Oral Communication
OC-349

Developing and Validating the Employer Perception on Disability Employment (EPDE) Scale: Assessing Key Factors Influencing Employer Willingness to Hire Persons With Disabilities

Topic: Disability Studies

Florence Blasius[1], Fatimah Ahmedy[2], Muhammad Aklil Abd Rahim[3]

[1]*Sabah State Office, Perkeso, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia*
[2]*Rehabilitation Medicine Unit, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia*
[3]*Department of Public Health Medicine, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia*

BACKGROUND

The inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in the workforce is essential for promoting social equity and driving economic growth. However, despite various policies and initiatives, the employment rate of PWD remains disproportionately low, primarily due to employer biases, organizational challenges and systemic barriers. Many employers lack awareness, resources or incentives to hire and integrate PWD into their workforce. Addressing these challenges requires a structured assessment tool to understand employer perspectives and identify areas for intervention. This study introduces a newly developed questionnaire, the Employer Perception on Disability Employment (EPDE) Scale, a validated instrument designed to assess key factors influencing employer willingness to hire PWD, with a specific focus on Malaysia. The scale aims to provide insights into employer attitudes, organizational readiness and the impact of regulatory frameworks to support inclusive employment policies and workforce integration.

METHODS

The EPDE Scale evaluates three core dimensions influencing PWD employment. The PWD attributes and capabilities (PWD Factor) assesses employer perceptions of PWD skills, productivity and workplace adaptability. The employer perceptions and organizational readiness (Employer Factor) examines workplace policies, inclusivity culture and perceived challenges in accommodating PWD. The regulatory frameworks (Regulatory Factor) evaluates the influence of laws, incentives and compliance requirements on employer decision-making. The scale underwent a multi-phase validation process including expert consultations, Delphi content validation and pilot testing. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) confirmed a three-factor structure, accounting for 82.52% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from 0.54 to 0.85. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha, yielding 0.992 for the overall scale, with subscale values of 0.977 (PWD Factor), 0.986 (Employer Factor) and 0.977 (Regulatory Factor).

RESULTS

The final 53-item EPDE Scale is a reliable and comprehensive instrument for evaluating employer attitudes toward PWD hiring. By identifying barriers and facilitators, this tool can inform policy interventions, workforce development strategies and organizational initiatives. Its findings can support targeted efforts to enhance PWD workforce participation, ultimately contributing to inclusive employment practices and fostering a more equitable labor market.

CONCLUSION

The EPDE Scale advances the assessment of employer willingness to hire PWD. With exceptional reliability and strong construct validity, it serves as a robust, empirically validated tool, supporting inclusive employment policies, workforce research and disability inclusion initiatives.

Statement of Disclosures

None

Doi: 10.5606/archisprm.2026.OC-349

Corresponding Author:
Florence Blasius
Sabah State Office, Perkeso, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
Email: florenceblasius@gmail.com