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TIDARAT CHOLPRASERTSUK

Maejo University, Thailand

THE DISABLED CHARACTERISTICS REQUIRED BY AGRIPRODUCT PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN THE UPPER NORTHERN PART OF THAILAND

Abstract:

This research utilizes both quantitative and qualitative approach or so called “mixed research methodology”. It aims to explore employing conditions of the disabled in the north of Thailand in agriproduct processing industry. Those companies- with more than 100 employees- are the population as it is required by laws to employ the disabled in the ratio of 100:1. The total number of sample are 13 companies which shows different attitudes toward employing the disabled. The majority of respondents are companies from frozen fruit and vegetables industry (46.20%), and there is 53.80% of those complied with employing the disabled laws. 84.60% of companies hires persons with mobility disability and those were assigned operational responsibility suitable for type of disability. The disabled received the minimum wage per day of 300 Baht (USD 10.00 per day) as the non-disabled receives. Only evidence shows little adjustments in the working environment to facilitate the disabled because companies prefer not to pay higher cost. In addition, companies has no preference on gender, age, educational background but prefer the disabled with professional training (23.10%). The preferred characteristics are the employees (disabled) who are responsible, able to learn and complete their task, loyal and be able to work with others.

Keywords:

Disabled, Agriproduct Processing Industry, Upper Northern Part of Thailand

JEL Classification: P29

1. INTRODUCTION

Regarding to the Act of Support and Develop the Quality Life of the Disabled (2007), it has clearly stated the ratio of disabled employed by entrepreneur equals to 100:1 and has enforced to entrepreneur with more than 100 employees. In the Northern Part of Thailand, such entrepreneurs are in agriproduct processing industry and frozen agriproduct industry as in the north, the climate is suitable to grow various types of fruits and vegetables. This industry is the major economic driver in the north as it can add value to the agriproduct; namely, the product needs the high turnover rate and requires workforces in the industry.

To employ the disabled is quite difficult due to the following reasons 1) unable to recruit the disabled 2) unable to determine type of the disabled 3) lack of information of both the entrepreneur and the disabled-whether the type of the disabled matched with the qualification specified by the entrepreneur or the unawareness of the entrepreneur of the required type of the disabled.

Therefore, the research team would explore the employing condition for the disabled in this area including the type of disabled required by entrepreneur. This would save the time for both entrepreneur and the disabled and for the disabled, they can improve their competency to match with such labor requirements.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The disabled employee required by entrepreneur should get professional training to ensure his/her competency as per to job description or to match with his/her potential. In addition, regular skill training should be attended in case more skills required in his/her task. The accomplishment of his/her jobs would become the role for other disabled to follow and enhance the possibility of other disabled in being recruited in the future (National Office for Empowerment for Person with Disabilities-NEP, 2012).

The employer could see the benefits of employing the disabled with the comprehension of their potential, in turn, the disabled are more involved in the society as one of the economic driver. Government must take the role in determining the related laws to support and motivate the employment of the disabled (International Labor Organization-ILO, 2010). The activities for government might be the Department of Employment liaise with entrepreneur and the disabled, provide proper training to the disabled and to ensure that such policy covering all the area the Department must create network between districts and subdistricts. Local Administration Organization requires the disabled to register with them so the disabled database is created (Namsiripongpun, 2011).

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

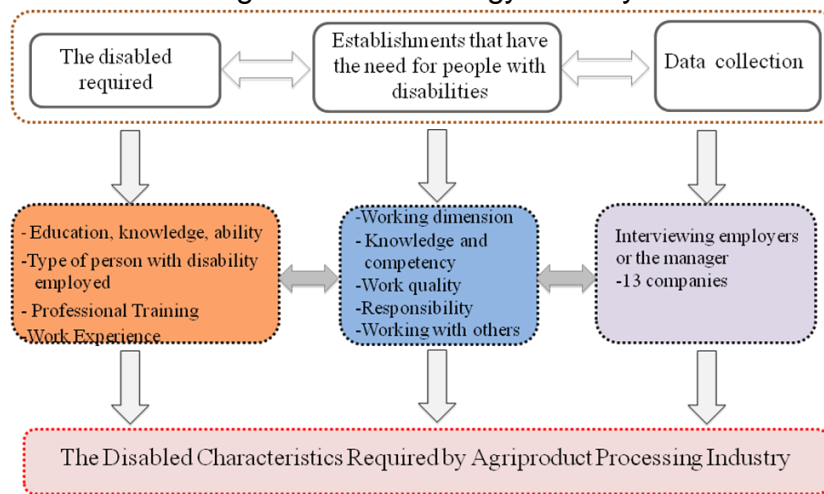
To explore the employing condition in agriproduct processing industry in the North of Thailand and to study the required characteristics of the disabled (the disability type)

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection was conducted by interviewing employers or the manager of entrepreneur in the mentioned area in the number of 13 companies. Those employ more than 100 employees-so it is required by laws to recruit the disabled as mentioned earlier. The data collection was done during July-September 2014 and this is the cross-sectional study.

Data analysis was done by content analysis and reports the result by using the frequency distribution of SPSS

Figure 1: Methodology of Study



5. RESULT OF THE STUDY

The results show that

5.1 Agriproduct Processing Industry

It is found that the majority of the respondents are frozen fruit and vegetable industry in the number of 6 companies (46.20%). The second majority is canned vegetable and fruit industry in the number of 5 (38.50%). The third is dried fruit and vegetable in the number of 3 (23.10%) and the least one is preserved fruit and vegetable industry (1 or 7.70%).

Table 1: Frequency of Respondents

Agriproduct Processing Industry	Amount	Percent
Canned Fruit and Vegetable Industry	5	38.50
Preserved fruit and vegetable	1	7.70
Dried fruit and vegetable	3	23.10
Frozen fruit and vegetable	6	46.20

5.2 Ratio of Person with Disabilities Employed

It is found that entrepreneurs employed the disabled as per required by laws (the ratio of 100:1) in the number of 7 (53.80%) the rest of more than 100:1 in the number of 5 (38.50%). There is only 1 entrepreneur unable to comply with 100:1 ratio (7.70%). Reasons by interviewing found that the disabled are employed because company would like to comply with laws and see the disabled potential.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of Employed Disabled

Ratio Employed	Amount (n = 13)	Percent
Ratio Employed		
100 :1 as required by laws	7	53.80
more than 100 :1	5	38.50
less than 100 :1	1	7.70

5.3 Type of Persons with Disability Employed

Entrepreneurs normally employs the mobility disabled in the number of 11 (84.60%), the second group is hearing disability in the number of 8 (61.50%), intellectual disability in the number of 4 (30.80%). Vision disability and autistic is in the same group; namely, 1 employed (7.70%). None employed learning disability.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Disability Type

Type of Persons with Disability Employed	Amount	Percent
Vision Impairment	1	7.70
Hearing Impairment	8	61.50
Mobility Disability	11	84.60
Intellectual Disability	4	30.80
Austitic	1	7.70
Learning Disability	-	-
Amount	-	-

The interview results show that the majority of employing mobility and hearing impairment persons because the company requires little change in the work setting otherwise, they would have to adjust the working environment which would incur the higher cost.

5.4 Position for the disabled

It is found that most entrepreneurs assign operational work to the disabled in the number of 12 (92.30) and the rest in administrative work in the number of 6 or 46.20%.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of Job Type

Position	Amount	Percent
Operation	12	92.30
Administration	6	46.20

* can answer more than 1

Based on the interview results, it is found that employers assign job to match with disability type to ensure their performance, for instance, cleaning staff, categorizing staff, stocking and storing staff, packaging staff, gardener, and security staff. However, it is found that though provided by proper computer training, the disabled are assigned with the unrelated work like cleaner, gardener because employers do not want to take the risk of misusing the machine. The administrative work for the disabled are administrative staff, company messenger, examining staff, personnel staff, stock database staff, and purchasing staff; who has long working experiences.

5.5 Difference in regulations between the disabled and non-disabled

It is found there is no significant difference in rules and regulations for employees from both groups in term of number of working hours, rules regarding holidays or annual leaves, and benefits in the number of 12 respondents and only 1 respondent prefers not to answer.

Table 5: Frequency and Percentage of Difference in Rule and Regulation between the

Disabled and Non-Disabled

Difference in Rule and Regulation Between the Disabled and Non-Disabled	Amount (n = 13(Percent
No. of Working Hours	-	-
Working Rules and Regulations	-	-
No. of Days for Holiday	-	-
Other Benefits	-	-
No Difference	12	92.30
Prefer not to answer	1	7.70

Based on the interview results, it is found that the disabled earn the minimum wage of 300 baht per day (USD 10 per day) like the nondisabled. They can work well with one another and there is only one company states that the disabled should earn less than the non-disabled without stating proper reasons.

5.6 Gender of disabled required

It is found that almost every firm has no preference on gender in the number of 10 (76.90%) and 1 of each prefer male and female (7.70%).

Table 6: Frequency and Percentage of Gender of the Disabled.

Gender	Amount (n = 13(Percent
Male	1	7.70
Female	1	7.70
No Preference	10	76.90
Prefer no to answer	1	7.70

5.7 Educational Qualification of the disabled

It is found that most firms (11 of 12, 84.60%) show no preference regarding educational background of the disabled only one firm prefers not to answer (7.70%) and one requires at least high school (7.70%).

Table 7: Frequency and Percentage of Education of the Disabled

Education	Amount (n = 13(Percent
less than high school	-	-
High School	1	7.70
Diploma	-	-
Bachelor	-	-
Master and higher	-	-
No Preference	11	84.60
Prefer no to ansswer	1	7.70

5.8 Characteristics of the disabled required

It is found that there are 7 companies requires no working experiences in order to employ the disabled while there are 3 companies requires that must pass some training (23.10%). There is only 1 company (7.70%) requires that the disabled must have had some working experiences.

Table 8: Frequency and Percentage of Required Characteristics of the Disabled

Required Characteristics of the Disabled	Amount	Percent
Professional Training	3	23.10
One year of working experience	1	7.70
Amount 1 Year	1	7.70
No working experience	7	53.80
Able to take care of themselves	1	7.70

* can answer more than one

5.9 Satisfaction of employers toward the competency of the disabled

The satisfaction dimension comprises knowledge and competency, work quality, responsibility and relationship with others. It is found that all dimensions are in the high level with the average score of 3.87. Work quality score is 4.15, working with others is 4.08, responsibility score is 3.74 and knowledge and work competency score is 3.51.

Table 9: Score of satisfaction of employer toward the disabled's performance

Working Dimension	Average	S.D.	Levle
Knowledge and Competency	3.51	1.144	very
Work Quality	4.15	1.331	very
Responsibility	3.74	1.164	very
Working with Others	4.08	1.230	very
Total	3.87	1.194	very

Based on the interview results, it is found that employers are satisfied with the disabled who can learn and follow the order, are responsible, loyal and can work with others.

6. SUMMARY

It can be summarized that most entrepreneurs employ the disabled (53.80%) to comply with laws. Only few companies (38.50%) employs more than required by laws as they are not confident about working performance of the disabled. Related organization would enhance such confidence to increase the possibility of being employed. Social policy should be implemented to increase the willingness to accept the disabled to work. On the other hand, the disabled should improved themselves to match with the employer's requirements such as participating in job-related training, learning to work with others.

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