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Research on the Tasks from a Corporate Perspective Involving the Employment of Persons with Mental Disabilities and their Solution Strategies

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[Keywords]

Employment of persons with mental disabilities, mental health measures, support for returning to work, employment support

[Usage of this report]

Tasks having workers to return to workplaces after leave due to mental issues as well as regarding the employment of persons with mental disabilities were analyzed and organized in respect to corporation. Subsequently, the efficient practical use of social resources and initiative policy in order to solve each task was provided. This is to provide indicators for a variety of corporations who are taking part in the employment of persons with mental disabilities to understand their own situation, and indicators for the employment support institutions to plan common recognition with other corporations.

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2   Research Period
  FY 2013 to 2015

3   Composition of the Research Report

Prologue: Aim of this research study, implementation method.

Chapter 1:   Research on "Re-work" support* (return to work support for persons with mental disabilities) at the Local Vocational Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities
*In cooperation with a doctor in charge and other persons concerned, support is provided including coordination for return to work, improvement of daily rhythm, preparatory work experience (called "rehabilitation work"), and development of the workplace environment to accept a disabled worker

Chapter 2:   The realities and tasks of the employment of persons with mental disabilities, research on the realities and tasks regarding the support for persons with mental health issues, research results

Chapter 3:   The relevance between the employment of persons with mental disabilities and the support for persons with mental health issues, the division of corporation groups depending on the employment disabilities and the stability level of workers to return to workplaces after leave due to mental health issues.

Chapter 4:   Problematic issues and solution strategies of each corporation group involved in the employment of persons with mental disabilities.

Epilogue: Tasks in the future

Materials at the end of the report

4   Background and Purpose of Research

In these few years, the index growth regarding the employment of persons with mental disabilities has been remarkable as a result of the increase in the number of employees who have mental disabilities as well as an increase in the number of employment through the Public Employment Security Office. Under these conditions, more support is required for the employees settling into their workplace after the hiring process has been completed as well as corporations at the time of the employment of persons with mental disabilities regarding the issues during the recruitment matching process.

On the other hand, recently the growth of persons suffering from mental health issues has been growing remarkably. Therefore, measures for mental health issues are taking place, for example, from December 2015, implementation of health checkups has become compulsory for workplaces of more than 50 employees. Regarding the return to work support for employees returning after their sick leave, due to their mental health issues, a "handbook for workers' return to work who were out of work" has been published and this is widely recognized. Regarding the support for returning to work, as a part of the "Re-work" support program, proactive support for returning to work has been recently ongoing, for the returnees who have been on sick leave due to their mental health issues. This "Re-work" support program is not only recognized at medical institutions but is also used at public institutions, or private enterprises.

In the research up to this time, corporations were classified into groups depending on their attributes such as their industry and size, then the constraints of the employment of persons with mental disabilities for each group was researched. However, in this research, the main aim was to become helpful in supporting corporations by identifying tasks and the limitations to promoting the employment of persons with mental disabilities analyzing the relationship between the employment of persons with mental disabilities and the support for returning to work. Finally, researching the strategy in promoting the employment of persons with mental disabilities.

5   Method
(1) Establishing the Research Committee
     The Research Committee was established from individuals with extensive learning skills in the field, and individuals from support institutions in order to smoothly undertake the planning of this research study and operation, with cooperation from technical expertise and individuals involved. From the Research Committee, advice on survey details for corporations, interpretation of survey results, and method and interpretation of research with opinion interviews was identified.
(2) Research on the Local Vocational Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities
     The research survey was undertaken with the individuals working at the Local Vocational Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities to identify the "Re-work" support programs, identifying answers to the possibility that the support for returning to work for the persons with mental disabilities might affect the new employment of persons with mental disabilities as well as concerning what tasks and support needs of corporations are.
(3) Survey research of corporations, etc.
     In order to clarify both the differences and common points of tasks, limitations and accommodations being able to provide regarding the employment of persons with mental disabilities and support for returning to work the survey research was undertaken to target 6,991 corporations and responses were received from 2,099 corporations (a response rate of 30.0%). Opinion interviews were also conducted when visiting corporations.
(4) Research using opinion interviews to the institutions involved
     The corporations were divided into six groups classified by two strategies, 1) the status of workers who return to workplaces after leave due to mental health issues, and 2) the employment policy for persons with mental disabilities. This was to analyze the tasks and limitations regarding the employment of persons with mental disabilities. Based on these, we conducted interviews with the institutions involved, etc., and investigated the strategies to promote securing employment of persons with mental disabilities were considered.

6   Research Result
(1) Research on the "Re-work" support
     The "Re-work" support is an effective method to prevent workers who return to workplaces after leave due to mental health issues from going back on sick leave again after their return to work. As a public institute, the Local Vocational Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities has been carrying out this support program. From the survey on individuals working at this institute, the research was undertaken on their evaluations towards the "Re-work" support, as well as the awareness of individuals involved in the "Re-work" support regarding its relationship with the employment of persons with mental disabilities.
     "Improvements in the individual's capacity to adapt the work environment" has come up many times as a focus corporations expect from the "Re-work" support program. Especially these days, the level of the individual's status corporations expect from the absent workers to return to workplaces has increased and the same consistent level of condition as the pre-sick leave level has been expected.
     In the relationship between the new employment of persons with mental disabilities and support for returning to work, a little less than 50% of the centers answered that undertaking the support for returning to work would affect the employment of persons with mental disabilities in some way. On the other hand, there were some centers which have indicated their recognition of those two parameters being less significant because individuals involved at workplaces are always different.
(2) Research on the tasks regarding the employment of persons with mental disabilities
     Continuation with the research on the "Re-work" support, the research on corporations across all sizes and industries regarding the status of the employment of persons with mental disabilities, support for returning to work and their mutual relations was undertaken.
     2,099 corporations responded and just over 30% of these corporations are currently employing persons with mental disabilities. As a mindset towards the employment of persons with mental disabilities those corporations, which are currently employing persons with mental disabilities, were more ambitious towards employing persons with mental disabilities compared to those corporations which have experience in employing those in the past but do not today nor have ever employed anyone with mental disabilities.

Factor analysis was performed with 17 items (4-point scale) that measured the difficulty of the tasks and the limitations during the employment process of persons with mental disabilities. As a result, we labeled three factors "difficulty of coping with behavior," "difficulty of employment management" and "difficulty of performance." The corporations with experiences in employing persons with mental disabilities (including those which have employed in the past) did not give the impression that too many difficulties were identified in all three factors. However, those corporations without any experiences in employing persons with mental disabilities gave the impression of difficulties in all three factors, regardless of their experience of employing persons with disabilities other than persons with mental disabilities. (Figure 1)
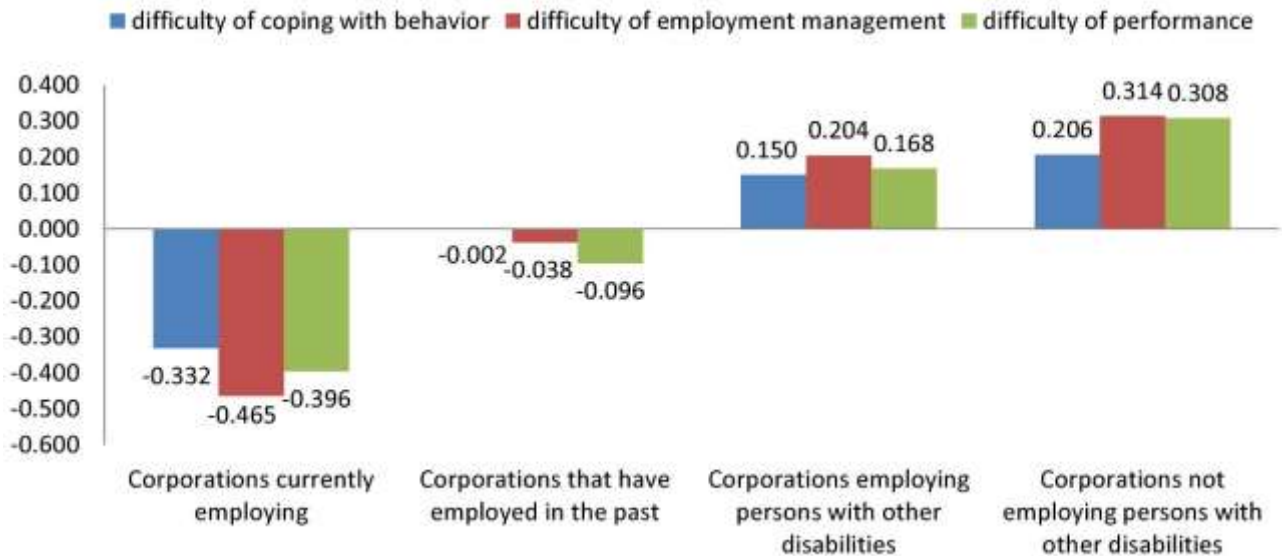

Figure 1: Factor scores of difficulty at the time of employment depending on the employment experiences

Factor analysis was performed with 16 items (4-point scale) that measured the possibility of accommodations for employment persons with mental disabilities. The result revealed that 1 general factor explained the possibility of accommodations, and therefore we labeled the factor "activeness to carry the accommodations." Reviewing the relationship of the difficulty level at the time of employment and the activeness level to carry the accommodations, the more active corporations at the time of employment of persons with mental disabilities tended to show lower difficulty.

(3) An actual situation and task in supporting persons with mental health issues

For the question, "what is the percentage of your employees who have not experienced a recurrence of their issues within a short period of time, when returning to work after having a continuous sick leave period of more than a month because of their mental health issues?", corporations with stable returning status had approximately 40% of all the answers with answers of "most of them are stable" and "more than half of them are stable" and corporations with unstable returning status had approximately 20% of all the answers with answers of "only a few of them are stable" and "most of them are not stable." The majority of corporations have had experiences in dealing with the returnees. However, the proportion that answered, "people rarely return to work" had the most recorded at 24%, and there were some corporations with a few experiences in supporting the workers to return to workplaces after leave due to mental health issues. The majority of corporations with stable returning status offer a sick leave period of more than two years. In comparison, approximately 30% of corporations with only a few returnees answered "no other leave systems are offered other than paid holiday," and approximately 40% offered a sick leave period of less than two years. (Figure 2)
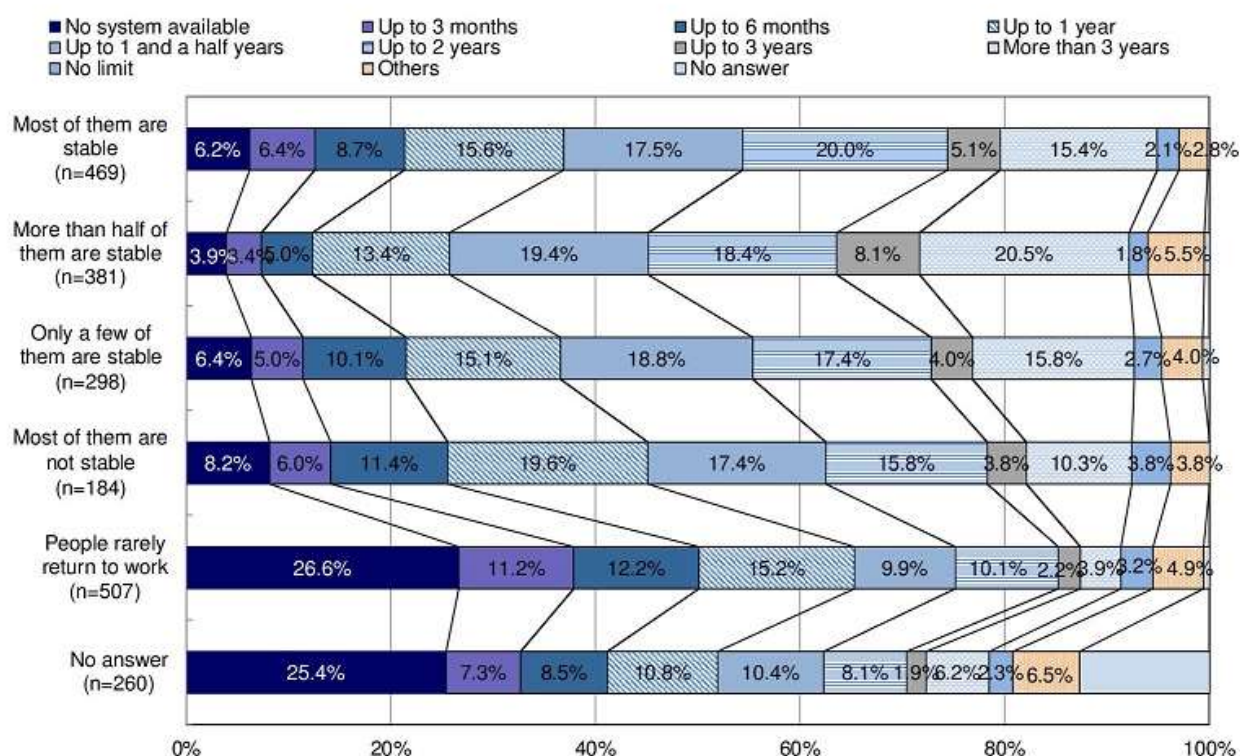
Figure 2: The maximum period of sick leave depending on the state of the returnees who return to work

Factor analysis was performed with 17 items (4-point scale) that measured the tasks and the limitations to have workers to return to workplaces after leave due to mental health issues. As a result, we labeled three factors "difficulty of coping with behavior," "difficulty of employment management" and "difficulty of performance." When comparing the factor scores from each of the stability levels in the return status, the factor of "difficulty of employment management" tends to decrease if the return status is good. However, for the factors of "difficulty of coping with behavior" and "difficulty of performance" the difficulty level was especially higher in the group of "people rarely return to work" compared to the group of "most of them are not stable." (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Factor scores of difficulty at the time of returning to work depending on the return status

Factor analysis was performed with 16 items (4-point scale) that measured possibility of accommodations to have workers to return to workplaces after leave due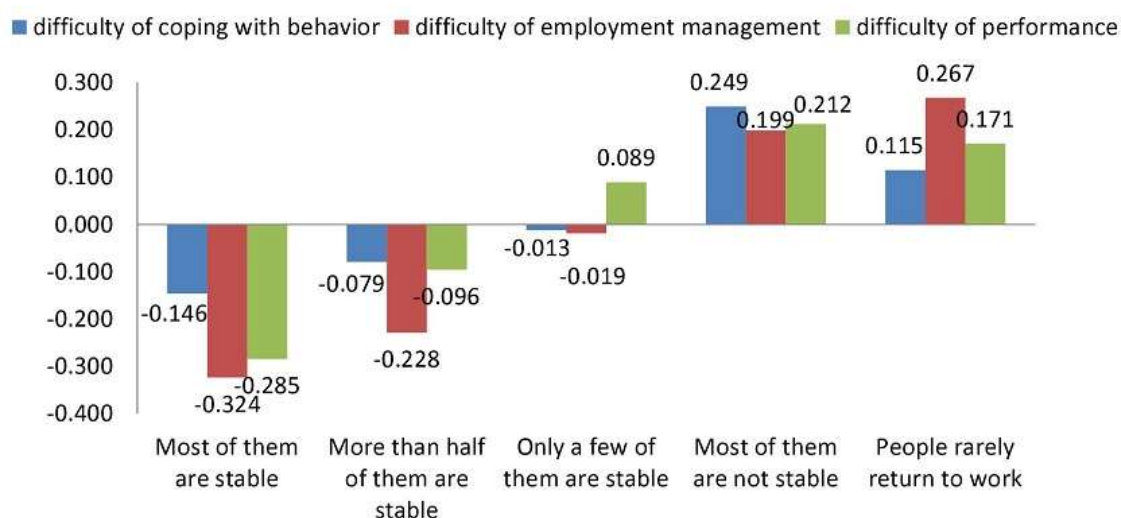 to mental health issues. As a result, we labeled three factors "employment management," "using support institutions" and "coping with individual problems." In this result, even though there seems to have been a little difference between groups in stability levels in return status, factor scores were high in "more than half of them are stable" and "only a few of them are stable." In the group of "people rarely return to work," all the factor scores were low, especially the factor score of "employment management" were low. (Figure 4)
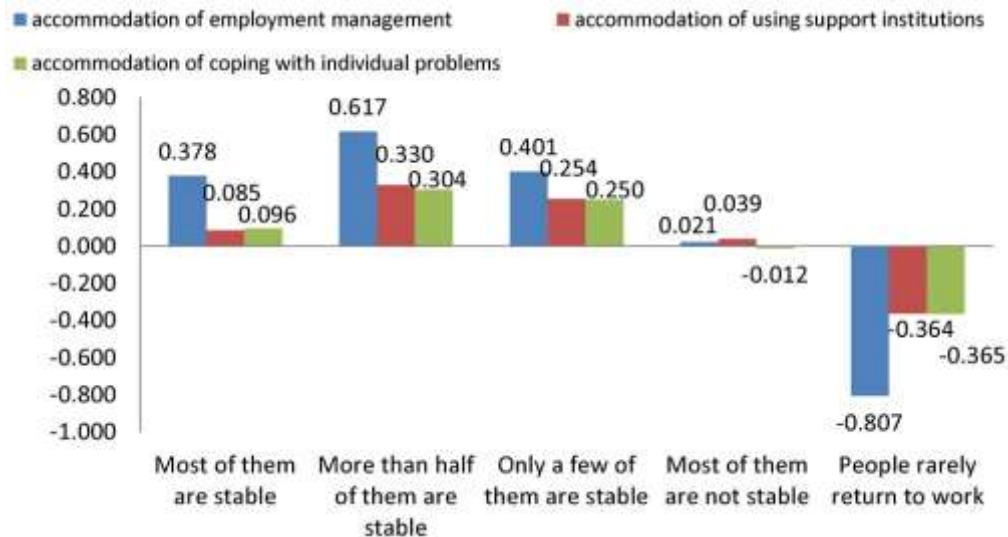

Figure 4: Factor scores of possibility of accommodations at the time of returning to work depending on the return status

7   Analysis regarding the Relation of the Employment of Persons with Mental Disabilities and the Support of Persons with Mental Health Issues

Previously, the research results of each individual task and limitation, in regards of 1) supporting workers to return to workplaces after leave due to mental health issues and 2) the employment of persons with mental disabilities at corporations, have been evaluated. However, in order to analyze in more depth about the existence of relationships between the previous two subjects, an additional investigation in the following was undertaken to analyze the characteristics dividing corporations into six groups from each key group of the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities and support towards persons with mental health issues in order to establish a method to promote the employment of persons with mental disabilities.

As a dividing method, six groups of 3x2 were created by dividing all the answers from the survey into the key group of 1) the plan of recruiting persons with disabilities (accepting the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities, not accepting the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities, not accepting the recruitment of persons with disabilities) and the other key group of 2) state of absent workers to return to workplaces (stable return to work, not stable return to work) in order to look into characteristics of corporation groups within each group. (Table 1)

Table 1: Six groups of types

			State of the returners	
			Stable return to work	Not stable return to work
Plan on recruitment of persons with disabilities	Recruitment planning available	Recruitment planning of employing persons with disabilities available/Accepting the employment of persons with mental disabilities	Stable return to work/Accepting the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities Group A/P (Antei/Positive) 145 corporations (6.9%)	Not stable return to work/Accepting the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities Group H/P (Hi-antei/Positive) 176 corporations (8.4%)
		Recruitment planning of employing persons with disabilities available/Not accepting the employment of persons with mental disabilities	Stable return to work/Not accepting the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities Group A/N (Antei/Negative) 392 corporations (18.7%)	Not stable return to work/Not accepting the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities Group H/N (Hi-antei/Negative) 541 corporations (25.8%)
	No recruitment planning available	Not accepting the recruitment planning of persons with disabilities	Stable return to work/Not accepting the recruitment of persons with disabilities Group A/B (Antei/Blank) 183 corporations (8.7%)	Not stable return to work/Not accepting the recruitment of persons with disabilities Group H/B (Hi-antei/Blank) 662 corporations (31.5%)

The following are the significant points identified in relation between the plan of recruiting persons with disabilities and the state of the return.
(1) The characteristics of the difficulty level and limitations at the time of the employment

In consideration of the sense of difficulty towards the employment management at the time of employment of persons with mental disabilities, regardless of the plan of recruiting persons with disabilities, the group of unstable return to work had a higher sense of difficulty than the group of stable return to work. In addition, reviewing the group of unstable return to work, especially a group of corporations without the plan of recruiting persons with disabilities (the group of not stable return to work/not accepting the recruitment of persons with disabilities) had more sense of difficulty than the group of stable return to work.
(2) The characteristics of the level of difficulty and limitations at the time of the restoration

Among the factors at the time of restoration, regarding the difficulty of "coping with behavior," and "employment management," the group which accepted the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities as their employment plan of employing persons with disabilities had less sense of difficulty than the group which did not accept the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities, and the group which did not accept recruitment of persons with disabilities. This indicates that there is a relationship between the aspect towards the recruitment of persons with mental disabilities and the sense of difficulty at the time of the restoration. In other words, this indicates that the group of corporations which are positive about recruiting persons with mental disabilities sense less difficulty coping with behavior and employment management at the time of restoration.

8   Promotion of Employment of Persons with Mental Disabilities Distinguished by Individual Corporation Group
Regarding the six groups of corporations where their characteristics were analyzed previously, tasks of each group involved in the employment of persons with mental disabilities were extracted and the opinions and information regarding the strategies towards resolving these tasks were gathered by undertaking opinion interviews with corporations, the persons concerned, specialists and support institutions. The main characteristics and examples of counterplans of those six groups are shown in Table 2.

9   Summary
Conclusion can be drawn that the results of the research survey have confirmed that there is some kind of a relationship between the support for returning to work and the employment of persons with mental disabilities. However, regarding the promotion of the employment of persons with mental disabilities, a careful consideration must be taken as there is an existence of the characteristics depending on a size of corporations, industries they operate in, and the characteristics of every individual corporation.
Moreover, from this research, the correlation between the employment policy of persons with mental disabilities and the state of the return is suggested. However, there was a limitation to the research on the factor relationships and circumstances hidden behind. These considerations should be the focus of future research. In this research, corporations were divided into six groups and general structures of tasks and resolution strategies were provided. However, regarding the promotion of the employment of persons with mental disabilities to the actual corporations, it is needless to say that the consideration, after observing a situation of each individual corporation carefully, is necessary.
Within the administrative measures in the past, the approach towards the counterplan for mental health issues and the promotion of the employment of persons with mental disabilities has been different. However, in the future, a desire to consider building a cooperation figure representing both parties is necessary, for example, demanding a fulfillment of the counterplan for mental health issues while cultivating a better understanding of the common points of both parties regarding the employment of persons with mental disabilities.

Table 2: Example of characteristics and counterplans of corporation groups

	The results for corporations research					Generic tasks	Example of counterplans
	Experience on employment of persons with mental disabilities		Percentage of employment of persons with physical and intellectual disabilities	Most numerous size classification	Industries with high percentages (Note 1)		
Group A/P	Corporations currently employing	79.3%	Physical: 90.3% Intellectual: 50.3%	More than 1,000 people (50.3%)	○ Wholesale and retail trade	• What corporations expect from the employment, many answered, "creating a better atmosphere within the corporation" and "positive effect on other employees" which reinforces their principle of including others. • What they can expect from supporting returnees return to work, many answered that "connection to supporting institutions, building know-how of the measures for mental health issues." • As a consideration of employment management, for example: adjusting to flexible employment conditions, which are also actively offered in high numbers to persons with mental health issues who are currently working. However, there are some concerns by corporations to deal with these situations by themselves regarding "unexpected corresponding behavior," as well as, "corresponding to problems outside work areas," a connection with supporting institutions outside corporations is deemed necessary.	• By cooperating with staff from occupational health within a corporation as well as medical institutions outside the corporation, accurate understanding of conditions and correspondence levels for first response at the time of a problem occurrence are improved.
	Corporations that have employed in the past	3.4%					
	Corporations employing persons with other disabilities	15.2%					
	Corporations not employing persons with other disabilities	2.1%					
Group A/N	Corporations currently employing	45.2%	Physical: 92.1% Intellectual: 26.5%	300 to 999 people (43.9%)	○ Finance and insurance ○ Information and communications ○ Construction	• What corporations expect from the employment, many answered "based on compliance" and even though actual employment achievement of persons with physical disabilities is high they are passive about new employment of persons with mental disabilities. • In the measures for mental health issues, however the correspondence as organization is prepared, the sense of difficulties is strong regarding the behavior correspondence for individual situation as well as the tasks for job performance. • Even though the main point is to understand the characteristics of disabilities the approach towards new employment becomes easier by solving tasks of individual consideration at the time of the returnees return to work, such as adjusting their human support system, for example, regular counselling to confirm employees' health conditions.	• In order to improve the understanding of disabilities within a corporation, the support measures are used to assign professionals, including job coaches* for corporations and psychiatric social workers. • The target of persons with disabilities is expanded to persons with developmental disabilities.
	Corporations that have employed in the past	9.4%					
	Corporations employing persons with other disabilities	41.3%					
	Corporations not employing persons with other disabilities	4.1%					
Group A/B	Corporations currently employing	16.9%	Physical: 69.9% Intellectual: 13.7%	100 to 299 people (35.5%)	○ Education, learning support ○ Information and communications ○ Finance and insurance	• It is difficult to allocate work in order to employ persons with disabilities, therefore secondary duties are also less expected as an assumption of the employment of persons with mental disabilities. Moreover, at the time of the judgement for the returnees return to work or not, the level of demand for performing duties is high and it is necessary to have an appropriate recovery level. • Regarding what corporations expect by undertaking the support to individuals returning to work, an improvement in work atmosphere has been indicated.	• In order to support the returnees return to work, the use of support institutions outside the corporations is undertaken. • In order to judge the continuation of employment for the employee who has difficulties in returning to work, if it is possible to gain a consensus within a corporation about building a flexible career route, the use of Comprehensive Employment Support for Persons with Mental disabilities at the local Vocational Rehabilitation Centers for Persons with Disabilities is suggested.
	Corporations that have employed in the past	6.6%					
	Corporations employing persons with other disabilities	51.4%					
	Corporations not employing persons with other disabilities	25.1%					
Group H/P	Corporations currently employing	64.8%	Physical: 72.2% Intellectual: 53.4%	100 to 299 people (31.3%)	○ Medical, health care and welfare ○ Wholesale and retail trade	• From the past experiences of employment of persons with disabilities, the accumulation of the achievement of human consideration has built up even though the ability preparation in cases of emergency situations, such aggravation of conditions, is lacking. The corporations expect individuals to have a potential power and concern about allocating duties as well as adjusting duty volumes equal to other employees. • They have difficulty getting understanding of absent workers to return to workplaces from other employees while consideration the individual privacy when returners return to work.	• There is a limitation to change the corporation system such as shift works therefore it is more efficient for persons with mental disabilities to attend the program at employment support institutions beforehand to gain the ability to demand considerations appropriately in order to actively use those skills during the employment. • They are prospective regarding the employment, therefore it is important to have support to settle into the workplace.
	Corporations that have employed in the past	6.8%					
	Corporations employing persons with other disabilities	20.5%					
	Corporations not employing persons with other disabilities	8.0%					
Group H/N	Corporations currently employing	27.0%	Physical: 77.8% Intellectual: 34.4%	100 to 299 people (39.9%)	○ Services, N. E. C. ○ Living-related and personal services and amusement services ○ Medical, health care and welfare ○ Accommodations, eating and drinking services	• Compared to others, the adjustment of employment conditions is fairly easy therefore the hurdle of employment is low. However, there are quite a few occasions where the employment does not settle into the workplace if a careful process has not been undertaken through support institutions at the time of matching and this makes it harder to progress to the next employment. • As a counterplan for employment management, either after employment or returning to work, if it is difficult within a corporation to create a supporting system to overlook the preparation system for the entire organization to welcome employees, the use of institutions outside the corporation should be considered.	• There are any corporations with a feeling of rejection due to a bad experience in employing the persons with mental disabilities in the past. • If further employment is considered, it is efficient to approach the employment in the long term through the help of support from institutions with achievements of employment of persons with mental disabilities, by 1) being present at interviews, 2) workplace training and 3) learning about approaches in other corporations.
	Corporations that have employed in the past	12.6%					
	Corporations employing persons with other disabilities	51.8%					
	Corporations not employing persons with other disabilities	8.7%					
Group H/B	Corporations currently employing	8.2%	Physical: 47.3% Intellectual: 9.0%	50 to 99 people (45.5%)	○ Agriculture, forestry and fisheries ○ Construction ○ Transport and postal services ○ Electricity, gas, heat supply and water	• It is difficult for them to actively approach the measures for the employment of persons with disabilities or mental health issues due to budgetary concerns. • Even though they have a sense of difficulty in implementation of considerations towards employment management, including information gathering for employment of persons with difficulties, it is considered to be easier to approach returnees returning to work more than approaching new employment undertakings.	• For the usage of support systems, it is necessary to consider (Note 2) to make the access to the information easier, therefore the counterplan to promote the understanding through the approach of the other corporations in the same industry (the Association of Small Business Entrepreneurs) should be considered.
	Corporations that have employed in the past	8.2%					
	Corporations employing persons with other disabilities	37.8%					
	Corporations not employing persons with other disabilities	45.9%					

Note 1) Chi-square test was significant (p < .001). From them, the adjusted residual score greater than |2.0| are shown on the table. Therefore, in each group some other applicable corporations exist other than industries illustrated as examples.

Note 2) For example, Anshin Zaidan has the measures for mental health issues targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises.

* In order to assist persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with mental disabilities in smoothly adjusting to the workplace, the centers dispatch job coaches to workplaces to provide direct and professional support to such persons and their employers based on individual disability traits.