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RISING HETEROGENEITY IN THE PH.D. LABOR FORCE: THE KOREAN CASE

Abstract:

Studies examining demographic composition and labor market condition have mainly focused on the relatively vulnerable workforce in the labor market. However, as the knowledge-based economy makes strides and skilled professionals become more important, it has become necessary to systematically analyze the composition of the skilled labor force as well as their occupational activity. Accordingly, OECD and Eurostat launched a pioneering global data project named 'Careers and Mobility of Doctorate Holders.' In 2013, comprehensive surveys of Korean doctorate holders were carried out as a part of the project. Based on the data produced by the project, this paper analyzes the structural changes occurring in the career patterns of Korean doctorate holders in the fields of science and engineering(S&E). This study addresses the questions posed by Lee, Miozzo & Laredo (2010) who observed that doctorate holders' career patterns are becoming more diversified. However, while they focused on the analysis of the relationships between the doctorate holders' working sectors and their job-related competencies based on surveys of a small number of generations, this study presents the changes in career patterns of different generations based on surveys of multiple generations. Since the Korean data includes retrospective questions about the first and previous careers of the whole population of doctorate holders, the data can be used to compare the differences in career paths among different generations. The results indicate that the career patterns of S&E doctorate holders are undergoing noticeable changes in terms of various aspects including employment sector, job security and major activities, and that the career differences between fields of science and engineering are becoming more significant.

Keywords:

doctorate holders, CDH project, Korea, career patterns

JEL Classification: J00, J44, J24