

Chapter 9

The Employment Status and Support Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Japan: An Analysis of Narrative using Narratology and Text Mining on a National Survey

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ABSTRACT

This paper has two objectives: (1) to describe the significance and applicability of narratology, which features computational and cognitive approaches, in the field of interpersonal relationship supports for persons with disabilities, and (2) to determine effective work supports by analyzing the narratives of the persons with disabilities. In this chapter, the narratives were operationally defined as free-expression answers obtained from mail-survey questionnaires from people with various disabilities describing their work and work life. The questionnaires were sent to 14,448 people and, of these, 4,546 responded. The survey items included their employment status, problems they encountered before employment, problems in their working life, support required in their working life, and opinions regarding disability employment. The results suggested that employment status and problems at work depended on their disability type and the presence of effective supports.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0432-0.ch009

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Any effective disability employment support, whether national policy or interpersonal practice, must be based on the reality of the working life of persons with disabilities. However, the national-level surveys (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2014a, 2014b) are mainly composed of selective questions for statistical analysis. Although some free-expression questions are usually added, traditional analysis of unstructured descriptions, such as the KJ method or the grounded theory, requires extensive human power for reading, classifying, and compiling the results. This methodological drawback has largely limited our understanding of the quantitative side of the reality. This study attempts to introduce an innovative analysis of the “narrative” of persons with disabilities that is derived from the national big data (National institute of vocational rehabilitation, 2011) in order to determine effective employment supports for persons with disabilities.

In recent years, there has been a growing focus, both internationally and domestically, on promoting the employment of persons with disabilities. In December 2006, the United Nations (2007) adopted the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,” which Japan ratified in January 2014. Article 27 of the Treaty prescribes prohibition of discrimination and supports reasonable accommodations for securing the right to work of persons with disabilities. Also, Article 2 of the Japanese “Act for the Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2015)” defines vocational rehabilitation as “establishing independence in the career of persons with disabilities by taking measures prescribed in law, including job guidance, vocational training, and job placement.” However, several problems persist in the current situation of the employment of persons with disabilities. Although in 2014 the number of persons with disabilities who were employed reached a record high of approximately 430,000 people (the highest for 11 years) (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2014a), the practical employment rate is merely 1.82%, which is short of the legal quota of 2.0%. In addition, per company, the ratio of achievement of the legal employment rate is 44.7%, meaning that more than half of all companies do not achieve the minimum legislated employment rate. Furthermore, by law, employers will be obligated to include persons with mental disabilities from 2018 and, as a result, the quota will be raised accordingly. Therefore, the development of effective working support to promote the employment of persons with disabilities is socially expected.

It is important to establish evidence for providing employment supports for persons with disabilities (Yaeda et al., 2012; Yaeda, Ozawa, & Wakabayashi, 2013). The concept of this evidence-based approach originated from 1990s EBM (evidence-based medicine) (Guyatt, 1991; Sackett, Richardson, Straus, Rosenberg, & Haynes, 1997), and evidence in this regard is objectively demonstrated. Sackett et al. (1997) define EBM as the “the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of the individual patient.” After the introduction of EBM, the concept was extended to other fields, such as nursing, welfare, psychology, and education. In the United States, an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model was established to provide evidence-based employment support for persons with significant mental illness. However, in Japan, the overall level of evidence acquired regarding the studies of employment support practices was low (Seino & Haruna, 2014). According to the classification of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (currently known as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality) (Clinton, 1993), meta-analysis is in the highest rank of evidence, followed by randomized controlled trials, whereas practice reports are ranked the lowest. Very few evidence-based clinical programs exist in Japan, such as cognitive rehabilitation programs (Sato et al., 2014), reinstatement support programs (Tashiro, Ito, Yoshida, & Tashiro, 2013;

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