

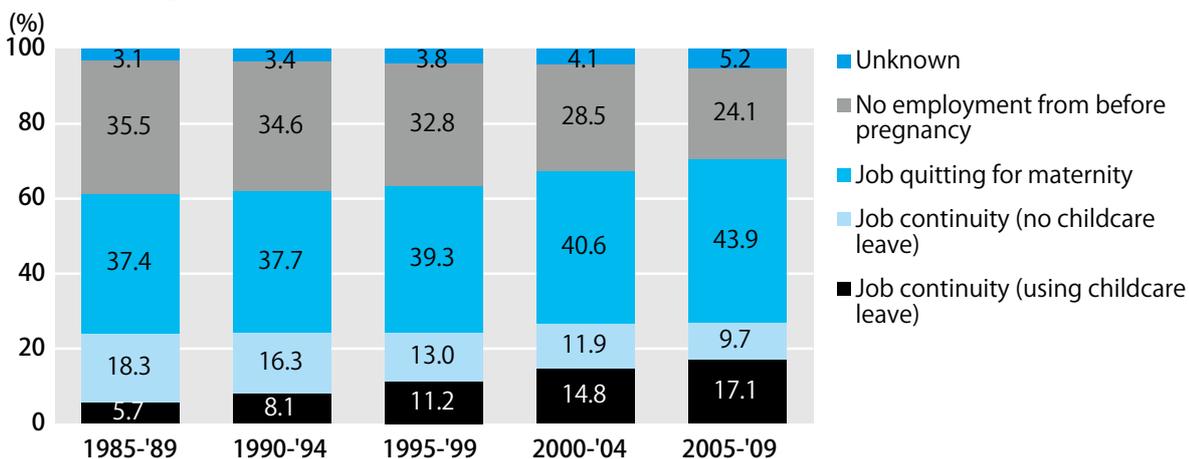
I The Problem

In Japan, women's job continuity has been supported by a number of policy initiatives, including the Equal Employment Act (enforced since 1986), the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act (1992), and the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children (2005). Ever since the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act made it compulsory for companies to give childcare leave, in particular, the number of companies with systems of childcare leave in their rules of employment, etc., has increased, and the proportion of women taking childcare leave has risen. In spite of that, however, many women still quit their jobs when giving birth and raising children. The rate of job quitting for the first pregnancy and childbirth is particularly high, and as Figure V-1 shows, the rate of job continuity before and after childbirth has hardly changed since the second half of the 1980s.¹ The purpose of this chapter

is to analyze the causes of this and to highlight issues with a view to increasing job continuity in the childbirth and childcare phases.²

Until now, many studies have pointed out that childcare leave systems have the effect of increasing job continuity in the childbirth and childcare phases. These include Higuchi (1994), Tomita (1994), Higuchi, Abe and Waldfogel (1997), Morita and Kaneko (1998), Nagase (2003) and Zhou (2003). In JILPT (2007), the final report in the JILPT Phase 1 Medium-term Plan, it was pointed out that, although childcare leave systems alone do not have the effect of reducing job quitting for childbirth, they do have this effect when combined with nurseries and family assistance. Here, the combination of childcare leave systems and nurseries was found to be particularly important in younger cohorts. The expansion of both childcare leave systems and nurseries since the 1990s could therefore be said to have had an effect. But in spite of this, job continuity ratios have not risen.

Figure V-1 Rates of Job Continuity before and after Birth of First Child



Source: 14th Japanese National Fertility Survey (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2010)

1 As pointed out in previous research, the job quitting ratio is particularly high in the first pregnancy and childbirth, and the focus of this paper will therefore be on the first pregnancy and childbirth. As such, "job quitting for maternity" and "job continuity" below will refer to situations in the first pregnancy and childbirth, unless otherwise stated.

2 This paper is based on the outcome of the Project Research Subtheme "Study on the Policy Effect of Women's Job Continuity" conducted by JILPT in fiscal 2007-2011. On this subtheme, see JILPT (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012b).

As causes of this, JILPT (2007) pointed to an increase in working styles (such as long working hours and late night work) that make it harder for women to remain employed during childbirth and childcare, as negative aspects in the expansion of women's employment;³ an increase in women who are not eligible for childcare leave systems, due to an increase in non-regular employment of younger age groups;⁴ and the reduced effect of family assistance as a traditional form of support.⁵ Higuchi (2007, 2009) also points out that labor supply and demand had eased off amid the harsh economic situation after the collapse of the bubble, and that companies were not actively seeking human resources at that time. Takeishi (2006) and Kawaguchi (2008), meanwhile, point to the gender discriminatory nature of the Japanese employment system as a more fundamental problem.⁶

In recent years, however, the situation may have changed. In the mid-2000s, when the economy had temporarily recovered from the slump after the collapse of the bubble, as Higuchi (2009) points out, companies may have been more positive in hiring women out of a need to secure labor power. Not only that, but it is also conceivable that companies may have started efforts to incorporate women in the workforce, with a view to raising the efficiency of using labor power over the long term. Kawaguchi (2008), though not discussing chronological trends, reveals the finding that there is a positive relationship between companies' reform of business management and the active involvement of women. Rather than negating the Japanese employment system, Kawaguchi explains that it promotes the active

involvement of women with a view to increasing management efficiency.

In terms of policy, an increase in support for work-life balance (WLB) has been promoted since 2005, in response to the changes in working styles mentioned above. Following the 2005 Amendment to the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act, eligibility for childcare leave was expanded to include fixed-term contract workers who met certain conditions. In the same year, the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-generation Children (the Next-generation Act) was also brought into effect. In order to acquire the 'Kurumin' certification mark of WLB support based on this law, companies must raise the proportion of women taking childcare leave to 70% or more, as well as shortening working hours, reducing overtime and encouraging workers to take their leave. In other words, the Next-generation Act not only requires companies to have a good record in terms of women taking childcare leave, but also to make positive efforts to create workplaces where women in the childbirth and childcare phases can work easily.

On job continuity in the childbirth and childcare phases, similarly, both Sato and Ma (2008) and Higuchi (2009) point out that the rate of job quitting for maternity has decreased among regular employees. The same trend may be seen in the results for "Regular employees" in Figure V-2. Although there is no increase in rates of job continuity between "1990-94" and "1995-1999", i.e. before and after the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act came into effect, a rising trend can be seen from "2000-2004" onwards. Meanwhile, JILPT (2008) reports that the

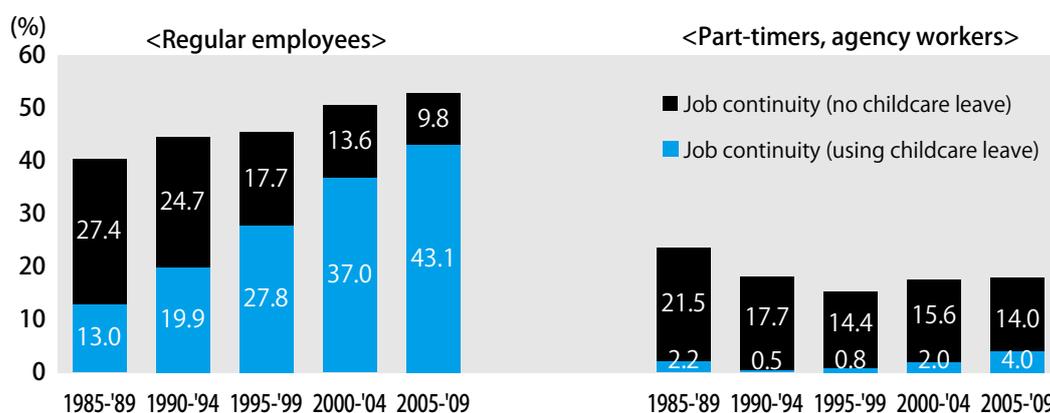
3 Tomita (1994) and Higuchi (2007) also point to analysis results showing that working hours have an impact on job quitting for maternity.

4 Non-regular employment is subject to childcare leave if under a labor contract with no fixed term. By contrast, fixed-term contract workers employed for a specific period have been regarded as excluded from childcare leave even after the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act came into effect in 1992, because their employment format is not considered fitting for long-term leave.

5 Ozawa and Suzuki (2000) and Senda (2002) also point out that the effect of cohabiting parents has not been significant in recent years. Senda (2002) also asserts, from the results of analysis on the use of childcare resources in the form of family (husband or parents), nurseries and childcare leave, that childcare resources available for use differ depending on the type of job.

6 The male-oriented nature of the Japanese employment system had already been pointed out by many previous studies. The possibility that this nature has not changed significantly even since the Equal Employment Act is suggested by both Takeishi (2006) and Kawaguchi (2008).

Figure V-2 Rates of Job Continuity before and after Birth of First Child- by Employment Format



Source: 14th Japanese National Fertility Survey (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2010)

number of fixed-term contract workers taking childcare leave is on the rise. Nevertheless, as Figure V-2 shows, there has been no upward movement in the rate of job continuity among non-regular employees, i.e. part-timers and agency workers.

As the background to this, let us now consider the following possibility. In the study mentioned above, Kawaguchi (2008) stresses the positive aspects of using female labor power in raising business management efficiency. As a negative aspect, however, it is also conceivable that a disparity will arise between female workers who are valued by companies as long-term labor power and other female workers. This disparity would appear to be expressed in the different trends for different employment formats shown in Figure V-2.⁷ Unlike the situation before the bubble, when the majority of young workers were in regular employment, companies have reduced their hiring of regular employees since the collapse of the bubble. And although they support the

work-life balance of those rigorously selected regular employees, it is conceivable that they may not be positive on job continuity of non-regular employees. Even for regular employees, it should be noted that initiatives in support of work-life balance are relatively slow to be adopted by small and medium-sized enterprises. For example, the obligation to formulate action plans on childcare support in the Next-generation Act (action plans by general businesses) only applies to companies with more than 100 full-time workers.⁸ Although the effect of this was to boost rates of job continuity in large corporations, they may not have risen in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Something that also appeared in a JILPT (2010) interview survey was that even today, when childcare leave systems are widespread and the proportion of women taking childcare leave has risen, many women still approach pregnancy and childbirth with uncertain prospects of job continuity. As a result, it is quite a common perception among women, even today, that

7 In previous research, job type and educational background have been cited as the main reasons for quitting jobs, but according to JILPT (2011), differences in the rate of job continuity based on education or job type are in a decreasing trend, due to increased awareness of systems of work-life balance support in companies. The difference in proportions taking leave and whether or not there is a childcare leave system based on employment formats is now larger, and the expansion of non-regular employment has even spread to those with higher education backgrounds and jobs like teachers, nursery workers and nurses. Employment formats will be examined in line with this situation.

8 When first brought into effect in 2005, the obligation was limited to companies with more than 300 workers, but since 2011 the scope has been expanded to include those with more than 100.

continuing to work as well as giving birth and raising children is “the exception”. Even if work-life balance support has boosted the rate of job continuity, if the scope of this is limited to regular employees in large corporations, there will be little change to the perception that job continuity is “the exception”. Rather than that, the analysis below will be used to examine whether Japan can be said to be moving toward a society in which rates of job continuity rise among women in general and job continuity is possible in the childbirth and childcare phases, regardless of the employer or working style.

For the analysis, data from the *Survey on Women's Working Styles and Family Life* targeting women aged 30-44 nationwide (JILPT 2010) will be used.⁹ To state the main analysis results from the outset, the rate of job quitting for maternity can be said to have fallen in companies with a scale of at least 100 regular employees, as a result of increased taking of childcare leave as the pivotal element of work-life balance support. Thus, a task from now on would be to strengthen support aimed at non-regular employees and companies with fewer than 100 employees, in order to expand the scope of job continuity in the childbirth and childcare phases. The analysis results suggest that, to promote this effectively, it will be important to diffuse work-life balance support flexibly in response to personnel management and career realities, and with this in mind, to enhance the provision of information to individual workers, rather than just encouraging companies to make efforts for work-life balance support.

II Trend toward Non-regular Employment of Young People and Job Quitting for maternity

Because childcare leave is a system premised on the continuation of an employment relationship with the same employer, labor contracts with fixed terms (fixed-term contracts) have been regarded as outside the scope of application, as they do not fit in with this system. And since many fixed-term contract workers are in non-regular employment as part-timers and agency workers, there is a widespread impression that “childcare leave is a system for regular employees”.¹⁰ However, even if a labor contract has a fixed term, the worker is still eligible for childcare leave if the employment relationship continues, making the situation no different to that of a labor contract with no fixed term. Based on this principle, eligibility for childcare leave has expanded to include some fixed-term contract workers since the 2005 Amendment to the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act. Spurred by this, women taking childcare leave have been increasing, albeit gradually, in non-regular employment as well.

To accelerate this trend and effectively raise the rate of job continuity, it will be important to promote taking of childcare leave in non-regular employment to the same level as in regular employment. Let us look at Figure V-3 to illustrate this. It shows that the job quitting ratio in non-regular employment is higher than that in regular employment, even among women whose employers had childcare leave systems at the time of their first pregnancy.

A problem existing before that of taking leave is the fact that the system is too narrow in its scope of application. Figure V-4 shows ratios of work-life balance support systems offered by employers at the

9 The survey was implemented between November 18 and December 12, 2010. Samples were selected via stratified two-stage sampling, and the survey was implemented by visiting and leaving questionnaires. The survey target sample consisted of 2,000 women, and responses were collected from 1,240 of these (collection rate 62.0%). Survey implementation was commissioned to Central Research Services, Inc. For details, see JILPT (2011, 2012b). Survey targets included women with no experience of childbirth, but this paper only analyzes those with childbirth experience.

10 JILPT (2011) points out a growing perception among women that non-regular employees are also eligible for childcare leave, regardless of whether on a fixed-term contract or not, triggered by the 2005 Amendment to the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act. By contrast, there appears to have been a widely shared perception, up to that point, that childcare leave systems did not apply to non-regular employment, even under labor contracts with no fixed term.

time of pregnancy by women giving birth to their first child in or after 2005, when eligibility for childcare leave was expanded to include fixed-term contract

workers. In either system, the ratio was lower in non-regular employment than in regular employment. Non-regular employment originally includes part-

Figure V-3 Job Quitting Ratios and Proportions Taking Childcare Leave for First Pregnancy and Childbirth– by Employment Format and Access to Childcare Leave Systems in First Pregnancy

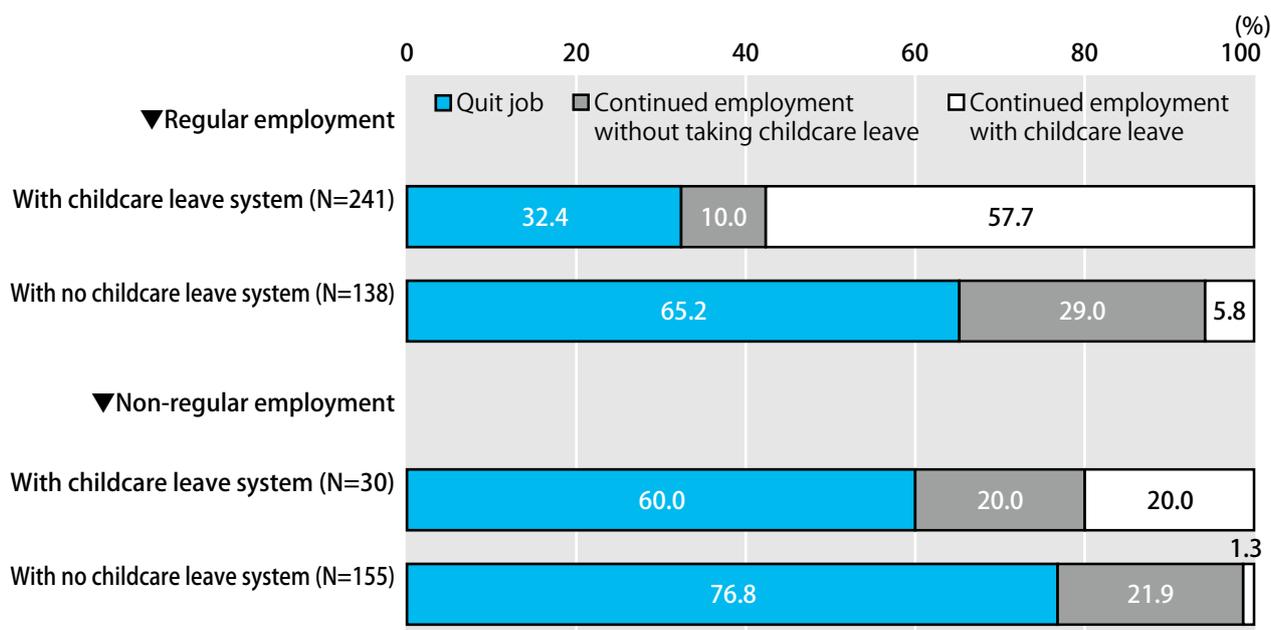
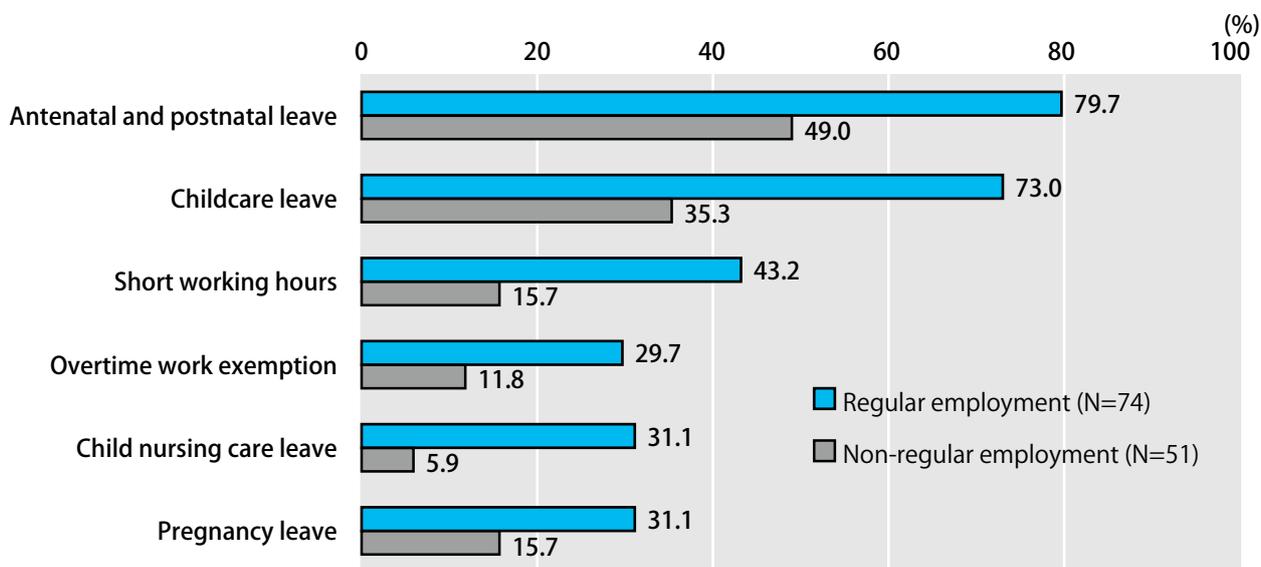


Figure V-4 Proportions Whose Employer in First Pregnancy Had a System of Work-life Balance Support– by Employment Format in First Pregnancy (Births in 2005 Onwards)



timers with short prescribed working hours and working styles in which there is no overtime work, even if work-life balance support does not exist as a system. Eligibility for childcare leave has not been expanded to include all non-regular employment. Based on the fact that working styles that form the basis of work-life balance support are different from regular employment, it cannot immediately be seen as a problem if these systems have a low rate of application.

However, considering that maternity leave is available to all women regardless of employment format, we should not overlook the fact that only about half of all non-regular employees are covered by this system. Although many reasons for job quitting by women are pointed out, job continuity would be almost impossible under any circumstances if there were no system of maternity leave. Conversely, if employment could be resumed after postnatal leave even if there were no eligibility for childcare leave, job quitting for maternity could be avoided. Applying a system of maternity leave even to workers outside the scope of childcare leave is a particularly important task for expanding job

continuity in non-regular employment.

Another point worthy of attention is that many women change from regular to non-regular employment after starting their first job. After the economic bubble collapsed at the beginning of the 1990s in Japan, there was a protracted a hard time for job seekers in which companies reduced their hiring of new graduates. And although the economy subsequently made a short-lived recovery, the employment situation took another turn for the worse with the Lehman shock. As a result of this lengthy economic downturn, the number of young people starting their first job in non-regular employment has certainly increased. However, as shown in Figure V-5, many women who started out in regular employment later changed to non-regular employment.¹¹ Viewed simply, job quitting for maternity should decrease if these women were to remain in regular employment. With this in mind, let us now analyze vocational careers before the first pregnancy.

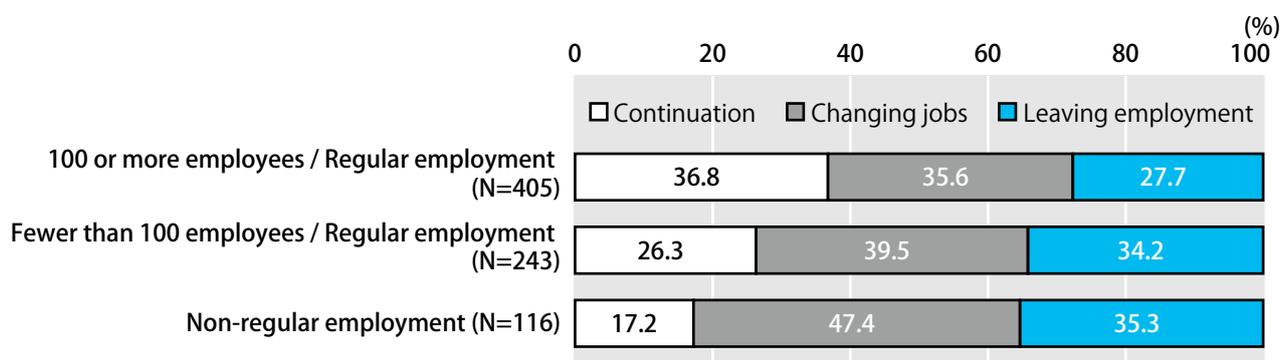
First, let us examine levels of continuation of initial employment. In Japan, it is not so common for workers to change from regular to non-regular employment when continuing to work for their first

Figure V-5 Proportions of Employment Format of First Job– by Employment Format in First Pregnancy and Birth Cohort



¹¹ From the same angle, Moriizumi (2005) also analyzes the impact of the increasing tendency toward non-regular employment by young people on job quitting for maternity, but does not analyze the relationship with childcare leave systems examined in this paper.

Figure V-6 Proportions of First Job Continuation, Changing Jobs and Leaving Employment until First Pregnancy– by Corporate Scale and Employment Format of First Job



* Continuation = same employer in first job and when pregnant
 Changing jobs = different employer
 Leaving employment = not in improvement when pregnant

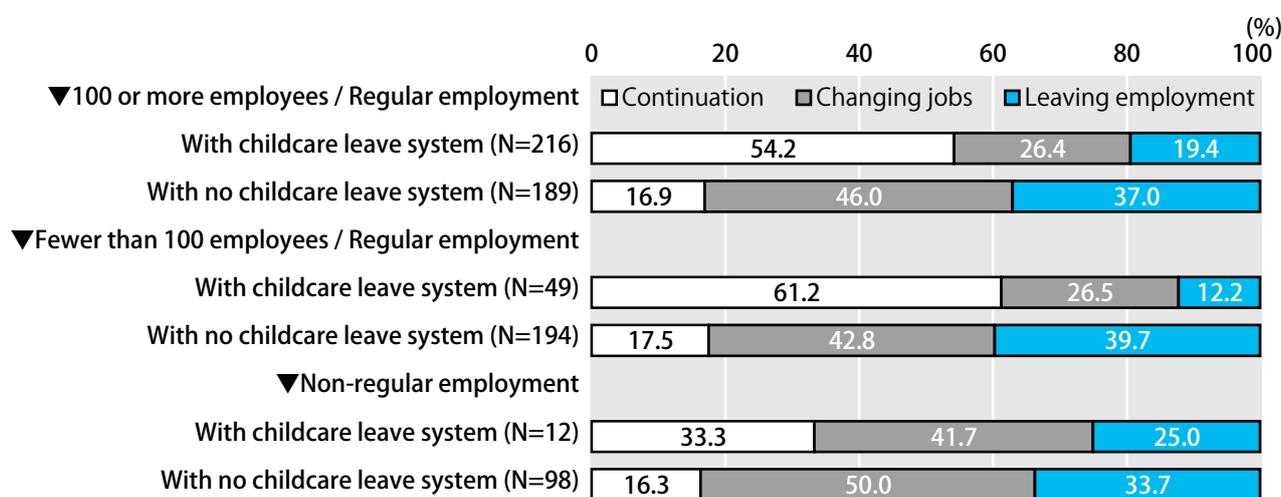
employer. The majority change employment formats in the process of moving from one employer to the other. In other words, if continuing one's first job in regular employment, pregnancy and childbirth should also be approached during regular employment. With this in mind, let us turn to Figure V-6. This shows the proportions of women staying with the same employer from the first job until the first pregnancy (continuation), those moving to another employer (changing jobs), and those withdrawing from employment altogether (leaving employment), by the scale of the first employer and the employment format. Regular employees in large Japanese corporations have a strong tendency to remain settled in their companies and build careers in internal labor markets. By contrast, workers in small and medium-sized enterprises have relatively high mobility, and this is even more the case with non-regular employees. And the same thing can be seen in these results. The categories of corporate scale and employment formats are "100 or more employees/ Regular employment", "Fewer than 100 employees/ Regular employment" and "Non-regular employment".¹² The continuation ratio (shown by the

white band) is highest with "100 or more employees/ Regular employment" and lowest with "non-regular employment". Conversely, the job changing ratio (gray band) is highest with "non-regular employment" and lowest with "100 or more employees/ Regular employment". It should also be noted, however, that even with "100 or more employees/ Regular employment", the continuation ratio is only around 35%. This could show how mobile the young workforce is.

Here, attention is drawn to the relationship between this level of continuation of the first job and the employer's system of work-life balance support. If the first employer had a system of work-life balance support, one would expect there to be job continuity on subsequently reaching the childbirth and childcare phases. It is often asserted that this is a positive factor in young female workers becoming settled in companies. In this respect, Figure V-7 focuses on the existence of childcare leave systems in the first job, and shows ratios of first job continuation, changing jobs and leaving employment by the employment format and corporate scale of the first job.

¹² As shown in JILPT (2009), the proportion taking childcare leave differs greatly on either side of a corporate scale of 100 employees.

Figure V-7 Proportions of First Job Continuation, Changing Jobs and Leaving Employment until First Pregnancy– by Corporate Scale, Employment Format and Access to Childcare Leave Systems in First Job



* Continuation = same employer in first job and when pregnant
 Changing jobs = different employer
 Leaving employment = not in improvement when pregnant

What should first be confirmed here is that, regardless of employment format and corporate scale, the continuation ratio is high when there was a childcare leave system in the first job.¹³ Comparing regular employment with “100 or more employees” and that with “fewer than 100 employees”, the ratios of continuation, changing jobs and leaving employment all show hardly any difference based on corporate scale. The difference in corporate scale seen in Figure V-6 could be said to reflect differences in terms of whether there is a childcare leave system or not. Similarly, it has also been pointed out traditionally that childcare leave systems have the effect of raising the corporate settlement of young females. From that, the following two points should be noted.

The first is that, even when there is a childcare leave system in the first job, regardless of corporate scale, about half quit their first employer (are

classified under “leaving employment” or “changing jobs”). This shows just how mobile the young workforce is. And the second is that, when there is no childcare leave system, there is hardly any difference between regular and non-regular employment in the ratios of first job continuation, changing jobs and leaving employment. If the employer has no system of childcare leave, there is only a low likelihood of job continuity in the childbirth and childcare phases even if the first job is in regular employment. On this point, there is no great difference between the predicament of regular employees with no childcare leave system and non-regular employees.

However, women whose first employer offers no childcare leave system cannot so easily improve their situation by subsequently changing jobs. This can be seen in Figure V-8 below, which shows the employment formats of those “changing jobs” in Figure V-7 above when pregnant and the ratios of

¹³ It is possible that women whose first jobs include childcare leave systems intentionally choose employers with such systems because they have a strong awareness of job continuity in the first place. Nevertheless, the problem addressed in this paper is the labor market structure that makes it difficult to form professional careers with high potential for job continuity unless there is this kind of strong awareness from the beginning of the career.

childcare leave systems in regular employment. Figures when the first job is “Fewer than 100 employees/ Regular employment” or “Non-regular employment” and there is a childcare leave system are merely noted for reference, as the sample size is small. Even so, the trends do not differ from “100 or more employees/ Regular employment”.

Let us first examine the situation when the first job is in a company with “100 or more employees/ Regular employment” but no childcare leave system. About 60% of these women are in non-regular employment by the time they reach pregnancy. Turning next to the same scenario in companies with “Fewer than 100 employees/ Regular employment”, the rate of non-regular employment is lower than that in companies with “100 or more employees”. However, the rate of “Regular employment with no childcare leave system” in pregnancy is high. As a result, regular employment with childcare leave systems when pregnant accounts for only about 20%, regardless of corporate scale. This is the same ratio as that of the change from a first job in non-regular employment with no childcare leave system to one in

regular employment with a childcare leave system when pregnant. This shows just how hard it is to move to regular employment under an employer with a childcare leave system.

Even when there is a childcare leave system in the first job, the rate of non-regular employment when pregnant is not at all low (around 40%) when this was “100 or more employees/ Regular employment”. However, compared to first jobs with no childcare leave system, the ratio is low, while conversely, “Regular employment with childcare leave system” when pregnant is relatively high. In “Regular employment with no childcare leave system” when pregnant (the gray band), there is no difference based on whether or not there was a childcare leave system in the first job, and the difference compared to “Regular employment with childcare leave system” is the same as that in the rate of non-regular employment.

Figure V-8 Proportions in Regular Employment and Having Access to Childcare Leave Systems in First Pregnancy– by Employment Format, Corporate Scale and Access to Childcare Leave Systems in First Job (Those Changing Jobs before First Pregnancy)

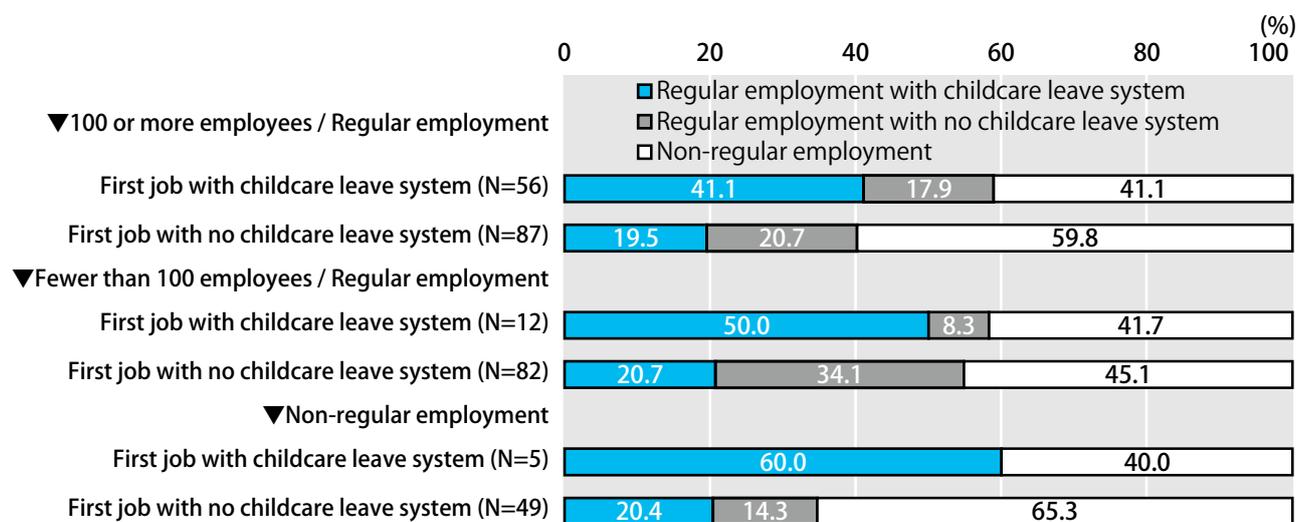
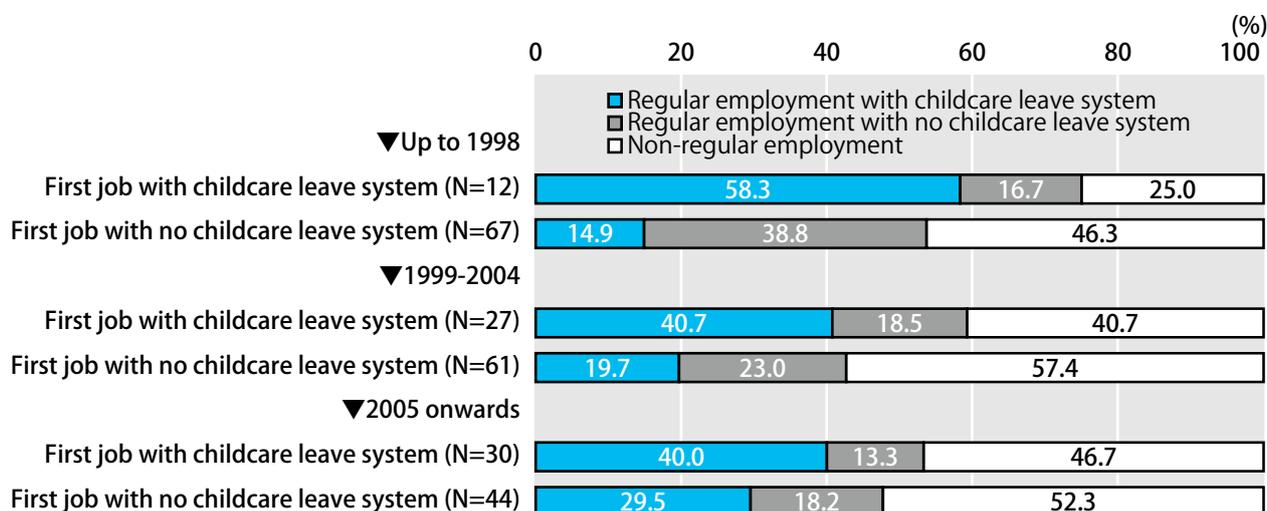


Figure V-9 Proportions in Regular Employment and with Access to Childcare Leave Systems in First Pregnancy– by Year of Childbirth and Access to Childcare Leave Systems in First Job (Those in Regular Employment in First Job and Changing Jobs before First Pregnancy)



The introduction rate of childcare leave systems has been increasing in recent years. However, as shown in Figure V-9, even when controlling the year of childbirth, the probability of changing from no childcare leave system to “Regular employment with childcare leave system” cannot be seen as high.

As the background to this, one would point out that the introduction rate of childcare leave systems by small and medium-sized enterprises is low. As is well known, large Japanese corporations focus mainly on hiring new graduates, and it is the small and medium-sized enterprises that hire more regular employees in mid-career. Although the diagram is ambiguous, of women who were in regular employment both for their first job and their first pregnancy, 27.2% of those who continued their first job worked in companies with a scale of fewer than 100 employees, while such employers accounted for 54.4% of those who changed jobs. This means that it is harder to change jobs to an employer with a childcare leave system. Regardless of corporate scale, if there are prospects of job continuity in the

childbirth and childcare phases, women who choose non-regular employment in consideration of the impact on family life could be expected to decrease.

III Issues facing job continuity support in smaller companies

Figure V-2 above revealed how the rate of job continuity among regular employees before and after the birth of the first child has risen. However, as shown in Figure V-10, there is no sign of a decreasing trend in job quitting for maternity in companies with fewer than 100 employees, even with regular employment.¹⁴ Rates of job quitting for maternity now differ even among regular employees, depending on corporate scale. To correct this difference, one method would be to promote the diffusion and application of childcare leave systems in small-scale companies with fewer than 100 employees. However, even today, 20 years after the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act came into effect, there still remains the problem of how companies without childcare

14 The following analysis is limited to women who were regular employees at the time of their first pregnancy.

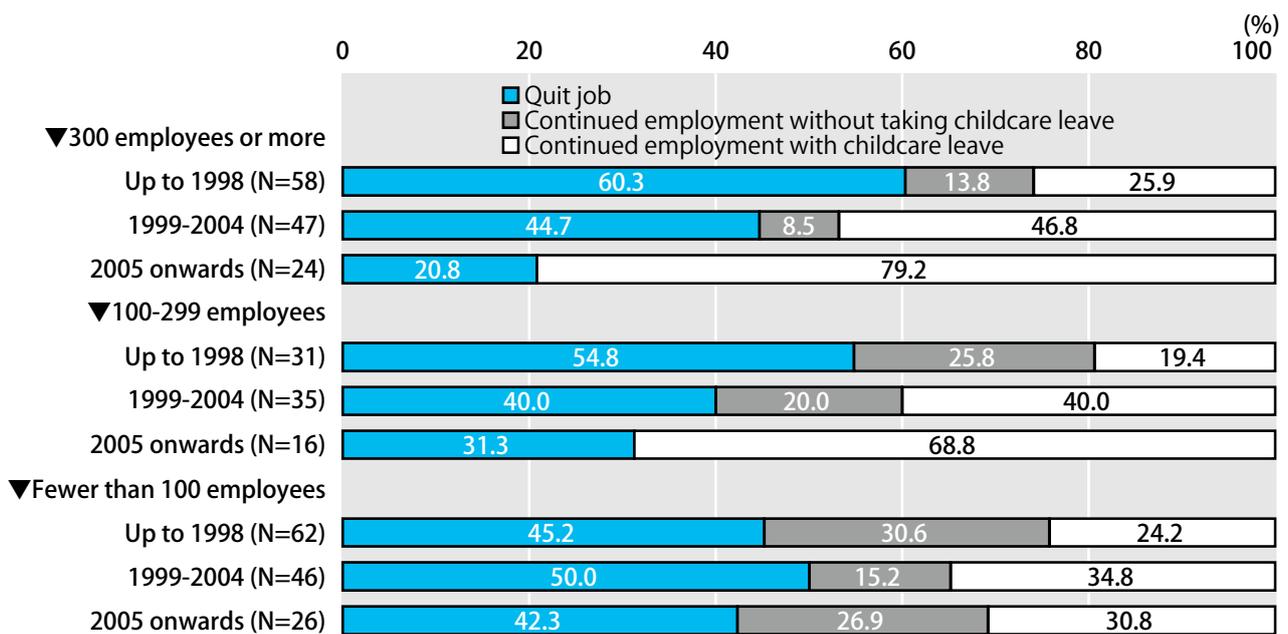
leave systems can be persuaded to introduce and apply them. As stated above, the obligation to formulate action plans for childcare support under the Next-generation Act has expanded in scope from companies with more than 300 employees to those with more than 100 employees, but companies with fewer than 100 employees are merely obliged to make efforts to this end.

However, it has also been suggested that applying the same policy measures to small businesses as to large corporations would not be appropriate to their circumstances. The typical case is that “SMEs ...

overcome the hurdles to combining work and parenting not by establishing systems, but by responding flexibly according to employees’ individual circumstances”¹⁵ (Small and Medium Enterprise Agency 2006: 225). From the same angle, Atsumi (2007) also reports a survey result that a large proportion of women find it “easier to achieve a balance” when working for small and medium-sized enterprises, and says that the “prevailing view” that “small and medium-sized enterprises are lagging behind in supporting work-life balance” is mistaken.¹⁶

On the other hand, some have also pointed out that small businesses cannot cope with the cost of

Figure V-10 Job Quitting Ratios and Proportions Taking Childcare Leave for First Pregnancy and Childbirth– by Corporate Scale and Year of Childbirth in First Pregnancy (Regular Employment in First Pregnancy)



15 On this point, Nakamura (2012) uses the results of data analysis to show that small businesses have low rates of taking childcare leave and high rates of job quitting due to marriage and pregnancy, that these job quitting rates could be reduced by creating systems of childcare leave, etc., and that very few companies with no system of childcare leave respond with flexible arrangements, thus criticizing the assertion in Small and Medium Enterprise Agency (2006) that “enterprises with fewer employees are more likely to respond flexibly without establishing systems” (Nakamura 2012: 117).

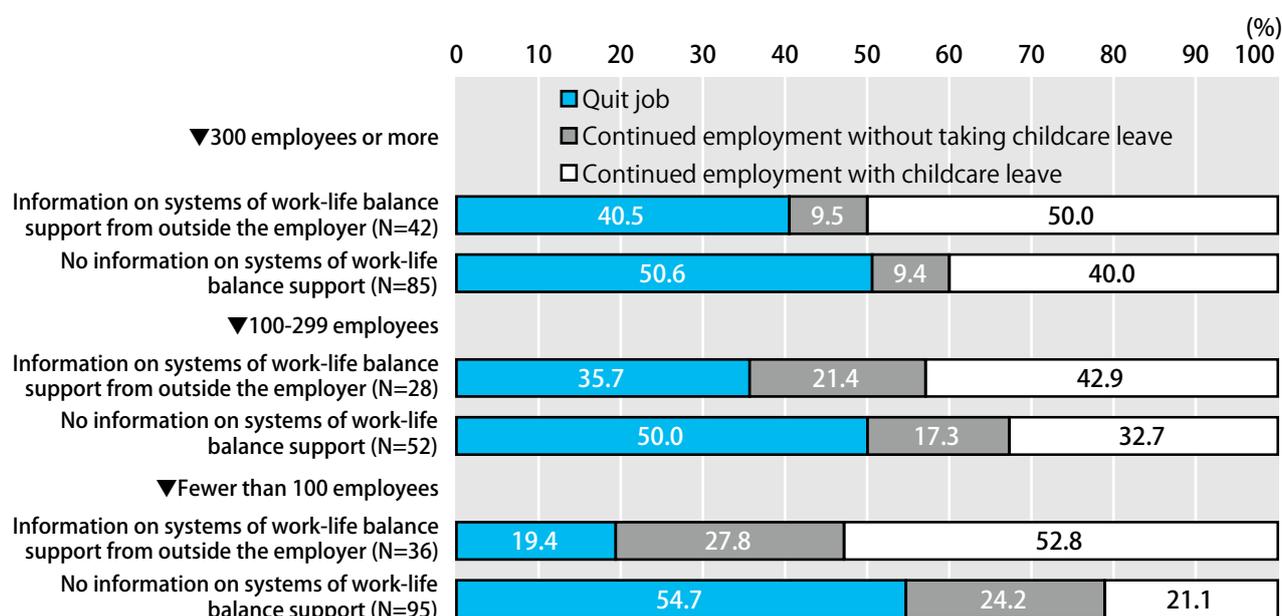
16 When discussing “small and medium-sized enterprises”, the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency (2006) and Atsumi (2007) have their focus more on small businesses than medium-sized ones.

work-life balance support.¹⁷ It would surely be unrealistic to expect small businesses always to adopt a positive response to their employees' work-life balance support. If job continuity has been achieved despite a lukewarm attitude to work-life balance support by businesses, it could be seen as largely due to the bargaining power of the workers themselves. In small businesses, there is greater scope for one-on-one negotiations between employers and individual workers than in large corporations. Under such circumstances, we could imagine that workers might have knowledge of systems of work-life balance support, use this knowledge to negotiate with their employers, and thereby avoid having to leave their jobs.¹⁸ From the employers' point of view, this would

surely be the same as “responding flexibly to individual circumstances”.

Figure V-11 illustrates this. In the analytical data survey, respondents were asked whether there were opportunities to know about childcare leave and other systems of work-life balance support outside the employer during the first pregnancy. The graph shows job quitting rates in first pregnancy and childbirth based on whether such opportunities existed, and proportions of women taking childcare leave based on corporate scale. Regardless of corporate scale, those who had information on systems of work-life balance support outside the employer had a lower rate of job quitting but also a smaller proportion taking childcare leave. This trend is particularly conspicuous

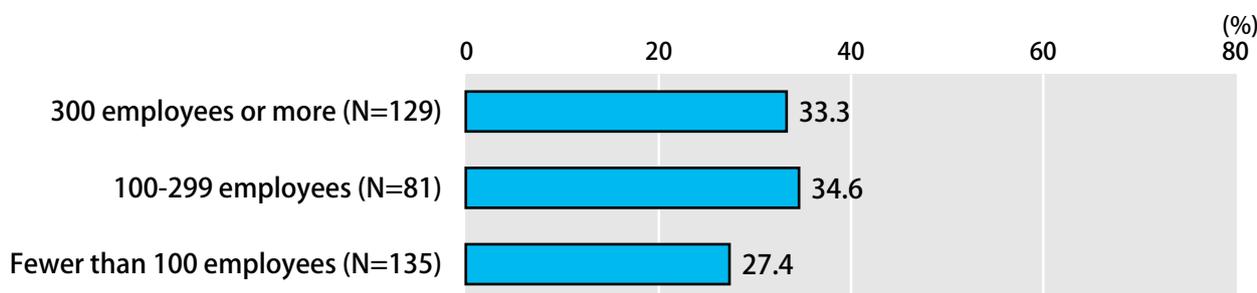
Figure V-11 Job Quitting Ratios and Proportions Taking Childcare Leave for First Pregnancy and Childbirth— by Corporate Scale and Access to Systems of Work-life Balance Support from Outside the Employer in First Pregnancy (Regular Employment in First Pregnancy)



17 Wakisaka (2001) and Morita (2005) suggest that costs associated with childcare leave could inhibit hiring of women by businesses with less than 30 employees.

18 In an interview survey, JILPT (2010) reports in detail on such negotiations with an employer in the case of respondent “E”. The gist was that, to elicit the support needed for job continuity from her employer, a female worker took it upon herself to gather information on systems of work-life balance support, and requested this from her employer. As a result, she achieved job continuity even with an employer who was initially not so positive about work-life balance support.

Figure V-12 Proportions Having Opportunities to Access Information on Systems of Work-life Balance Support Outside the Employer in First Pregnancy– by Corporate Scale in First Pregnancy (Regular Employment in First Pregnancy)



in businesses with “Fewer than 100 employees”.¹⁹ This seems to show how knowledge of systems by individual workers can influence negotiations with employers on job continuity in childbirth and childcare.

However, women in companies with fewer than 100 employees could hardly be considered blessed with opportunities for obtaining information on systems of work-life balance support outside the employer. Figure V-12 shows the ratios of such opportunities by corporate scale. Thanks to the advance of the Internet and other information technology in recent years, it is becoming technically easier to obtain various information on systems of work-life balance support. It is possible that the number of women who avoid job quitting for maternity could decrease if this kind of information environment were enhanced and information that is useful in negotiations with employers were provided to workers in small businesses. However, the ratio in businesses with “Fewer than 100 employees” is lower than in those with “300 employees or more” and “100-299 employees”. It would appear, then, that not many workers are making full use of the advantage of small businesses in facilitating individual negotiations with employers.

Finally, multivariate analysis will be carried out to see if the same could be said even if other factors were controlled. The method used will be logistic regression analysis. The dependent variables are 1 if the mother is employed when the first child is born and 0 when not in employment. Since the analysis target is regular employment in first pregnancy, not being in employment when giving birth could be equated with job quitting for maternity. Explanatory variables will be “Whether information on systems of work-life balance support is received from the employer”, plus the following.

The first variable is whether or not there is a system of childcare leave, as an effect of employers’ systems of work-life balance support. However, a problem that “systems are hard to use, even if they exist” is occasionally highlighted in connection with systems of work-life balance support. Efforts aimed at familiarizing employees with the system in order to eliminate this kind of uncertainty associated with system use are becoming more widespread among large corporations. Thus, variables for the existence or absence of childcare leave systems and of familiarization with systems of work-life balance support²⁰ will be combined into three categories (“System + familiarization”, “System only” and “No

¹⁹ The results of χ square tests based on corporate scale are only significant in businesses with fewer than 100 employees.

²⁰ In the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they had ever had explanations from an employer concerning the employer’s childcare leave systems, etc. Explanations here include guidance based on pamphlets, websites, email, etc. Cases when such explanations were made are referred to as “With” and those when no explanation was made as “Without”.

system”), with “No system” input as the benchmark. The next variable is whether work duties upon first pregnancy were the same as those of male full employees. This will be input as an indicator showing the segregation of vocational fields for men and women. The job type at the time of pregnancy (the benchmark is clerical work) and the final educational level (the benchmark is junior or senior high school) will be input as related variables, and membership of a labor union as a collective labor relations indicator. Variables showing the influence of families will be whether or not there was a cohabiting parent when the first child was born, the job continuity of the respondent's mother in the childbirth and childcare phases, which Nagase (1999) sees as having an effect²¹ (continued employment = 1, employment interrupted or re-employed = 0), and difficulty in attending work due to morning sickness (showing employment difficulty when pregnant rather than after childbirth). Finally, the birth cohort (the benchmark is birth in 1966-70), the age when the first child was born, and the location of residence when the first child was born (urban areas²² = 1, others = 0) will be input as basic attributes.

Until now, corporate scale has been divided into three categories (“300 employees or more”, “100-299 employees” and “Fewer than 100 employees”), but since it was not possible to secure a sufficient sample size from businesses with “100-299 employees” for estimation, those with “300 employees or more” and “Fewer than 100 employees” will be compared. By so doing, the intention is to clarify the common ground and differences between effective job continuity support measures in large corporations with “300 employees or more” and measures that are effective in small businesses with “Fewer than 100 employees”. The analysis results are shown in Table

V-13. Variables producing significant effects are highlighted, but determinants behind job quitting for maternity differ according to corporate scale.

To begin with, let us examine the effect of systems of work-life balance support from outside the employer. Although a significant effect is shown in businesses with “Fewer than 100 employees”, it is not significant in those with “300 employees or more”. Small businesses offer considerable scope for deciding whether job continuity is possible or not through individual negotiation. By contrast, the possibility of job continuity in large corporations is determined under collective personnel and labor management. This can be seen as the reason why this difference arises.

From the same perspective, familiarizing employees with childcare leave systems has the effect of reducing job quitting for maternity in businesses with “Fewer than 100 employees”, even in cases of “System only”. By contrast, there is no significant effect on “No familiarization” in businesses with “300 employees or more”, even when a system exists. In large corporations, where there is a great diversity of workplaces within the organization, an inconsistency in usability can easily arise, even when there is a system. Familiarization with systems could therefore be seen as important in order to correct this inconsistency. Conversely, in small businesses, where internal leadership is easier to achieve than in large corporations, the problem that systems exist but are difficult to use is very likely not to be so serious. Rather, the analysis results suggest that inconsistency in the very existence of systems from company to company has a greater impact on job continuity.

21 “I gave birth and raised my child while continuing to work” in the questionnaire is referred to as “Job continuity”, “I gave birth and raised my child without working, then started working when childcare had become settled” as “Re-employment after childcare”, and “I gave birth and raised my child without working, and remained out of work thereafter” as “full-time housewife”.

22 Since the location of residence is related to the supply-demand balance of nursery services, seven prefectures, government-designated cities and core cities described as “urban areas” in the “Summary of the Situation Regarding Nurseries (April 1, 2010)” by the Day Care Division of the Equal Employment, Children and Families Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will also be referred to as “urban areas” here.

Table V-13 Determinants for Employment on Birth of First Child (Logistic Regression Analysis)

Dependent variables (employment = 1, not in employment = 0)	Whether employed at birth of first child					
	300 employees or more			Fewer than 100 employees		
Targets of analysis (corporate scale)	Coefficient value	Standard error	Odds ratio	Coefficient value	Standard error	Odds ratio
Cohort (BM: Born 1966-70)						
Born 1971-75	.009	.552	1.009	.072	.638	1.075
Born 1976-80	.596	.716	1.814	-.731	.793	.481
Age at birth of first child	.067	.073	1.069	.080	.084	1.084
Location of residence at birth of first child (urban area = 1, other = 0)	-.684	.543	.505	-.815	.580	.443
Whether there was a cohabiting parent when first child was born	-.285	.554	.752	.193	.617	1.213
Whether there was a cohabiting parent when first child was born Own mother's job continuity (yes = 1, no = 0)	.617	.525	1.854	1.362	.579	3.906 *
Difficulty in attending work due to morning sickness	-.496	.492	.609	.498	.545	1.645
Final educational level (BM: junior or senior high school)						
Vocational school or junior college graduate	.416	.607	1.515	-.261	.631	.770
University or graduate school graduate	.319	.871	1.376	1.821	1.143	6.180
Job type in first pregnancy (BM: clerical work)						
Teacher, nursery worker, nurse	-.496	.869	.609	.739	1.086	2.094
Specialist or technical	-.419	.840	.658	-.084	.853	.919
Business or sales	-.169	.796	.845	-1.298	1.084	.273
Services	-.551	1.189	.577	-.341	.772	.711
Skilled or unskilled labor	-.851	1.150	.427	-.406	.944	.666
Work duties in first pregnancy (same as male full employees = 1, different = 0)	1.872	.682	6.503 **	.399	.632	1.490
Whether labor union member in first pregnancy	-.289	.595	.749	.138	.735	1.148
Whether access to systems of work-life balance support from outside the employer	-.164	.542	.849	1.328	.667	3.772 *
Familiarization of employer's childcare leave systems in first pregnancy (BM: No system)						
System + familiarization	2.845	.937	17.205 **	2.347	1.021	10.456 *
System only	.690	.725	1.993	2.025	.682	7.577 **
Constant	-4.009	2.121	.018	-3.923	2.462	.020
χ square		38.886 **			56.810 **	
Freedom		19			19	
Nagelkerke R2		.383			.514	
N		115			117	

BM = benchmark
All "either/or" items: "Yes" = 1, "No" = 0

**p<.01 *p<.05

Targets of analysis:
regular employees in first pregnancy

Meanwhile, in businesses with "Fewer than 100 employees", the state of job continuity when the respondent's own mother was in the childbirth and childcare phases shows a significant effect. Like

systems of work-life balance support from outside the employer, this is also highly to influence individual negotiations with the employer. Because there is a clear wish for job continuity in the childbirth and

childcare phases under the mother's influence, these women are more likely to approach negotiations with the employer from a stronger vantage point.

Thus, differences in personnel and labor management, in that these are based on collective management in large corporations but on individual negotiations in small businesses, can be interpreted as being reflected in the results in Table V-13. Probably for the same reason, the issue of whether work duties were the same as for male full employees was only significant in businesses with "300 employees or more". In large corporations, there is a tendency to decide individual employee allocations based on how women are employed collectively. By contrast, small businesses have greater scope to take individual personalities and aptitudes into account when allocating staff. For this reason, it is possible that a female worker will not quit even if her work duties are not the same as those of male full employees, as long as she feels motivation. This may be why no significant effect is found in businesses with "Fewer than 100 employees".

In this way, it is important to encourage efforts aimed at work-life balance support in large corporations founded on collective personnel and labor management. This is typically reflected in the effect achieved by familiarizing employees with the system. It will also be effective to encourage small businesses to introduce systems and make them familiar. In small businesses, however, even if the companies themselves are difficult to persuade, it is possible that more women could avoid job quitting for maternity if individual workers were provided with information on systems of work-life balance support, and their bargaining power vis-à-vis the employer were thereby enhanced. In that sense, effective methods of promoting work-life balance support in small businesses will differ from those applied to large corporations.

IV Summary and Conclusion

The situation of job quitting upon first pregnancy and childbirth has been analyzed, and issues to be resolved in order to increase job continuity in the childbirth and childcare phases have been studied.

The main points of the analysis results are as follows.

- (1) In regular employment with a corporate scale 100 or more employees, the proportion of women taking childcare leave (as the main element of work-life balance support) increases and the rate of job quitting for maternity decreases. Suggested causes of this are greater familiarization of employees with the system in individual companies, and the effect of male-female occupational integration.
- (2) In non-regular employment, the proportion of workers without access to any system (antenatal and postnatal leave as well as childcare leave) is still as high as ever. Moreover, although many women switch from regular to non-regular employment after starting the first job, a large proportion of women who had no access to childcare leave systems with their first employer shift to non-regular employment.
- (3) Even in regular employment, the rate of job quitting for maternity has not fallen in companies with fewer than 100 employees. In these businesses, promoting the diffusion of childcare leave systems remains an issue, but at the same time, providing workers with information on systems of work-life balance support outside the employer would also be effective in reducing rates of job quitting for maternity.

To further expand job continuity in the childbirth and childcare phases, strengthening support for non-regular employees and small businesses with fewer than 100 employees could be seen as an important task. However, the determinants of job continuity differ according to corporate scale and employment format. Based on such differences, the analysis results suggest the importance of flexible efforts to permeate work-life balance support. Specifically, it is important not only to encourage efforts aimed at work-life balance support by companies, but also to provide individual workers with information that will be useful for job continuity.

Until now, the main method of promoting work-life balance support has been based on strengthening efforts by employers. This is suited to regular employment in large corporations, where workers

become settled in a single company and are managed collectively as the core labor power. The analysis results in this paper also suggest that systems of work-life balance support encourage female labor power to become settled in companies. Conversely, if the employer is not so positive about work-life balance support, changing to a different employer is another method of increasing the potential for job continuity. However, opportunities to know about a company's system of work-life balance support before joining that company are limited in Japan. Therefore, the analysis results reveal that women avoid changing jobs within regular employment, where the impact on family life is great, choosing non-regular employment instead. Creating an environment in which these women can change jobs within regular employment while retaining prospects of job continuity could be seen as an issue to be tackled.

To this end, it would be considered effective to strengthen work-life balance support in small and medium-sized enterprises, where mid-career hiring of regular employees is relatively common. If the diffusion of work-life balance support systems could be promoted in small businesses where the diffusion is particularly lagging, this alone would increase the possibility for joining companies that have systems of work-life balance support. However, this will be "easier said than done". The problem of how to encourage efforts toward work-life balance support in small businesses would still remain. To overcome this situation, the analysis results suggest that an effective method would be to appeal not to companies but to individual workers, and to provide individuals with information enabling them to avoid job quitting for maternity.

By doing so, job continuity could be expected to expand, not only among regular employees in large corporations but also broadly among women in the childbirth and childcare phases.

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