

## A Review Paper on the Definition of 'Disability and Employment'

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### Abstract

This review paper focus on one particular group of people; people with disabilities, that is to say people with mental disabilities. Due to the expected decline in the working-age population, especially in European countries, people with disabilities are now often recognized as a valuable resource in the workforce and research into disability and employment is more important than ever. The definition of disability is referring to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) of the World Health Organization, by that recognizing that disability results from the interaction of person and environment. Key issues, including the complexity of defining disability, the legal situation in Europe and North America concerning disability at work, and barriers and enablers to employment, are discussed. For each of the topics we show important findings in the existing literature and indicate where more in-depth research is needed. We finalize with a concrete research agenda on disability and employment and provide recommendations for practice.

**Keywords:** Disability, Employment, Health, Rehabilitation, Mental Disorder

### Introduction

According to the article U.N. Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UNGA, 2006). The World Health Organization (WHO) (2019) reports, about 15% of the world's population have a disability. Some would not agree that this is a low estimate given the various ways in which disability is defined across countries. For this reasons, according to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) of the World Health Organization (WHO) (2019), attribute to disability as a complex concept with multiple dimensions. Thus, when talking about people with disabilities, we recognize that people can be disables by environmental factors as well as by their bodies, stressing that disability is not equal to the medical concept of body or functional impairment but refers to the interaction of person and

environment. Persons with disabilities are an underemployed group of the workforce in terms of employment and participation on the labour market (Villotti et al., 2018). Moreover, high unemployment among people with disabilities coexists with shortages in distinct sectors on the labour market especially in European countries due to demographic changes and the retirement of the baby-boom generation.

### **Description and Measurement of Disability**

The description and measurement of work disability is an important new topic in work and organizational psychological research. The tool is proposed to be used as standard tool for the objective assessment of work ability in rehabilitation medicine in Germany and for socio-medical judgements in Switzerland (Marelli, 2012). Based on the social phobic symptomatology, the employee may be able to work and even achieve good potential in an office setting without the need to initiate contact with clients. Next, new approaches to advance the actual integration at work have been developed to assess disability. Some of the vocational and rehabilitation services and programmes have been implemented on a national and international level in couple of years ago.

### **Legislation**

Besides that, many European countries take a step forward in the integration of people with disabilities and aim to create an inclusive labour market. An inclusive labour market can be defined as a labour market which is everyone can participate regardless of any form of disability, including disadvantaged and low productive worker who contribute to the best of their abilities (Edzes, Rijnks, & Van Dijk, 2013). The biggest challenge the policy had faced is to prevent social exclusion on the labour market for low productive workers due to mental or physical disabilities (OECD, 2010).

### **Barriers and Enablers to Employment**

We recognized the barriers and risk factors associated with mental ill-health at work and enablers to employment. There are two barriers and enablers of the same story and determine each other. For this reason, an employer might have had negative associations with the employment of workers with disabilities. The employer's attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities can either represent a barrier or an enabler. They still face significant barriers in the area of employment to offer employment support and opportunities to individuals with disabilities (Prince, 2010). There are several ways to look at those barriers. One of the ways is to categorize barriers within the environment. However, characteristics of a person interact with the environment making systematization difficult. Next, to classify barriers is to look at different stages of the integration process. For instance, applicants disclosing their disability in their application documents were invited less frequently to job interviews than applicants with a similar profile but without a disability (Schrader, Malzer and Bruyere, 2014). Further, barriers that hamper a person to perform at a maximum level at work play a pivotal role for the success of an integration process. There is no uniform approach to classify barriers and define clear categories.

### **Attitudes towards Workers with Disabilities**

Then, several studies that investigate the attitudes of the general population towards people with disabilities report that people often feel a high degree of social distance towards people with disabilities (Mathias et al., 2018). The perception of a social distance can be seen that

into a biased view about the capacities of employees with disabilities in a way that disabilities person was perceived as helpless, having no capacities to develop (Prins, 2013) and being unable to effect a similar level of performances as their colleagues. This is the biggest concerns of employees in an organization. Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities are often accompanied by a misunderstanding of disability like distrust and fear of co-workers or managers concerning the disability. Individual with mental disorder are able to face mistrust and belong to one of the stigmatized groups in our society. This is because their disability is invisible and their skills and handicaps not immediately ascertainable. People with mental disorders are known as being dangerous, deviant, and aggressive, which evokes fear and irritation in others (Follmer & Jones, 2018).

### **Job Requirements**

The job requirements are also important. The job can constitute a barrier towards the successful integration of workers with mental disorder. For example, some barriers are working for a long timing, work overload, work pressure and effects of these factors on personal lives. Work demands have expended in recent years and making access to labour participation increasingly difficult for disabilities people. Employees with disabilities report bureaucratic and complain about confusing plurality of funding agencies and contact persons with indistinct responsibilities (Eurofound, 2016).

### **Conclusion**

Disability and employment is something general that everyone should know. There are two things that we should be concern which is work and organization psychologists. Both of that have to push forward in order to support the workplace inclusion of people with disabilities. Understanding is not enough to disabilities people but we also need to take new perspectives to make a contribution to the field. We should participate in any program about disability. Then, we have to be known the situation of people with mental disorder and the impact of the disorder on functionality and work capacity. The policy must respond more efficiently to the demands of the labour market inclusion of people with mental disorders. We hope that the welfare of disable person in the workplace is guaranteed.

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