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EFFECT OF STEREOTYPE ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

All over the world, reports from different organizations say that people living with disabilities (PLWDs) are underemployed. In Kenya besides many organizations lobbying for the increased employment of PLWDs, amplified by the constitution that at least 5% elective positions must be spared for (PLWDs) there is lower rate of employment. For example the entire cabinet and parastatal secretaries of about twenty six people only one is disabled. The empirical review has pointed out that education has affected negatively on people with disability employment; the employer stereotype also has made it difficult for PLWDs to attain jobs. The literature revealed that the organizational culture is of dare consequences as it may work against the advantage of the disabled, also inaccessibility inhibit Disabled employees from accessing organizational facilities. The employer perception in the literature shows that employers view people living with disabilities as costly. The objective of the study investigated the challenges facing employment opportunities for PLWDs while the specific objectives investigated; the effect of education on employment opportunities for People Living With Disability, to find out the effect of organizational culture on employment opportunities for People Living With Disability, to investigate the effect of employer stereotype on employment opportunities for People Living With Disability, and to investigate the effect of employer perception on employment opportunities for People Living With Disability. The target population was all People Living with Disability employees in selected Universities in Kenya and associations of People Living with Disabilities in Kenya. The sample size was all employees living with Disabilities and all members of the association of People Living with Disabilities in Murang'a County. The findings were presented in tabular form. Both Descriptive statistics i.e. mean standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and inferential statistics i.e. Correlation, Regression, ANOVA models were used to analyze the findings. The findings showed that People Living with Disabilities do not secure employment opportunities due to: lack of required Skills; lack of available accessible organizational facilities; stringent organizational culture; negative employee stereotype; and negative employer perception towards employees. The study recommended that for people living with disabilities to increase their employment opportunities, their educational level, working experience have to be enhanced. The organizational facilities have to be made available and accessible to PLWDs. The organizational culture has to be changed to embrace acceptable performance not high performance, be less bureaucratic, and equal measures in performance have to be changed to favor customized to individual nature of being.

KEYWORDS

Stereotype, employment opportunities, people living with disabilities.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

 ne billion people, or 15 percent of the world's population, experience some form of disability. One fifth of the estimated global total, or between 110 million and 190 million people, encounter significant disabilities. Persons with disabilities on average as a group are more likely to experience less employment, and higher poverty rates, World Bank (2014). Many countries in the world have passed laws directed towards equal employment opportunities for the people living with disabilities in the labor market; however, employment disparities are persistent, even in industrialized countries. Disability and Employment statistics for people with disabilities in high income countries are not only unreliable due to insufficient data, incompatible disability definitions and statistical biases; they are also plagued by huge differences in employment definitions Sarpong (1974). Employment statistics for people with disabilities are virtually non-existent in developing countries. Nevertheless, the existing evidence suggests that lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities in high income countries are extremely high, and that unemployment rates for people with disabilities in developing countries are at least as high or higher Wright (1960). In the United States, only 14.3 million of an estimated 48.9 million people with disabilities were reported to be employed in 1991-92 in Austria, where people with disabilities must register, only 69% of those who registered were reported to be employed in 1994.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

In general, disabled are less valued in the world of work as shown by lack of equity in participation, pay, the kind of jobs they have, and the positions they hold. Studies conducted across the globe using both micro Blau & Kahn, (2003) and macro data Azmat *et al* (2006) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe UNECE (2008) have converging findings regarding people living with disabilities employment disparities. For instance, Blau and Kahn (2003) investigated the people living with disability employment gap in 22 countries across the globe. The data were extracted from the International Social Survey Program between 2000 and 2010 and include countries such as the United States, Britain, Canada, Japan, Germany, The Netherlands, and Russia. The discrimination gap averaged between 44 and 84%. The study outcome revealed the following gender pay gaps: United States (40%), Britain (37%), Japan (85%), and Slovenia (44%). Apart from people living with disability being underrepresented in the world of employment, studies have shown they are also underrepresented in official and managerial positions while they are overrepresented as sales, clerical, and service workers. The UNECE (2008) found that, except for the United States and Lithuania, where the proportion of PLWDs legislators, managers, and senior officials was rather high (54 and 47%, respectively), the rest of Europe and North America has a clear majority of PLWDs among legislators, managers, and senior officials. Trends in Europe and North America also show that PLWDs are less likely to be employed or self-employed, and no country within 18 the UNECE has attained a 5% proportion of PWDs among employees (UNECE, 2008). Despite the awareness of employment disparities and the need for equal pay for equal work, disparities in employment persist, with PWDs being disadvantaged. Inadequate human capital, low participation rate in the labor force, and discrimination are attributed to the predicament of women in the labor force (Azmat *et*

al., 2006). In Africa particularly Tanzania and Kenya have entrenched in their constitutions law that compel the employer to at least set a site 3% and 5% plus progressive employment opportunities for people living with disabilities, Constitution of Tanzania and Kenya (2010) respectively.

THE REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Variations in the treatment of persons with disabilities are manifest in Africa as in other parts of the world Amoako (1977). Among the Chagga in East Africa, the physically handicapped were perceived as pacifiers of the evil spirits. Hence, care was taken not to harm the physically handicapped. Among the citizens of Benin (formerly Dahomey in West Africa), constables were selected from those with obvious physical handicaps. In some communities in Benin, children born with anomalies were seen as protected by supernatural forces. As such they were accepted in the community because they were believed to bring good luck Wright (1960). Nabagwu (1977) observed that among the Ibo of Nigeria, treatment of persons with disabilities varied from pampering to total rejection.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Wilkins (2013) established that majority of people with disabilities unemployed, improvement in the last decades has been below targets and expectation. Kwek a (2010) revealed that employment of people with disabilities have improved only marginally and continue to be a serious concern for economic and social policy alike, but his study is questionable for generalization since the population used was 197, while his sample size was only 26 people living with disabilities and only involved people from just Dar-es salaam. Another study by Mkumbo (2012) established that people living with disabilities do not get employment opportunities easily because of lack of education. Makwena (2012) established that people living with disabilities especially people on wheel chairs do not access employment opportunities due to their nature as they cannot utilize the organizational facilities in many of the country's buildings. In the study carried out on employment opportunities among the ethnic communities in the Kenyan Universities and colleges, it was found that only Egerton University, Technical University of Mombasa, and Multimidia University had complied with the National cohesion and integration Act (2008) by employing less dominant ethnic groups in their regions, since people with disabilities are part of affirmative issues, then one is left to wonder why the rule of ethnicity balance in employment has been complied to but why not disability rule? Charles, J. (2015). Reported that there is an increase in unemployment for people living with disabilities. Daily Nation (2015). Multimidia University, Rongo University Colloge, and Kibabii University College advertised job vacancies and clearly indicated that people living with disabilities are encouraged to apply. In Kenya besides the constitution guideline of at least 5% plus progressive employment opportunities, according to National council for people living with disabilities less than 2% of the employment positions are occupied by persons with disabilities NCPWD (2013). Scanty research has been done on challenges facing employment opportunities for people living with disabilities. Therefore the gap exist as there is scanty research on challenges facing employment opportunities for people living with disabilities, these triggered the need for investigation into the challenges facing equal employment opportunity for people living with disabilities in Kenya to address the gap.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To investigate the challenges facing employment opportunity for people living with disabilities in selected Universities in Kenya

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To find out how stereotype affects employment opportunities for people living with disabilities.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H0₁ Stereotype does not affect employment opportunities for people living with disabilities

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

- i. The republic of Kenya will benefit from the findings as the problems inhibiting employment of disabled is known and the corrective measures have been recommended on how to increase employment of the people living with disabilities.
- ii. Researchers and Scholars in the field of disabilities will benefit from the findings it adds knowledge in the academic field.
- iii. The Human Resource Managers will benefit from the study as they can utilize the recommendations of the study to solve employment problems of the people living with disabilities at workplace.
- iv. The National Council for People Living with Disabilities will benefit as they will utilize the findings of study to champion for the rights of people living with disabilities.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are many factors that affect employment for people living with disabilities. The study concentrated on how Skills, Stereotype, Employer perception, Organizational Culture, and Organizational facilities affect the employment opportunities of the Blind, the Deaf, and the physically handicapped. The study was conducted among the public Universities in Nairobi County as these Universities have the largest population of employees hence the findings from the institutions can be generalized as true representative of the people living with disabilities and unemployed PLWDs in Murang'a County between February and April 2015.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There are some factors that limited the comprehensive coverage of the study. One of the difficulties encountered was the release of information; the respondent were not willing to give correct information as they feared repercussions, however the study overcame the problem as the respondents were assured that the information given was confidential and was to be used only for purposes of academic. The other problem was communication barrier especially when dealing with people that have hearing impairment, however problem was overcome by the help of specialist in sign language

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

According to Derrick B. (1970), Critical race theory (CRT) recognizes that racism is engrained in the fabric and system of the society. The individual racist need not exist to note that institutional racism is pervasive in our culture. This is the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining existing power structures. CRT identifies that these power structures are based on people without disabilities privilege and people without disabilities supremacy, which perpetuates the marginalization people living with disabilities.

Schur (2009) reported that organizational cultures that are responsive to the needs of all employees are particularly beneficial for disabled workers. Similarly, culture that value flexibility, social justice, personalization and embraces diversity would be one in which disabled people will be treated more favorably than another that is more rigid and bureaucratic. Supportive organizational culture will also focus on changing non-disabled employees' negative attitudes toward disability as eliminating behaviors that reflect subtle forms of discrimination and exclusion, hence promoting more effective interaction among non-disabled and disabled employees. The CRT theory is relevant to the study as the disabled group is seen as people of different group and so they are discriminated by the virtual of being people living with disabilities which is unwanted group, the theory address the independent variable organizational culture.

STEREOTYPE**SHY/DISTANT**

From findings in Stone & Colella (2011), Supervisors and co-workers attitudes people living with disabilities are shy have a profound impact on the employment experiences of people with disabilities. Even in corporations that are committed to hiring employees with disabilities, negative attitudes from supervisors and coworkers have affected the socialization of new employees with disabilities, and limited their ability to become fully accepted and well functioning insiders. The study further found that employees with disabilities remain distant; this limits their job performance and opportunities for training and advancement. Shy employees are resistant to change since people selectively attend to information consistent with pre-existing stereotypes (Blanck, 2001). Negative affect or discomfort in being around people with disabilities. Negative affect varies by type of disability, with greater discomfort for mental and sensory impairments than for mobility and other physical impairments (Stone & Colella, 2006). The study indicates that negative affect may be counteracted in many instances by a "norm of kindness," although such a norm can lead to condescending attitudes or overly helpful behavior.

The study further noted that Strain caused by communication difficulties due to shyness in some disabilities, such as speech or hearing impairments, make communication more difficult. Co-workers avoid interacting with employees who have such disabilities because of the extra time and strain involved John Wiley & Sons, (2005). Personality factors; Prejudice is greater among employees who are high on distant or poor self-concept and body satisfaction (Colella, 1996). The study pointed out that previous contact helps counteract the effects of negative stereotypes, since it allows "individuals to gather detailed information about out-group members (e.g., disabled individuals) so that they are viewed as individuals rather than members of a stereotyped group" (Stone & Colella, 2012). Makas (2008) found that greater contact leads to more positive attitudes toward people with disabilities. Supervisor and co-worker attitudes in turn affect the Performance expectations. Shyness and negative affect lead to biased views of how well a person with a disability is likely to perform.

Of the 13 studies of expectations of future performance or promotional potential for employees with disabilities, ten found evidence of negative bias (DeNisi, & Varma, 2008). Negative attitudes lead to lower employment of employees with disabilities, although in some cases there may be a positive bias due to the norm of kindness or initial low expectations. The evidence from employer surveys does not point to a bias in employment, but the evidence from experiments is mixed, depending on the existence of recruitment standards, the presence of objective selection data, and the supervisor-employee relationship (Colella *et al.*, 2008). According to the study by Varma *et al* (2008) desire to work with an individual with a disability, negative affect and concern about the effects on one's own performance lead to unwillingness to work with an employee with a disability. This depends on the type of job and the nature of rewards, an experiment found that there was negative bias against choosing a coworker with a disability when (a) the job was viewed as a poor fit for the person with a disability, and (b) there were interdependent rewards, for example if the pay of the co-worker would be affected by the performance of the person with a disability (Colella *et al.*, 2008).

Hiring people with discretionary work activities, negative effect, low expectations, and expected co-worker strain cause employers to deny employees with disabilities access to jobs with substantial responsibility, leaving them in generally lower paying jobs that do not allow them much opportunity for developing their skills (Colella, 2006). Negative attitudes and treatment in turn affect the responses of persons with disabilities. Equity theory predicts that employees decrease their work effort when they believe they have not been justly rewarded; more generally, negative attitudes such as low performance expectations cause employees with disabilities to become alienated and withdrawn, which may itself "confirm" the low expectations (Blanck *et al.*, 2013). Employees with disabilities use a number of strategies to shape expectations in the workforce, including (a) concealing the disability, (b) communicating information about the disability to reduce discomfort and clarify norms, (c) requesting help to clarify expected behaviors, (d) emphasizing similarity to others through shared interests, opinions, and values, and (e) becoming a "super-worker" to dispel Corporate culture and employment of persons with disabilities John Wiley (2005). In addition, they may take an activist approach and seek to change organization policies on their own or in concert with others, or use cognitive strategies to protect or change themselves, such as by attributing negative outcomes to bias rather than to their own performance problems (Sandler & Blanck, 2005).

DEPENDENT/NONCOMPETITIVE

From the study conducted by Wordsworth (2013), which aimed at identifying barriers faced by organizations in Gauteng when employing people living with disabilities in the business and financial sectors. The study conducted qualitative interviews with human resource managers from ten organizations in business and financial sectors. The results of the study indicated that the most common barrier identified by the participants was dependence/noncompetitive of people with disabilities. The factor recurred through all the studies was the fact that barriers of employing people with disabilities were mainly looked at from an employer's perspective in which a top-down approach was used in order to formulate the research questions.

Stone & Colella, (2010), in their study carried out in America, found out that low employment rate of PWDs was due to negative stereotypes are dependent held by employers about disabled that result in unfavorable selection decisions. The study reveals that Stereotypes are largely false "over generalized" beliefs about members of a category that are typically negative. The study also revealed that non-competency ascribed to persons with disabilities may be used as a basis for generating expectancies about persons with disabilities (Stone & Colella, 2010). The study found that Expectancies are anticipatory beliefs about the individual based on category membership and stereotypes. The study found that if a person is categorized as dependent, the observer also derives expectancies about the person from stereotyped assumptions made about people with disabilities as a group.

BITTER/UNHAPPY

Another research done in Australia by Greenwood, et al. (2011) found that Physical disabilities are generally viewed as bitter/unhappy. The study found that Projects With Industry placement specialists rated employers as being more unwilling to hire individuals with physical disabilities than those with emotional, mental, or communication disabilities, to have the least difficulty in recruiting and selecting these workers, and to expect better work performance from them. In another study done by Hazer & Bedell, (2000), where students and human resource professionals were asked to employment suitability of applicants, results showed that candidates with disability were given significant lower suitability ratings than candidates with no disabilities because they are termed bitter or unhappy.

In the study carried out in Germany by Koser *et al.* (2009) where human resource professionals were asked to choose one of two candidates with similar backgrounds. Results showed that a job applicant who uses a wheelchair was more likely to be hired than an employee taking medication for depression or anxiety this is because the ones on medication are unhappy which may lower moral of performance. In a survey of Fortune 500 companies, Jones, *et al.*, (2011) found that the physically handicapped ranked much lower as desirable employees than did those without disabilities. Furthermore, few employers had specific employment policies regarding the handicap. This perception of a hierarchy in disabilities regarded to be more or less desirable has been reported in other studies as well (Gilbride, *et al.*2000) found that employers in a Midwestern state reluctant hiring persons with hearing disabilities, while employers in a Southeastern state reluctant hiring persons with physical disabilities.

Many studies carried out by Fabian *et al.*, (2005) investigated the relationship between employer attitudes toward hiring persons with disabilities and previous experience with PWDs on the part of the employer. Most of these studies found that prior positive contact has a direct relationship with favorable employer attitudes. Only two of the studies did not support the evidence. From the study by Stone & Colella, (2006) America found out that Jobs can also be stereotyped, and these stereotypes can be used to exclude applicants with disabilities as not well-suited. The study further found that the nature of the job elicits prototypical images about job requirements, the combination of stereotypes about applicants with disabilities and stereotypes about job requirements may lead to incorrect decisions and unfair discrimination. Stone and Colella (2006) provide a poignant example: observers may classify a hearing-impaired (deaf) person as incapable of performing the job of a supervisor because the job requires face-to-face communication and the ability to communicate with others on a telephone. The reason for this is that the prototypical hearing-impaired person cannot understand or orally communicate with others. This inference, however, may be incorrect about a particular hearing-impaired person who has the ability to read lips and communicate orally with others.

AGGRESSIVE

Greenwood and Johnson (2007) found that employers were more unwilling to consider the physically disabled for jobs that were sedentary, had less pressure, and had less interpersonal contact, this so because physically disabled persons are viewed aggressive. This seemed consistent with the concept of job prototypes that are congruent with stereotypes of PWDs. While aggressive is typically negative, some limited research has shown a positive bias in favor of

hiring PWDs. In one study, applicants depicted as having a disability were rated higher on employment and management potential scales than applicants without a disability Christman & Slaten, (2011). Another study had similar findings showing that job candidates with physical disabilities were rated more highly than those without disabilities Nordstrom, *et al* (2008). These studies suggest that in some cases, having a physical disability may be viewed as a desirable. However, more research is needed to substantiate these findings and understand the causal relationships.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used both descriptive and exploratory method of study. The sampling frame was 14, 600 people, while the sample size was 191 people. The questionnaire was used to collect data and analyzed using SPSS package.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sixteen point seven (16.7%) percent of the respondents say that employees living with disabilities are shy. From the findings, it means that minority of the people living with disabilities are believed to be shy as indicated by 16.7%. Seventy people translating to fifty eight point three (58.3%) percent of the respondents say that employees living with disabilities are dependent. The table means that majority of the respondents are of the view that people living with disabilities are dependent/noncompetitive. Twenty people which is (16.7%) percent of the respondents say employees living with disabilities are bitter. From the outcome, it means that coworkers and employers believe that people living with disabilities are bitter. Ten people translating to eight point three (8.3%) percent of the respondents say that employees living with disabilities are aggressive. From the table, it shows means that majority of the respondents believe that people living with disabilities are aggressive/non-submissive.

THE REGRESSION OF STEREOTYPE AGAINST EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLWDS

Stone & Colella (2011), in their study established that supervisors and co-workers categorized people living with disabilities as Shy and that employers were not willing to employ people living with disabilities as they were viewed as being reluctant to take up new challenges. Further study by Blank (2001), found that co-workers were discomfort to in being around with people living with disabilities.

In this study, the outcome established employment opportunities for people living with disabilities are affected by 0.401 as shown in the table below. This means that 40.1% change in employment opportunities for people living with disabilities can be predicted by unit change in Stereotype. This study was in line with that of Stone & Colella(2011), and that of Blank (2001), so we can confirm that stereotype is a challenge to employment opportunities for people living with disabilities. The regression formula for stereotype against employment opportunities is as below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + 0.401 \text{Stereotype} + 0.707$$

TABLE 1: ANOVA MODEL FOR STEREOTYPE AGAINST EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLWDS

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.633 ^a	.401	.392	.707

a. Predictors: (Constant), STEREOTYPE

The table below shows that the relationship between stereotype and employment opportunity is very strong as indicated by sig 0.000, this means that the effect is not by change but by the presence of the stereotype. This also means that for any meaningful improvement for employment opportunities by people living with disabilities, stereotyping have to be discouraged.

TABLE 2: SIGNIFICANCE OF STEREOTYPE AGAINST EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLWDS

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.059	1	22.059	44.118	.000 ^a
	Residual	33.000	66	.500		
	Total	55.059	67			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stereotype

b. Dependent Variable: Employment Opportunities

FINDINGS

The literature showed that employment opportunities for people living with disabilities are affected by various challenges. In the organizations studied, employment opportunities for people living with disabilities are lower than expected. The study examined a population of three thousand people in University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Technical University of Mombasa, and Murang'a Association of people living with disabilities. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty (150) people for investigation, this was to ensure that even number of respondents are given chance to participate. The study was conducted by use of questionnaires. Out of 150 people only 120 responded giving a response rate of 80%. The instruments were pilot tested and analyzed for reliability and validity using Cronbach's Alpha formula. Confirmatory factor analysis to reduce the factors was also used. This confirmed the conceptual framework of the study, SPSS version 17 was used as the statistical tool for analysis all through the study. The data was analyzed and using descriptive and inferential statistics. Scatter plots were visually examined to check whether linear regression relationships existed after which linear regression was done to establish the magnitude and direction of relationship. Multi regression was used to test the combined effect of all the independent variables to the dependent variables. The study had the following findings:

CONCLUSION

The study further determined that employers perceived people living with disabilities as disturbing, expensive, lazy, and antisocial. This means that employer will not desire PLWDS as they will reduce profitability due to expenses involved during medication by meeting medical bills and accommodation. They are also not hard working due to the nature of disability this make coworkers view that they may let them down when the remuneration is tight on group performance. Also the issue of antisocial makes team work impossible as working together need personal friendship first.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study therefore recommends that the negative stereotypes have to be changed in order to increase chances of employment for people with disabilities. This can be achieved by encouraging socialization of employees with disabilities with those without disabilities so as to learn how to accommodate each other. Co-workers should be encouraged to assist the disabled employees and lobby for team-work not individual responsibility.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to constraints highlighted in the study, it was not exhaustive of all the challenges facing employment opportunities for people living with disabilities. Research should be conducted to establish other challenges that influence employment opportunities for people living with disabilities since only 67.5% of the employment opportunities were covered by the five independent variables, meaning that the 32.5% of the unexplained influence have to be accounted for by the next research. The other disabilities like Hyper, HIV/AIDS, and Slow learners should be conducted.

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