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Research paper

Employment opportunities for persons with different types of disability



Les opportunités d'emploi pour les personnes atteintes de diverses formes de handicap

Tomas Boman^{a,*}, Anders Kjellberg^b,
Berth Danermark^c, Eva Boman^a

^a Department of Social Work and Psychology, Faculty of Health and Occupational Studies, University of Gävle, SE-801 76 Gävle, Sweden

^b Department of Building, Energy and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Sustainable Development, University of Gävle, Gävle, Sweden

^c Swedish Institute for Disability Research, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

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ABSTRACT

The employment status of groups with different disabilities was analysed as were potentially important moderating factors (work ability, structural and individual factors). A secondary analysis was performed on 4359 respondents with disabilities from Statistics Sweden's Labour Market Investigation. The respondents were divided into six disability groups (communicative-hearing, communicative-speech-reading, communicative-vision, psychological disability, medical disability, physical disability). Logistic regression analyses showed that the probability of being employed was highest among respondents with hearing disabilities and respondents with psychological disabilities were least likely to be employed. Being a woman (very young or old) with only primary education and with partially or very impaired work ability, reduced employment opportunities. Higher education did not increase employment opportunities for respondents with impaired work ability. In summary, the type of disability is essential for employment opportunities, and differences between disability groups cannot be explained by differences in other variables.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: tbn@hig.se (T. Boman).

The moderating factors studied were found to be of equal importance in all groups.

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R É S U M É

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Cet article expose les résultats d'une étude statistique sur les difficultés d'accès à l'emploi rencontrées par les personnes en situation de handicap. Des mécanismes d'interaction entre la capacité de travail et d'autres facteurs individuels et structurels sont mis en évidence. Une analyse secondaire des réponses de 4359 personnes handicapées, extraites des archives statistiques suédoises, a été effectuée. Les répondants ont été répartis en six groupes. Des analyses de régression logistique ont montré que la probabilité d'obtenir un emploi était plus élevée chez les personnes ayant un déficit auditif et que les personnes souffrant de handicaps psychologiques étaient les moins susceptibles d'être en emploi. Être une femme, très jeune ou très âgée, avec un niveau d'éducation élémentaire et avec une capacité de travail partiellement ou fortement réduite, diminue les possibilités d'accès à l'emploi. Enfin, un niveau d'éducation supérieur n'augmente pas les possibilités d'accès à l'emploi pour les répondants ayant une capacité de travail réduite. La conclusion principale est que le type de handicap a une importance considérable relativement aux possibilités d'accès à l'emploi et que ces différences ne sont pas expliquées par des différences dans d'autres variables déterminantes. Les facteurs modérateurs étudiés sont d'importance égale dans tous les groupes.

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1. Introduction

Being employed means being committed to participation in an activity, fellowship with others and an occupational identity. People want to feel that they are needed by others and that what they do is meaningful, in both their own eyes and in the eyes of others. For people with a disability, such aspects are probably even more important, largely because these individuals have become an increasingly marginalised group in contemporary working life, with its great demands for education, flexibility and productivity (e.g., Baker & Jacobs, 2003; Dag, 2006; Sjöberg, 2002).

We know that the barriers towards entering the labour market for people with disabilities vary depending on the type of disability (e.g., Clausen, Greve Pedersen, Olsen, & Bengtsson, 2004). Some groups face extreme difficulties to overcome (e.g., people with psychiatric disorders), while others are facing fewer difficulties (e.g., people with hearing impairment). In some countries, rehabilitation programmes are tailored according to different disabilities: for instance, persons with neuropsychological disabilities are offered another type of working life support than persons with mobility disabilities. However, in the general discussion about benefit schemes and assessments of rehabilitation programmes, persons with disability are sometimes treated as a homogenous group (e.g., OECD, 2009a,b), although it is important that differences in work opportunities are considered, such as in cost–utility analysis of rehabilitation programmes.

In surveys on living conditions, data are often classified into groups of disability, and the results mainly concern how demographic variables (e.g., gender, age and residential region) as well as other variables (e.g., work ability and level of education) differ between the types of disability. Further, comparisons are often made between people with and without disabilities. Several studies have focused

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