Employment of People with Disabilities in the Northern States of Peninsular Malaysia: Employers' Perspective

Tiun Ling Ta[1*], Lee Lay Wah[2], Khoo Suet Leng[1]
1.School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia
2. School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates employers' perspective towards employing people with disabilities in the northern states of Peninsular Malaysia. The research also endeavoured to identify factors that promote or hinder gainful employment of people with disabilities in Malaysia.

Method: The data were collected through postal questionnaires distributed to several types of industries in the northern region of Malaysia.

Results: The results indicated that most of the employers are in favour of employing persons with disabilities. However, very few have such enabling policies, or a mechanism to handle issues related to persons with disabilities, or a built environment which is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. They are also concerned about the ability of workers with disabilities to comprehend and follow orders, as well as the costs involved in employing and training them. These results imply that if employers want to fulfil their intentions of recruiting persons with disabilities, a lot has to be done to employ and sustain them in their jobs.

Key words: Employment, People with Disabilities, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities comprise more than 600 million people worldwide (International Labour Organisation (ILO n.d). In Malaysia, according to the statistics from the Welfare Department, the total number of persons with disabilities in 2009 was about 277,509. Of these, 26 percent or 73,545 are in the Northern Region of Peninsular Malaysia (Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang and Perak

states). However, these data are incomplete as registration of persons with disabilities in Malaysia is not compulsory, and is done only on a voluntary basis. In addition, the data are not up to date, as the names of those who have died are not deleted from the main record. A card is issued to registrants with disabilities as evidence for their entitlement to benefits provided by the government, such as disability allowances, educational accommodation, income tax deductions and others benefits stated by the government. According to the estimation of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the number of persons with disabilities in developing countries is between 5 to 10 per cent (Khor, 2002). If the WHO estimate is taken into consideration, the number of persons with disabilities in Malaysia should be between 1.4 to 2.8 million, based on the total population of 28 million in 2010. However these numbers may differ from country to country, depending on their definition of disability.

According to Ledman and Brown (1993), persons with disabilities are usually the nation's largest minority and they tend to be marginalised in all aspects of life. They usually experience substantially poorer quality of life and are more likely to be unemployed due to institutional discrimination. If they do work, they are likely to be underemployed, earn low salaries, experience less job security and have fewer chances for advancement (ILO, Information Sheet 2011). It should be emphasised that employment is an important element in one's life, regardless of one's disabilities. Overall, employment and work give people the sense of participation in a wider collective purpose, and provide the individual with social status and a sense of identity. For persons with disabilities, employment also plays an important part in alleviating poverty.

According to Yong (2001), about 3,000 persons with physical disabilities are employed in the private sector and 540 in the public sector in Malaysia. In 2003, there was an increase of about 2,000 persons with disabilities who worked in the private sector (Fong, 2004). These 5,000 employed persons with physical disabilities represented only 3.92% of the total number who were registered. This is not a surprising trend as it happens all over the world, regardless of the country's development status. For example, only 53 per cent of the persons with disabilities in Australia are employed, as compared to 80 per cent of non-disabled people (ILO n.d). In 1994, two-third of Americans with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 were not working, and 59% of them lived in households earning less than US \$25,000 per year, which is considered to be at poverty level (Szymanski et al, 2003:14). In the European Union, 42 per cent of persons with

disabilities are employed, as compared to 64 per cent of the non-disabled (ILO n.d). The exclusion of persons with disabilities is one of the reasons which has led to the high incidence of poverty among them. According to the ILO, the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities in some developing countries can reach as high as 80 per cent or more. The World Bank in 2000 estimated that due to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from mainstream society, the total loss to the gross domestic product was between US $1.37 trillion to US $1.94 trillion worldwide (Khor, 2002). In United Kingdom alone, the spending power of persons with disabilities was estimated at £50 billion (Perrin, 2003). For Malaysia, the social exclusion of persons with disabilities entailed an estimated loss to the GDP of between US $1.18 and US $1.68 billion (Khor, 2002).

Employment plays an important role in everyone's life since it presents a route for one's social inclusion and is a source for gaining the necessary financial resources needed for one's wellbeing (Mourad, 2009). Goffman (1959) shows that work can be important for the manner in which we label, interact with, and talk about each other. In most parts of the world, the employment rate of persons with disabilities is much less in comparison to the non-disabled, and the situation is worse in developing countries. For example in the US in 2004, only 35% of persons with disabilities reported being employed full-time or part-time, compared to 78% of those without disabilities (Harris and Associates, 2004), and in South Africa only 19% of people with disabilities are employed, compared to 35% of the total population (ILO information Sheet, 2011). There are some reasons to believe that the country's economic performance could be enhanced by widespread employment of persons with disabilities. However, this does not happen as society's vision seems to be clouded with regard to many aspects of disability. In some countries which are steeped in superstitious beliefs (such as Nepal and India), disabilities are still viewed as a result of the sins committed in a previous birth; therefore the notion that a person with disability has equal rights, is largely absent from the popular mindset. In Zimbabwe, the birth of a child with disability is considered as a bad omen (Chimedza & Peters, 1999).

The rights of persons with disabilities under existing UN conventions are generally ignored in monitoring procedures in most developing countries (Jayasooria, 2000). As a result, people with disabilities are the largest minority group and the most discriminated against in the world. Their human rights are systematically violated, resulting in worsening living conditions, degrading treatment, lack of adequate housing, healthcare, education, employment, social inclusion and, often death (Khalfan, 2003).

Barriers to education and training issues related to assistive technology, programmatic work disincentives, fear of losing health insurance and medical benefits, stereotyping as well as discrimination in the workplace, are all major factors contributing to the under-employment and unemployment of persons with disabilities (ILO, n.d). Stereotyping of persons with disabilities is related to the medical model approach, regarding them as incapable and non-functional. The medical model also views disability as equivalent to a functional impairment, therefore persons with disabilities are considered not suitable to be employed (Jayasooria, 2000). However, in reality most of the negative perceptions regarding persons with disabilities are unfounded. Research has shown that persons with disabilities possess and display talent, vigour, and determination to succeed in any activity despite all the difficulties faced, and if they are given the opportunity, they can be valuable contributors to work productivity (Sharma, Singh and Kutty, 2006; Barnes, 2007; Faridah, 2003; Mottl,2001). For example, in the medical transcription business, persons with disabilities actually exceed the non-disabled workers in productivity (Ghormley, 2001).

Work itself is undergoing changes due to the pervasiveness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and knowledge management in today's borderless world (Karim & Khalid, 2003). With the development and advancement of ICT and knowledge management, jobs nowadays are more focused on "able-mind" rather than "able-body". This shift opens up more opportunities for highly educated and skilled workers. Therefore, qualified persons with disabilities stand to benefit from the greater employment opportunities in the information and services sector.

In Malaysia, the government has shown its commitment towards improving the quality of life among its population of people with disabilities, by signing the Proclamation on Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia and Pacific Region, on May 16, 1994. On February 25, 1998 the Cabinet approved the establishment of the National Coordinating Body known as the National Advisory and Consultative Council for People with Disabilities, to replace the National Implementation Committee for the well-being of the Disabled, which had been formed on August 30, 1990 (Ismail, 2003). Despite the prospects of employment, persons with disabilities still have to face negative perceptions of employers, as well as physical barriers such as facilities related to built environment and the inaccessible transport system, which are related to the increase in the cost of accommodation and also the cost involved in training people

with disabilities. However, studies show that removal of those barriers needs a holistic approach which includes monitoring, enforcing and getting feedback from those showing successful outcomes (Jayasooria, 1997; Ganapathy, 1992).

This study aimed to investigate employers' perspective towards employing people with disabilities in the northern states of Peninsular Malaysia' and to identify factors that promote or hinder gainful employment of people with disabilities in Malaysia.

METHOD

This quantitative study was conducted through a postal survey. Structured questionnaires were sent to about 250 private companies operating in the four Northern states of Peninsular Malaysia, in 2010. The samples were selected at random from the listing in a government website and the Yellow Pages. The queries in the questionnaires included the company background, their experience in employing people with disabilities, their perceptions toward employees with disabilities and their perceptions on barriers they have to face when employing people with disabilities. 250 questionnaires were sent out; however, the return rate was only 15.6%, which means there were only 39 respondents. While this return rate was not encouraging, it does cover employers from two of the most industrial states in the Northern region, which are Penang and Perak.

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by sectors. Majority of the respondents are from the industrial and manufacturing sectors. They make up 26 or 66.7% of the total. The retail and service sectors each contributed 5.1% (2) and 7.7% (3) to the total sample. There was only one respondent each from the construction and transportation sectors. Others include aquaculture, non-government voluntary center, advertising, sterilisation processing company and recycling.

Table 1: Type of Industries

Type of Industries	Number and Percentage
Retail	2 (5.1)
Industrial (manufacturing)	26 (66.7)
Services	3 (7.7)
Construction	1 (2.6)
Transportation	1 (2.6)
Others	6 (15.4)
Total respondents (N)	39

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employers' Profile in Relation to Recruitment

Tables 2 and 3 present the profile of employers in relation to their employment and recruitment of persons with disabilities. From among the total respondents, 20 (51.3 %) already have experience in employing persons with disabilities in their organisations. For those with such experience in recruiting people with disabilities as workers, the main mode of recruitment is by contacting related non-governmental organisations (NGOs). About 11 (28.2 %) of the respondents preferred to make contact directly with the relevant NGOs, which appeared to be a more effective method as compared to other methods such as advertising in the media. By engaging the NGOs in job recruitment, it is easier for employers to get reliable workers. NGOs representing persons with disabilities can usually identify those who are able to work, and the type of jobs that may be suitable for them.

Table 2: Employer Profile

Supports provided by Employer	Number and percentage	
	Yes	**No**
Experience in employing PwDs in Company	20 (51.3)	19 (48.7)
Organisation has some sort of policy in employment of PwDs	5 (12.8)	34 (87.2)
Organisation with individual or department to deal with PwDs employees	9 (23.1)	20 (76.9)
Organisation engages in practices to recruit applicants with disabilities	14 (35.9)	25 (64.1)
Organisation intends to employ PwDs in future	29 (74.4)	10 (25.6)
Office fully accessible to PwDs	5 (12.8)	34 (87.2)

It is encouraging to note that even though 19 (48.7 %) of the respondents have no experience in employing persons with disabilities, 29 or 74.4 % of the total respondents feel positive about employing them in future, and that 14 (35.9 %) do engage in practices to recruit applicants with disabilities. 9 (23.1%) of

the respondents also mentioned that their organisations have an individual or a department that deals with employees with disabilities. Only 12.8% (5) of the organisations have some sort of policy for the recruitment of workers with disabilities; however, the type of policy is not mentioned. Most of the organisations (76.9% or 25 industries) do not assign any department or individual to assist their workers with disabilities, or to look into their needs and their welfare. It is therefore not surprising that often employees with disabilities are not able to sustain their jobs. They are not provided with additional support and most of them, especially those with intellectual disabilities, are not able to take the pressure of long working hours. Due to pressure, either from their superiors or their peers, employees with disabilities tend to leave their jobs after a few months.

Table 3: Recruitment Method to attract Persons With Disabilities and Accessibility of the Working Built Environment.

Recruitment method	Number and Percentage
Through the mainstream media	7.7 (3)
Advertised in electronic media	10.3 (4)
Contact with the related NGOs	28.2 (11)
Recommendations from external agencies	12.8 (5)
More than 1 method used	7.7 (3)
No Information	33.3 (13)
Total Respondents (N)	**39**

Table 4 shows the relationship between the different types of industries, with several selected variables relating to persons with disabilities. It seems that except for the construction sector, most of the sectors do have some sort of experience in employing persons with disabilities. From the industries sector, 14 (53.8%) of the respondents already have some experience in employing persons with disabilities, but only 2 (7.7%) have a policy related to their employment. 6 (23.1%) from the industries sector mentioned that they have an individual or a department to handle issues relating to employees with disabilities, and 8 (30.8%) of them engaged in practices to recruit applicants with disabilities. However, most of the built environment in the industries sector is not accessible to persons with disabilities. From the feedback received, only 4 (15.4%) respondents thought that the built environment of the industries sector are accessible. From the services

sector, 2 (66.6%)) have some experience in employing persons with disabilities and also engage in practices to recruit them. However, only 1 (33.3%) of them thought that their entire built environment was accessible to persons with disabilities.

Table 4: Relationship between the different types of industries and their disability profile (%)

Type of Industries	Experienced in employing PwDs (%)	Have policy related to employing PwDs (%)	Have Department or Individual to handle issues related to PwDs (%)	Engaged in practices to recruit PwDs applicants (%)	All Places accessible to PwDs (%)	Intended to employ PwDs workers in future (%)
Retail	1 (50)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0.0	2 (100)
Industries	14 (53.8)	2 (7.7)	6 (23.1)	8 (30.8)	4 (15.4)	20 (83.3)
Services	2 (66.6)	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.6)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.6)
Construction	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1 (100)
Transportation	1 (100)	0.0	1 (100)	1 (100)	0.0	1 (100)
Others	2(33.3)	1 (16.7)	0.0	2 (33.3)	3 (50.0)	6 (100)

Table 5 describes the accessible status of the built environment for persons with disabilities, in the various sectors that participated in this survey. Only 5 (12.8%) of the industries reported that their built environment was fully accessible to persons with disabilities, whereas 14 (35.9%) of the respondents reported that the majority of the places were inaccessible. 6 (15.4%) of the respondents were not sure about the accessibility of their built environment. This shows that some of the personnel do not understand what the term 'accessibility' involves for persons with disabilities, even though the guidelines relating to accessible facilities for persons with disabilities according to the Malaysian Standard, has been available since 2002. Lack of accessible built environment and facilities is regarded as one of the factors contributing to persons with disabilities quitting their jobs. Feedback from the survey on accessibility in the working environment is not encouraging even though in Malaysia, the Uniform Building (Amendment) By Laws 34A (UBBL) 1991, stipulates that all new buildings are to be provided with access for

persons with disabilities such as ramps, step ramps, pathways, stairs, door-ways, grab bars, floor space, lifts, toilets, parking bays and alarm systems (UNESCAP, 2002). This requirement has been gazetted in all states in Peninsular Malaysia since 1996, and in some states the gazette date is much earlier. However, due to lack of political will, the issues of accessibility are not given priority, and the implementation of these regulations tends to be overlooked. Therefore it is not surprising that only 5 (12.8 %) of the respondents in this survey felt that their built environment can be fully accessed by persons with disabilities, especially those on wheelchairs. Without accessible built environment workers with disabilities, especially those on wheelchairs, cannot perform their jobs independently as they are restricted to their offices and cannot move around freely.

Table 5: Percentage of the Accessibility of the Built Environment

Accessibility of built environment for PwD	Number and percentage
All places are accessible	5 (12.8)
Majority of the places are accessible	14 (35.9)
Majority of the places are not accessible	11 (28.2)
Not sure	6 (15.4)
No Information	3 (7.7)
Total respondents (N)	39

Factors affecting the employment of persons with disabilities are usually determined by one's perceptions and attitudes towards their capabilities. This study indicates that the company-held belief of unfavourable attitudes and stereotyping is not obvious among the respondents. As shown in Table 6, the perception that it is more difficult for workers with disabilities to comprehend and follow orders, was ranked the lowest by the respondents in this survey. Most of the employers disagreed with the statement that persons with disabilities are unable to follow orders and also that employees with disabilities have to be continuously monitored. Only 15 (31.5%) of them agreed with these statements. On the perception of the ability of persons with disabilities to work, 16 (42.1%) and 18 (47.3%) of the employers were concerned about absenteeism and performance of employees with disabilities. These percentages are quite high, but overall most of them seem to have positive perceptions about the capabilities and the performance of employees with disabilities. For example, 16 (42.1%) of the respondents

felt that employees with disabilities have better attendance and punctuality records, and 18 (47.3%) of the respondents felt that the recruitment/retention of an employee with a disability, or of one who becomes disabled, has a positive effect on staff relations and morale, as shown in Table 6. Almost all respondents 35(92.2%) agreed that employers should hire anyone who meets their requirements, regardless of their disability. However, 18 (47.3 %) of the employers felt that they did not have enough resources to spend on an employee with a disability. Usually by employing persons with disabilities, especially those with physical disabilities, the built environment has to be renovated to facilitate their needs. Currently in Malaysia, those who employ persons with disabilities are given double tax relief, but some employers still feel that the costs incurred for renovations are too high.

Table: 6. Employers' Perceptions Towards the Workers wih Disabilities in the Northern States of Peninsular Malaysia

Items	Total agreed (%)
An employer should hire anyone who meets employment standards regardless of the disability	35 (92.2)
Employees with disabilities need more attention from personnel/HR staff management and supervisors	23 (60.6)
Co-workers of employees with disabilities would express concern about the provision of accommodation (office alterations, equipment and special devices) for employees with disabilities	20 (52.6)
The recruitment/retention of an employee who is or has become disabled has a positive effect on staff relations and morale	18 (47.3)
Co-workers of employees with disabilities would express concern about the work performance of employees with disabilities	18 (47.3)
Many employers do not have the resources to spend on an employee with disability	18 (47.3)
Employers are concerned about absenteeism of workers with disabilities	16 (42.1)
Employees with disabilities tend to have better attendance and punctuality records	16 (42.1)
It is somewhat more difficult to fire or terminate an employee with disability	39.5(15)
The cost of accommodating workers with disabilities is often too high to make business sense	12 (31.5)
Employers feel that they would have to continuously monitor employees with disabilities	12(31.5)
It is more difficult for workers with disabilities to comprehend and follow orders	9 (23.7)

Barriers for Employers to Employ People with Disabilities

To determine the barriers faced when employing persons with disabilities, respondents were given a Likert-scale questionnaire about their perception of barriers. From the results as shown in Table 7, most of the issues do not seem to be major barriers for most of the respondents. Factors showing a higher mean figure are cost of training (3.58) and cost of supervision (3.51). However the mean figures are still in the range of 3, which indicate that most of them are either not sure or perceive it as just a minor barrier. This finding may be due to lack of experience in dealing with employees with disabilities, as shown in Table 2. Only 20 (51%) of the respondents mentioned that they already have experience in employing persons with disabilities.

The mean result for accommodation cost (3.41) also shows that respondents are not sure whether accommodation is the main barrier in employing persons with disabilities, as the value of the mean ranges between 'not sure' and 'minor barrier'. This is quite consistent with the finding in Table 6, as only 12 (31.5%) of the respondents felt that the cost of accommodating workers with disabilities was too high. With the development of technology, the cost of accommodation should not be a problem for employing persons with disabilities. Brown (1992) found that an adaptive technology in any computer software or hardware tool can assist individuals with disabilities to be more effective in performing jobs related to daily activities. In this technological world, employees with disabilities have a number of selected technology devices to choose from, in order to enhance their work.

Table: 7. Major Barriers for Employers to Employ Persons with Disabilities in the Northern Region of Peninsular Malaysia

Items	Mean	SD
Cost of training	3.58	.919
Additional cost of supervision	3.53	1.006
Cost of accommodation	3.41	1.010
Lack of knowledge	3.24	1.051
Lack of related experience in managing disability issues	3.05	1.161
Attitudinal/stereotyping	3.03	.944
Lack of requisite skill and training	3.03	1.026

Lack of knowledge (mean 3.24) and lack of experience (mean 3.05) are also not considered major barriers in the employment of persons with disabilities. As the mean distribution is below 4, it can be assumed that most of the employers are not sure whether they have enough knowledge and experience in handling employees with disabilities. However, several findings (Scheid, 1999; Jayasooria, 1997) on the reluctance of employers to employ persons with disabilities, point to lack of knowledge and experience regarding the capabilities of persons with disabilities. This situation has arisen because employers are not aware of how to interact with persons with disabilities and understand their needs. Most of the employers were reluctant to employ persons with disabilities as they felt that they would need more attention, and their co-workers were concerned about the provision of accommodation for their colleagues with disabilities. The same situation was observed by Scheid (1999) in European countries, where he found that some of the greatest barriers against employment opportunities for persons with disabilities were created by unfavourable and stereotyping attitudes. An attitude here is defined in terms of evaluation, effect, cognition, and behavioural predisposition (Olson & Zanna, 1993). According to Scheid, individuals with disabilities who are successfully employed, have to make serious efforts to overcome negative stereotypes of their disabilities. Therefore, it is primarily the disability label and not the reality, which causes most of the difficulty for persons with disabilities (Scheid, 1999) in their working environment. Due to their limited experience, most people are unaware of what and how much persons with disabilities can do and, as a result, often believe that they cannot do much of everything. These employers' attitudes towards employees with disabilities most likely impact their responses when dealing with disability issues. The disability label is another source of concern because of its influence in shaping attitudes towards workers with disabilities. Usually successfully employed individuals with disabilities have to make serious efforts to overcome negative stereotypes of their disabilities. Several researchers also found that they possess determination to succeed in any activity despite all the difficulties they faced. If they are given the opportunity, persons with disabilities can be valuable contributors to work productivity (Ghormley, 2001; Sharma et al, 2006). This proves that persons with disabilities have achieved success over seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Lack of knowledge in managing disability issues is related to employers' lack of awareness in utilising the public and private agencies that serve persons with disabilities. They are also unsure about how to conduct the job selection process for applicants with disabilities, due to lack of awareness regarding disability

issues, lack of understanding on how to interact with persons with disabilities, and their uncertainties when confronted with disability. Lack of disability training among employees and managers is partly responsible for the lack of in-depth understanding about the abilities of workers with disabilities. Ganapathy (cited in Jayasooria, 2000) in his research identified 5 reasons for the low hiring of people with disabilities in Malaysia. These were: the absence of nation-wide registered job seekers among persons with disabilities because the government and voluntary agencies were not well coordinated, prejudice against persons with disabilities, poor access to public facilities, restricted location of employment, and reluctance of employers to modify or adapt machinery and facilities for workers with disabilities. Low educational achievements and lack of marketable training in persons with disabilities are also contributing factors.

This research indicates that there are several reasons why employers are not keen on employing persons with disabilities. One of them is the perception that by employing persons with disabilities, they need to spend more on training and supervision costs (refer to Table 7). Employers felt that they would incur high costs to train persons with disabilities to perform, and that such employees would require extra supervision. Most of these worries are due to a lack of understanding regarding the ability of persons with disabilities, and are based on the medical understanding of disability. According to those employers who already have workers with disabilities, the actual cost incurred is minimal, and it is beneficial to the company in the long run. For example, John Studer (cited in Mottl, 2001:85) who heads the People with Disabilities Task Force of Proctor & Gamble Co., maintains that accommodation costs are insignificant in comparison to the benefits returned to the employer by hiring a talented, qualified person.

Limitation of the study

The limitation of this research is the low response rate of 15.6% (39 out of 250) by the employers. Therefore, there is limited scope for generalisation. However, even though it does not provide definitive results, it does provide suggestive trends for further discussion.

CONCLUSION

The research shows that although 74.4% (29) of the organisations indicated their willingness to employ persons with disabilities, only 5 have such enabling policies, and only 9 have a department or an individual to handle issues related to

persons with disabilities. In addition, only 14 organisations engage in practices to recruit applicants with disabilities. Even though there are positive attitudes in the intention to recruit workers with disabilities, only 5 of those organisations have a built environment which is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. These results imply that if they want to fulfil their intentions of recruiting persons with disabilities, a lot has to be done to employ and sustain them in their jobs. This is supported by the fact that about 8 (47.3%) of the organisations thought that they did not have enough resources to provide facilities for their employees with disabilities.

It is important for decision-makers to increase their awareness about the abilities of persons with disabilities in the job market. Given a chance, most persons with disabilities can perform and can be as productive as other workers. The important issue is for employers to understand the cultural and the social construct of disability. When disability is understood as a social construct, the policy structure will involve integration or inclusion of people with disabilities to help in the removal of social barriers. Therefore, legislation on equity and anti-discrimination laws are important, to put persons with disabilities on an equal footing with others in all aspects of life. The laws will eliminate inequality and societal exclusion, treating disability as a human rights issue, and promote the understanding that persons with disabilities are citizens with citizenship rights whose special needs must be met by reasonable accommodation. Currently there are no anti-discrimination laws to protect persons with disabilities in Malaysia. Thus it is important for the government to implement an anti-discrimination law as soon as possible, so that the number of persons with disabilities in the job market increases. The employment opportunities for people with disabilities can also be improved through the removal of social barriers in the workplace. More research should be done on the removal of these barriers.

Future research should focus on the training of non-disabled staff in disability issues, as it is a valuable tool to bring about positive organisational changes in attitude towards employees with disabilities. The training can play a central role in the development of equal access, and probably be one of the most effective ways to improve various provisions for them. Staff training can also increase the level of user satisfaction among customers with disabilities and users of services (Playforth, 2003). Besides, disability training can instill in an organisation an approach that is holistic and cross-disciplinary, thereby easily meeting the requirement of disability legislation.

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