

Occupational health in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) among Japanese companies

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Summary: The purpose of this study was to investigate CSR reports by Japanese companies and consider the importance of description on occupational health in the CSR reports. The study cases were companies listed on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, Inc. in 2005 and 2006. We investigated the titles and contents of the CSR reports obtained from the companies. Many companies commented on occupational health in the CSR reports. There were significant differences in the frequency of commenting on occupational health between the secondary and tertiary industrial sectors ($p < 0.01$). The description on occupational health was found in the reports under a variety of titles. As for the policy of occupational health and occupational accidents, description by the secondary sector of industries were found more frequently than those by the tertiary sector of industries ($p < 0.01$). Health examinations were described more frequently in the tertiary sector of industries than in the secondary sector of industries ($p < 0.05$). Description on mental health is becoming an important issue for employees. These findings suggest that mental health and health management of employees would become the most important issue for occupational health of the CSR reports.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Occupational Health, Mental health, Health management

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been widely recognized among Japanese companies as the concept of corporate social responsibility in recent years^{1,2)}. CSR has been announced to include aspects of sociality, humanity, and economy. In addition, it is important for companies to establish a credible relationship with the various stakeholders (customers, shareholders, business partners, employees, government, local communities).

Some reports³⁻⁶⁾ have already noted about the relationship between CSR and occupational health in the early half of the 2000's. The consideration about occupational health of employees is an important aspect of CSR. However, little information is available on the aspect of occupational health in the CSR reports.

In this study, we focused on the CSR reports published in 2005 and 2006 and investigated on some aspects of the CSR reports. Then, we considered the importance of occupational health in CSR reports.

Subjects and methods

Subject companies

The subjects were companies listed on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, Inc. in 2005 and 2006. The total number of subjects was 1,661. The CSR reports published by these companies were collected by two methods. One is from the Web, these were downloaded from companies' homepages. Another is the way by post, the report of each company was sent directly to the authors. The obtained reports were from 1,058 subject companies. The companies were classified to the primary, secondary,

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and tertiary sectors of industries according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan. Under the industrial classification, the primary sector of industries included two companies, the secondary sector included eight hundred fifty companies, and the tertiary sector included two hundred six companies. Those of the primary sector were excluded from this study because the number of companies were too few.

We focused on description of occupational health in the reports of the secondary and tertiary sectors of industries.

Titles and contents of reports

The CSR reports are entitled as CSR report, Environment report, Environment Social report, Social Environment report, Sustainability report, Responsibility report, and others. Environment Social and Social Environment reports are categorized as Environment / Social report in this study. Sustainability and Responsibility reports were few, so they were unified in this study. We investigated the number of titles and frequency of description on occupational health in

the CSR reports.

There were some description on occupational health in the reports. We focused on the following five items in the CSR; policy of occupational health (ex; policy, plan), occupational accident (ex; accident rate per 1,000 persons, frequency rate, severity rate), health examinations (ex; general medical examinations, special medical examinations), mental health (ex; EAP, counseling), health management (ex; overwork, total health promotion), which are considered to be representative items and important items for occupational health. We investigated them in each industrial sector.

Statistical analysis

Data were expressed as number and ratio values. Chi-square tests were applied to compare ratios, respectively. P values less than 0.05 were considered to be statistically significant.

Table 1. The numbers of reports with and without descriptions about occupational health in the reports by companies of each industrial sector

Industrial Classification	Occupational health		P value
	Description (+)	Description (-)	
Secondary sector of industry	626	224	0.009**
Tertiary sector of industry	133	73	

** p<0.01.

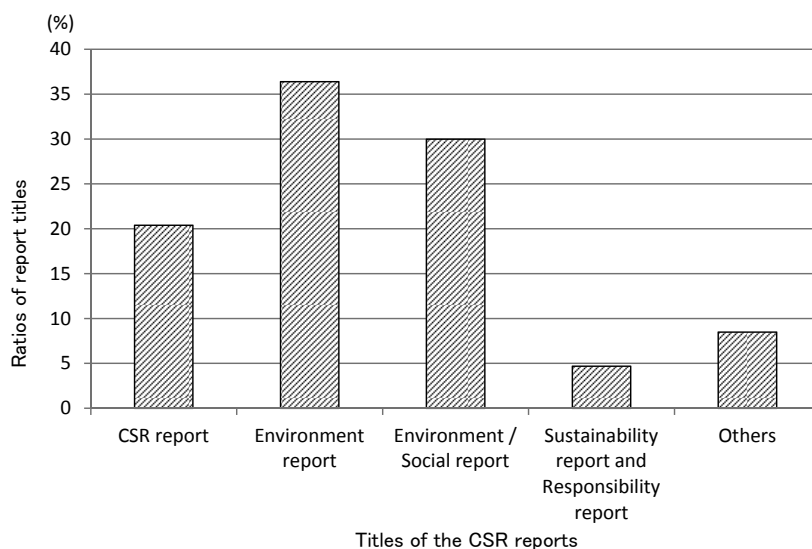


Fig. 1. Titles of the CSR reports.

Results

The number of reports obtained from the companies were 1,056. The numbers of reports with and without description on occupational health in the reports by in each industrial sector are shown in Table 1. The number of reports which included occupational health was 759 (71.9%) of all companies. Occupational health was found by 626 (73.6%) secondary sector companies and by 133 (64.6%) tertiary sector companies. There was a significant ($p < 0.01$) difference in this respect between the two industrial sectors.

Frequency ratios of the titles of CSR reports are shown in Fig 1. The most frequently used title was Environment

reports (36.4%), followed by Environment / Social reports (30.0%) and CSR reports (20.4%).

The frequency of describing occupational health under each title is summarized in Fig. 2. A majority of the reports described occupational health under the title of CSR reports (92.1%), followed by Environment / Social reports (90.2%), Sustainability reports and Responsibility reports (86.0%), and others (85.6%). However, the number of Environment reports describing occupational health (40.6%) was less than half.

Figure 3 shows the ratios of companies describing the five items on occupational health in each industrial sector. In the secondary sector of industries, occupational accidents

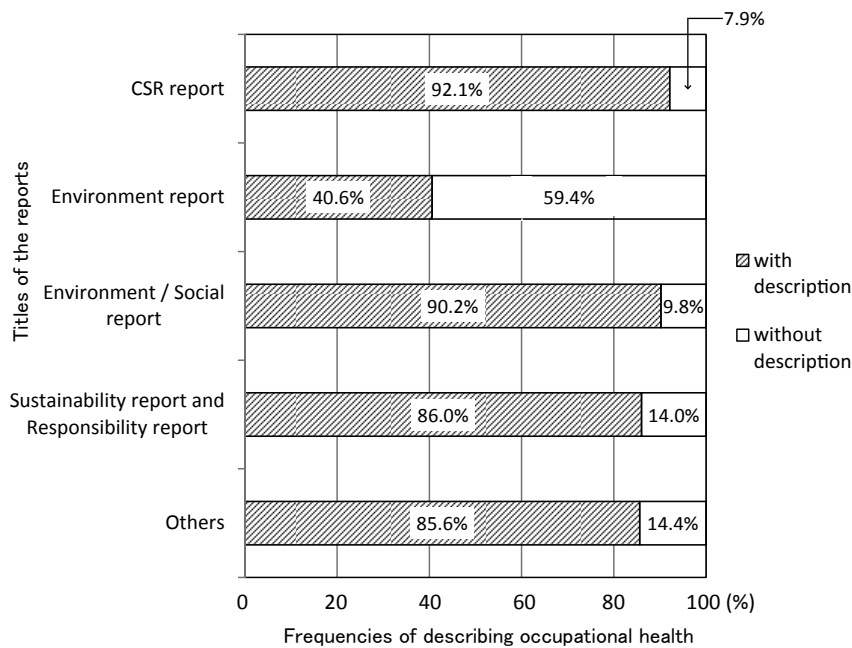


Fig. 2. The frequency of describing occupational health under each title of the reports.

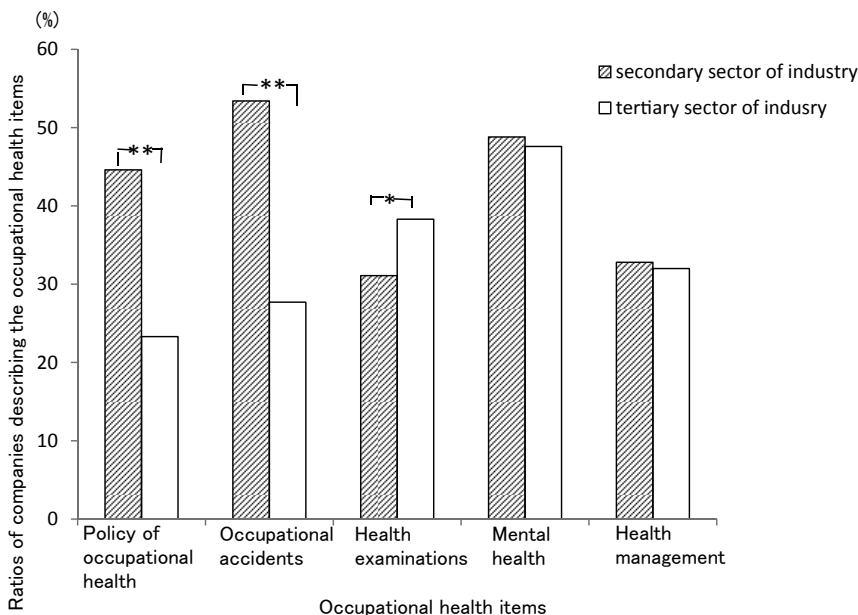


Fig. 3. Ratios of companies describing each of the five occupational health items in the two industrial sectors.

were most frequently described (53.4%), followed by mental health (48.8%). Mental health was the most frequently described item (47.6%) in the tertiary sector of industries.

As for the policy of occupational health and occupational accidents, description by the secondary sector of industries was made in significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher rates than by the tertiary sector. Description of health examinations was made more ($p < 0.05$) often in the tertiary sector of industries than in the secondary sector. Regarding mental health and health management, the secondary and tertiary sectors of industries indicated almost the same rate.

Discussion

The results of this study showed that numerous companies described occupational health in the CSR reports and that the frequency of describing occupational health differed depending on the title of reports. In addition, the present study showed that full health management for employee is an important issue in the CSR reports.

It has been reported⁶⁾ that occupational health was taken up as a subject in about half of the CSR reports published in 2004. The importance of occupational health of employees has been recognized by stakeholders year by year⁶⁾.

CSR reports were extremely few in 2004⁶⁾. However, the present study showed that about twenty percent of the companies published them in 2005 and 2006. Okubo⁷⁾ reported that the scope of business activities spread from the environment activities to CSR activities. Furthermore, by the transition from the Environment report to CSR report, the corporate vision has shown a high motivation to fulfill development together with the society⁸⁾. It could be speculated that the title of CSR reports would increase more and the number of Environment reports would decrease with the increasing contents of sociality and humanity issues.

The present study showed that occupational health has not been described in so many Environment reports, but numerous CSR reports and other titled reports described occupational health. The title of reports indicates important matters in the reports⁶⁾. The important purpose of Environment reports was to reduce Environmental burdens⁷⁾. So, it could be speculated that Environment reports described issues related to environmental matters. If the company has become conscious of occupational

health of its employees, it would assume that the title of its report should be changed to other than Environment reports. However, many companies have considered the stakeholders including the community, employees, and environment⁶⁾. It should be noted that it is necessary to show more concern about occupational health of employees besides environmental issues.

The present study showed that the ratios of companies describing the policy of occupational health and occupational accidents were higher than those in the reports in 2004⁶⁾. On the other hand, it could be assumed that these items were more important issues for the secondary sector of industries, because the ratio of companies in the secondary sector of industries was about twice as high as that of those in the tertiary sector of industries. There was the same tendency in the reports in 2004⁶⁾. This may result from the fact that a higher number of manufacturing companies are in the secondary sector than in the tertiary sector of industries. In these days, there have been arising more important problems such as overwork, overwork death (karoshi), and mental health, especially in the tertiary sector of industries. It could be speculated that the difference in the description on CSR would come from the difference in characteristics of working environment between the secondary and tertiary sectors of industries.

The results of the present study made it clear that mental health would be an important issue for employees. About 50 % of both the secondary and tertiary sectors of industries had described on mental health issues and this was more frequent than in 2004⁶⁾.

Guidelines for promoting mental health care of workers have been published⁹⁾ in Japan. However, the number of employees with anxiety, suffering, and stress has been shown an increase of about 60 % over the past several years¹⁰⁾. The companies should consider about both physical and mental health promotion for employees¹¹⁾. On the other hand, many companies have been tackling issues regarding employees' health (health management, mental health, counseling) as well as health examinations¹²⁾. We could confirm that companies should have a high regard for employees' health, and that some issues about occupational health will gradually increase in CSR reports, because responsibility for employees has already become an important aspect of CSR.

Recently, the word of "kenkou-keiei" has become

popular in Japan^{13,14}. “Kenkou-keiei” would mean that health management would contribute to better economic management of the companies. Furthermore, companies dealing with a strategic vision about employees’ health management have been selected as “kenkou-keiei-meigara”¹⁵ by Ministry of Economy and Trade and Industry and Tokyo Stock Exchange, Inc. “Kenkou-keiei-meigara” represent excellent companies including those investing on employees’ health.

It could be suggested that health management of employees would become a most important issue for occupational health in CSR reports.

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日本の企業の社会的責任（CSR）における産業保健の課題について

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要 旨

近年、CSR（企業の社会的責任）に対する関心は高まってきており、CSRレポート等の報告書を発行する企業が増えている。これらの報告書は、企業の取り組みや社会に対する考え方等を表していると考えられており、その中で、産業保健に関する課題がどのような位置づけにあるか明らかにすることを目的として報告書の分析を行った。

対象は東証1部上場企業で、企業から発行されている報告書を収集した。それらを分析した結果、報告書を発行している企業の多くが産業保健について記述していることがわかった。産業保健の記述の有無と、第2次産業および第3次産業の間に有意な差が認められた ($p<0.01$)。また、報告書のタイトルによって産業保健の記述の有無に違いがあることがわかった。産業保健に関する記述内容は、労働安全衛生の方針と労働災害については第2次産業が第3次産業より多く ($p<0.01$) 記述し、健康診断については第3次産業の方が多く記述していた ($p<0.05$)。メンタルヘルスについては、第2次産業、第3次産業ともに約半数の報告書に記述が認められた。さらに、健康管理についても記述が認められており、産業保健の中でも従業員に対する健康管理の充実が重要視されていることが明らかとなった。

キーワード：企業の社会的責任 (CSR)、産業保健、メンタルヘルス、健康管理