

Attitudinal and Environmental Factors as Determinants of Job Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities

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Abstract

Persons with disabilities are often discriminated against in appropriate job and advancement in employment even when their literacy and educational level is adequate or more than adequate. Attitudinal and environmental factors could contribute to discrimination against persons with disabilities. This study aims at examining the attitudinal and environmental factors that determine job discrimination against persons with disabilities. The study employed the use of descriptive research design. Four research questions were generated. Questionnaires were administered to one hundred and nine employers of labour to determine the factors prompting job discrimination against persons with disabilities. Multiple regression analysis, mean and t-test was used to analyse the data collected for the study. The findings revealed that the attitude and the environment are the major determinants of job discrimination against persons with disabilities. It was also discovered that the disposition of both private and public employers are the same towards persons with disabilities in provision of job. Based on these findings it was recommended that awareness and sensitisation programmes should be done to intimate employers of labour about persons with disabilities in order to know that employing them would be beneficial to both parties and would make persons with disabilities to be less dependent.

Keywords: Attitudinal factors, environmental factors, job discrimination and persons with disabilities.

Introduction

Billions of persons live with disabilities in the world and more than eighty (80) percent reside in developing countries. The vast majority of these people are marginalized and disproportionately poor simply because they are excluded from education, employment, and political processes as a result of their communication, physical or sensory impairments. To this end, persons with disabilities encounter a number of barriers as they make the decision to enter or re-enter the workplace, employment or job. Some of these barriers might be described as external as they involve environmental and workplace supports such as transportation, accommodations, and job opportunities (Loprest & Maag, 2001). Other barriers might be described as internal, as they involve self-perceptions regarding adequacy of work experience, work skills, and vocational beliefs that are necessary considerations and influences in the job search process (Bolton, 1983; Belgrave & Walker, 1991; Corbiere, Mercier & Lesage, 2004). Whatever the locus of these barriers, there is ample evidence that they may represent impediments to work. For example, despite the increase in general employment rates over the past ten years, adults with disabilities continue to lag behind their nondisabled counterparts in terms of hours worked, wages earned, and unemployment and under-employment rates. In these areas, men and women who report a work limitation earn an average of 46% of their nondisabled counterparts' earnings; and report an unemployment rate of almost 81% compared to 23% of those without a work limitation (Houtenville, 2006).

Difficulties in gaining appropriate employment and advancement in employment experienced by persons with disabilities even when their literacy and educational level are adequate or more than adequate. Environmental and attitudinal barriers in the job placement according to Szymanski and Hershenson (1998) are the limitations of

disabilities which are not inherent within individuals, but rather in individual's interactions with the environment. Environmental barriers comprise physical or structural impediments caused by an impairment to become a disability in the terms of World Health Organization's definition (World Health Organization, 1980). For people with hearing loss for instance, such barriers include the necessity to use telephones, background noise in workplace, and auditory rather than visual alerting signals (DeCaro and Egleston-Dodd(1982). Jobs in the growing services-oriented usually require considerable amounts of verbal interaction with customers or clients; interaction is certainly possible but can be problematic for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons (Schildroth et al., 1991). The most difficult job placement situation reported by deaf and hearing people, however, involve group situations such as departmental and staff meeting and staff service training sessions, and work-related social function all situations that are important for career maintenance or advancement (Laroche et al., 2000; Scherich, 1996; Scherich and Mowry, 1997).

Environmental barriers can be reduced by the altering of job condition and the provision of accommodations. The 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act require that employers employ 15 or more employees to make reasonable accommodations so that quality workers with disabilities have equal employment opportunity. In Australia, the Disabilities Discrimination Act (1992) requires employers to provide services or facilities to enable suitably qualified persons with a disability to perform the inherent requirements of the particular employment as long as such provision would not impose an "unjustifiable hardship" on the employer (DDA Section 15, 4, b).

However, many studies have shown that necessary, reasonable accommodation is difficult to obtain or not forthcoming for many workers with disabilities in general (Harlan and Robert, 1998) and hearing loss in particular (Geyer and Schroedel, 1999; Scherich, 1996; Scherich and Mowry, 1997; Stika, 1997). In response to these employment disparities for people with disabilities, a number of studies have investigated various aspects associated with positive employment or job outcomes. They include research on personality and psychological attributes (Asbury, Walker, Maholmes, Green & Belgrave, 1994; McShane & Karp, 1993), demographic and disability characteristics (Capella, 2003; Marshak, Bostick & Turton, 1990; James, DeVivo, & Richards, 1993; Moore, 2002), and employer attitudes and workplace issues (Gouvier, Sytsma-Jordan, & Mayville, 2003; Kenny, 1998), among others. Despite the number of studies, findings have been inconclusive due, in part, to the multivariate nature of the variables involved and the lack of theoretical grounding of the studies (Saunders, Leahy, McGlynn & Estrada-Hernandez, 2006).

Equal employment opportunities are central for disabled people in terms of full participation in society. Both the financial rewards and the social rewards of job can be very important in determining people's quality of life (Berthoud et al, 1993). The disability movement's goal of independent living includes the right to employment, although it has been argued that discussion of employment issues has been limited: the initial emphasis has rested instead upon the role of personal assistance and social services, education and housing in enabling independent living (Thornton and Lunt, 1995, p 3). Although there is a large amount of research on employment and disability, most of it is therefore from the perspective of the government or employers. While the disability movement perceive the issue of access to employment within a framework of rights (within the social model of disability), the government approach is located more easily within a framework of human resources (within the medical model), whereby achieving equal access is seen at a much more individual level.

Reliable data on the employment of people with disabilities worldwide is difficult to come by, but the available data indicate people with disabilities have poorer employment outcomes than people without disabilities (International Disability Rights Monitor 2004). At least 650 million people have disabilities worldwide, with approximately 15-20% of each country's population affected by disability (Employers' Forum). In developing countries, 80-90% of people with disabilities of working age are unemployed (Zarocostas 2005). In industrialized countries, the situation is slightly better. However, individuals of working age with disabilities are still unemployed at a rate between 50% and 70%, at least twice the rate of those without disabilities (International Disability Rights Monitor 2004).

Statement of the problem

Oftentimes persons with disabilities are being discriminated against in job. They have difficulties being gainfully employed despite the fact that they have attended high schools and have been educationally equipped or they have acquired one skill or the other vocationally. It should be noted that the world is a competitive where persons without disabilities are being discriminated against in job placement despite their qualifications. The persons with disabilities are not left out in job discrimination hence making their own discrimination more or less double with disability at one hand. It is against this background that this study aim at investigating the attitudinal and environmental factors that determine job discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify the attitudinal and environmental factors that determine job discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Research questions

1. What is the relative contribution of the employer attitudes, environmental factors on job discrimination against persons with disabilities?
2. To what extent can the job discrimination against persons with disabilities determine the employers consideration for work placement?
3. What are the attitudes of public and private organizations towards provision of job for persons with disabilities?
4. What are the dispositions of male and female employers towards employment of persons with disabilities?

Methodology

Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study.

Study sample

The participants in this study are one hundred and twenty employers of labour in Oyo state. The sample is made up of employers from selected organisations in Oyo State. Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of both private and public organisations. Organisations where persons with disabilities are working and those without persons with disabilities on their staff list were utilized in this study.

Instrumentation

Determinants of job discrimination questionnaire was used to gather the data for this study. It consists of a set of questions made up of part A and B. Section A contains demographic data on department, sex, age, designation and educational qualifications of employees and also consist of eleven factors that can be considered in employing persons with disabilities while Section B consist of a twelve question items with a likert scale specifically designed to allow the participants to respond accordingly to the question items. They include:

- SA - Strongly Agreed
- A - Agreed
- SD - Strongly Disagreed
- D - Disagreed.

Method of data analysis

The data collected for this study were analysed using Multiple Regression Analysis and t-test.

Results

This section is discussed based on the research questions.

Research question1

What is the relative contribution of the Employer attitudes, Environmental factors on Job Discrimination against People with Disabilities in Oyo State?

The combined contribution of the Independent variable was regressed on dependent variable

Table 1: Regression summary analysis showing effect of attitudinal and environmental factors as determinants of job discrimination against persons with disabilities

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F. ratio	Sig
Regression	1307.8956	2	653.978	181.519	0.000
Residual	381.897	106	3.603		
Total	1689.853	108			

Sig. at 0.05 levels

Table 1 shows that Analysis of variance of the multiple regressions yielded an (F) Ratio of 181.519 which is significant at $P=0.000 < 0.05$ level of significant. Therefore, that it's, Employer attitudes and Environmental factors were jointly contributed to Job Discrimination against People with Disabilities in Oyo State. The findings revealed

that the environment and attitude of employers of labour are the major determinants of Job discrimination against persons with disabilities in Oyo State.

Research Question 2

To what extent can the Job Discrimination against Disable persons determine the Employers consideration for Work placement in Oyo State

Table 2: Shows the level of Job Discrimination

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Sig
1	Jobs in the growing services oriented usually require considerable amount of verbal interaction.	27	82	0	0	3.25	0.434	***
2	Interaction is certainly possible but can be problematic for persons with Disabilities in general.	27	55	27	0	3.0	0.707	***
3	The most difficult Job placement situation is reported by persons with disabilities.	27	54	28	0	2.99	0.714	***
4	Departmental staff meeting are difficult for persons with disabilities.	54	55	0	0	2.99	1.005	***
5	Staff services and training sessions are difficult for persons with disabilities.	27	55	27	0	3.00	0.707	***
6	Work related and social functions are difficult for persons with disabilities.	27	28	54	0	2.75	0.830	**
7	Can disabilities be a barrier to employment of persons with disabilities when their literacy levels are adequate?	54	55	0	0	2.50	0.502	**
8	Would disability be a barrier to advancement in employment by persons with disabilities despite their educational level?	27	55	27	0	3.00	0.707	***
9	Does disability prevent a person with disability to use phone?	54	55	0	0	2.99	1.005	***
10	Does disability prevent a person with disability from hearing background noise in work place?	0	54	55	0	2.50	0.502	**
11	Does disability prevent auditory and visual alertness?	27	55	27	0	3.00	0.707	***
	Average weighted means					2.906		

X=Means Scores=2.906, Highly ***, Moderate**, Low *

Table 2 shows the analysis of means and standard deviation of attitudinal and environmental factors as determinant of Job Discrimination against persons with disabilities. It determines the Employers consideration for Work placement of persons with disability in Oyo State.

Jobs in the growing services oriented usually require considerable amount of verbal interaction (Mean =3.25). Interaction is certainly possible but can be problematic for persons with disabilities (Mean =3.00). The most difficult Job placement situation is reported by persons with disabilities (Mean =2.99). Departmental and staff meeting are difficult for persons with disabilities (Mean =2.99). Staff services and training sessions are difficult for persons with disabilities (Mean =3.00). Work related and social function are difficult for persons with disabilities (Mean =2.75). Disabilities can be a barrier when their literacy level are adequate (Mean =2.50). Disabilities could be a barrier to

advancement in employment for persons with disabilities despite their educational level (Mean =3.00). Persons with disabilities could be prevented from the use of telephone because of their disability which could affect their job performance (Mean =2.99). Persons with disabilities would be prevented from hearing background noise in work place due to their disabilities (Mean =2.50). Disabilities could prevent auditory and visual alertness in persons with disabilities (Mean =3.00).

It implies that level of Job Discrimination against persons with disabilities determine the Employers consideration for Work placement in Oyo State have higher means.

However the weighted average estimated mean of Job Discrimination against persons with disabilities determine the Employers consideration for Work placement in Oyo State was 2.905 which is greater than 2.50 expected mean. Hence the conclusion can be drawn that level of Job Discrimination against persons with disabilities determine the Employers consideration for Work placement in Oyo State decided by respondent were ranked with High (***) followed by Moderate (***) and those that have low perception with Low (*).

Research Question 3

What are the attitudes of Public and Private Organization towards provision of Job for persons with disabilities?

Table3: The independent t-test of private and Public Employers

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std Error	t. Cal	t.Crit	df	Sig(2 tail)
Public Organization	55	28.49	0.50452	0.0680	-20.194	1.96	107	0.000
Private Organization	54	35.50	2.5234	0.3434				

t Cal = -20.194, t Criti = 1.96, df=107, p = 0.000, Decision=0.05 level of significance

The table 3 shows the significant difference between Public organization and Private Organization job discrimination against persons with disabilities in Oyo State. It was observed that the t- Calculated value was greater than t-Critical values). It is significant at (t. Calculated=-20.194, was greater than t-Critical=1.96, df=107, P=0.000<0.05). Therefore, it was concluded that, there is significant difference between Public organization and Private Organization job discrimination against person with disabilities in Oyo State. It was discovered that the disposition of both Private and Public employers are the same towards persons of disabilities in provision of Job.

Research Question 4

What are the dispositions of male and female employers towards employment of persons with disabilities?

Table 4: The independent t-test of Male and Female Employers

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std Error	t. Cal	t.Crit	df	Sig(2 tail)
Male Employers	55	32.900	5.045	0.680	2.585	1.96	107	0.011
Female Employers	54	31.000	2.018	0.274				

t Cal= 2.585, t Crit = 1.96, df =107, p = 0.011, Decision =0.05 level of significance

The table 4 shows the significant difference between Male and Female Employers on job discrimination against persons with disabilities in Oyo State. It was observed that the t- Calculated value was greater than t-Critical values. It is significant at (t. Calculated=2.585, was greater than t-Critical=1.96, df=107, P=0.000<0.05). Therefore, it was concluded that, there is significant difference between Male and Female Employers on job discrimination against person with disabilities in Oyo State. It was also discovered that the disposition of both Male and Female employers are the same towards persons of disabilities in provision of job.

Discussion of findings

The findings revealed that the environment and attitude of employers of labour are the major determinants of Job discrimination against persons with disabilities in Oyo State. This is supported by the studies of Asbury, Walker, Maholmes, Green and Belgrave (1994) and McShane and Karp (1993) that persons with disabilities often suffer disparity in employment due to their personality and psychological attributes. It also corroborated the findings of Gouvier, Sytsma-Jordan and Mayville (2003) on attitude of employers based on demographic, disability characteristics and work place issues. From the foregoing, one could deduce that the attitude of employers of labour and the environment put together are the major determinants of job discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Also the findings revealed that the attitude of public and private organization towards employment of persons with disabilities are the same. This implies that both public and private organisations discriminate against persons with disabilities in job procurement. This is in line with the findings of Houtenville (2006) wherein 81% of persons with disabilities were reported as not being gainfully employed.

Further it was also discovered that there was no significant difference in the disposition of female and male employers toward employment of persons with disabilities. These findings could be attributed to societal belief towards persons with disabilities. Society creates additional handicap for persons with disabilities through their belief, stereotypes and prejudice. The employers of labour both private and public organization, female or male are within the society. The finding is supported by Loprest and Maag (2001).

Recommendations and Conclusion

As is true for those without disabilities, people with disabilities have a right to fair and equal wages, working hours and opportunities, and the cultural benefits of being employed in the community. To achieve this goal, individuals with disabilities need to be in customized or supported employment, rather than in sheltered and segregated settings.

Since employing people with disabilities has a positive impact on employers, increases in customized and supported employment will not only help individuals with disabilities, but also benefit the workforce and society as a whole. Unfortunately, throughout the world, individuals with disabilities remain employed at lower rates than people without disabilities, and when employed, often are in sheltered settings. For employment outcomes to improve for people with disabilities, policy makers must continue to move from the medical model of disability to more comprehensive models such as the social and bio psychosocial models of disability, and address supply and demand challenges.

Awareness and sensitisation programmes should be done to intimate employers of labour about persons with disabilities in order to know that employing them would be beneficial to both parties and would make persons with disabilities to be less dependent.

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