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Establishment and Evolution of Telework as Seen in Latest Data

Hybrid work may be optimal solution for balancing trust, flexibility, and productivity

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Summary

- The percentage of employed teleworkers among Japan's workforce stood at 24.6% in FY2024 (31.2% for men and 16.9% for women), and has remained stable since FY2023. The percentage of teleworkers has consistently been higher among men than women, with the rate decreasing gradually for men aged 60 and older and for women aged 40 and older. The percentage of teleworkers is closely correlated with length of commuting time. Employed teleworkers worked remotely for an average of two or more days per week in FY2024. A hybrid model combining telework and on-site work is becoming established in Japan. Over 60% of employed teleworkers expressed the intention to continue teleworking, with the most commonly desired frequency being two days per week, followed by one day per week and five or more days per week.
- Academic research using the latest data from around the world has revealed that telework utilization rates are highest in English-speaking countries such as North America, the UK, and Australia, while Asia has the lowest rates. It has also been found that employees with children tend to choose a "hybrid model" that combines telework and on-site work. Additionally, there is no consensus on the correlation between telework and productivity. This is due to factors such as differences in the time periods of the data being analyzed, variations in home environments, the proportion of tasks suitable for telework differing by industry and occupation, and cultural backgrounds (work practices) specific to each country.
- Telework is also attracting attention from the perspectives of inclusiveness (accepting people from diverse backgrounds) and amenities (saving commuting time and facilitating work-life balance). Some point out that it offers the advantage of securing labor while suppressing wage increases by increasing opportunities to access potential workers that companies have not been able to approach in the past.
- Furthermore, some studies suggest that providing face-to-face training (onboarding) for a certain period after joining the company is effective in improving retention and medium-to-long-term productivity. Ensuring a certain amount of face-to-face time and building and maintaining a relationship of trust between the company and its employees seems to be an important point in effectively utilizing telework. To address labor shortages and improve productivity, it is important

to determine whether a particular job is suitable for telework and to implement telework in a way that builds and maintains trust, such as through a hybrid model.