Empirical Analysis of Social Norms and Female Labor Supply

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　　　　　　（社会規範と女性の労働供給に関する実証分析）

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論 文 内 容 の 要 旨
Abstract

　　This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive review of the literature related to changes in female labor force participation rates (FLFPRs) in Japan and the U.S. over recent decades with attempts to draw insights from these two labor markets displaying quite different trajectories. Existing research has emphasized policy, employment structure, and preferences. A review of the literature suggests that family-friendly policies are responsible for the widely differing FLFPRs of Japan and the United States. The lack of policy support makes it difficult for U.S. women to return to the labor force after childbirth. In contrast, FLFPR in Japan has increased steadily with the introduction of a series of family-friendly policies. Furthermore, this survey reveals that Japan does not exhibit more favorable outcomes in the female labor market than the United States. The influx of women into the Japanese labor market is rarely to fill high paying or managerial positions. Results show that a preference for traditional gender norms is at the root of this phenomenon. Our review of the existing literature in this chapter led us to perform the following analysis as discussed in Chapters 2 through 5.

　　Chapter 2 investigates how the gender gap is associated with social norms. Specifically, within the context of gender roles, this chapter examine the social norm that wives should not earn more than their husbands. We estimate a model that explains wives' labor force participation in terms of the probability of wives earning more than their husbands by applying an estimation procedure that accounts for potential bias arising from self-selection into employment. Since the impact of social norms can vary in different cultural contexts, we compare the estimation results using datasets obtained from surveys conducted in Japan and the U.S.—representing Eastern and Western cultures, respectively. Our results indicate that a 10 percentage point increase in the probability of wives earning more than their husbands is associated with an 8 percentage point decrease in their labor force participation rate in Japan, whereas the probability of wives earning more is not significant when the model is estimated using U.S. data. Thus, wives' labor force participation decisions can be related to the social norm more closely in Japan than in the U.S., reflecting the different social status of women in these countries.

　　Chapter 3 presents empirical examination of gender role effects on female labor market performance conducted using pooled Japanese General Social Surveys (JGSS) data from

2000–2006. The findings show that a prefecture with more traditional gender role perceptions is less likely to have women in paid jobs with high earnings. Although gender norms are transmitted between generations and are stable, they can still be affected by social circumstances and individual socioeconomic experiences. Using prefectural assemblywoman's share as an instrumental variable for prefectural gender role attitudes, it is apparent that a higher share of assemblywoman is associated with more modern gender role attitudes in that prefecture, resulting in higher female labor force participation and earnings.

Chapter 4 Using microdata collected from the JHPS and the KHPS, this study examines the relation between married couples' relative incomes and their respective reports of subjective well-being. It further divides the sample into four groups according to the husband's and wife's income patterns. Estimation results revealed that, in a scenario where traditional gender norms are maintained and preferred, a wife with a higher potential income is least likely to feel satisfied and happy. However, her husband is most likely to report a high level of satisfaction and happiness, and is least likely to report low self-esteem.

Chapter 5 investigates the gender gap in the relationship between receiving college education and wages in Japan, using a dataset that contains detailed information about the universities from which the respondents graduated. In particular, we focus on the ranking of colleges. We find that obtaining a college degree is positively correlated for both men and women in economic terms, but this relationship is stronger for men than for women. Moreover, graduating from a high-ranking college is positively and significantly associated with male workers only. Further, the relationship between attending a high ranking college and female's spousal wage is positive and significant. Thus, opportunities in obtaining higher education benefits are most likely related to the different pathways that men and women take for economic success.

Chapter 6 summarizes the preceding chapters that support the view that gender role related social norms play a role in the outcomes of female labor markets. Traditional social norms discourage women from entering the labor market and engaging in paid work, and further prevent them from fully realizing their labor market potential. Furthermore, women who are unable to realize their labor market potential due to avoiding violations of traditional social norms exhibit low subjective well-being. Moreover, the wage premium of top universities is negligible for women compared to men, providing a new perspective on the existing labor market gender gap.