

## **Employer's Perception Towards Acceptance of Disabled Workers in Food Service**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30880/ritvet.2021.01.02.028>

Received 27 September 2020; Accepted 16 June 2021; Available online 28 September 2021

**Abstract:** This study was conducted on employers in the foodservice industry in Johor Bharu district. The purpose of this study was to explore employers' perceptions of the acceptability of workers with disabilities (OKU). This study also determines the acceptance factors and factors of employer rejection of disabilities people (OKU) in the field of food service. This study uses a qualitative approach through a semi-structured interview method. Data analysis using the thematic analysis method is broken down into themes. The findings show that employers' perceptions of accepting workers from the disabled in the food service field are wide open and allow disabled people to work in accordance with the same skills and competencies as other (normal) workers. It is hoped that this study will provide positive perceptions to employers and other employees of the disabled and can help increase the confidence and morale of the disabled to continue to work and not be afraid to venture into the field of interest as employers are more open to accepting anyone even from the disabled with the skills, and ability to do a job.

**Keywords:** Perceptions, Disability Employers, Employer Acceptance

### **1. Introduction**

Disabilities people (OKU) are part of the community. They have equal rights and opportunities to live life like other members of society. According to the publication of the Current Malaysian Population Budget 2019, the country's population is estimated at about 32.6 million people. However, Disabled people (OKU) registered in the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) as of December 31, 2018, were 1.58 per cent, of which 513,519 persons. Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that 15 percent of people with disabilities need to be registered in a country (Mumin, 2019). This shows that there are still more people with disabilities who are not registered with the Malaysian Department of Welfare (JKM) and this will also slow down the government's goal of defending the well-being of the disabled.

The number of disabilities people (OKU) employed in the public sector is still low, accounting for only 0.24% of the total about 1.6 million civil servants nationwide (Zahari, 2017). According to Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim, Women, Family and Population Development, less than one percent of disabled people are employed in the public sector and urged all government agencies to accelerate the recruitment process based on the one percent policy of their disabled.

Furthermore, disabilities people are seen to have the ability to be productive citizens and to contribute to the development of the country. According to Othman & Rahim (2014), countries do not have to rely on foreign labour. However, these kinds of things are not fully appreciated by certain groups as long as they are able to afford low-wage labour. If they are hiring disabled workers, there are too many modifications that need to be made to enable a task to be properly performed. As a result of the employer's actions, the percentage of disabilities people is increasing steadily from year to year (Jaafar, Abdul Wahab & Yaacob, 2017).

According to Nasir (2003), it is found that disabilities people in Malaysia who have received Special Education and Vocational Education in Government and Private Training Centre do not get job offers due to physical disabilities. The disadvantage of these disabled peoples is the lack of exposure given to them in terms of job opportunities, types and types of employment according to their ability, suitability and ability during vocational training (Abdullah, 2012).

In addition, negative views of disabilities people (OKU) have created prejudiced attitudes that are difficult to eradicate in society (Rao, 2004). According to Mohd Noh (2010) in Rosli, Wan Mahmud & Mahbob (2017), there are still employers who look down on the disabled. This study is in line with Peninsular Malaysia's Department of Labour (JTKSM) which states that the main problem encountered in the employment of disabilities people is the attitude of employers who are not interested, distrustful and unwilling to provide suitable infrastructure facilities for the disabled. This is supported by a preliminary study by researchers, finding that employers find it difficult to accommodate disabilities people in the foodservice sector because they have to provide facilities such as special toilets, parking lots, special routes and chairs where they work duty (kitchen). Not only that, employers also need to constantly monitor and pay attention to disabilities employees as they do their work.

Finally, the failure of the disabled peoples (OKU) to communicate in society as well as their inability to perform tasks as efficiently and effectively as other normal workers (Mustapha & Mohd Salleh, 2007). Communication is a very important criterion as a means of communicating between employer and employee. According to Bradley, Ebener & Geyer (2013), issues related to the way disabled peoples communicate in the workplace become an obstacle to getting a job. This is because they are humbled and ashamed to get along and difficult to work with. This is also supported by the findings of the preliminary study, which found that employers find it difficult to accept workers from the disabled because they can't communicate properly. And as we know, the foodservice sector needs an effective level of communication as it is constantly confronting and communicating with customers. For example, in the Food and Beverage section requiring employees who can communicate well to take food orders from customers, indirectly disabled workers such as dumb and deaf are not appropriate to perform this task because it would cause problems for customers and employers.

Among the issues that make the Disabled people widespread and limited employment for all professions is the level of employer acceptance of the disabled to work or serve in their company. This is because many employers assume that if they hire a disabled employee, there are many modifications or facilities that need to be provided to enable the worker to perform well. In addition, the lack of disclosures regarding job opportunities, types and forms of employment that are relevant to the level of ability, ability and suitability of disabled workers during vocational training make it difficult for employers to accept them. Furthermore, there is an element of discrimination and distrust of the disabilities people, it is undeniable that they are less physically fit but not a reason not to give them a chance.

Finally, failure to communicate has prevented the disabled from gaining a place in the open job market. Employers find it difficult to accept employees with disabilities because they can't communicate well with either their employer or their colleagues. Therefore, this study is important to

understand the perceptions and factors of accepting employers from workers with disabilities so that these groups have access to equality in line with employers' needs and wants and employment.

Based on Jaafar, Abdul Wahab & Yaacob (2017), the study of employers' practices in the management of disabled workers (OKU) in an organization in Malaysia is poorly conducted as is done overseas. Developing countries have higher rates of disabilities, but empirical studies involving disabilities people are still limited. In this study, the differences that exist are largely due to the different understandings and perceptions of the disabled. According to the Peninsular Malaysia Department of Labour (JTKSM) which states the major problems encountered in employment placement are disabled. The attitude of employers who are not interested, distrustful and unwilling to provide appropriate infrastructure facilities for the disabled (OKU). However, employers generally have stereotypical views of the disabled (OKU). They consider this group to be inadequate or unreliable because employees of disabled peoples (OKU) often fall ill and need a lot of funding (Nasir, 2003).

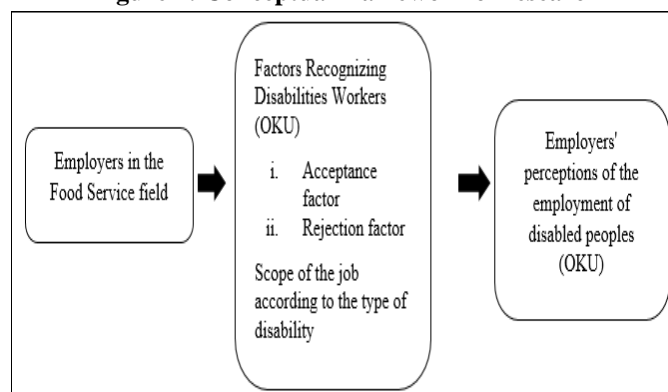
Therefore, Special Education is a program or service designed based on individual characteristics to meet the individual needs and needs of specific facilities. The approach used in special education is to emphasize students with disabilities in developing skills, functions, skills, development, mastery and achievement in developmental skills (Che, 2015). According to the study of Mad Isa & Abd Kadir (2014) stated that the ability of students with learning disabilities in cooking, food preparation and presentation can strengthen their work skills after graduation. To this end, the students have been theoretically exposed and given practical training such as food and beverage delivery techniques, hospitality techniques, and tableware and tableware at the dining table in line with the Ministry of Education (MOE) goals in providing education courses and technical and vocational training for students in accordance with recognized occupational standards, with emphasis on practical components, psychomotor skills and exposure to training in the industry.

Therefore, choosing and deciding the world of work in the present and the future is very important and significant for every individual. So too with disabilities people (OKU), because of the phenomenon of career or occupational selection, they will surely go through. They have to make choices and decisions, and then plan for a career that they can pursue in their work so that they can be productive, quality and committed to their work and meet the visionary aspirations of the nation as a developed nation by 2020. This study is to answer the following research questions:

- i. How do employers accept workers from the Disabled in the food service field?
  - a. What factors influence employers' acceptance of workers' disability (OKU)
  - b. What is the factor in the employer's refusal to accept a disabled employee (OKU)
- ii. What is the scope of the task for the Disabled to fit their disability or the type of disability they are experiencing?
- iii. What are the appropriate suggestions to help disabilities people meet the needs or requirements of the food service industry?

## 2. Methodology

This study will focus on employers' perceptions towards disabilities workers in the food service field. The conceptual frameworks developed for this study are as shown in Figure 1. The conceptual framework of this research was based on previous studies related to employers' perceptions of the acceptance of disabilities people in the field of food service. This conceptual framework shows employers from the food service field as participants in this study. Researchers want to explore the employer's own perceptions of employees of the disabled. In addition, the researchers want to identify the suitability of disabled workers according to the type of disability and the factors of employer acceptance of the disabled in the food service job.

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of research**

The methodology of the study is one of the important elements of the research. This study design is a case study design that uses a qualitative approach because it can gather more detailed and detailed information about an individual's behaviour and social situation to learn how an individual's behaviour or social change has occurred (Chua, 2011).

The study participant was the employer selected by the researcher to obtain the source of research information obtained directly from the study participant. In this qualitative study, the selection of the study participants is aimed at the selection of the study participants according to the characteristics set by the researcher with the aim of obtaining information to answer all the research questions. Here are the characteristics of the study participants:

- i. Employers who have employees of the Disabled (OKU)
- ii. Employers who have been employed by the Disabled
- iii. Employers with at least five (5) years of experiences in the food service sector

This study involved three (3) employers from various organizations in the food service sector as participants in the study according to the criteria described above. Researchers choose employers from a variety of organizations because it is to explore and study their perceptions of disabled workers whether they have the same or different perceptions. The selection of study participants ceased after the researcher analyzed the data, found that the data answered all the research questions and obtained high reliability and consistency of the data.

### 3. Results and Discussion

As a result of the analysis of the findings, the researcher was able to formulate a number of themes that could be drawn out, namely the employee acceptance factor disabilities people (OKU). Among the factors that make up the acceptance of disabled workers based on the statement of the study, participants are in terms of physical capacity of the disabled workers, communication with others, undergoing training and courses provided and receiving instruction and guidance well.

#### 3.1 Worker's physical ability

The physical capacity of the worker becomes the factor in the employer's selection of workers from the disabled. This is because these disabled people have the potential, ability to venture into the food service field. Disabilities people (OKU) are constantly striving and working hard because of their desire for socialization, acceptance of their employers, self-reliance for survival and they want to be rewarded with the skills available and accepted as ordinary people (Mohd Said & Radzi, 2008). Good potential and performance can be seen when they are able to do work that involves interacting with customers at the front desk, ticket sales and restaurant priorities (Mumin, 2019). This indirectly proves that disabilities people (OKU) are able to do the job and are able to earn their own pocket money and have the same ability as normal people.

### 3.2 Food handling training and courses

Food training and training courses are very important and should be taken by all employees involved in food service regardless of the disabilities people (OKU) or the normal peoples. This is to provide exposure and awareness on the importance of providing clean and safe food to all food operators or workers in the food and services sector (Shokarny, 2016). As such, employers are highly concerned with training and food handling courses and employee acceptance depending on the performance shown in training and food handling courses for a specified period.

### 3.3 Receiving instructions and guidance well

According to Mumin (2019), he stated that as long as they are able to manage themselves and receive direction, nothing can hinder them from working and qualifying for their own income according to their capabilities. However, employees who are not from a disability group also do not miss instructions and are given guidance in doing their jobs repeatedly the same thing.

Therefore, the researcher can conclude that the employees of the disabled are reasonable and the employer is well received. This is because these groups can receive instruction and learn quickly in a task, they just need to take time to adjust and understand each assignment. This is supported by Mohd Zahari et al. (2010), who stated that employees of these groups are said to be productive and able to make good commitments to assigned tasks and tasks.

### 3.4 Communication

Communication skills are very important for human life. Communication is a process of interaction that connects one party to another, for example, the relationship between employer and employee (Aris & Yunus, 2016). Therefore, in the world of work, communication is very important especially to those who are engaged in customer service areas such as food service.

In short, the researchers found that the communication factor of workers can be the factor of acceptance and the rejection of employers in hiring disabled people (OKU). This is because communication is very important and is considered by all employers regardless of the food service sector or other sectors. If one is not able to communicate well, how can one build relationships with others or the community? This is supported by Crystal, Elias & Nasri (2010), who stated that communication skills are important in the work environment as they reflect employee skills in a direction that is an important component in determining employer acceptance for employee selection.

### 3.5 Scope of disable employees (OKU)

The scope of work for disabled workers is just like any other (normal) worker. They have to do all the work according to the schedule provided by the employer. So, there is no term difference in employment between normal and disabled workers, all workers are given equal treatment and division. This is supported by Mad Isa & Abd Kadir, (2014) who stated that 'slow learner' ability in cooking, food preparation and presentation can enhance work skills after graduation. To this end, the students have been theoretically exposed and given practical training such as food and beverage delivery techniques, hospitality techniques, and tableware and tableware at the dining table in line with the Ministry of Education (MOE) goals in providing education courses and technical and vocational training for students in accordance with recognized occupational standards, with emphasis on practical components, psychomotor skills and exposure to training in the industry.

Based on the results of the study, the researchers found that in the field of food service there is no specific task scope for disabled people (OKU) because based on the answers given from the three study participants the same. This is likely because they have employees with disabilities from the same category who are either disabled or learning disabilities. According to the three study participants, the job scope for disabled workers is the same as for normal workers. This is because they only have learning problems or hours, so they have no problem doing work like other workers. They just need to be always given instructions and guidance before doing any work.

Based on the analysis of the results of the study, it is shown that employers' perceptions have changed from traditional thinking to more open-minded. This is because as a result of the data analysis, the researchers found that employers are openly accepting disabled workers (OKU) who have the ability and also give these people the opportunity to prove that not all disabled people are able to do the job. In addition, the researcher can also identify some of the factors that contribute to the acceptance and rejection of employers 'acceptance of workers' disabilities. Among the factors that the employer receives in this category are physical capabilities, compliance instructions, training and food handling courses, and communication. However, this communication factor can be a factor of acceptance and rejection. For this reason, this communication is very important if you want to venture into the food service sector as it is a must-have for dealing with people to provide customer service. Not only that, but communication is also about giving and receiving directions for doing work.

Furthermore, based on the analysis of the findings of the study also found that in the field of food service, the scope of work for disabled workers is the same as for other (normal) workers. They will be given six (6) months of training and will be required to attend and pass food handling courses before the employer becomes a full-time employee. This is because the food service field does not have a specific job scope, they have to do all the work according to the schedule provided by the employer. So, there is no term difference in employment between normal and disabled workers, all workers are given equal employment and distribution.

As such, the implications of this study will be a reference to existing employers in Malaysia to recruit workers from the disabled. Methodologically: the data collection method can be a guide to conducting qualitative research and the processes implemented in this study can be a guide to other researchers in the future to implement the same research approach.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Overall, employers' perceptions towards disabled workers are not as negative as one might think. This is because in this era of globalization, the minds of the people, especially the employers, are already open and aware that not all people with disabilities are unable to work and be independent. The findings of the study have shown that employers are well received by disabilities workers in the food service field.

Based on the results of interviews conducted, there are several employers' acceptance factors for disabled workers in the field of food service. Among the first is that employers look at their physical capabilities whether they have significant physical or physical disabilities but have other problems such as fatigue (learning problems) and hearing and speech problems (deaf and dumb). If their physical appearance is normal, then they will have no problem doing work especially in the field of food service requiring strong physical capabilities other than mental endurance. This is because the scope of the job for disabled and normal (normal) workers is the same as the assigned job schedule.

Second, employers welcome disabled workers into the food service field after they have been through a number of training and food handling courses. This is because when a disabled worker undergoes 60 days of training and graduates in a food handling course, it can increase employers' confidence and confidence in disabled workers that they can do the job.

Third, employers accept workers with disabilities because they do the job as directed and quickly learn the results of the instruction provided. For example, workers who are slow learners should always be given instruction and guidance at the beginning of their work only, as long as they are good at managing their own work. Finally, communication. Communication is very important because all jobs require good communication to communicate with other people, whether employers, employees or customers. The field of food service is certainly customer-facing, so effective communication can serve customers well.

#### **Acknowledgement**

We would like to thank the Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia for the support given throughout the entire process of this study.

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