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Research Article

Opening Doors: Employer Perspectives on Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in Tangub City

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how selected merchandising businesses in Tangub City view employment opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs). It specifically described the applicant characteristics and competencies that employers consider and measured reported organizational commitment to PWD recruitment and employers' disposition toward hiring PWDs. A descriptive-quantitative approach was used with 258 business owners, managers, and human resource practitioners. The researchers used a structured questionnaire adapted and modified from Saquin (2023) and Omar et al. (2021). Frequencies and percentages were used for applicant characteristics, while means and standard deviations were used for the employment-opportunity indicators. The responses showed that applicants aged 28–37 were most frequently considered, while applicants aged 58 and above were least selected. Male and female applicants were considered at nearly the same rate, and Senior High School graduates were the most frequently identified educational group. Hearing impairment was the disability type most often selected. Communication skills and computer application skills were the most frequently identified soft and hard skills, respectively. Employer commitment to PWD recruitment obtained a grand mean of 3.32, while disposition toward hiring PWDs obtained a grand mean of 3.28, both interpreted as Strongly Agree/Very High under the study's scale. These findings describe the views and reported organizational orientations of employers; they do not measure actual PWD employment rates or the experiences of PWD employees. The results point to the need to strengthen formal hiring procedures, workplace support, and employer partnerships so that positive views can be reflected in sustained employment opportunities.

Keywords: *Employer Commitment*, *Employment Opportunities*, *Inclusive Hiring*, *Merchandising Businesses*, *Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)*

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Introduction

Access to decent work is closely connected with participation in economic and community life. For persons with disabilities (PWDs), employment can provide income, independence, social participation, and opportunities to contribute their skills. Merchandising businesses are a useful setting for examining this issue because they offer different types of work that may accommodate varied abilities and competencies. In the Philippines, the employment rights of PWDs are recognized in Republic Act No. 7277, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, and Republic Act No. 10524, which promotes employment opportunities for PWDs.

Legal protection does not automatically remove the practical barriers that may affect hiring. The researchers' initial observations in Tangub City pointed to uncertainty among some business owners regarding legal responsibilities, reasonable accommodations, and the ability of PWD applicants to meet particular job demands. Previous literature also identifies recruitment bias, accessibility concerns, workplace accommodations, and career development as issues that can influence disability inclusion. These concerns provided the basis for examining what employers in selected merchandising businesses consider when they evaluate PWD applicants and how they describe their own commitment and disposition toward hiring them.

The study was intentionally employer-centered. Its respondents were business owners, managers, and human resource practitioners who could provide information about hiring practices. Thus, the results should be understood as reported employer perspectives rather than direct evidence of PWD employees' experiences, actual hiring rates, job retention, or workplace outcomes. Within this boundary, the study sought to provide local evidence that may help businesses, educational institutions, and community stakeholders discuss practical approaches to inclusive employment.

Literature Review

The Human Capital Theory of Becker (1964) offers a basis for examining the qualifications and competencies employers associate with employability. From this perspective, education, skills, and experience represent forms of human capital that may affect how employers assess an applicant's potential contribution. Galiakberova (2019) likewise emphasizes the economic value of education and skills. In this study, educational attainment and the soft and hard skills identified by respondents were treated as indicators of the competencies considered in employer assessment.

The study also draws on Social Role Valorization, associated with Wolfensberger, which emphasizes the value of socially recognized roles, including employment and productive participation. Employment can contribute to social inclusion by providing individuals with a meaningful role in the community. In organizational settings, this perspective is relevant to disability-inclusion practices because the conditions created by employers can influence whether PWDs are able to participate in work on equitable terms. Bezyak et al. (2020) similarly examined organizational strategies associated with disability inclusion.

The literature reviewed for the study also points to the importance of both interpersonal and technical competencies. Lyu and Liu (2021) distinguish soft and hard skills in relation to labor-market requirements, while Poláková et al. (2023) discuss the continuing importance of soft skills in changing work environments. In disability employment research, Saquin (2023) examined employment opportunities for PWDs across major industries, while Omar et al. (2021) focused on employer readiness, commitment, and disposition. These works provided a basis for the questionnaire domains used in the present study.

Employer decisions may also be shaped by organizational and environmental conditions. Österlund (2020) discusses unconscious bias in recruitment, while Gupta and Priyadarshi (2020) identify continuing challenges in the career development of persons with disabilities. Ashril et al. (2024) highlights the importance of accessibility and support. Taken together, these studies suggest that inclusive employment involves more than an applicant's qualifications; it also depends on the organization's readiness to provide fair treatment, appropriate support, and accessible working conditions.

Methods

Research Design

A descriptive-quantitative design was selected because the study aimed to summarize employer responses rather than establish causal relationships. The design allowed the researchers to describe the applicant characteristics and competencies most frequently considered by respondents and to determine the level of reported organizational commitment and disposition toward PWD hiring. The approach therefore matched the study's purpose of presenting a local employer perspective using numerical summaries.

Research Participants and Setting

The study was carried out in Tangub City, Misamis Occidental. The source manuscript identified 779 registered merchandising businesses in the area, from which 258 respondents were included based on the reported sample-size computation. Participants were business owners, managers, or human resource practitioners who were familiar with their organization's recruitment or employment practices. The respondents were selected from the business sector covered by the study. Importantly, PWD applicants and employees were not direct respondents; consequently, the study cannot be used to describe their personal experiences or verify actual employment outcomes.

Research Instrument and Data Gathering

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire adapted and modified from the instruments of Saquin (2023) and Omar et al. (2021). The questionnaire covered two broad areas. The first asked respondents to identify applicant characteristics and competencies considered in relation to PWD employment, including age, sex, educational attainment, disability type, soft skills, and hard skills. The second measured reported employment opportunities through statements concerning organizational commitment to PWD recruitment and disposition toward hiring PWDs. The source manuscript reports that the instrument underwent pilot testing with participants similar to the target respondents and that Cronbach's alpha was used to examine internal consistency. Permission was secured before data collection, participants were informed about the study, and responses were treated confidentially.

Data Analysis

The researchers summarized categorical responses through frequency counts and percentages. For the statements measuring organizational commitment and disposition, mean scores and standard deviations were used. The four-point scale applied in the source study classified scores of 3.26–4.00 as Strongly Agree/Very High, 2.51–3.25 as Agree/High, 1.76–2.50 as Disagree/Low, and 1.00–1.75 as Strongly Disagree/Very Low. These procedures were used to present the pattern of employer responses in a straightforward descriptive form.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical practice was considered throughout the data-gathering process. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the research and were asked for their consent before participating. The researchers maintained confidentiality and avoided presenting responses in a way that could identify individual participants or businesses. Care was also taken to report the findings within the limits of the data and to avoid treating employer-reported perceptions as direct evidence of PWD employment outcomes.

Results and Discussion

The findings are organized around the characteristics employers considered in PWD applicants, followed by their reported organizational commitment and disposition toward hiring. Since the respondents were employers or business representatives, the results represent their reported selections and views. They should not be interpreted as a measure of how PWD applicants or employees themselves experience recruitment, employment, workplace inclusion, or career progression.

Table 1. Applicant Characteristics Considered by Employers

Variable	Most Frequently Considered	n	Percent
Age	28–37 years	82	31.78%
Sex	Female	134	51.94%
Educational attainment	Senior High School graduates	58	22.48%
Disability type	Hearing impairment	104	40.31%
Soft skill	Communication skills	174	67.44%
Hard skill	Computer application skills	164	63.57%

The pattern in Table 1 shows that employer consideration differed across applicant characteristics. The 28–37 age group was selected most often, with 82 respondents (31.78%), while the 58-and-above group was selected least often at 18 respondents (6.98%). Female applicants were selected by 134 respondents (51.94%), compared with 124 (48.06%) for male applicants, indicating only a modest difference in the reported selections. Senior High School graduates were the most frequently identified educational attainment, with 58 responses (22.48%).

For disability type, hearing impairment received the highest number of selections at 104 (40.31%), whereas learning impairment received the lowest at 54 (20.93%). This variation suggests that respondents did not view all disability categories in the same way when considering employment. The difference may be relevant to the concerns identified in the literature regarding perceived capability, accessibility, workplace readiness, and employer preparation (Omar et al., 2021; Saquin, 2023). The result also indicates an area for further inquiry because the study did not ask respondents to explain why particular disability types were selected more frequently.

Communication skills were identified most often among the soft skills, with 174 respondents (67.44%), while leadership was selected least often at 82 (31.78%). Among hard skills, computer application skills led with 164 responses (63.57%), whereas working linguistic skills had the fewest selections at 72 (27.91%). The responses place considerable emphasis on communication and practical digital competencies. This pattern is consistent with literature describing the value of interpersonal and technical skills in contemporary employment settings (Lyu & Liu, 2021; Poláková et al., 2023).

Table 2. Employers' Commitment to PWD Recruitment

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Fair knowledge management for employees with or without disabilities	3.51	Strongly Agree
Organization is not hesitant about having PWDs work in the company	3.44	Strongly Agree
Organization does not lack effort in hiring PWDs	3.47	Strongly Agree
Hiring PWDs has become an organizational practice	3.10	Agree
Fair and equal opportunity for PWDs	3.41	Strongly Agree
Safe and inclusive working environment	3.14	Agree
Company goals and mission include employing PWDs	3.28	Strongly Agree
Employees exercise positive values and attitudes toward PWDs	3.25	Agree
Employees celebrate differences of PWDs	3.29	Strongly Agree
Positive environment integrating employees with/without disability	3.31	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	3.32	Strongly Agree / Very High

The commitment indicators produced a grand mean of 3.32, interpreted as Strongly Agree/Very High. The highest mean was recorded for fair knowledge management for employees with or without disabilities (3.51). The lowest mean, although still interpreted as Agree, was 3.10 for the statement that hiring PWDs had become an organizational practice. This difference is important because it shows that respondents expressed strong support for fairness and inclusion, while the formalization of PWD hiring as a routine organizational practice was comparatively less pronounced. The findings therefore suggest a distinction between favorable organizational orientation and the extent to which inclusive hiring has been institutionalized.

The result is consistent with the focus of Omar et al. (2021) on employer readiness and commitment and with Miethlich's (2022) discussion of organizational approaches that support employment. Bezyak et al. (2020) likewise examined disability-inclusion strategies in relation to workplace practices. In the present study, the relatively lower score for established hiring practice is worth noting because it identifies a concrete organizational area that may require further development even when general commitment is reported as strong.

Table 3. Employers' Disposition Toward Hiring PWDs

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Organization will hire PWDs for employment	3.35	Strongly Agree
PWDs have the right to request employment	3.14	Agree
PWDs should receive appropriate workplace privileges/accommodations	3.11	Agree
Confidence in giving job responsibility to PWDs	3.06	Agree
Readiness to remodel workplace for PWD needs	3.19	Agree
PWD work performance can be similar to other employees	3.40	Strongly Agree
PWD employees should not be paid less	3.34	Strongly Agree
Hiring PWDs will not become a burden to other employees	3.40	Strongly Agree
Responsibility to hire and supervise PWDs	3.37	Strongly Agree
Organization does not discriminate against PWD involvement	3.41	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	3.28	Strongly Agree / Very High

The disposition scale produced a table-level grand mean of 3.28, which falls under Strongly Agree/Very High in the study's interpretation. The highest-rated statement was that the organization does not discriminate against PWD involvement in employment (3.41). The lowest was confidence in giving job responsibility to PWDs (3.06), although this remained within the Agree range. Other relatively lower indicators concerned workplace accommodations and readiness to remodel the workplace. The pattern suggests that respondents expressed broad support for equal treatment while showing somewhat less confidence in specific operational aspects of employing PWDs.

These results can be considered alongside Omar et al. (2021), who examined employer disposition toward PWD employment, and Bezyak et al. (2020), who linked disability-inclusion strategies with hiring intentions. Sampana and Dela Cruz (2020) also discuss disability inclusion as part of workforce diversification. The present study contributes a local descriptive account from selected merchandising businesses in Tangub City. Because the study measured reported perceptions, however, the findings should not be taken as evidence that all businesses have already implemented the practices described by respondents.

Overall Findings

Across the major indicators, respondents reported a generally supportive orientation toward PWD employment. Both organizational

commitment and disposition toward hiring were classified as very high based on the study's four-point interpretation scale. At the same time, the applicant-characteristic results show that employers did not select all age groups, disability types, educational levels, or competencies at the same frequency. Communication and computer application skills were the most frequently selected competencies. Within the organizational measures, formalized PWD hiring practice and confidence in assigning job responsibilities received comparatively lower scores than several other indicators.

The scope of these findings is important. The analysis covers 258 employers or business representatives from selected merchandising businesses in Tangub City. It does not establish the proportion of PWDs actually employed, the duration of their employment, their workplace experiences, or the reasons behind individual hiring decisions. Neither does it demonstrate that the reported attitudes produce actual inclusive employment outcomes. The results should therefore be read as evidence of reported employer perspectives and organizational orientations within the study setting.

Conclusion

The study found that selected merchandising businesses in Tangub City reported strong commitment to PWD recruitment and a favorable disposition toward hiring PWDs. Applicants aged 28–37 were most frequently considered, male and female applicants were selected at nearly equal rates, and Senior High School graduates were the most frequently identified educational group. Hearing impairment was the disability type most frequently selected, while communication and computer application skills were the most frequently identified soft and hard skills.

The organizational findings were generally positive, particularly on fairness, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and willingness to hire. At the same time, lower scores for the institutionalization of PWD hiring and confidence in assigning job responsibilities indicate areas that may need additional attention. The conclusion is limited to the employer perspective represented in the sample. It does not claim that PWD employment outcomes in Tangub City are already high or that the workplace experiences of PWD employees are necessarily positive. Rather, the findings indicate that favorable employer attitudes provide a basis for further strengthening recruitment procedures, workplace accommodations, and sustained support.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the limits of the study, the following recommendations are offered: (1) merchandising business owners and employers may translate their stated commitment into written inclusive recruitment, onboarding, training, and workplace-support procedures; (2) human resource personnel may strengthen fair screening and interview processes and consider reasonable, disability-responsive adjustments when evaluating applicants; (3) local government units, support organizations, and job-placement programs may improve referral and matching mechanisms between PWD job seekers and employers; (4) Tangub City Global College may build stronger linkages with local businesses for internships, work exposure, and employment pathways for PWD students; and (5) future researchers may examine actual hiring and retention outcomes, workplace experiences of PWD employees, and the effectiveness of specific inclusion interventions in other industries and locations.

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