and analyzes the progress and impact of teleworking by comparing 2016 and 2024 using the Japanese Panel Study of Employment Dynamics (JPSED) conducted by Recruit Works Institute. Our analysis revealed that, against the backdrop of work style reforms and the COVID-19 pandemic, telework adoption rates and hours are increasing, particularly among mid-career employees and in urban areas. As institutional support for teleworking has become more established, there has been a qualitative change from the traditional way of working in which people with time constraints work overtime from home to a more flexible way of working centering on working from home. From a lifestyle perspective, teleworking has resulted in a shift in time allocation, and a tendency for life satisfaction and job satisfaction to increase, especially among married people, has been confirmed. However, an increase in time spent on housework and childcare cannot be explained solely by the presence of teleworking, and no significant changes were observed in the division of roles between men and women. In terms of work, teleworkers had a higher proportion of core work, and greater autonomy and flexibility in their work style were associated with increased satisfaction. On the other hand, hybrid teleworkers were shown to have a lower sense of growth. With regard to well-being,

differences between occupations and gender were larger than differences for teleworkers, suggesting the need for consideration of mental and physical health issues and insufficient sleep. These results suggest that while teleworking contributes to increased life satisfaction, new challenges must also be addressed, such as managing the boundaries between work and home, restructuring workplace design and management, and ensuring well-being.

Nonstandard Work Hours and Health-Related Behaviors among Employees in Japan

Tomohiro Takami (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training)

This study examines the relationship between nonstandard work hours and health-related behaviors among employees in Japan. As the service economy expands, a considerable number of workers are employed outside standard daytime hours, including evening, night, and early morning periods. Previous studies have documented associations between shift work and various health outcomes, but fewer studies have focused on how specific work schedules relate to daily health behaviors. Using data from the first wave of the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training Longitudinal Survey of Individuals (JILLS-*i*), this study analyzes regular employees to investigate whether working during nonstandard hours is associated with unhealthy behaviors. Nonstandard work hours are categorized into evening work (18:00–22:00), night work (22:00–5:00), and early morning work (5:00–8:00). Logistic regression models are used to examine their associations with smoking, drinking, skipping breakfast, and lack of restorative sleep. The results show that lack of restorative sleep is significantly associated with all three types of nonstandard work hours. Skipping breakfast is associated with evening and night work, while drinking is associated with early morning work. No significant association is found between nonstandard work hours and smoking. These findings suggest that nonstandard work hours may influence workers' health behaviors through differences in daily time use and sleep patterns.

Examination of the Discussion Surrounding Mandatory Daily Rest Periods

Yukiko Ishizaki (Yokohama National University)

The European Union (EU) Working Time Directive establishes regulations for daily rest periods, whereas in Japan, employers are merely required to endeavor to ensure such rest periods. The provision imposing a duty to endeavor on employers was added through the 2018 amendment to the Act on Special Measures for Improvement of Working Hours Arrangements, and the government has subsequently promoted the introduction of a work interval system. However, the proportion of companies implementing it remains low. Discussions regarding the mandatory implementation of daily rest periods had been conducted throughout the legislative process, the policy formulation process, and in academic circles, but no unified direction has been established. This paper examines the content of the EU Directive and Japan's current systems and policies, alongside discussions within the Diet, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's advisory councils and research groups, and academia concerning the regulation of work intervals. Following clarification of the key issues relating to mandating daily rest periods, it is argued that work interval regulations hold significant importance not only for safeguarding health but also for ensuring private time. Consequently, the system should be designed to apply to all workers, with the principle of securing a work interval of 11 hours or more. However, derogations based on collective agreements between labor and management should be permitted in response to operational constraints or other circumstances, provided that compensatory rest is secured. The paper concludes by noting that the mandatory implementation of daily rest periods should be advanced in stages, and that efforts should first be made to promote consultations between labor and management regarding the content of desirable work interval systems.

The Concept of Work-Relatedness in Working Hours: An Analysis of Case Law Involving Non-Job Activities such as Self-Directed Learning, Training, and Business Meals

Koichi Tominaga (Sophia University)

This paper examines the concept of "work-relatedness" (*shokumusei*) as a key criterion for determining working hours under the Labor Standards Act and separately under labor

accident compensation standards. Focusing on court decisions involving non-job activities such as training, self-directed learning, and business meals, the paper analyzes how working hours are differently assessed in overtime wage claims and in labor accident or tort cases. Under prevailing case law, working hours are defined as time spent under the employer's control, and according to a leading theory, two factors play central roles: employer involvement and work-relatedness. However, some scholars note that the notion of working hours in labor accident determinations may diverge from that used in overtime wage litigation. The paper argues that overtime cases place greater emphasis on explicit employer instructions, while cases related to labor accidents more readily recognize working hours based on the unavoidability of an activity or the physical and psychological burdens it imposes. From subtle differences observed in court decisions, the paper suggests that work-relatedness encompasses several dimensions: the activity's connection to job duties, the workload, and whether the activity benefits the employer. Because overtime regulations target financial compensation in addition to health and safety, whereas labor accident law focuses mainly on health and safety, the outcomes may differ, which reflects the relative nature of the concept of working hours across legal contexts.

Challenges and Improvement Measures for Japan's Approach to Rest and Work

Haruka Shibata (Kyoto University)

The rise in overwork and stagnant labor productivity in Japan stems from challenges in how people rest (the quantity and quality of holidays and rest time). First, regarding holidays, in a comparison of OECD countries, Japan has fewer days of paid leave taken (quantity) and a higher proportion of statutory holidays, which leads to overcrowding (low quality). Promoting solutions like flexible holidays, where employees can freely choose alternative days instead of statutory holidays, would be effective. Next, regarding rest time, sleep duration in Japan is the shortest among OECD countries, falling below the 8 hours necessary for maintaining brain function. Lack of sleep reduces cognitive abilities to a level equivalent to being under the influence of alcohol, hindering productivity. Empirical research in Japan indicates that shortening working hours through digitalization and other means to ensure adequate sleep leads to improved corporate profit margins. The background to this lack of sleep is the current practice of companies prioritizing overtime over digital investment due to the low overtime premium rate of 25%, leading to long working hours. To achieve an optimal time allocation of 8 hours of work, 8 hours of sleep, and 8 hours of leisure for the average person, raising the overtime premium rate to the Western standard of 50% would effectively encourage digitalization. Reducing working hours would attract Japan's women and youth—whose intellectual capabilities rank among the world's highest—along with highly skilled talent from Western countries. This would bring secondary benefits in terms of alleviating labor shortages and boosting productivity. Furthermore, promoting the adoption of flexible working hours and time-based paid leave would enhance the quality of both work and leisure time. These improvements in how people rest can be expected to help resolve the challenges of overwork and low productivity facing Japanese society.

Who Prefers to Work in the Public Sector? An Examination of Sociodemographic Factors and Values Based on a Student Survey

Itaru Yanagi (Ritsumeikan University)

Yoshiaki Kubo (Kwansei Gakuin University)

Koichi Kawai (University of Tsukuba)

Masaki Hata (Osaka University of Economics)

This study examines preferences for public sector employment among university students in Japan using a large-scale student survey conducted in 2023. The survey targeted university students who had not yet decided on their post-graduation career path, regardless of whether they initially preferred public employment. While declining interest in civil service careers has attracted growing attention, research in Japan has rarely used large-scale multi-university data, and the effects of sociodemographic factors and values in shaping public sector preferences have not been comprehensively examined. To provide more generalizable evidence, this study analyzes survey data from multiple universities

that produce a relatively large number of successful candidates for the National Public Service Comprehensive Examination. The analysis shows that preferences for public sector employment are systematically associated with both sociodemographic factors and values. Women, students whose parents have less than a university degree, those with parents employed in the public sector, and students from non-metropolitan areas are more likely to prefer public employment. Household income is not significantly related to a preference for the public sector. Regarding values, higher public service motivation, lower emphasis on high income, a stronger preference for job stability, and higher ethical standards increase the likelihood of preferring a public sector career. Lower extraversion and openness are also associated with preferring the public sector, whereas work-life balance orientation and intrinsic motivation are not.