Research on cases of continued employment of persons with developmental disabilities whose disabilities were identified by employers after they were hired

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[Keywords]

Developmental Disabilities

Post-Employment

Post-Hiring

Developmental Disabilities Identified Post-Employment

Continuation of Employment

Employer Support

Reasonable Accommodation

Occupational Life Issues and Responses

Triggers for Medical Examination

Employment of Persons with Developmental Disabilities

[Abstract]

The purpose of this research was to clarify what kind of support is needed for employers who hire employees with developmental disabilities by looking at cases where employers identified employees as having developmental disabilities after they were hired and worked to resolve workplace accommodation issues so that the employees could continue to work.

The research results showed that the main problems in occupational life were those related to work performance and communication caused by the characteristics of the disability, and that the companies that solved the problems and were able to continue employing the employees were those that "reviewed work instruction methods", "created tasks that the employee could perform", and "explained the rules of the workplace and any annoyances the employee felt and communicated desired responses". In addition, many companies tended to deal with the problems by limiting the range of duties, rather than making major changes to the job description. In the process of diagnosis and disclosure of developmental

disabilities, the presence of supervisors, human resources staff, occupational physicians, and other occupational health staff with knowledge of developmental disabilities and good understanding had a positive impact on diagnosis and disclosure.

The first step in support is to understand employees whose developmental disabilities are identified after they are hired and whose problems become apparent as a result of the interaction between their overlooked characteristics and the environment. It is expected that the discussion of desirable support and consideration will be deepened in conjunction with the development of human resources (supervisors and co-workers) who can provide support and consideration by staying close to these employees, being patient, not giving up, taking time, being careful, and building relationships of trust.

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2　Research Period

FY2022 - FY2023

3　Composition of the Research Report

Chapter 1: Background and Issues

Chapter 2: Questionnaire Research

Chapter 3: Company Hearings

Chapter 4: Summary

Endnotes

4　Background and Purpose of the Research

With the enactment of the Act on Support for Persons with Developmental Disabilities in April 2005, support for persons with developmental disabilities has been enhanced, and although knowledge is accumulating regarding issues in the workplace and measures to be taken for continued employment, most previous studies have focused on persons employed as persons with developmental disabilities.

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to organize the process of identifying developmental disabilities and the process of problem solving through cases in which employers identified employees with developmental disabilities after hiring and worked to resolve issues related to workplace accommodations in order for them to continue working, and to clarify what support is needed for employers who hire employees whose developmental disabilities are identified after hiring (hereinafter referred to as the employees in question).

5　Method

(1) Questionnaire survey of Local vocational centers for persons with disabilities

The survey was sent by e-mail to 52 Local vocational centers for persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "Local centers") nationwide (including 5 branches), and a response was requested from each center using a questionnaire form in the groupware used by the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers.

(2) Company Questionnaire Survey

From the 106,921 companies covered by the report on the status of employment of persons with disabilities as of June 1, 2021, 15,000 companies were selected by stratified random sampling based on size x industry x employment status of persons with disabilities. Letters of request were mailed to human resources and labor management personnel at each company, and responses were requested from each company via a web questionnaire form. The number of companies that could be mailed the request was 14,914, excluding 86 companies to which the request could not be delivered.

(3) Hearings with companies

In addition to the five companies that agreed to participate in the interviews through the Local centers, we also contacted seven of the 51 companies by e-mail or telephone to those who indicated on the company questionnaire that they were willing to participate in the interviews, and 5 of the 7 companies that agreed were selected based on the following three criteria: (1) employment had continued after the developmental disability was identified; (2) support and accommodation had been provided to address occupational life issues and improvements had been made; and (3) diversity in size and type of business should be ensured. A total of 10 companies were selected. The interviews were conducted either online using a web conferencing tool or in person by visiting the companies and lasted approximately one hour. The interviewees were persons familiar with the situation of the employees in question, including the person in charge of general affairs, the person in charge of human resources, the person in charge of

employment of persons with disabilities, supervisors, managers, in-house health nurses, and in-house nurses.

6   Summarized Results of the Study

(1) Results of Local center Survey

Of the 37 Local centers that responded that they "have a track record of providing assistance to establishments that have identified an employee with a developmental disability after hiring," we asked about one optionally selected case and found that the most common route leading to assistance was "request from the establishments," at over 80%.

In terms of problems in their occupational lives, in addition to "work performance," "work relationships and communication," and "social skills and work attitudes" caused by the characteristics of their disabilities, "physical and mental illness and poor attendance" related to secondary disabilities were reported, and the Local centers often provided information to their supervisors and co-workers as support.

The points to keep in mind when providing support included "carefully assessing the business establishment's willingness to continue employment" and "listening to the employer's sense of distress and providing support to ease the burden" while carefully confirming the wishes of the employee in question and his or her family and informing the establishment of the characteristics of the disability in a way that would not be detrimental to the employee. In addition, the division of roles between the establishments and the Local center was clarified and support goals were shared.

Difficulties perceived by the Local centers when providing support included "difficulty in resolving the mismatch between the required job performance and the job that can be performed," "difficulty in improving issues such as other-punitive behavior and low self-esteem," "difficulty in improving deteriorating relationships with other employees," and "lack of self-understanding by the employee in question". Problems that were particularly more difficult than when the employee was hired on the assumption that he/she had a developmental disability included "difficulty forming rapport with supporters due to lack of self-understanding," "difficulty coordinating reasonable accommodations that can be provided with the employee's wishes," "difficulty making accommodations due to changes in compensation, work style, or job description," and "difficulty finding time for support due to the employee's employment status.

(2) Results of company questionnaire survey

Responses were received from 3,456 companies (23.2% response rate). The largest number of companies (3,143 (over 90%)) reported "no applicable employees" in the past five years or so, and companies with experience of hiring people with disabilities were more likely than companies without such experience to hire the employees in question.

When asked to respond to a randomly selected case study, the most common time of diagnosis was

after employment at just under 60%, employment status was full-time at just under 70%, and the developmental disability was identified within one year of employment at just over 40%.

The average score was calculated for each of the 23 problems (Figure 1) in the order "There were no problems at all (1 point)", "There wasn't much of a problem (2 points)", "There was a slight problem (3 points)", and "There was a very big problem (4 points)". Average scores were calculated for each of the following items, in descending order from highest to lowest: "The person was not good at multitasking (e.g., had difficulty performing multiple tasks in parallel)," "Failed to prioritize work," "The person often made mistakes due to inattention," "The individual had difficulty understanding what his/her supervisor or co-workers said," "The individual had difficulty communicating what he/she wanted to say to others (talking too much, giving too much information, saying inappropriate things, etc.)". The percentage of support and consideration given by companies to these five items was over 70%.
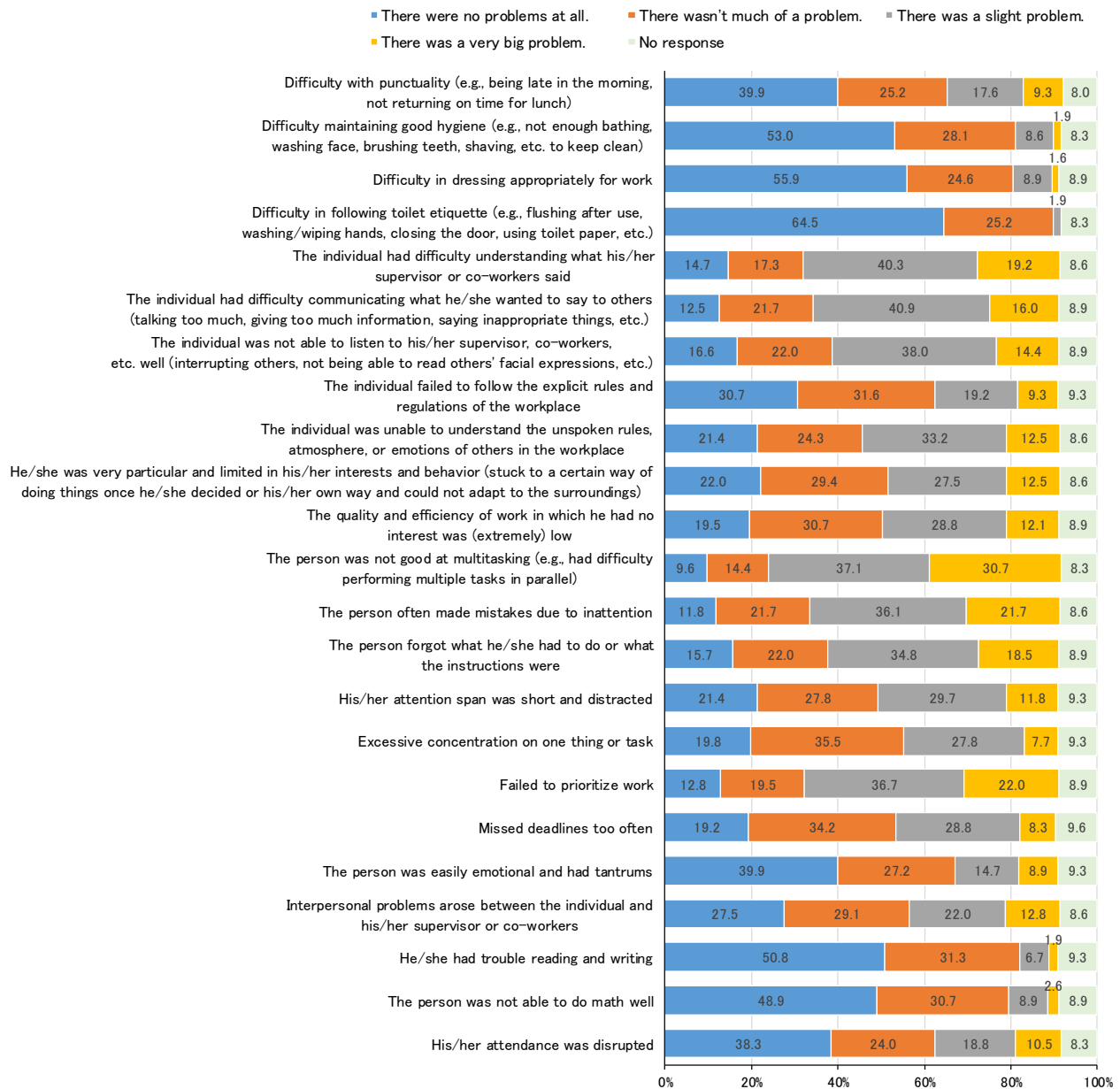
Figure 1: Problems in occupational life

In order of frequency, the most frequently cited reasons for identifying developmental disabilities after employment were "from voluntary consultation by the individual," "from attendance problems caused by the individual's mental or physical illness," and "from a recommendation for medical examination by the workplace (voluntary recommendation for medical examination by a psychiatric institution based on the findings of co-workers, supervisors, occupational physicians, etc.).

Among the support and consideration for occupational life problems (16 items), the items with a high percentage of implementation by companies were "Review of work instruction methods", "Assigned a person in charge regarding work instruction and consultation", and "Explained workplace rules and perceived annoyances and communicated desirable responses". The items with particularly high percentages that led to the resolution of these problems were "Review of work instruction methods," "Creation of duties that can be performed by the individual," and "Consideration and innovation for tasks that are difficult due to characteristics of the individual's disability (e.g., customer service, face-to-face work, etc.) and review of the job description" (Figure 2).
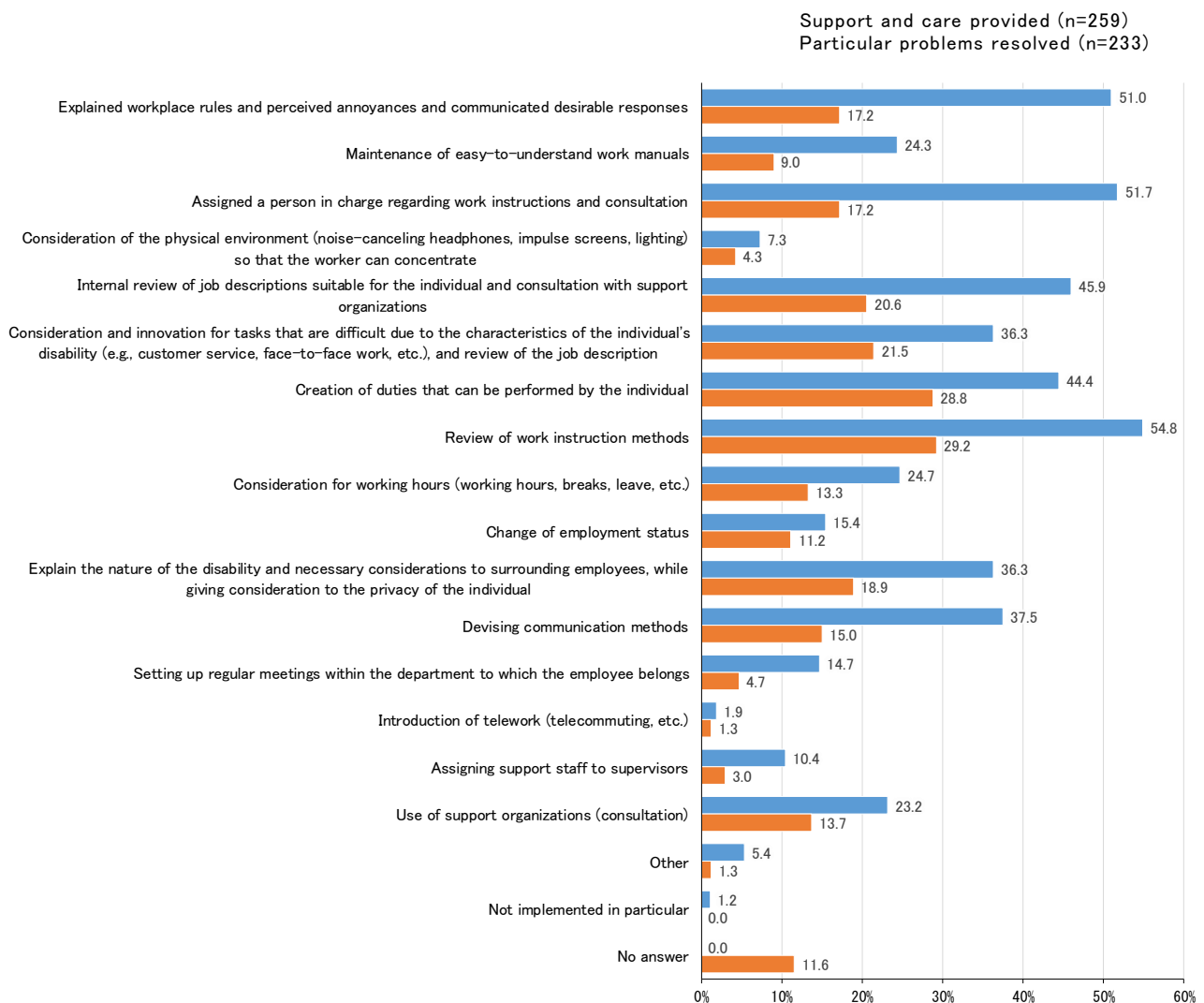

Figure 2: Support and consideration given to problems in occupational life

Companies that reported that "Review of work instruction methods," "Creation of duties that can be performed by the individual," and "Explained workplace rules and perceived annoyances and communicated desirable responses" solved the problems were significantly more likely than other companies to report that they were able to keep the employee on the job.

The results of the survey suggest that one of the most effective ways to improve the problems in their occupational lives is to prepare tasks that they can perform and to review the way they are instructed to perform them, but most companies tend not to make major changes in job duties, but to limit the range of duties.

Regarding the situations (15 items) that are difficult to deal with in the process of working on the employee's continued employment (problem solving), significantly more respondents answered that they would not continue the employee's employment if they had difficulty in reducing the "supervisor's sense of burden."

The companies that responded that there were differences between the management of hiring employees with developmental disabilities and the management of hiring employees who were hired without knowing that they had developmental disabilities cited difficulties in finding jobs other than the ones they had expected to perform, difficulties in gaining the understanding of supervisors and co-workers because of their ability to perform their jobs, and communication problems as reasons for the differences. In addition, some respondents indicated that it is not easy to change their employment status even if they cannot fully perform the responsibilities required of regular employees.

When asked whether or not they had encountered any difficulties (15 items) in the process of their efforts to maintain employment, more than 30% of the companies responded that they had answered "Yes" to the following questions: "Selecting a job (or transfer destination) that suits the individual," "Evaluating the individual's ability to perform the job," "Discussing how to deal with the individual among relevant personnel in the workplace," "Creating an environment and atmosphere where the individual is comfortable talking to his/her supervisor or other relevant personnel," "Promoting understanding of the individual by his/her co-workers and supervisors," and "Interviewing the individual to share the issues he/she faces". Among the support organizations that can evaluate the employee's work performance and provide information to his co-workers and supervisors are Local centers and employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "employment and life support centers"). However, 40% of the companies answered that they do not have any support organizations with which they cooperate.

(3) Results of company hearings

(a) The trigger and circumstances that led to the diagnosis and disclosure

Of the three cases classified as "from voluntary consultation by the individual," the one in which the individual was hired without disclosing that he/she had a developmental disability diagnosis is believed to be the one in which the individual was unable to understand the content of a meeting he/she attended

for the first time, and his/her anxiety increased and his/her own "sense of distress" became pronounced, forcing him/her to disclose the information. In the other two cases, the individual was concerned that his/her work was not going well and asked for advice.

One of the five cases that resulted in a diagnosis "from a recommendation for medical examination by the workplace" was triggered by the individual's request for an interview with an occupational physician after a stress check had identified the individual as a high-stress case. The other four cases all had one thing in common: they all had problems in their relationships with other employees.

In one of the two cases where the diagnosis was made "from attendance problems caused by the individual's mental or physical illness", it is assumed that the person's illness was the motivating factor that made it easy to recommend that he or she undergo a medical examination. On the other hand, if the employee was unaware of his or her physical and mental illness and problems at work, repeated consultations due to the inability to continue working and the many discrepancies in communication led to the recommendation for a medical examination.

Five of the six companies with 100 or more employees had some form of involvement of occupational physicians in the medical examinations.

(b) Challenges in occupational life and responses (considerations and innovations)

In terms of occupational life challenges, 8 cases each mentioned work or communication challenges, and there were no cases that did not mention any of these challenges. As for other issues, two cases each referred to emotional control and soft skills, one case each referred to instability of feelings and unstable attendance, and four cases referred to interpersonal problems (sullenness of relationships).

Job mismatches were addressed by reassigning workers, eliminating parts of the job, or limiting the scope of the job to those at which the worker excelled, as well as by reassigning workers to avoid hazards and limiting the scope of their responsibilities.

Among the problems mentioned, interpersonal problems included problems (difficulties) that arose because of "general treatment", where both the employee in question and the surrounding employees became exhausted without knowing the cause or reason for the problem, and the situation deteriorated to the point of irreparable damage. In some cases, the employees were diagnosed with developmental disabilities, and the understanding of the cause of the problem led to the understanding and cooperation of the people around them. But in some cases, when the situation had deteriorated to the point of irreparable damage, the environment was changed through reassignment and new relationships were established.

(c) History and status of use of support organizations

Seven cases (six using the Local center and one using the employment and life support center) used support services, but only one case used them prior to diagnosis. One respondent said, "If I had a disability certificate, I might have considered using a support organization (for persons with disabilities). In six of the seven cases, respondents mentioned the effectiveness and usefulness of the

support organization, indicating that the organization was a reliable resource for those responsible for handling the cases. In addition, there were cases where the occupational physician or diagnostician was familiar with the support organization, which led to the use of the support organization, as well as cases where communication with the attending physician using the hospital visit notebook and advice from the occupational therapist regarding work were helpful in the worker's continued employment.

(d) Differences from hiring based on developmental disabilities

The interviewees who mentioned differences noted that there is a big difference between hiring on the assumption that some self-understanding has been organized in their own way and that the need for support is recognized, and hiring after the fact, when they examine their strengths and weaknesses from the ground up and look for work they can do. The interviewee who mentioned that if a developmental disability is discovered after hiring, the only way to deal with it is to figure out how to get the person to contribute to the company, said that there is no difference in employment if the person can provide the reasonable accommodations needed and the skills that the job requires.

In one case where the employee in question indicated his or her intention to retire, the workplace proposed a reassignment and retirement was avoided. In general, the company's approach was not to recommend resignation, but to seek measures to continue employment.

(e) Reflecting on the response (issues, effective response methods, desired support measures, etc.)

In the interviews, respondents used phrases such as "staying close to employees," "being patient," "not giving up," "taking time," "being careful," and "building relationships of trust," suggesting that these attitudes were key points in the response of those responsible for handling the situation. In addition, many of the interviewees had no experience in hiring or working with people with developmental disabilities, and they also talked about the "fumbling" they had to do and the anxiety and difficulties they had to go through because of this "fumbling". Regardless of their experience, they were able to keep their jobs by being sincere with their employees.

Support measures requested included those related to training, awareness and publicity, subsidies, and support.

(4) Considerations

(a) Characteristics of the companies and the employees who were identified as having a developmental disability after being hired

The survey showed that companies with experience in hiring people with disabilities had a higher possibility of hiring employees in question than companies without experience, possibly because companies with experience were more likely than companies without experience to have a corporate culture that made it easier for employees to report disabilities or a system that made it easier for the workplace to identify disabilities and recommend that employees receive medical examinations.

The results of the survey, in which companies were asked to voluntarily select a case, suggest that many cases of developmental disabilities may have been identified as a result of a mismatch between

the job description and the ability to perform the job, and difficulties in performing the job as a result of being hired as a full-time employee and being required to perform at a high level.

(b) How and why the developmental disability was diagnosed and disclosed

Regarding the trigger for diagnosis and disclosure, different results were obtained for the Local center questionnaire (the most common response was "from a recommendation for medical examination by the workplace") and the company questionnaire (the most common response was "from voluntary consultation by the individual").

The results of the company interviews suggest that the presence of supervisors, human resource personnel, occupational health physicians, and other occupational health personnel with knowledge and understanding of developmental disabilities during the diagnosis and disclosure process had a positive impact on diagnosis and disclosure.

(c) Challenges in occupational life and responses (considerations and innovations)

The results of the company survey indicated that the main problems in their occupational lives were related to job performance and communication due to disability characteristics, and more than 70% of the companies provided support and consideration for these problems.

In addition, significantly more of the employees in the companies that responded that "Review of work instruction methods," "Creation of duties that can be performed by the individual," and "Explained workplace rules and perceived annoyances and communicated desirable responses" specifically solved the problem were able to continue employment than those in the companies that did not. In addition, many companies tended to deal with the problem by limiting the range of duties, rather than making major changes to the job description.

(d) History and use of support organizations

Regarding the route that led to the Local center's support for business establishments, more than 80% of the requests came from business establishments, while more than 40% of the companies responded that there was no support organization with which they were (or had been) working in terms of job retention. Although the interviewed companies that had used support organizations reported the effectiveness and usefulness of their use, it is possible that they were reluctant to consult (use) support organizations when they had not yet been diagnosed or had not yet received a disability certificate, or that they had difficulties in dealing with the situation because they did not know where to turn. In order for companies to support their employees in cooperation with support organizations and to manage employment by making the best use of individual strengths, it is desirable for companies to make the services and procedures of support organizations known to their employees and to collect and share good examples.

(e) Differences from hiring based on developmental disabilities

It is believed that in cases where a person has characteristics of a developmental disability but the problem has not manifested itself and the person has lived without receiving special support or

accommodations, there is often a lack of understanding of one's own characteristics or the need for support or accommodations is not organized or the person is not aware of the need for such support or accommodations. This is likely to be perceived as particularly different from hiring on the assumption that the employee has a developmental disability. If, after hiring, problems due to the characteristics of developmental disabilities that were previously overlooked become apparent, the need for the employee to confront his or her own characteristics and disability and to have an opportunity to deepen his or her understanding of himself or herself should also be considered.

(f) Support necessary for the establishment that employs the employee.

As there are indications that existing support measures are not fully recognized, we would like to see further efforts to raise awareness of these measures, including how they can be used and examples of how they can be used, as well as consideration of new support measures. In addition, in considering support measures, we would like to take into account the fact that a significant number of respondents to the company questionnaire indicated that they would not have continued to employ the employee in question if they had struggled to reduce the sense of burden on their supervisors, and that there are managers in the workplace who struggle to keep the employee employed, as confirmed in the company hearings, and we would also like to consider strengthening support systems for these employees.

(5) Significance, limitations and Issues of this research

The fact that we were able to clarify to some extent the actual conditions of the employees concerned through a large-scale survey, collect free descriptions of the problems specific to the employees concerned, and gather a wide variety of good examples was significant. We hope that the case studies will help to deepen understanding of the fact that there are employees who continue to be employed and active in their jobs with support and consideration even after their developmental disabilities are identified after employment, and that they will also help to provide support and consideration to similar employees.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the cases collected in the questionnaire survey are a compilation of a single case voluntarily selected by the company respondents, and thus may be biased toward cases that they would like to answer or feel comfortable answering. In addition, the cases obtained from the company interviews were biased toward males by gender and toward those in their 20s to 30s by generation, and because interviews were not conducted with the employees in question, it was not possible to mention the changes in self-understanding, challenges and innovations in their occupational lives, and necessary support and consideration from the perspective of the employees in question. It would therefore be necessary to develop new survey objectives and methods and to conduct more surveys.

The first step in support is to understand employees whose developmental disabilities are identified after they are hired and whose problems become apparent as a result of the interaction between their overlooked characteristics and the environment. It is expected that the discussion of desirable support

and consideration will be deepened in conjunction with the development of human resources (supervisors and co-workers) who can provide support and consideration by staying close to these employees, being patient, not giving up, taking time, being careful, and building relationships of trust .