

## **Job Continuity at the Stage of Childbirth/Childcare: Trends from 2005 Onward**

### **Authors**

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### **Period of research**

Fiscal 2007-2011

### **Objectives and outline of research**

Since the enforcement of the Child Care Leave Act in 1992 the number of companies including a definition of childcare leave systems in their employment regulations has increased, as has the number of women taking childcare leave. Still, a high number of women quit their jobs during maternity or childbirth period. In order to clarify the factors behind this situation, we implemented a research project between fiscal 2007 and 2011 entitled “Study on Policy Effect of Job Continuity,” as a sub-theme of its project entitled “Research on the Way of Establishing Working Conditions towards Response to Diversification of Employment Formats and Realization of Work-Life Balance.” This report is an interim report published as the research results from fiscal 2010.

During fiscal 2010, a questionnaire-based survey was carried out of women between the ages of 30-44, and profile data was used to analyze the situation in regard to quitting jobs in their first maternity or childbirth period. The results of analysis shows that the rate of employment among women at the first childbirth began to rise from a baseline around 2003 (when the economy began to recover once again after the bursting of the economic bubble), and has continued to rise subsequent to the Amendments to the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act and the enactment of the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children (hereinafter referred to as the “Next Generation Act”) in 2005.

In regard to non-regular employees such as part-timers, contract or temporary agency workers, certain fixed-term employees began to be covered by the terms of childcare leave after the 2005 Amendments to the Child Care and Family Care Leave

Act, providing they meet certain conditions. This report also demonstrates that the rate of non-regular employees taking childcare leave is rising. The overall percentage, however, is not high. On the other hand, for regular employees, there is the issue of support for working hours prior to and subsequent to childbirth, but working hours have not been shortened prior to childbirth. For both regular and non-regular employees, however, because of the fact that more women are now doing jobs that are equivalent to those of men, the fact that women are increasingly working for a single company over a long period and therefore becoming pregnant while working for that company, and the fact that more women have become aware of support systems in the workplace for work-life balance, the percentage of women continuing to work prior and subsequent to the birth of their first child is increasing. Since companies now utilize women as a source of long-term labor, the analysis results demonstrate that they are also becoming more positive in regard to their support for work-life balance. In particular, the benefits of ensuring awareness of the system have been significant, and as a result, there has been an increase in the number of women continuing to work prior and subsequent to the birth of their first child, regardless of their educational history, type of job, or working hours. The analysis results from which we derived the above-mentioned findings are explained below.

### **Outline of analysis results**

#### **1. Outline of analysis results**

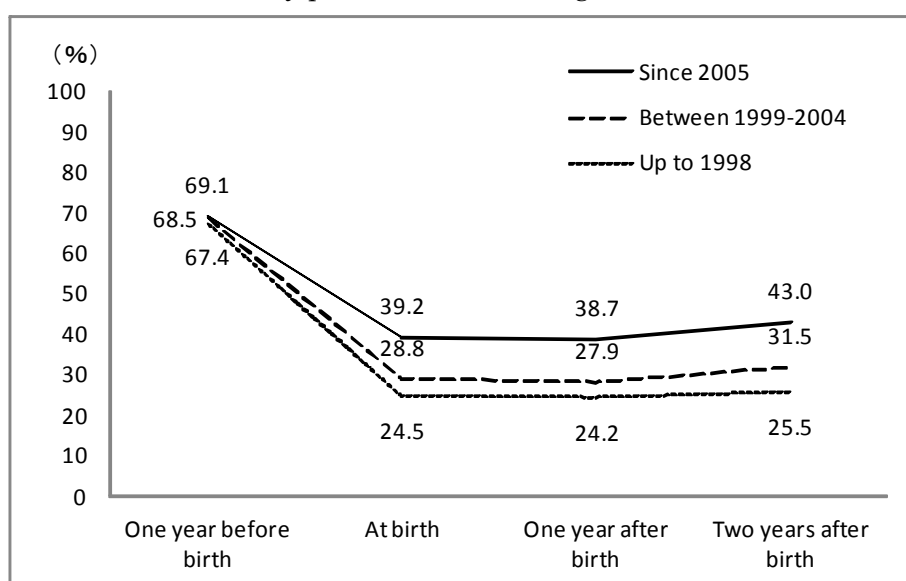
The state of continuing employment prior and subsequent to the first childbirth of women was analyzed, focusing on trends from 2005 onwards. The major points emerging from this analysis were as follows.

- (1) Even within the young cohort, there is a significant reduction in employment rates during the year before the first childbirth. Despite this, when compared by period, the percentage of women in employment at the point where they give birth to their first child is rising, and has continued to rise since 2005 (Fig. 1).
- (2) For non-regular employees, since 2005, both the proportion of companies that have childcare leave systems in place and the proportion of women taking childcare leave have risen. These figures, however, are not significant, compared with the overall scale of continually employed non-regular employees. There has been little progress in shorter working hours for regular employees, but at the same time, the resignation rate at pregnancy for women working long hours is not particularly high.
- (3) For both regular and non-regular employees, there has been an increase in the proportion of women doing the same jobs as men, and the number of years of

employment for such women at the point at which they become pregnant has risen. These are factors behind the increase in continued employment.

- (4) There have been significant benefits to promoting awareness of the systems in operation to support work-life balance. Since 2005, the proportion of people who are aware of such systems has increased, contributing to an increase in continued employment among women regardless of their educational background, job category, and working hours.

Figure 1 Rate of employment prior and subsequent to the first childbirth – by period when women gave birth



## 2. Outline of each chapter

Chapter 1: M-shaped employment curve, and state of employment prior and subsequent to the first childbirth

Even among the youngest women in the survey (born between 1976 and 1980), the proportion of those leaving work during one year prior to the birth of their first child is high. Despite this, a comparison by period shows that since the period 2002-2004 (when the economy began to recover once again after the bursting of the economic bubble), the employment rate at the time of giving birth has risen, and continued to rise further subsequent to the Amendments to the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act and the enactment of Next Generation Act in 2005. The proportion of women regular employees taking childcare leave has risen, and the rate of such women leaving work at the time of pregnancy or childbirth has fallen. Since 2005, the rate of women taking childcare leave has also risen among non-regular employees, demonstrating the effect of the expanding

the scope of childcare leave to include fixed-term employees. This proportion is not large, however, considering the number of women who are continually employed as non-regular employees.

#### Chapter 2: Working style among regular employees and job continuity – focusing on the effects of working hours

The working hours of regular employees have not become any shorter, but it is not necessarily the case that women working longer hours are more likely to leave work at times of maternity or childbirth. Women doing the same job as men or having been serving for long years have a high percentage of taking childcare leave and continuing their employment at the stage of first childbirth, even though their working hours are long. Against this background of an increasing number of regular employees of this type, the rate of continued employment is rising. Promoting the utilization of women employees appears to be an effective method of increasing the continued employment of women at the stage of childbirth/childcare.

#### Chapter 3: Working style among non-regular employees and job continuity – focusing on changes in working style

Also among non-regular employees, there has been a similar increase in the number of women doing the same job as men, as well as an increase in the number of women serving for long years and then becoming pregnant. This is the background to the increase in the rate of continued employment among such employees. The proportion of those with high educational background or those engaged in professional or technical jobs is also increasing and their working hours have become longer. Women who started employment as non-regular employees demonstrate higher rates of continued employment than those who became non-regular employees on the part way through their careers. Styles of work are becoming more similar to those of regular employees, and increasing numbers of women are forming careers early on as non-regular employees, both of which factors are contributing to rising rates of continued employment among non-regular employees.

#### Chapter 4: Job continuity and communications between management and workers

Since 2005, unionization rate has continued to fall, and there has been no rise in the proportion of companies with systems to ascertain their employees' need for work-life balance support. Rather, companies' efforts to ensure awareness of systems to support work-family balance, may have increased communication to employees of their proactive

attitude to support work-family balance, resulting in lower rates of leaving work among women at times of maternity or childbirth. The proportion of people aware of systems to support work-family balance has always been higher among women with higher levels of educational history and in professions where employment has traditionally continued (teachers, nursery nurses, nurses etc.) In recent years, however, employees in a broader range of professions have become aware of these systems.

An increasing trend of continued employment in companies with 300 or more employees since 2005 is considered to demonstrate the impact of stronger measures to encourage them to systemize work-family balance under the Next Generation Act.

### **3. Outline of “Survey into Ways of Working for Women and Family Lives”**

#### (1) Purpose

In order to clarify the problems of employment environment and social supports involved in encouraging women to stay on the jobs, a survey was implemented to ascertain conditions in regard to work, marriage, childbirth and childrearing, etc., as well as companies’ employment management, regional childcare services, and support measures for families.

#### (2) Main survey categories

1. Employment profile
2. Marriage profile
3. Childrearing profile
4. Sharing of family and housework burdens
5. State of utilization of work-life balance support
6. State of current employment, income, etc.
7. Awareness of employment, career, lifestyle, etc.

#### (3) Survey scope

2,000 women between the ages of 30-44, throughout Japan

#### (4) Survey method

1. Extraction: Stratified 2-stage sampling
2. Survey method: Visit and placement

#### (5) Survey period

18<sup>th</sup> November – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2010

#### (6) Survey implementation

Commissioned to survey company (Central Research Services, Inc.)

#### (7) Responses

1,240 (62.0% response rate)