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Research on the Current Status and Issues of Human Resource Development and Accumulation of Support Expertise, etc. in Employment Support Providers

(Research Report No. 167) Summary

[Abstract]

The purpose of this research study was to understand the actual situation of human resource development at employment support providers, and to clarify the contents that employment support staff should share (effective support expertise) and the key points of human resource development for work support staff, by conducting (1) actual conditions survey of a total of 3,000 employment support providers, (2) public solicitation of effective support expertise, and collection and compilation of opinions on the content of such expertise using the Delphi method.

The results showed that (1) knowledge, experience, and skills of employment support providers varied widely, (2) effective support expertise for work support means having overall knowledge and experience of the work support process, providing comprehensive and wide-ranging support from pre-employment to post-placement on going follow-up in cooperation with organizations in various fields, and having the skills, etc. to provide up-to-date support that meets the needs of persons with disabilities and companies, and (3) organizations that implement organizational initiatives for human resource development, including the verbalization and sharing of expertise, are more likely to have sufficient effective support expertise as described in (2) above.

1 Authors (in order of authorship)

TAKEUCHI Daisuke   (Researcher, Disability Support Division, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

KUWAKI Hirotaka   (Researcher, Disability Support Division, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

GI En   (Research cooperator, Disability Support Division, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

HARUNA Yuichiro   (Associate researcher manager, Disability Support Division, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

HORI Hirotaka   (Researcher, Disability Support Division, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation)

2 Research Period

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3 Composition of the Research Report

Chapter 1: Background and Purpose of the Research for the Issues

Chapter 2: Understanding the Current Situation and Issues of Human Resource Development in Employment Support Providers

Chapter 3: Gathering Information on Effective Support Expertise for Vocational Rehabilitation

Chapter 4: Overall Discussion and Conclusion

Appendix

Case Examples of Vocational Rehabilitation by Various Stakeholders

4 Background and Purpose of the Research

Vocational rehabilitation in Japan has expanded the employment possibilities of people with disabilities by providing support for both the disabled and employers, centered on employment support providers and in cooperation with related fields. However, such effective vocational rehabilitation is not necessarily fully reflected in the organizational initiatives of work support providers, and the work support capacity in the community depends on the motivation, knowledge, and skills that each support worker acquires informally in the field, which may lead to vulnerability and regional disparities due to personnel changes.

The development of human resources involved in work support for persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "work support ") in the regional community is one of the most important issues at the present time. To develop more effective human resource development by various employment support providers in the future, it is necessary to accurately understand the actual status of human resource development at employment providers, and to organize the contents that work support staff should share, the contents that should be emphasized in training, etc., and effective methods and points. Therefore, we conducted a research study with the following three purposes.

（ⅰ) To clarify the current status of the accumulation of support expertise and human resource development initiatives of employment support providers and the issues

（ⅱ) To organize the principles, processes, knowledge, skills, etc. (effective support expertise) that work support staff should share as points to be considered when providing future training, advice, assistance, etc.

（ⅲ) To clarify effective methods and important points in human resource development for work support staff. In particular, specific details of organizational initiatives that are important in human resource development will be clarified.

5 Method

(1) Establishment of Research Committee

To improve the validity and reliability of the research content, effective implementation of the research, and data analysis and interpretation, a research committee consisting of practitioners and experts in related fields was established to effectively consolidate opinions.

(2) Survey on Organizational Initiatives for Human Resource Development of Support Practitioners in Employment Support Providers

A survey was conducted on the status of the accumulation of support expertise and human resource development initiatives, targeting organizational managers and support practitioners belonging to 336 employment and live support centers for persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "employment and life support centers"), 128 employment support providers established by the municipalities (hereinafter referred to as "municipal employment support providers"), and 2,536 work transitional providers that provide transitional work support services and/or employment settlement support services.

(3) Information Gathering on Effective support Expertise for Vocational Rehabilitation

We have attempted to clarify "effective support expertise," which has not necessarily been clearly verbalized as a common understanding among those involved in work support, by using the following methods.

A Public offering of expertise in effective assistance for work support

We "publicly solicited" case examples related to "effective support expertise" from a wide range of people involved in work support (medical care, welfare, education, work support, companies, etc.).

B Forming a common understanding using the Delphi method

The Delphi method was conducted with 95 "experts" (survey targets) with experience in work support and related fields in order to evaluate the validity of the content and collect opinions after compiling "effective support expertise" that organized and summarized the content obtained from the public solicitation.

6 Summarized Results of the Study

(1) Survey on Organizational Initiatives for Human Resource Development of Support Practitioners in Work Support Providers

We conducted a questionnaire survey to understand the actual status of the accumulation of support expertise and human resource development at employment support providers, and then clarified the contents of effective support expertise and what kind of initiatives for human resource development are being taken at the providers that have accumulated such effective support expertise.

A Overview of survey respondents

The total number of responses to "the survey of organizational managers of employment support providers" was 1,542 (205 from employment and life support centers, 71 from municipal employment support providers, and 1,266 from work transitional providers. The total number of responses to "the survey of support practitioners" was 2,305 (369 at employment and life support centers, 136 at municipal employment support providers, and 1,800 at work transitional providers.).

B Status of support implementation at employment support providers and diffusion and sufficiency of principles, knowledge, skills, etc.

Many Employment support providers provided comprehensive and wide-ranging support from pre-employment to post-employment on going follow-up in cooperation with multidisciplinary providers, but there was some variation in the diffusion of knowledge, experience, and skills, even within the same type of providers, depending on the contents of the support.

a. Status of support implementation at employment support providers (results of the survey by support practitioners)

With regard to a series of support services from pre-placement to post-placement, excluding the employment development process, more than 70% of all provider types indicated that they provide support. Regarding cooperation with outside organizations, a high percentage of respondents answered that they "mainly provide support by their own organization alone" in the areas of assessment and training of basic labor skills in work transition, etc., consultation and support for job information, resumes, and job interviews, and assessment and support to ensure understanding and accommodations in the workplace, while for the other items, more than half of the respondents in all three organization types answered that they provide support through cooperation or close collaboration with outside organizations, indicating that they are providing support in cooperation with related fields.

b. Actual status of diffusion of knowledge, skills, etc. (results of the survey by organizational managers)

With regard to the availability of work support staff with the qualifications, abilities, and skills, "knowledge and skills to provide work support that meets the recruitment and development of human resources and employment management and management needs of companies" and "knowledge and skills to collect and effectively use the latest work support methods, support equipment, and other relevant information" varied widely, with the total of "no applicable staff at all" or "few applicable staff" exceeding 30% for both types of providers. As an example, Table 1 shows the results of the work transitional providers

Table 1: Sufficiency of employment support staff with qualities, abilities, and skills
(results from the work transitional providers)

Question items	Not applicable at all	Fewer applicable	About half are applicable	Many applicable	Almost all applicable	Number of valid answers
(1) Qualities and abilities to try to meet the life and life support needs of each person with disabilities with various ideas	6 0.5%	172 13.9%	358 28.9%	478 38.5%	226 18.2%	1,240
(2) Quality and ability to understand others' feelings correctly and to explain things clearly	3 0.2%	117 9.4%	328 26.4%	569 45.8%	226 18.2%	1,243
(3) Qualities and abilities to organize and carry out a variety of tasks efficiently and effectively	13 1.0%	167 13.5%	440 35.5%	456 36.8%	164 13.2%	1,240
(4) Qualities and abilities to cope with situations where the future is uncertain and diverse opinions are present with mental stability	8 0.6%	193 15.6%	438 35.4%	432 34.9%	167 13.5%	1,238
(5) Knowledge and skills to utilize various related systems and services according to individual support needs	11 0.9%	304 24.6%	432 35.0%	371 30.0%	118 9.5%	1,236
(6) Knowledge and skills to coordinate and develop jobs and workplaces that enable each person with disabilities to thrive	14 1.1%	282 22.8%	462 37.4%	348 28.2%	129 10.4%	1,235
(7) Knowledge and skills to provide work support to companies to meet their recruitment, training, employment management and management needs	47 3.8%	398 32.3%	428 34.7%	280 22.7%	80 6.5%	1,233
(8) Knowledge and skills to collect and effectively utilize the latest work support methods, support equipment, etc., and other related information	59 4.8%	450 36.6%	385 31.4%	265 21.6%	69 5.6%	1,228
(9) Knowledge and skills to effectively collaborate with supporters in various related fields to provide work support	25 2.0%	338 27.4%	409 33.1%	348 28.2%	114 9.2%	1,234

C   Status of initiatives for human resource development at employment support providers (examples of organizational initiatives for human resource development)

Among the organizational initiatives for human resource development, "other supporters and supervisors are always available for consultation," "support case examples are reviewed and shared at case meetings within the organization," and "effective support is accumulated, shared, and improved within the organization through records of support content and support outcomes" received the most responses as "emphasized and implemented" in all three providers types. On the other hand, more than half of the respondents answered that "it is important but implementation is low" for all three types of providers for the following three items: "verbalize and document the support expertise within the organization and share it with other supporters," "verbalize and document how to promote cooperation and division of roles with relevant regional organizations," "proactively organize and share professional support expertise through conferences, research and practice presentations, and submission of papers," and "clarify the career stages and achievement goals of employment support workers through personnel evaluation, etc., and systematically promote human resource development. Table 2 shows the results from the work transitional providers.

Table 2: Actual status of organizational initiatives for human resource development
(results from the work transitional providers)

Question Items	I don't think implementation is important	I think it's important, but implementation is little	It's important and implemented	Number of valid responses
(1) If each supporter has a problem with support, other supporters and supervisors are always available for consultation	12 1.0%	411 32.9%	826 66.1%	1,249
(2) Support examples are reviewed and shared at case meetings within the organization	7 0.6%	264 21.2%	975 78.3%	1,246
(3) Work on accumulation, sharing, and improvement of effective support in the organization through recording of support contents and support outcomes	6 0.3%	388 31.2%	850 68.3%	1,244
4) Collaborate in case management not only within the organization, but also with relevant local organizations to review examples and share expertise	31 2.5%	814 65.4%	400 32.1%	1,245
(5) Verbalize and document the support expertise, etc. within the organization and share it with other supporters to facilitate smooth transfer	14 1.1%	619 49.7%	612 49.2%	1,245
(6) Verbalize and document how to proceed with cooperation and division of roles with relevant local organizations, so that it can be transferred even if there is a personnel change in the relevant organizations.	48 3.9%	856 68.9%	339 27.3%	1,243
(7) Proactively organize and share professional support expertise through conferences, research and practice presentations, and article submissions	211 17.0%	887 71.3%	146 11.7%	1,244
(8) Promote human resource development in a planned manner by specifying career stages and achievement goals for employment support workers through personnel evaluations, etc.	68 5.5%	757 60.8%	421 33.8%	1,246
(9) Promote participation in external training programs, etc. as an organization to raise the level of employment support staff according to their level	26 2.1%	531 42.7%	687 55.2%	1,244

D. Factors that are key to improving the work support capabilities of employment support providers and human resource development initiatives

a.   Factors influencing the outcome of support by employment support providers

Multiple regression analysis or logistic regression analysis was conducted to clarify the content of support and

the sufficiency of knowledge, experience, and skills (explanatory variables) that have an influence on the improvement of support outcomes (objective variable), such as the number of persons transferring to general employment and the retention rate after employment by the organization to which they belong. The results of the survey revealed that a wide range of support for both persons with disabilities and workplaces, from pre-employment to post-employment and follow-up, is provided in collaboration and liaison with various fields, and that overall knowledge of the work support process and skills to provide up-to-date support according to the needs of persons with disabilities and companies influence the improvement of support outcomes.

- **Factors influencing the improvement in the number of people transferring to work in one year (work transitional providers: analysis of a survey of organizational managers)**

The improvement in the number of persons transitioning to work during the year was influenced by the implementation of "support from job search to retention" and the sufficiency of "the qualities, abilities, and skills to provide up-to-date support and case management that meets the needs of persons with disabilities and businesses." Table 3 shows the results from the work transitional providers.

Table 3 Factors influencing the "number of persons transferring to general employment in a year"
(results from the work transitional providers)

Target variable: number of persons transferring to general employment in one year	Unstandardized coefficient B	Standardization coefficient β	p	
Support from job search to retention	1.425	0.232	0.000	**
Qualities, abilities, and skills to provide up-to-date support and case management that meets the needs of persons with disabilities and companies	0.677	0.113	0.000	**
Number of employment support workers at his/her provider/office	0.611	0.217	0.000	**
Employment retention support providers	0.505	0.043	0.137	

$R^2=0.140, {}^*:p<0.05, {}^{**}:p<0.01$ Multiple regression analysis (stepwise method)

＊Results of multiple regression analysis. The larger the value of the standardized coefficient, the greater the influence on the objective variable. p indicates the significance level. The gray figures indicate adjustment variables used to adjust for differences due to institutional characteristics, such as the size of the organization and the presence or absence of employment retention support providers (Tables 4 and 5 are also similar).

- **Factors influential in improving retention at one-year post-employment (work transitional service providers: analysis of a survey of organizational managers)**

The retention rate tends to be higher for organizations that provide "support to prepare for and find employment possibilities." Table 4 shows the results from the work transitional providers.

Table 4: Factors influencing "retention rate at one-year post-employment"
(results from the work transitional providers)

Target variable: retention rate at one year after employment in general employment	B	p		Odds ratio	Confidence interval (CI) Lower limit	Upper limit
Support to prepare for employment and discover possibilities	0.584	0.000	**	1.793	1.494	2.152
Employment retention support providers	0.860	0.000	**	2.363	1.713	3.259

Percentage of correct classifications : 72.6% , ${}^*:p<0.05,{}^{**}:p<0.01$ Logistic regression analysis (step-up procedure)

*Results of logistic regression analysis. This analysis analyzed whether the respondent organization's retention rate was 71% or higher, which is one standard deviation below the mean (75%). A higher odds ratio indicates a higher probability of falling into the 71% or higher retention rate category.

b. **Factors influencing the sufficiency of effective support expertise**

The next step was to conduct a multiple regression analysis to identify the content of human resource development initiatives (explanatory variables) that have an influence on the degree of sufficiency of the "effective support expertise" (objective variable), such as the content of support and knowledge, experience, and skills that have been shown to have an impact on support outcomes. The results showed that the institutions with sufficient effective support expertise were implementing systematic initiatives for human resource development (initiatives to verbalize and share expertise, and to share case examples and records of support) in addition to attending various training programs.

● **Initiatives that are influential in meeting the "qualities, competencies, and skills to provide up-to-date support and case management that meets the needs of persons with disabilities and businesses" (overall three provider types: analysis of organizational manager survey)**

The strongest influence came from initiatives to "verbalization and sharing roles and expertise," followed by initiatives to "share support case examples and records," training, etc., and the number of people who leave their jobs. Table 5 shows the results for all three provider types.

Table 5: Factors influencing the sufficiency of "Qualities, abilities, and skills to provide up-to-date support and case management that meets the needs of persons with disabilities and companies"
(results for all three provider types)

Target variable: qualities, abilities, and skills to provide up-to-date support and case management to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and companies	Unstandardized coefficient B	Standardization coefficient β	p	
Not many people leave or change jobs	0.096	0.118	0.000	**
Verbalization and sharing of roles and expertise	0.289	0.255	0.000	**
Sharing of support cases and records	0.140	0.122	0.001	**
Whether or not to attend job coach training	0.132	0.068	0.007	**
Utilizing advice and assistance from regional vocational centers for persons with disabilities	0.056	0.059	0.029	*
Employment and life support centers for persons with disabilities	0.047	0.017	0.638	
Work transition support providers	0.002	0.001	0.980	
Employment retention support providers	0.041	0.020	0.446	
Employment support providers established by the municipalities	-0.005	-0.001	0.971	

R^2=0.171, *:$p<0.05$, **:$p<0.01$ Multiple regression analysis (stepwise method)

＊Results of multiple regression analysis. All provider types were used as adjustment variables, and the results can be interpreted as being independent of provider type.

(2) Information Gathering on Effective Support Expertise for Vocational Rehabilitation

By gathering information on effective support initiatives by various support practitioners in work support -related fields and consolidating the opinions of "experts" in work support -related fields, we organized effective support expertise and obtained results that contribute to the verbalization and sharing of expertise for improving the work support capabilities of employment support providers.

A Results of public solicitation of effective expertise for work support

A total of 73 applications were received. These 73 case examples were organized into 16 categories based on the commonality of their contents using the KJ method. Of these, 15 items, excluding one item specific to welfare-type employment, were designated as "effective support expertise for work support."

B Consolidation of opinions and consensus building regarding effective support expertise (results of the Delphi method)

A total of two rounds of Delphi were used to collect opinions on the content of " effective support expertise for

work support." Based on the feedback from the first round, the second round was conducted with revisions and additions to the description of "effective expertise in work support ". The results showed that in the second round, 11 items had a response of "appropriate" ("rather appropriate" + "completely appropriate") for content appropriateness exceeding 80%, and 12 items had a response of 70% or more. However, there were many comments in the second round that the content still needs to be improved. Therefore, after organizing the key points of opinions received in the two Delphi methods, the contents of the "effective expertise for work support" were scrutinized once again. As a result, it became clear that by integrating the duplicated content among the items, some of the items for which many "experts" pointed out problems could be corrected. The results were organized into a total of 14 items from the following four perspectives: a-d.

a. Perspectives of children and persons with disabilities

The importance of vocational assessment and support for improving self-understanding and self-confidence based on improving the possibility of employment through specialized vocational rehabilitation, including the possibility of improving the work environment post-employment, without dividing the pre-employment support and post-employment support vertically, as indicated.

(1) Support from pre-employment while assuming job adjustment and post-employment work environment development

(2) Self-understanding and empowerment through desired work experience and reflection with professional supporters

(3) Utilization of evaluation by professionals of the causal relation between various functional disabilities and specific occupational issues

(4) Provision of information and experiences that promote "work-ready" motivation and confidence of children or persons with disabilities and their families.

b. Perspectives of companies and workplaces

The importance of support for improving the recognition of persons with disabilities as "active human resources" in companies was indicated through workplace development based on comprehensive consideration, including professional supporters of job descriptions and reasonable accommodations that enable individual persons with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities, rather than a fixed view of their job descriptions.

(5) Support for appropriate placement and skill development through segmentation of work and visualization of a list of skill levels

(6) Advice and support to employers regarding reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities to exercise their abilities

(7) Workplace development by understanding and organizing the aptitude and motivation of each person with disabilities and the human resource needs of companies.

(8) Provide information and awareness-raising to companies so that they can recognize persons with disabilities as "active human resources.

c. Perspectives of community service providers

The importance of more proactive information provision to and promotion of collaboration with relevant local providers was indicated regarding the importance of continuous vocational support by relevant medical and lifestyle providers, and collaboration of specialized providers for comprehensive response to support needs in employment,

medical care, lifestyle, economy, etc., as well as coordination of specialized support in the workplace.

(9) Local follow-up system to continuously support the vocational life of persons with disabilities after employment

(10) Cooperation with multidisciplinary providers to meet the complex and specialized support needs of employment, medical care, daily life, economics, etc.

(11) Work support for persons with disabilities through close cooperation with medical institutions, workplaces, industrial physicians, etc.

(12) Activities to expand the latest work support for people with disabilities to the fields of medical care, welfare, education, etc.

d.   Challenges to more inclusive employment

As an example of concrete initiatives to promote the guarantee of labor rights for all persons with disabilities under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, initiatives to create a workplace environment where persons with disabilities and able-bodied persons can work together, including welfare workshop, and to create appropriate employment opportunities were also presented.

(13) Workplaces where diverse people with disabilities and able-bodied people work together in the right places based on mutual understanding

(14) Support making welfare employment a job with appropriate remuneration and humanistic satisfaction.

(3) General Discussion and Conclusion

A Current status of accumulation of support expertise and human resource development initiatives of employment support providers and issues

Although many employment support providers provided comprehensive and wide-ranging support under a cooperative framework with multidisciplinary providers, there were variations among providers, even among the same provider type, in terms of the diffusion of knowledge, experience, skills, etc.

With regard to organizational initiatives for human resource development, initiatives to verbalize and share support expertise and to clarify organizational goals, in particular, tended to be implemented less frequently, although the importance of these initiatives was recognized.

B   Effective support expertise that work support staff should have in common

Effective support expertise for work support was thought to be a comprehensive process, knowledge, and skills that are not based on the vertical knowledge and perspectives of pre-employment/post-employment, employment/life, and persons with disabilities/companies, and that are not completed only by specific providers or fields. Specifically, they had the overall knowledge and experience of the work support process, the skills, etc. to provide comprehensive and wide-ranging support from pre-placement to post-placement follow-up, in collaboration with multidisciplinary providers, and the latest support to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and companies.

In addition, an easy-to-understand summary of "effective support expertise for work support," organized based on cases examples publicly solicited from various support practitioners, is included at the end of the research report No. 167 as "case examples of vocational rehabilitation by various persons concerned.

C   Effective methods and important points in human resource development of work support staff

In addition to training, organizational initiatives for human resource development were important for effective human resource development. In particular, organizational initiatives to share support expertise and case examples had

an impact on improving the results of support. In the future, training to promote such initiatives is considered necessary.

7　Related Research Deliverables

・Research on the roles and collaboration in supporting employment and workplace settlement of persons with disabilities by regional related organizations and occupations, Research Report No.147,2019

・Research on regional support to promote job preparation and work transition, etc. for persons with disabilities in the fields of health, welfare, and education, Research Report No.134, 2017

・Related data and materials on regional support to promote job preparation and work transition, etc. for persons with disabilities in the fields of health, welfare, and education, Resource Series No.95, 2017