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Survey on grasping methods for challenges faced by employers and proposal-based employer support methods regarding employment of persons with disabilities and continued employment

(Research report No. 163) Summary

【Keyword】

Challenges of employment of persons with disabilities, support needs, training program s, proposal-based employer supports

【Summary】

The purpose of this research was to conduct tests for employer supports by using training programs created in accordance with needs and challenges of each employer with developed tools for grasping the challenges in employment of persons with disabilities based on the circumstance of employer support services at Local Vocational Centers for persons with disabilities.

One of the major deliverables that we made is "Support tool for Employment of Persons with Disabilities" and other tools that employers using while consulting with vocational counselors for persons with disabilities and other support personnel at the Local Vocational Center for Persons with Disabilities. In addition, we conducted a trial of proposal-based employer support using a training program to help employers make decisions on employment of persons with disabilities and to develop human resources to support employment of persons with disabilities in the company, and verified the effectiveness of the program.

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2. Research period

FY2019 - 2021

3. Composition of the research report

1st chapter - Background, purpose, and method

2nd chapter - Implementation contents of employer support by Local centers

3rd chapter - Understanding challenges (creation and utilization of tools)

4th chapter - Trial of proposal-based employer support using training programs

5th chapter - Summary

Appendix

4. Background and purpose of the research

(1) Importance of proposal-based employer supports in employment of persons with disabilities

Due to the change in law on Act on Employment Promotion etc. of Persons with Disabilities, employers are required further efforts to hire persons with disabilities because the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment fields and provision of reasonable accommodation have been mandated since April, 2016, the employment of persons with mental disabilities has imposed since 2018, and the legal employment rate has increased to 2.3% in 2021, etc.

Under these circumstances, support organizations are required to provide proposal-based employer supports for consideration and proposal of improvement measures after understanding and sharing the support needs and challenges of individual employers.

(2) Understanding of challenges and needs in employer supports

In general, the key points of process for employer supports are to understand challenges and needs of employers and share with them; propose improvement measures of challenges, support the plan execution in assent, verify its effects, and propose further improvement measures if necessary.

However, it has been confirmed that the method of understanding issues in meeting the challenges and needs of employers is not necessarily set in stone, and that there are various gaps in the perceptions of companies and support organizations regarding the challenges of employing people

with disabilities.

For smooth implementation of employer assistance services, it is necessary for employers and support organizations to go through a process of mutually identifying issues and needs related to the employment of persons with disabilities. The support organizations are required to share the challenges that employers are satisfied in step with understanding employer's needs by careful interviews with employers who come for consultations including challenges in its background as well as problems called by employers. In this context, tools for visualizing challenges that employers have and sharing these challenges between employers and support organization (hereinafter referred to as "tools") are considered in need.

(3) Improvement measures of challenges

A: Supporting for employer's decision-making in employment of persons with disabilities

Local Vocational Centers for Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "Local Centers") Many employers who visit employment support organizations, including Local employment centers for persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "Local centers"), are likely to already be thinking about employing (or must employ) persons with disabilities, but at that point, they often do not yet have a concrete image of employment for persons with disabilities.In order to concretely promote the employment of persons with disabilities, it is important for supporters to support for decision-making in employment of persons with disabilities by clarifying and embodying those needs.

B: Enhancement of settling into the workplace supports

The ultimate goal of employer support is for each company to be able to independently address its own employment and retention issues for people with disabilities, and to be equipped with the ability to provide natural support and not require outside assistance. For these purposes, it is necessary to provide supports toward building and strengthening of support systems for persons with disabilities by fostering personnel who provide employment supports for persons with disabilities within businesses (hereinafter referred to as "support employees"). However, it is difficult to say that sufficient verifications have been conducted on implementation of trainings for "support employees" fostering, understanding its effects, and especially how the results have returned to individuals and organizations at this stage. As a result, implementation of trainings on human resources development for "support employees" and enhancing employer supports related to verification of its effects are to be considered as important challenges.

C: More proactive development of employer supports

In the process of understanding employer's challenges and implementing supports to meet its needs, new needs may arise when employer's vague needs to employ persons with disabilities are changed to more specific needs, or some needs are met.

We believe that it will be possible to develop proactive employer supports by conducting the proposals of eliciting further needs and concreting needs through supports that are implemented of improvement measures.

(4) Purpose of research

In light of the above, this study was undertaken to develop tools with the intention of using them in the Local center's proposed employer support, etc., and to conduct a trial of proposed employer support using training programs developed in response to the needs and issues of individual employers.

5. Method

(1) Questionnaire survey for Local centers

Questionnaire survey for implementation contents of employer assistance operations was conducted.

(2) Creating tools

Based on the survey in (1) above and existing tools, the issues and needs of employers were identified, and tools were developed through interviews with support specialists and employers, as well as trial runs with companies to be supported by the Local centers.

(3) Testing of proposal-based employer supports utilizing of training programs

In order to understand employer's challenges and needs through trainings with developing and testing training programs for the purpose to provide corresponding supports, we verified the effects through questionnaires and interviews regarding implementation results.

6. Summarized results of the study

(1) Employer assistance operations of "Local centers"

Questionnaire survey was conducted to understand implementation status of employer assistance operations by "Local centers". As a result, the following was revealed.

1. Employer support for persons with disabilities, etc. at the stage where they are not identified (including expansion of employment) was provided at most Local centers, although less frequently than support for the recruitment (or adaptation to the workplace and return to work) of specific persons with disabilities.

2. Regarding the aims of support for employers at the stage where persons with disabilities have not been identified (including expansion of employment), the most common responses were "achievement of the legally mandated employment rate" (96%), "consideration of duties assigned to persons with disabilities" (92%), and "raising awareness of management and employees, and providing information to management and employees" (88%).

3. In employer support methods at the stage that was not identified for persons with disabilities and patients (including employment expansion), "cooperation for employee trainings (including instructor dispatch and external instructor utilization)" was the most common and was conducted all "Local centers".

4. Regarding the aim for employers of training supported at "Local centers", it was organized into five of "promotion of further understanding for managements toward employment of persons with disabilities," "promotion of internal understanding toward employment of persons with disabilities," "employment management know-how at workplace, understanding and practice of specific communications", "employment development and job creation", and "Others.

(2) Creating tools based on actual situations of "Local centers"

In this study, the tools were developed based on the results of the questionnaire survey at the Local centers mentioned above and other factors. In preparing the tool, we intended to use it mainly at Local centers, taking into account the fact that there are still many companies employing zero employees, and targeted "employers who are going to start employing people with disabilities or are already doing so". The tool was created for employers to utilize while consulting with the Local center's vocational counselors for persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "counselors") when they consider initiatives for employing persons with disabilities on their own initiative.

A: Tool creation process

1. Based on the above questionnaire results in (1), tools (prototype version) for understanding the challenges in employment of persons with disabilities smoothly while referring to existing materials, etc. were created in addition to extracting employer's challenges by cluster analysis related to employment in persons with disabilities, expectations for support organizations, and free opinions regarding future employer supports, etc.

2. The revision was made by incorporating opinions of experts from organizations that support persons with disabilities (employment of persons with disabilities support network coordinator at central employment information centers for person with disabilities, senior counselor of two "Local centers", and persons in charge of employer assistance operations of all "Local centers", etc.).

3. From the employer's perspective, by testing tools (prototype version) in consultation situations with employers who were the target of employer assistance services at "Local centers", we confirmed if it would be useful how to organize initiatives for employment of persons with disabilities, and made revisions after hearing opinions of human resource managers from two companies with hiring experience of persons with disabilities.

B: Created tools

a. Support tool for employment of persons with disabilities

   This tool includes "initiative checkpoint list for employment of persons with disabilities" consisting of seven checkpoints as hints for proceeding in employment of persons with disabilities smoothly. This tool is made on a single A3-size sheet (both sides) to make it easy for employers to read.

b. Support tool for employment of persons with disabilities, reference by checkpoints

   This booklet explains the background of each seven checkpoints of a. simply. Related data, research results, cases, system outline, etc. are summarized in order to gain a deeper understanding by providing information of each checkpoint on the background and more detailed contents from supporters to employers and reading the booklet for employers themselves.

(3) Proposal-based employer supports utilizing of training programs

   Based on the results of survey in (1), etc., training implementation was considered as effective measures to support employer supports so that we tested proposal-based employer supports utilizing of training programs as challenge solving measures for employers. Regarding this test, the main purpose was to address two major challenges of "employer's decision-making in employment of persons with disabilities" and "developing human resources to support the employment of persons with disabilities in the companies" as support contents.

   As for "developing human resources to support in general employment of persons with disabilities in the companies", "general programs utilizing four techniques of cognitive-behavioral therapy (cognitive restructuring utilizing at "Local centers", etc. (column method), problem solving method (skill training), assertion trainings and social skills training (hereinafter referred to as "SST")" and "SST", one of four methods, were utilized to conduct "human resource development programs utilizing "SST"" for aiming to develop more specialized human resources. In addition, as for "human resource development programs utilizing "SST"", we implemented one for "individual companies" and the other for "multiple companies" with the aim of improving support capacities of the entire region and building Local networks (see Table).

A: Employer's decision-making in employment of persons with disabilities

   The three main challenges identified through interviews with companies subject to the test were: (1) reluctance to hire persons other than physical disabilities in particular and lack of understanding the disability characteristics, (2) creation of duties for persons with disabilities, and (3) lack of information related to supports for employment of persons with disabilities. In addition to creating and testing training programs to address these challenges, we proposed that training programs would begin with short-time employment, gradually broaden the scope of duties, and extend working hours.

Table: Contents of proposal-based employer supports utilizing of training programs

Identified challenges	Aim of training	Attributes of targeted company	Provided information and utilization theory, etc.
Employer's decision-making in employment of persons with disabilities	Clarifying and embodying in employment of person with disabilities	Company groups including related businesses	Providing various information including related to support systems and support organizations
Developing human resources to support the employment of persons with disabilities 1	General information that can be acquired as "support employees" and creating local networks	Multiple companies	Four methods of cognitive-behavioral therapy
Developing human resources to support the employment of persons with disabilities 2-1	Developing more special supporters in offices	Individual companies	"SST" in four methods of cognitive-behavioral therapy
Developing human resources to support the employment of persons with disabilities 2-2	Improving local support capacities and creating local networks	Multiple companies	"SST" in four methods of cognitive-behavioral therapy

After confirming the effects of training programs through questionnaires, etc., among the information provision through trainings, deepening the understanding of disabilities and supports provided by support organizations would lead to the elimination of employer's anxieties in case of employment of persons with disabilities, increase their motivation to hire persons with disabilities, and be expected to have effects of encouraging examination of specific actions. Furthermore, in regard to "employment of persons with disabilities starting from 10 hours per week" utilizing proposed support organizations by training programs, this could be one of the effective measures for proposal-based employer supports from understanding challenges to presenting solution measures because we could promote employer's decision-making in employment of persons with disabilities for employers.

B: Developing human resources to support the employment of persons with disabilities 1

As for the purpose of developing human resources of "support employees" to strengthen support systems for settling into the workplace of disability employees, we made a prototype and tested it based on four methods of cognitive-behavioral therapy utilizing at "Local centers".

The three challenges identified through interviews with companies subject to tests were: (1) improvement of support skills for persons with mental and developmental disabilities, (2) continuity of support provided by employment support organizations before employment and support provided by "support employees" after employment, (3) Mental health of "support employees".

For these challenges, we implemented training program consisting of four methods utilizing at "Local centers".

After training programs were implemented, we confirmed the effects through questionnaires and found that information and exercises on cognitive-behavioral therapy, etc. provided in trainings gave a certain level of satisfaction to "support employees", and the knowledge and skills learned in trainings could be used in more or less support situations.

In addition, we evaluated if their own behavior was changed based on training learned for training effects. Regarding the utilizing of training programs at workplace, the effects of this training would be confirmed because 7 out of 9 respondents answered that they planned to utilize in the near future although they had not yet utilized for trainings, etc. at their workplace at this time.

C: Developing human resources to support the employment of persons with disabilities-2

Two patterns of supports by utilizing "SST" that was considered effective in supporting the

improvement of communication skills, two patterns of support were implemented: (1) programs targeting a single company, and (2) programs targeting multiple companies with the aim of improving local support capacities, etc.

a. Programs targeting a single company

The needs and challenges of companies targeted by this program were: "we wanted to implement "SST" for full-time employees with disabilities and included it in their career maps, but we did not know how to do so," and "We wanted to develop human resources of our "support employees" at the same time by entrusting them to operate and implement "SST", but we did not have employees with the skills".

Training programs that included exercises to address these needs and challenges were conducted for "support employees" and employees with disabilities, and the results were verified through questionnaires survey after trainings were completed. As for "support employees", the high level of satisfaction with implementation methods of this training program that combined theory and practice was confirmed, and a certain degree of effectiveness was recognized in the acquisition of knowledge and improvement of skills that were conveyed in training programs.

b. Programs targeting multiple companies

This program was implemented in response to needs to spread the program not only to their own companies, but also to local employment offices for persons with disabilities. At that time, as in the case of programs for a single company, it was pointed out that there was no supporter who had the skills to instruct "SST" in companies, or in the area. A two-stage training program was conducted for several companies: (1) workshop training programs to familiarize local "support employees" to take the programs into practice within local network, and (2) implementation of training programs structured by eliciting needs of "support employees".

The effectiveness of training programs was confirmed post-training questionnaire survey and interviews, and we found that the training participants were highly satisfied with this training program, understood the training contents, and changed their behavior based on what they learned. From this, it was suggested that this training program was effective in reaching behavior change. At the same time, one of the aims of this training program was to improve the local support capabilities and create a network of "support employees". We believed that the initial training needs met to a certain extent by receiving responses for the effectiveness of trainings in forming networks outside of the offices.

(4) Summary

The tools and training programs presented in this research were just one of the measures to effectively promote employer supports, and should be customized and brushed up by actual situations through actual utilization in support field.

In addition, developed tools and training programs were the effective measures for employer supports and created to ensure the quality of employer supports in a certain extent. However, these tools and programs were used by each supporter at support sites so that it was necessary to make more efforts to improve support skills for effective utilization of tools, etc.

Furthermore, it should be noted that even though supporters were in a position to propose solutions to challenges, they must always remember to take the perspective of employers and jointly seek to solve problems when important opinions received from experts, etc. in the process of proceeding this research for "proposal-based employer supports" of research theme.
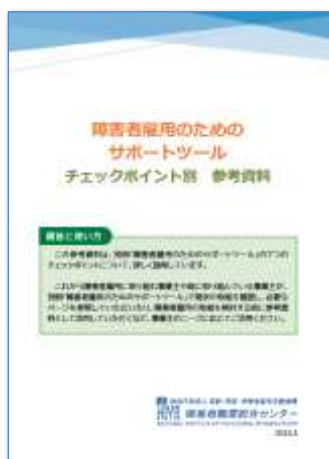
We hoped that research results would help employer supports in the future because it was expected that the importance of employer supports in employment of persons with disabilities would increase in the future with the demands of respond to needs and challenges of various employers.

7. Related research products

・Support tool for employment of persons with disability, 2022

・Reference material of Support tool for employment of persons with disability by checkpoints,2022

Support tool for employment of persons with disability

Reference material of Support tool for employment of persons
with disability by checkpoints