

Glass ceilings or sticky floors?

An analysis of the gender wage gap across the wage distribution in Japan

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Abstract

This study examines the gender wage gap across the wage distribution in Japan using data for the years 1990 to 2014. The results of the Firpo–Fortin–Lemieux decomposition show that, in Japan, the part of the observed gender gap that is not explained by gendered differences in human capital is larger at the top and at the bottom of the wage distribution, indicating that both a glass ceiling and a sticky floor exist for women in the labor market. Furthermore, this study also finds that while the gender wage gap has been declining over the period 1990–2014 at all quantiles of the wage distribution, the proportion of the gender gap unexplained by differences in human capital has increased. This result suggests that labor market discrimination has not disappeared and persists today.

Keywords: gender wage gap, glass ceiling, sticky floor
JEL Classification Code: J31, J72, J24

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