

Tentative title of communication

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THE MALE-FEMALE WAGE DIFFERENTIAL GAP BETWEEN JAPAN AND FRANCE IN 1990s

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From the 1980s through the 1990s, a trend of diminishing wage differentials between men and women has been observed in the industrialized countries. Despite awareness of the differences in labor market characteristics and wage determination mechanisms between the industrialized nations, the trend of narrowing in the male-female wage gap is a phenomenon widely observed in the industrialized states. Nevertheless, although this diminishing wage gap between men and women is thus a tendency broadly seen, when examined in terms of the absolute value of male-female wage differential the disparities between the industrialized countries continue to be profound.

With regard to Japan as well, while a tendency for the male-female wage differential to diminish surfaced from around the mid-1980s, it has also been pointed out that in terms of the absolute value of the wage disparity between men and women the gap is quite wide even among the ranks of the industrialized countries. France, meanwhile, is known as an industrialized nation where the male-female wage differential is low. In this category, in fact, France ranks on a par with the Scandinavian countries, Australia and New Zealand (Blau and Kahn, 1995).

The objective of this paper is to compare the male-female wage differential in France, an industrialized country where this disparity is conspicuously small, and Japan, where that gap is notably wide. In doing so, we wish to explore the reasons that the male-female wage differentials in Japan is large compared to that in France.

For the means used to perform this analysis, famed as an approach normally used in international comparisons of male-female wage gaps is the econometric method developed by Juhn, Murphy and Pierce (1991), and applied by Blau and Kahn (1992, 1995) in drawing international comparisons of wage differentials between men and women. The advantage of this method is that it targets age, years of services, academic background and other statistically observable factors believed to exert influence on the wage coefficient, while at the same time providing the ability to analyze the impact of factors which cannot be statistically observed.