

# **FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE READINESS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY: HOTEL INDUSTRY IN KOTA KINABALU, SABAH, MALAYSIA**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

More than a billion people in the world are estimated to live with some sort of disability. This corresponds to about 15% of the world's population (World Health Organization, 2020). The numbers are also increasing due to the aging population and chronic health conditions. According to the World Health Organization, there was an unstated presumption that employers would not hire people with disabilities if quotas were not in place because of lower productivity, increased costs of labour such as accommodations and facilities, and even discrimination against people with disabilities. According to the study made by Leng and Ta (2013), the presence of bias and misunderstandings among the public about the disabled individuals' capacity to execute and finish the duties assigned to them causes them to remain jobless. With a particular emphasis on the hospitality sector, human resource professionals have the same reservations about hiring people with disabilities because they believe that disabled people are unable to perform the tasks assigned to them and that providing accommodations for this group will cost a lot of money. Khoo et. al (2013) found that most businesses in the restaurant and hotel industries were reluctant to recruit handicapped or disabled individuals because of the additional costs that they would have to incur to accommodate them. Besides, Hui, Tsui, and Tavitiyaman (2020) mentioned that disabled people were emotionally unstable at work, slowed in doing their job, had uncertain performances, and received too many complaints from the customers which resulted in a lower impression of the hotel. This is being supported by study previous study whereby Barber, Madera, and Taylor (2019) mentioned that services given by disabled people were rated lower specifically on their competencies than services given by non-disabled people. Lacking in terms of necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics mainly resulted in the lack of employment among disabled people as contact between customers and workers is very crucial in the hospitality industry. In addition to that, failure to recognise and take advantage of government incentives may also contribute to the low employment rates among persons with disabilities, which is still a significant problem. Hence, the purposes of this study are to determine to what extent barrier-free environment and facilities, disability awareness training, and incentives introduced by the Malaysian Government affected the hospitality's Human Resource Management decision in employing people with disabilities.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

As a quantitative study, this research used the Simple Random Sampling Method. In determining the sample size, the researcher used Roscoe (1975) where the appropriate sample

size would be larger than 30 and less than 500; where a minimum of 30 sample size for each category would be necessary if the sample were to be broken into sub-sample. Hence, a total of 80 respondents were chosen randomly to reflect the population of Human Resources working in hotels. Questionnaires were distributed to every hotel in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Each questionnaire has three parts; Part A - Background of the Hotel, Part B - How Important Are the Following Reasons in Affecting the Readiness of Human Resource Management in Employing People with Disability, and Part C - Readiness of Human Resource Management in Employing People with Disability. Data collected were then analysed using descriptive analysis and Spearman correlation using Statistic Package for the Social Science (SPSS), version 26.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Demographic Characteristics

A total of 80 respondents from 80 different hotels participated in the study. Out of the total, the highest respondent was female i.e., 41 (51.2%), followed by male i.e., 39 (48.8%). Most of the hotels had been operating for 6 years to 10 years. Out of 80 hotels, only two hotels had been operating for less than 12 months. Looking at the availability of disabled workers who worked at the hotels, more than half of the hotels did not employ any disabled i.e., 71.3%.

#### 3.2 Inferential Analysis

**Objective 1:** To determine whether accommodation and free-barrier facilities affect the readiness of Human Resource Management in employing people with disabilities.

**Table 1: The Spearman Correlation Matrix between Accommodation & Free-Barrier Facilities and Readiness of Human Resource Management in Employing People with Disability**

	Mean	1	2
<b>Readiness</b>	2.8125	1	
<b>Accommodation &amp; Free-Barrier facilities</b>	2.7350	0.553	1

The test shows that, statistically, there was a significant correlation between accommodation & free-barrier facilities and the readiness of human resources as the p-value is 0.01. Thus, it can be inferred that there was enough evidence indicating a significant correlation between accommodation & free-barrier facilities and the readiness of human resource management in employing people with disabilities as the p-value was below 0.05. Meanwhile, the relationship was moderately positive as the value was 0.553

**Objective 2:** To analyse whether disability awareness training availability does affect the Human Resources Management decision in employing people with disabilities.

**Table 2: The Spearman Correlation Matrix between Disability Awareness Training and Readiness of Human Resource Management in Employing People with Disability**

	Mean	1	2
Readiness	2.7875	1	
Disability Awareness Training	2.8250	0.918	1

The test shows, statistically, there was a significant correlation between disability awareness training and the readiness of human resources as the p-value was 0.01. Thus, there was enough evidence to conclude that there was a significant correlation between training and the readiness of human resource management in employing people with disabilities as the p-value was below 0.05. Meanwhile, the relationship was strongly positive as the value was 0.918.

**Objective 3:** To identify whether there is a correlation between incentives introduced by the Malaysian Government and Human Resource Management's decision in employing people with disabilities.

**Table 3: The Spearman Correlation Matrix between Government Incentives and Readiness of Human Resource Management in Employing People with Disability**

	Mean	1	2
Readiness	2.7875	1	
Government Incentives	2.8125	0.626	1

The test shows that there was a statistically significant correlation between government incentives and the readiness of human resources as the p-value was 0.01. Thus, there was enough evidence to conclude that there was a significant correlation between training and readiness of human resource management in employing people with disabilities as the p-value was below 0.05. Meanwhile, the relationship is strongly positive as the value was 0.626. Based on the findings, accommodation and free-barrier facilities did affect the readiness of human resource management in employing people with disabilities as the result indicates that there was a significant correlation between training and human resource readiness. This finding supports that of Lengnick-Hall et al. (2003) who found that that disability-friendly accommodation helped to increase the knowledge and sensitivity of the employers so that they were able to understand the concept of diverse work in general especially when it came to disabled co-workers. Similarly, Anand and Sevak (2017) stated that accommodations and facilities in the workplace were able to reduce the employment barriers faced by disabled workers while improving the employability among people with disabilities. Apart from that, disability awareness training also affected the readiness of human resource management in employing people with disabilities. Much in the same vein, the finding of this research echoed that of Takeuchi (2017) who found that staff training was the most essential part of Human Resources Management, and it was a perfect way to assisting employees to make the best use of their abilities regardless of their health condition. Besides, Daniel (2017) also mentioned that having disability awareness training was important as it allowed the organization to take lead on the issue of harmonious, collaborative, and non-discriminatory towards disabled people. Having said that, it is important to highlight the fact that disabled workers depend heavily on disability-friendly facilities and accommodations that are

available in the workplace. Lastly, the findings also show that incentives introduced by the Malaysian Government did affect the readiness of human resource management in employing people with disabilities. The Department for Work and Pension once mentioned that financial incentives introduced by the government did increase the motivation of the employees in applying for a job and at the same time increased the morale of the employers in hiring people with disabilities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research suggest that disability awareness training, free-barrier facilities accommodation, and government incentives were the key factors needed in increasing the readiness of human resource management in employing people with disabilities to work in the hotel industry. Based on the findings, it is recommended that employers should actively take part in disability awareness training to reduce stereotypes and discrimination against disabled people. A job coach also needs to be empowered especially in giving more in-house training to both disabled and non-disabled people.

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