



Research on the relationship between employment situation, disorders of persons with mental disabilities, and grades provided on mental disability certificates

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[Keywords]

Mental disability
Mental disorder
Mental disabilities certificate grading system
Reasonable accommodation
Employment management
Rates of implementation
Effectiveness
Burden

[Abstract]

This study elucidated the relationship between grades allocated on the mental disabilities certificate, the primary disorder of persons with disabilities, and the challenges faced by such individuals during employment. Herein, three surveys—a corporate survey, an on-site survey, and a survey targeting persons with disabilities—were conducted. Analysis was conducted regarding the implementation (or lack thereof) and effectiveness of, as well as the degree of burden incurred by, accommodations and measures related to employment management for persons with mental disabilities, in addition to various other employment conditions.

Notably, while the implementation (or lack thereof) and effectiveness of, as well as the degree of burden incurred by, accommodations and measures taken, were partially related to the primary disorders of individuals, no general tendencies were observed. Almost no relationship was observed regarding the grades provided on the certificate. Conversely, issues related to employment for subjects were prevalent, while initiatives related to accommodations and measures taken at the corporate level had a facilitative effect on their corresponding implementation undertaken by businesses on behalf of subjects.

1 Authors (in order of authorship)

ASAKA Hidehiko (Chief Researcher, Research Group on Support for Persons with Disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation) FY2022–FY2024

SHIBUYA Tomonori (Senior Researcher, Research Group on Support for Persons with Disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation) FY2022–FY2024

DOUI Yasuhiro (Research Manager, Research Group on Support for Persons with Disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation) FY2024

TANAKA Noriko (Researcher, Research Group on Support for Persons with Disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation) FY2024

IGARASHI Iwaho (Fellow Researcher, Research Group on Support for Persons with Disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation) FY2022–FY2024

NOZAWA Takuya (Research Cooperator, Research Group on Support for Persons with Disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation) FY2022–FY2024

ODA Shinichi (Research Cooperator, Research Group on Support for Persons with Disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation) FY2024

2 Research Period

FY2022–FY2024

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Preface

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4 Background and Purpose of the Research

(1) Background of this study

Criteria for obtaining a mental disability certificate include “the condition of one’s mental disorder (impairments on functioning)” and “conditions surrounding impairments on one’s ability (restrictions on activities).” However, as the criteria are determined from a perspective that differs from situations occurring in the context of employment, the relationship between the said criteria and restrictions on one’s working life has not been sufficiently explored. Therefore, to promote and facilitate stable employment for persons with disabilities, it is necessary to gather data that may contribute to the

evaluation of the relationship between the aforementioned restrictions and grades provided on mental disability certificates.

(2) Purpose of this study

In promoting the employment of, as well as stable employment for, persons with mental disabilities (hereinafter including persons with developmental disabilities, unless specified otherwise), it is crucial to gain an understanding of the degree of burden in relation to employment management incurred by business owners in employing such persons with disabilities. However, challenges related to employment for persons with mental disabilities and the grades provided on mental disability certificates are not necessarily related. Furthermore, as both the grades on certificates and disorder types vary, it is assumed that the burden, with relation to employment management, incurred by business owners does not necessarily correspond to the grades provided on mental disability certificates, while it is affected by factors such as disorder type and grade presented on the certificate, among others.

Based on this background, this study expounds on the relationship between primary disorders of persons with mental disabilities, grades provided on mental disability certificates, and the employment situation. This is in addition to appraising the employment-related challenges pertaining to the burden incurred by business owners vis-à-vis employment management while considering the influence of other factors.

5 Method

(1) Establishment of a research committee

During this study, to obtain the specialist opinion of external experts regarding the investigation and analysis of conditions surrounding the employment of persons with mental disabilities, a research committee comprising seven individuals who were academic experts, stakeholders (administrative, medical, or corporate), or support providers was established and operated. Four meetings were held by the committee over three years (2022–2024).

(2) Interviews with specialists

Prior to the research committee meetings, interviews were conducted with five experts in the field of employment support for persons with mental disabilities and eleven corporations and organizations, which included those at which persons with mental disabilities were employed as well as those involved in the provision of employment support to such persons. The purpose was to gather information that would contribute to the evaluation of (a draft of) research contents and items.

(3) Implementation of research on the employment conditions of persons with disabilities

Three questionnaire surveys were conducted over the course of this study. The first survey (Questionnaire A—the corporate survey) was conducted to investigate basic matters and basic accommodations and measures related to employment management. The second survey (Questionnaire B—the on-site survey) was conducted to investigate the employment management of individual

employees with mental disabilities. The third survey (Questionnaire C—the survey targeting persons with disabilities [involved parties]) targeted employed staff with mental disabilities.

A. Selection of subjects (corporations) during the corporate survey (Questionnaire A), as well as the parties from which responses were obtained

Based on the Report on the Status of Employment of Persons with Disabilities, published in 2022, 10,000 corporations and businesses at which persons with mental disabilities were employed were selected as the subjects of the corporate survey. As the corporate survey was conducted to examine the general situation of corporations and businesses (hereinafter “corporations”), individuals working in the fields of human resources and labor were asked to provide responses.

B. Subjects of the on-site survey (Questionnaire B) and the survey targeting persons with disabilities (involved parties) (Questionnaire C), as well as the parties from which responses were obtained

During the on-site survey, as well as the survey targeting persons with disabilities (involved parties), all persons with mental disabilities who were employed at the corporations for the corporate survey were administered a copy of the questionnaire. While the total number of persons with mental disabilities employed at the corporations selected for the corporate survey was expected to be 40,096, a limit of six persons was set for corporations where over six individuals with mental disabilities were employed. Subsequently, the total number of respondents was estimated to be 21,776. Individuals (including those in charge of human resources and labor, as well as superiors in the workplace) who had knowledge regarding employment situation were asked to provide responses to the on-site survey, while those with disabilities were asked to provide responses to the survey targeting persons with disabilities (involved parties).

C. Questionnaires and methods of responding

Responses to all three survey types—the corporate survey, on-site survey, and survey targeting persons with disabilities (involved parties)—were obtained with the assistance of respective corporations.

D. Responses to the survey

The response period was set as from July 1 (Saturday) to September 30 (Saturday) 2023. The number of responses gathered for each questionnaire, as well as the corresponding response rates, can be found in the table below.

Number of responses gathered and response rate for each questionnaire

Questionnaire	Target sample	Number of responses	Response rate
Questionnaire A	10,000 corporations	2,553	25.5%
Questionnaire B	21,776 individuals	3,638	16.7%
Questionnaire C	21,776 individuals	2,601	11.9%

6 Summarized Results of the Study

(1) Results of the corporate and on-site surveys

A. Results of the corporate survey (Questionnaire A)

Regarding Questionnaire A, individuals in charge of human resources or labor at corporations where persons with disabilities were employed were asked to provide information on employment management, including that on accommodations and measures taken from an employment management perspective. Notably, 2,553 responses were obtained from such corporations. Over 40% of the 2,553 responses came from corporations with 100 to 299 employees. The top three business sectors were *healthcare and welfare, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail trade*, making up over 60% of the total.

Accommodations and measures related to employment management that were commonly implemented included *personnel allocation, as well as the selection and creation of work tasks that consider the characteristics of one's disability*, with this being the most commonly implemented, at a rate of 78.8%. This was followed by *designation and adjustment of working conditions, including times at which employees signed in and out, working hours, leave, and breaks, which consider factors such as outpatient treatment and personal health condition*, with an implementation rate of 56.8%, as well as the *management of personal health and work tasks conducted via regular interviews*, with an implementation rate of 52.4%.

Regarding parties or departments in charge of the management of *employees with mental disabilities* (hereinafter “subjects”), *only superiors and/or persons-in-charge at departments where individuals were allocated* were most commonly selected to be in charge of work-related instructions. Business management aside from the above-stated most commonly involved *superiors and/or persons-in-charge at the departments where individuals were allocated as well as individuals working in human resources, labor, and administration*. Regarding *consultations related to personal condition or health, occupational health staff, including occupational doctors*, was found to be involved to a certain degree, in addition to the parties mentioned above.

B. Results of the on-site survey (Questionnaire B)

Questionnaire B was administered to gather information from individuals-in-charge or human resources or labor, as well as persons-in-charge on site, regarding the circumstances of individual employees with mental disabilities and the management of such employees. Notably, responses were obtained from 3,638 employees with mental disabilities. The business entities at which subjects worked were *general corporations or businesses* (94.7%), *special subsidiary companies* (1.2%), and *support programs for continuation of work (Type A)* (3.7%). *Support programs for continuation of work (Type A)* refer to “a welfare service that is also an employment that provides employment opportunities based on employment contracts to persons with disabilities who have difficulty working in ordinary business establishments and delivers necessary training to improve their knowledge and abilities.”

The most common primary disorder of subjects was mood disorders (26.7%), followed by unspecified

disorders (17.2%), schizophrenia (14.1%), autism spectrum disorder (ASD; 14.1%), and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD; 7.2%). Grades provided on the mental disabilities certificate (hereinafter “certificate”) were Level 1 (2.7%), Level 2 (42.0%), Level 3 (48.7%), and unspecified (4.4%). Notably, 2.2% of the responses obtained were invalid. An examination of primary disorders occurring at each certificate level showed that many disorders most commonly occurred at Level 3. However, schizophrenia (59.1%) and higher brain dysfunction (45.5%) occurred most commonly at Level 2.

Employment-related challenges commonly faced by subjects overall included *the ability to make decisions during unexpected situations* (35.8%), where individuals responded that they *faced challenges* or *faced considerable challenges*. Regarding primary disorder, subjects with higher brain dysfunction answered that they *faced challenges* or *faced considerable challenges* with regard to over 50% of the items included in the questionnaire. Subjects with mood disorders commonly responded that they *faced challenges* or *faced considerable challenges* with regard to *stability of symptoms* (28.2%), whereas subjects with ASD commonly responded that they *faced challenges* or *faced considerable challenges* regarding *necessary communication at work* (26.8%).

Accommodations and measures that were commonly implemented on behalf of subjects included the following: *allocate work tasks and perform personnel allocation based on personal capabilities and abilities* (76.3%); *respond to changes in personal condition that arose, where the completion of tasks or attendance was affected* (73.3%); *designate an individual to be in charge of provision of work instructions, as well as consultations regarding work* (67.2%); *have superiors or persons in charge of employment management conduct regular meetings* (64.5%). No significant characteristics were observed based on grade or primary disorder aside from several items where the rate of implementation rose alongside increases in grade (*take measures or provide equipment to deal with the physical environment, such as lighting or indoor noises*; *create manuals or operation schedules that consider the characteristics of employee disability*; *respond to changes in employee health condition that arose, where the completion of tasks or attendance was affected*).

Regarding the effectiveness of accommodations and measures taken vis-à-vis employment management, the rates at which respondents had an *effective* or *somewhat effective* response was high for the following items: *allocate work tasks and perform personnel allocation based on personal capabilities and abilities* (80.3%), *designate an individual to be in charge of provision of work instructions, as well as consultations regarding work* (76.2%), *respond to changes in employee health condition that arose, where the completion of tasks or attendance was affected* (76.0%), *have superiors or persons in charge of employment management conduct regular meetings* (75.6%), and *conduct workplace training before hiring to examine the individual’s suitability with job* (73.3%). Generally, high implementation rates were positively related to high proportions of *effective* or *somewhat effective* responses.

Regarding burden incurred, overall, the rates at which respondents presented *burdensome* or *somewhat burdensome* responses were high with respect to the following accommodations or measures related to employment management: *create manuals or operation schedules that consider the characteristics of employee disability* (46.0%), *revise workflow instructions based on characteristics of individual disabilities* (42.1%), *conduct workplace training before hiring to examine individual's suitability with job* (40.3%), *designate an individual to be in charge of provision of work instructions, as well as consultations regarding work* (39.5%), and *station a support provider (e.g., employment support worker, in-house job coach, etc.) to help employees adapt to the workplace* (39.0%). No major differences were found in the degree of burden incurred based on grade. Characteristics based on primary disorder were, for the most part, similar.

(2) Results of the survey targeting persons with disabilities (involved parties) (Questionnaire C)

In Questionnaire C, individual employees with mental disabilities were asked to provide information regarding the following: sex, age, primary disorder, grade provided on certificate, mode of employment, occupation type, years of service, employment support providers used by individuals at the time of employment, and accommodations and measures taken by the corporation or business at which one worked. There were 2,601 respondents, with 64.8% (33.0%) of the respondents being male (female). Regarding respondent age, the highest proportion of respondents were in their 30s, followed by those in their 40s.

Mood disorders (28.0%) were the most commonly reported primary disorder, followed by ASD (21.1%) and schizophrenia (20.1%). Level 3 (50.5%) was the most commonly reported certificate grade, followed by Level 2 (45.0%). Level 1 was only reported rarely, at a rate of 1.9%. The most commonly reported primary disorder of individuals with a Level 1 grade was epilepsy (24.5%), followed by schizophrenia (22.4%) and mood disorders (16.3%). The most commonly reported primary disorder of individuals with a Level 2 grade was schizophrenia (29.5%), followed by mood disorders (25.3%) and ASD (21.5%). The most commonly reported primary disorder of individuals with a Level 3 grade was mood disorders (31.6%), followed by ASD (22.0%) and ADHD (13.9%).

The most commonly reported occupation type of respondents was clerical work (32.9%), followed by *transportation, cleaning, packaging, and so on* (15.6%), *jobs related to the manufacturing process* (13.4%), and *service-related jobs* (11.1%). The reported years of service of respondents were as follows: 1–2 years (25.5%), 3–4 years (20.6%), 5–9 years (26.6%), and 10 years or longer (14.4%).

Moreover, the following accommodations and measures taken by the corporation or business at which respondents worked were reported at a rate higher than 60%: *make it easy for employees to take leave when not feeling well* (62.5%), *allocate individual in charge of providing assistance with task completion as well as the provision of advice to the employee or other individuals* (61.6%), and *provide simple instructions regarding the methods to conduct tasks* (61.1%). The following accommodations or measures were reported to be useful by respondents at a rate higher than 30%: *allocate individual in*

charge of providing assistance with task completion as well as the provision of advice to the employee or other individuals (33.6%), make it easy for employees to take leave when not feeling well (33.1%), and provide simple instructions with regard to the methods to conduct tasks (32.2%). The following accommodations or measures were reported by respondents as not currently being conducted but desirable, at a rate of higher than 30%: *evaluation, promotions, or advancement based on ability (36.3%); have superiors share the contents of consultations with primary doctor (35.0%); make adjustments to the physical environment, such as lighting or indoor noises, in response to sensory sensitivity (34.0%); providing more means of employee training or induction training (30.8%).*

The most common reason selected by respondents for leaving their previous job was *the vibe or interpersonal relationships at the workplace (47.1%)*. Respondents chose the below-listed items—they would have continued to work at their previous workplace (corporation or business) if the following accommodations or measures were available: *accommodations made with regard to communication and interpersonal relationships in the workplace (43.7%), make it easy for employees to take leave when not feeling well (35.6%), make adjustments to workload based on symptoms or employee health condition (33.6%), and allocate individual in charge of providing assistance with task completion as well as the provision of advice to the employee or other individuals (30.6%).*

(3) Evaluation of factors that affect the implementation of accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects

A. Method of evaluation

At the National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation (2024),¹ a significant relationship was found between a sufficient rate of implementation regarding reasonable accommodations and the desire of employees with disabilities to continue working. Considering these research results, the items included in Questionnaire B to which respondents were asked to provide answers were handled as follows. The implementation (or lack thereof) as well as effectiveness of various accommodations and measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects and the degree of burden incurred were designated as the dependent variables. Various variables, including primary disorder and certificate grade, were designated as the independent variables, and the relationship between the dependent and independent variables was evaluated using the generalized linear model.

The dependent variables were handled as follows: 22 items, related to the implementation (or lack thereof) of accommodations and measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects, were treated as two-state variables, taking the *implemented* or *not implemented* form. Responses provided based on effectiveness were recorded on a 5-point scale as continuous variables, from *effective* to *not effective*, while responses provided regarding the degree of burden were recorded on a 5-point scale as continuous variables, from *burden* to *not a burden*. Most items included in Questionnaires A and B were used as independent variables.

¹ Research Report No. 176: Research on the actual status of employment of persons with disabilities, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation (2024).

B. Evaluation results

(a) Primary disorder and certificate grade of subjects

While certain primary disorders were found to have a facilitative or inhibitive effect on the implementation of certain accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects with regard to the relationship between primary disorder and the accommodations or measures taken, no tendencies were observed regarding specific disorders that had an inhibitory effect on the implementation of numerous accommodations, as well as corresponding effectiveness and degree of burden incurred. Furthermore, based on the grade provided on the certificate, few items were observed to correlate with the implementation (or lack thereof) of accommodations and measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects, as well as the corresponding effectiveness or degree of burden incurred. No positive results were obtained with regard to the relationship between the grade provided on the certificate and accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects.

(b) Employment-related challenges faced by subjects

Employment-related challenges faced by subjects were found to correlate with the implementation of accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects. Several employment-related challenges were found to have a facilitative effect on the implementation of accommodations or measures; businesses might implement accommodations or measures while considering the characteristics of subjects. Furthermore, the effectiveness of accommodations or measures taken was found to decrease alongside the increased employment-related challenges faced by subjects. Simultaneously, the degree of burden incurred by the implementation of such accommodations or measures was found to increase alongside increases in the employment-related challenges faced by subjects. Notably, significant challenges faced with regard to *self-understanding* were found to exert an inhibitory effect on the implementation of accommodations or measures.

(c) Various employment situations of subjects

When subjects fulfilled the employment condition of *being a full-time employee*, this was found to have an inhibitory effect on accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of respondents. Further, in the case of subjects who worked in jobs related to *external affairs or customer-facing work*, an inhibitory effect was observed. Moreover, the possibility that the effectiveness of accommodations or measures taken by businesses was high, in relation to jobs where persons with mental disabilities were commonly employed, was suggested.

Regarding monitoring changes in personal health, taking any of the following actions (whether independently or as a combination of multiple actions) was found to have a facilitative effect on the accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects: *pay attention to the individual's condition on a day-to-day basis and reach out to them* (hereinafter *reaching out*), *ask the individual to keep a journal* (hereinafter *journal*), and *conduct regular meetings and ask about the individual's health*

condition (hereinafter *regular meetings*). The effectiveness of accommodations or measures taken in the form of *reaching out* and *regular meetings* was found to be high. The degree of burden incurred was found to be low for *reaching out* and conducting *regular meetings* but high for *journal*.

(d) Initiatives taken at the corporate level

Accommodations or measures taken at the corporate level had a facilitative effect on the implementation of numerous accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects and tended to raise the effectiveness of such implementation. Initiatives taken at the corporate level were found to reduce the degree of burden incurred partially, albeit to a lesser degree compared to the effects on the degree of implementation or effectiveness.

(e) Collaboration with employment support providers

Collaboration with employment support providers tended to have a strong facilitative effect on the implementation of accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects, and it was assumed to be an important factor. However, no major relationship was found between said collaboration and the effectiveness of as well as the degree of burden incurred by accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects.

(4) Perceptions held by subjects and businesses surrounding the necessity of accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects

A. Perceptions held by persons-in-charge at businesses and subjects regarding the implementation (or lack thereof) of accommodations or measures taken

The three forms of accommodations or measures most commonly reported to be implemented by businesses on behalf of subjects, excluding responses obtained under *other* and invalid responses, were as follows: *allocate work tasks and perform personnel allocation based on personal capabilities and abilities* (83.5%), *respond to changes in employee health condition that arose where the completion of tasks or attendance was affected* (79.4%), and *designate an individual to be in charge of provision of work instructions as well as consultations regarding work* (72.7%). Conversely, the three forms of accommodations or measures most commonly reported to be received by subjects, excluding invalid responses, were as follows: *make it easy for employees to take leave when not feeling well* (63.1%), *allocate the individual in charge of providing assistance with task completion as well as the provision of advice to the employee or other individuals* (61.9%), and *provide simple instructions with regard to the methods to conduct tasks* (61.4%).

B. Perceptions held by persons-in-charge at businesses and subjects surrounding the effectiveness of accommodations or measures taken

The three forms of accommodations or measures most commonly reported to be taken by persons-in-charge at businesses on behalf of subjects, which were also reported to be *effective* or *somewhat effective* with regard to effectiveness, were as follows: *create manuals or operation schedules that consider the characteristics of employee disability* (95.4%), *designate an individual to be in charge of provision of*

work instructions as well as consultations regarding work (94.7%), and allocate work tasks and perform personnel allocation based on personal capabilities and abilities (94.2%). Additionally, the three accommodations and methods that were most commonly selected by subjects as being useful, excluding invalid responses, were as follows (including items with tied selection rates): *allocate the individual in charge of providing assistance with task completion as well as the provision of advice to the employee or other individuals (54.5%), designate an individual to be in charge of provision of work instructions as well as consultations regarding work (53.2%), make it easy for employees to take leave when not feeling well (53.0%), and accommodations made with regard to communication and interpersonal relationships at the workplace (53.0%).* The three most commonly selected items above overlapped partially with items that had been decided on by persons-in-charge.

(5) Discussion

While partial relationships were observed between primary disorders and the implementation (or lack thereof) of accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects, as well as the effectiveness of and the degree of burden incurred by such implementation, no general trends were identified. Almost no relationship was found between the implementation and effectiveness of, as well as the degree, of accommodations or measures and grades provided on the certificate. Conversely, significant employment-related challenges faced by subjects tended to have a facilitative effect on the implementation of accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects. Facilitative effects on the implementation of accommodations or measures were also observed regarding the following: gaining an understanding of changes in the health condition of employees, such as through *reaching out*, initiatives taken regarding accommodations and measures at the corporate level, and collaboration with employment support providers. In particular, it was suggested that initiatives taken regarding accommodations and measures at the corporate level and gaining an understanding of changes in the health condition of employees could possibly raise the effectiveness of and reduce the burdens incurred by accommodations or measures taken by businesses on behalf of subjects.

7 Relevant Research Products

- Conditions surrounding the employment of persons holding a mental disability certificate, as well as accommodations and measures taken by businesses regarding the workplace, as seen through the results of a study: *Research on the relationship between employment situation, disorders of persons with mental disabilities, and grades provided on mental disability certificates*



<https://www.nivr.jeed.go.jp/research/kyouzai/kyouzai85.html>

