

DISABLED EMPLOYEES' JOB EMBEDDEDNESS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The issues of hiring and turnover among person with disability (PWD) have become an endless concern as the environment is evaluating them based on their disability per se. Generally, PWDs have to face challenges to find jobs that suits with their capability but eventually they quit from their job after struggling with it. So, the increasing trend of high turnover among disabled employees in Malaysia has given direction to this study in examining the concept of job embeddedness which conceptualized specifically the whole forces that constrain them from leaving their current employment. Study on job embeddedness among PWD is important because it will bring new insights on how managers can integrate person with disabilities at workplace. The results discovered that all dimensions of job embeddedness namely link, fit and sacrifice are important factors that ensure PWD will stay with their job. In addition, the paper found that types of disability have no specific relation with factors that influence them to stick with their job. Limitations, practical implications and directions for future research are offered.

Keywords: Person with disability, Job embeddedness, Disabled employees, Turnover, Employment

INTRODUCTION

Person with disabilities (PWDs) have been referred to people with certain biological properties (Woodhams & Danieli, 2000). Malaysian Persons with Disabilities Act, 2008 defines PWD as individuals who are diagnosed with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sense impairment which restrict them from fully and effectively participate in the community. With the total population close to 30.0 million people (*Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia*, 2014), it is estimated that between five (5) to ten (10) percent of the population are proclaimed as people with disabilities.

Based on their disabilities per se, the process of hiring and turnover among them has become an endless issue of concern in Malaysia (Adabi, 2011). This is due to the challenges in finding jobs that suit their capability. The empirical research findings showed that PWDs face difficulties in finding jobs to survive (e.g., Ellsum & Pederson, 2005; Jarhag, Nilsson & Werning, 2009; Love, Traustadottir & Rice, 2018). Overall, it can be said that employees with disability have to face challenges related to the factors of workplace and its environment which make them difficult to get a job as well as they will feel uncomfortable to embed longer with their job in the organizations.

The Malaysian government continuously prompts action towards the welfare of people with disabilities in many ways. Even though there are attempts that can be improved, this effort has marked another endless and long journey of social responsibility and the efforts made by the government (Adabi, 2011; Jayasooria, 2000). However the issues on the small number of disabled people are being hired and the employment opportunities given to the disabled in Malaysia or other countries have long been argued (Kim, 2017; Li, Roesler, Rumrill Jr, & Li, 2018; Lyth, 1973; Ta & Leng, 2013). Due to the increasing trend of high turnover among disabled employees in Malaysia as well as the costs associated with the keep on stigma of "excluding them" behavior (Islam, 2015) in the mainstream, studies on disabled employees' job embeddedness should become a concern.

Studying on disabled employees' job embeddedness will bring more benefits as it conceptualized specifically the whole forces which constrain them from leaving their current employment (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski & Erez, 2001). Studying on disabled employees' job embeddedness is important because it will bring new insights on how managers can integrate person with disabilities at workplace. Besides, disabled employees will have an opportunity to enable their real ability, have their own meaningful income to survive as well as to be more independent in life.

It is found that many studies are focusing on what makes PWD quit from their employment in Malaysia (for instance – Zahari, Yusoff, Jamaluddin & Othman, 2010; Lee, Abdullah & Mey, 2011; Ta & Leng, 2013). However, less work has been done to focus on the factors that make PWDs stay on their job. Drawing on the ideas on job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001), it is believed that examining the factors that make employee with disability to remain in the organization is very important. Many studies have been conducted based on job retention (e.g., Lee, Hom, Eberly & Li, 2018; Ma, Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018; Sekiguchi, Burton & Sablynski, 2008; Watson, 2018) however Morrow, Suzuki, Crum, Ruben, and Pautsch (2005) proposed a new direction in the future research effort where job embeddedness study should emphasize the context where alternate jobs are not available. Furthermore, Yang, Ma, and Hu (2011) have proposed to explore individual differences and situational variables in job embeddedness research. Hence, it is believed that this construct might be useful in providing the support on how employees with disability can be embedded in their job. This study will apply Mitchell et al., (2001) articulation on the construct of job embeddedness which the focus is to identify factors that attach people with their job so that they will stay longer with their employment. So, the research objective of this study is to describe details on disabled employees' job embeddedness which focusing on three job embeddedness dimensions namely link, fit and sacrifice, and to evaluate the means significance of types of disability on their job embeddedness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

Mitchell et al. (2001) have proposed the idea of what makes people stay with their job. According to Mitchell et al. (2001), job embeddedness is a concept which consists of a web of forces that keeps and retains employees with their current employment. The main idea is that people are being connected with a social web that holds them on their job based on three key aspects which are referred to as links, fit, and sacrifice respectively and are concerned with "on-the-job" and "off-the-job" experiences. On-the-job aspect focuses on the compatibility with the organization and with his or her environment while off-the-job is looking at how well he or she is comfortable with the community and surrounding environment (Holtom, Mitchell & Lee, 2006). This study is focusing on factors that make disabled employees more attach with their job. Generally, it is believed that the more connected an employee is with the social web, the more embedded he or she is.

There are three dimensions of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001) namely links, fit and sacrifice which are used in this study. Links refer to the formal or informal connections between an individual and institutions (Mitchell et al., 2001). Generally, people will have many links with various aspects of their life as well as their surroundings. Employees regardless of their ability will also find that they have many connections with their working environment which are related or unrelated to work connection. Disabled employees will need to connect with others as they need help in implementing their job. Thus, it is suggested that the more the employee has the number of thread connected with his or her organization (e.g., work groups) and the community (e.g., belonging to local interest group), the more embedded he or she will become.

Fit is the individual's perceived compatibility with an organization or environment (Mitchell et al., 2001). It is apparent that employees have their own goals to be achieved in their life (e.g., career goals, personal principles). In order to manage their career path successfully, they must ensure that they are fit with the company as well as their job. Employees will feel comfortable with the organization if they find that their personal values or goals fit with their jobs or community. In the context of disabled employees, it requires more understanding of various factors such as supervisors and colleagues to assure that they are fit with the company.

Sacrifice is defined as the material cost or psychological benefits that may be forfeited if the employees leave or change their job (Mitchell et al., 2001). These dimensions are associated with an individual's organization and community. For instance, leaving the job indicates personal losses for the employees as they will lose their perks or colleagues. Disabled employees are expected to lose more as they are usually loyal to their employers and they know that they have difficulties switching to a new job (Kim, 2017; Ta & Leng, 2013).

This research only focuses on the on-the-job side of embeddedness. It is believed that employees with high level of job embeddedness reflect more connection (links) with the organization, have better feelings of comfort with their job which suits their personal aim (fit), and consider sacrificing things with value if they leave their job (Sekiguchi et al., 2008).

Types of Disability and Job Embeddedness

In this research, type of disability is posited to influence disabled employees' job embeddedness. The influence of types of disability is in line with the assertion by Foster (2007) whereby he concerned that by virtue of their impairment, disabled people are different and require different treatment. Furthermore, there are many studies affirmed that impairment may affect an individual productivity (Jones, 2008) and one's dynamic career development (Ellsum & Pederson, 2005) due to different barriers that they had to encountered. Hence, hiring disabled people need to focus on specific attention as it can influence their life (Thanem, 2008) and their attention to stay with the company (Skelton, 2017). From these explanations, type of disability is

proposed as the factor that could influence the criterion variable as it is related to the study on employees' job embeddedness. It is expected that this factor will influence disabled employees' job embeddedness (link, fit and sacrifice). Accordingly:

H1: There is a significance means difference between types of disability with job embeddedness.

METHODOLOGY

Disabled people involved in this study were recruited from public and private sector in Malaysia by which a cross-sectional study using questionnaires was used to answer the questions pertaining to their job embeddedness. The sample of this research was drawn from all sources related such as Social Welfare Department and Labour Department. As this study involved working disabled from private and public sectors, the researcher has taken the initiative to contact appropriate ministries, departments and companies to find out PWD hired at the operational level. The departments and ministries approached and the feedback received are shown in Table 1.

A total of 536 raw data received from the private sector and 343 data received from the public sector. All the disabled lists of names received were filtered to focus on four types of disability. The respondents were chosen based on their physical disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, and speech disability only. Mentally disabled employees were not included in this research as they could not use their mind in their life and actions. Therefore, the final list which represented the final sample consisted of 406 disabled working in the private sector and 278 in the public sector.

Table1: The final list of departments and ministries approached and the feedback received

No	Ministry / Department	Feedback	Specification
1	Labour Department / State Labour Department	List of companies that are hiring disabled (Hotels, retailing, manufacturing and tourism companies).	75
		List of disabled working in private sector	351
2	Social Welfare Department (SWD)	List of disabled working in SWD	36
3	Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MOSTI)	List of disabled working in MOSTI	18
4	Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)	List of disabled working in MOHA	172
5	Ministry of Works (MOW)	List of disabled working in MOW	33
6	Universities	List of disabled working in university (UiTM, UKM, UM and USM)	17
7	State government office	List of disabled working in the state government office:	
		Pahang	12
		Johor	19
		Negeri Sembilan	7

Stratified random sampling was used in this study as it is the most efficient choice when differentiated information is needed from various sections (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Based on this understanding, each of the subgroups (types of disability) was identified and the final data was grouped according to their types of disability to gather the information from the respondent from each group from both public and private sector (Table 2). Out of the 684 questionnaires sent out, 282 were returned representing 41.2% response rate for the self-administered mail.

The research questions were tested using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 21.0. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation) were calculated for all demographic and job embeddedness data. Additionally, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test was used to examine the differences of the mean scores of type of disability and job embeddedness.

The questionnaire items used for assessing job embeddedness were based on the validated instrument developed by Mitchell et al. (2001). All job embeddedness items (fit, link, and sacrifice sub-constructs) required respondents to indicate their answers based on the seven-point Likert scale which indicated the extent of their agreement on their inducement to stay with the organization. However, all the seven original link items (JElink1, JElink2, JElink3, JElink4, JElink5, JElink6, and JElink7) were open-ended questions which respondents have to answer based on the numbers (e.g., How long have you worked for this company). Thus, all questions were changed to suit the answers by using seven-point Likert scale

Table 2: Respondent Sample Group According to Types of Disability

Sector	Types of Disability	Numbers of Respondent	Total
Public Sector	Physical Disability	243	406
	Hearing Impairment	114	
	Visual Impairment	18	
	Speech Disability	26	
	No Specific Types of Disability	5	
Private Sector	Physical Disability	173	278
	Hearing Impairment	70	
	Visual Impairment	20	
	Speech Disability	15	
	No Specific Types of Disability	-	
TOTAL			684

The changes were prepared according to Zhang, Fried, and Griffeth (2012) suggestions on link items in their work. They recommended that link items should be revised as they are not necessarily translated into higher embeddedness among employees. Further, they argued that it is not the matter of the quantity of the link but the quality which is more important which makes employee embeds to their job. The questions were changed with the idea to focus on the quality of the link between disabled employees and the people around their work. The connection with others such as colleagues and supervisors is believed to influence their embeddedness in their job as they are more socialize and become happier with the environment. Table 3 below shows the original and modified items.

Table 3: Links Items Modified

Item	Original Item	Modified Item
JElink1	How long have you been in your present position?	I have been at my present position for a long time.
JElink2	How long have you worked for this company?	I have been working for this company for a long time.
JElink3	How long have you worked in the industry?	I have been in this industry for a long time.
JElink4	How many co-workers do you interact with regularly?	I have many co-workers which I regularly interact with.
JElink5	How many coworkers are highly dependent on you?	I have many co-workers that highly dependent on me.
JElink6	How many work teams are on you?	I have many work teams that are on me.
JElink7	How many work committees are on you?	I have many work committees that are on me

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample consisted of a total of 282 disabled respondents. The majority of the respondents were male (73%) and the remaining were female (27%). More than half of the respondents (82.3%) were Malays and followed by Indians (7.8%), Chinese (6.7%) and others such as Kadazan, and Iban (3.2%). As for the types of disability, the majority of the respondents are physically disabled (66.3%). The remainder consists of hearing impairment (25.5%), visually impaired (5.3%) and speech disabled (2.8%). Almost half of the respondents (49.3%) are married while the remainder are still single (46.1%) and divorced (4.6%). Finally, the majority of the respondents are below forty (40) years old (73%) while the remainder (26.3%) are between forty one (41) to sixty (60) year and 0.4% aged more than sixty (60) years old.

Furthermore, the reliability of the construct used is assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Table 4 shows the summary of job embeddedness reliability. It was found that the Cronbach's alpha for job embeddedness subconstructs exceeded the benchmark of 0.65 (Piaw, 2009).

Table 4: Summary of Job Embeddedness Reliability

Construct	Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Link	JElto1	0.921
	JElto2	
	JElto3	
	JElto4	
	JElto5	
Fit	JEfit1	0.908
	JEfit2	
	JEfit3	
	JEfit4	
Sacrifice	JEsac3	0.912
	JEsac4	
	JEsac5	
	JEsac6	

Table 5 shows the means and standard deviations of job embeddedness subconstructs (link, fit and sacrifice). It is found that most respondents were highly prone to job embeddedness constructs as indicated by the mean and standard deviation values. All values were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale. It is found that all constructs counted high mean (Link – 5.877, Fit – 5.746 and Sacrifice – 5.729) followed by low standard deviation. Generally, it shows that most respondents strongly agreed on their willingness to be job embedded.

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviation for Job Embeddedness

		MeanFit	MeanSac	MeanLink
N	Valid	282	282	282
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		5.7456	5.7299	5.8773
Std. Deviation		.58767	.55011	.51246

Table 6 illustrates that H1a (link), H1b (fit) and H1c (sacrifice) are not statistically significant with $\beta = .116$ (link), $\beta = .513$ (fit) and $\beta = .111$ (sacrifice) respectively. Results of the means scores for job embeddedness show no significant mean difference between types of disability and their job embeddedness. Therefore, it shows no support to H1 which posited that there is significance means difference between types of disability with their job embeddedness.

Table 6: Summary of ANOVA Results for Job Embeddedness Constructs

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Results
LINK						
Between Groups	1.551	3	.517	1.989	.116	Not Supported
Within Groups	72.244	278	.260			
Total	73.795	281				
FIT						
Between Groups	.797	3	.266	.767	.513	Not Supported
Within Groups	96.249	278	.346			
Total	97.046	281				
SACRIFICE						
Between Groups	1.816	3	.605	2.023	.111	Not Supported
Within Groups	83.220	278	.299			
Total	85.036	281				

Examining disabled employees' job embeddedness is very crucial to understand on their retention behavior towards their job. Yet, it is also very important as it has become one of the government agendas to have more PWD in public and private sector in Malaysia. Although studies regarding the outcomes of job embeddedness are evolving in the literature especially in the western context, the assumption cannot be generalized to other regions of the world particularly Malaysia, especially the disabled employees as focused in this research. In addition, there is little evidence on the employment of disabled people in Malaysia (Furuoka, Lim, Pazim & Mahmud, 2011; Hwa, 2012; Lee et al., 2011). Inspired by their work, this research verified the concept of job embeddedness among disabled employees across the private and public sectors in Malaysia despite the small number of disabled in employment (Khor, 2010; Zahari et al., 2010).

Based on these findings, it is found that all job embeddedness constructs namely link, fit and sacrifice plays very important factors that make them embed with their job. Basically, disabled people are found to be loyal to their work (Skelton, 2017; Ta & Leng, 2013). This is based on the fact that having a job is really a privileged for them as their chances to get a job is very slim. Besides, switching job is not easy for them. These reasons have make sense on why all job embeddedness constructs are very important to them.

Duckett (2000) firmly mentioned that to improve the disabled employment decision, it must start by fixing "people" rather than "places". While Coetzer, Inma, Poisat, Redmond and Standing (2018) proposed that managers should adapt their leadership with suitable strategies that can positively influence disabled employees' job embeddedness. So, it is hoped that these findings will contribute to the development of starting a better perception towards employees with disability in a work setting as well as finding factors which will make them stay longer with their job.

CONCLUSION

While this research makes a contribution to the body of knowledge of disabled job embeddedness, it is not without limitations. Firstly, this research involved employees with disability who were the respondents in this study. They were selected from different kinds of disabilities namely sight impairment, hearing impairment, speech impairment and physical impairment except for learning disability and mental disability. This is based on the assumption that it is very important to look at their abilities and not their disabilities (Kim, 2017; Stone & Colella, 1996). However, due to the scope of study of this research, employees with mental and learning disability were excluded as their disabilities have caused difficulties for them to use their mind in getting through their life and limit their ability to get involved in the society. Furthermore, the job embeddedness scale applied was originally designed using two sub-dimensions namely on-the-job (organization) and off-the-job (community) (Mitchell et al., 2001). However, this study limited its range by applying the on-the-job sub-construct only. This is based on the scope that focused on the factors inside the organization that influence the disabled employees' job embeddedness. Although this decision was theoretically and statistically supported, it would be useful for future research to apply this research using all items from both sub-dimensions (on-the-job and off-the-job) of job embeddedness to investigate wider factors that will influence the disabled employees' retention as well as their life satisfaction (Ampofo & Coetzer, 2018).

This research could benefit in providing the starting idea in investigating further the disabled job embeddedness in this country. The findings are expected to help some organizations in dealing with their disabled employees more effectively in order to make them stay longer in their jobs. Therefore, understanding job embeddedness among disabled employees is highly recommended and it could be a valued research to explore in the future.

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