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**Inclusive Recruitment Strategies and Employability of
Persons with Disability in State Corporations in Kenya**



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Inclusive Recruitment Strategies and Employability of Persons with Disability in State Corporations in Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: Employability of persons with disability is rooted in the laws of Kenya, with the disability act of 2003 providing that 5% of all jobs be offered to persons with disability (PwDs). Previous research indicates that access and inclusion of PwDs in the labor force remains a global challenge. The main objective of the study was to determine the relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability of persons with disability in state corporations in Kenya.

Methodology: The scope of the study was limited to state corporations during the financial period 2022/2023. A descriptive survey research design was used and 186 human resource professionals were targeted. Data was collected from 117 respondents, yielding a response rate of 70%. Pilot testing was done before the main study. Data was collected using a semi structured questionnaires. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings: The study found, inclusive recruitment strategies positively and significantly influenced employability of PwDs in state corporations in Kenya.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study recommends that organizations should ensure that its management are aware of policies governing diversity, equity and inclusion and work towards establishing inclusive hiring metrics. Implementing internal diversity and inclusion recruitment best practices is important thus state parastatals need to create accessible websites, prepare inclusive job descriptions, and organize for inclusive interviews. The study additionally recommends that state corporations pair PwDs with their seniors for mentorship into top management this will increase their representation at management level.

Key Words: *Employability; Persons with Disability; Inclusive Recruitment Strategies*

Introduction

A truly inclusive workplace must put into place strategies that reduce bias, by allowing employees to express themselves and connect with one another. Leaders must advocate for fair treatment of PwDs, by promoting organizational strategies and practices that embrace inclusivity (Arssi & Taibi, 2017). Inclusion strategies will ensure all PwDs are treated respectfully and have equal

access to the same resources and opportunities given to "able employees". The strategies will in turn help organizations recruit employees with competencies and abilities to meet their organization goals. For PwDs the degree to which they fit into the organizational culture is key to their performance (Gazzaz, 2021). Kuznetsova and Bento (2018) assert that the most significant components of guaranteeing PwDs employability in organizations are drawing up policies, investing resources and holding the organization accountable for enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion. Open procedures for making decisions concerning rewards promotions, and task assignments must be communicated clearly through various channels. (Mtetwa, 2018). This demonstrates the premise that strategic communication should never be overlooked. Ratsifandrihamanana (2019) argues that inclusive recruitment strategies are able to recognize talented individuals from all walks of life. Advertising on inclusive websites and using diverse and inclusive interviewer panels can reduce bias and allow for a variety of perspectives that can shed deeper insights into a candidate's behavior. Developing and implementing an inclusive recruitment strategy leads to company growth, greater employee engagement and retention. (Houtenville & Kalargyrou 2012). Foster and Wass (2012) argue that accommodation strategies aim at ensuring PwDs can work effectively. Reasonable accommodations for an employee with a physical disability may include changing the nature of the tasks they are required to perform, making changes to their physical environment or workspace, or taking time off to recover from an injury (Aryani & Widodo, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Globally, slightly over a billion people amounting to 15% of the world's population experience a form of disability (ILO, 2022) People with disabilities are bound to experience more challenges economically, socially and otherwise than their counterparts without disability (Iwanagaa et al., 2020) In Kenya, unemployment is a barrier to the rehabilitation and well-being of PwDs. As of now, only 1% of Kenya's PwDs in adulthood are working, compared to 57% of Kenyan adults in the overall population, with women having higher levels of systemic exclusion in work and employment than males (Owino, 2020). The Kenyan law under the PwDs Act, 2003, International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) in line with International Labor Organization (ILO) provides for protection of PwDs including at the workplace. The rights of of PwDs have also been safeguarded under Article 54 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. The COVID pandemic further escalated the plight of PwDs with approximately 20% losing their source of income (Verulava & Bedianashvili, 2021; Rohwerder, 2020). These failures affect the position of state corporations in supporting the Governments' big four agenda and the four pillars of sustainability (human, social, economic and environmental (Gesongo & Baraza, 2019; Kabare, 2018; Khaemba, et al 2017). From the foregoing, evidently queries arise on why over 99 percent of the state corporations have not achieved the 5% employability target set in the 2010 constitution of Kenya. The current study

sought to determine the relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability of PwDs in state corporations in Kenya.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability of PwDs in state corporations in Kenya.

Literature Review

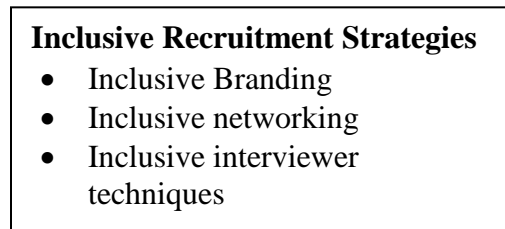
Surbhi (2015) defines recruitment as the process of identifying potential candidates and encouraging them to apply for open positions. Organizations focus more on acquiring competent human capital these days because they are the most valuable assets, thus organizations must develop a strategy to carefully attract the most qualified personnel. A well-thought-out recruitment strategy should naturally lead to a solid personnel plan program. The relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability had been studied previously. Houtenville and Kalargyrou (2012) conducted research on employers' perceptions in hotel industry recruitment procedures, techniques, and obstacles. The study relied on a survey as its primary method of data collection. The research shows that different sized hospitality entities took different approaches to hiring PwDs, such as partnering with advocacy groups. Customers with disabilities become dedicated patrons when they were helped by employees who appreciated their unique circumstances. Employing PwDs shows a commitment to learning about and addressing the needs of customers who use assistive devices. The research found that the key to overcoming prejudice and misunderstanding was to employ recruitment strategies that were inclusive of PwDs. The results of adopting a disability-inclusive mentality were analyzed by Ochrach, Thomas, and Phillips (2021) at a major biotechnology firm.

An inductive qualitative case study methodology was used for this investigation. The qualitative method was used to compile data on the hiring process. The results show that branding and other inclusive strategies improve the well-being of people with disabilities and help keep them in the workforce. It is clear that businesses can value and provide diversity, support, and inclusion to employees when both a company-wide attitude and specific policies and practices are implemented, as the emphasis on inclusivity led to a consistent sense of meaning and values across all levels of the company. Kingori (2020), on the other hand, investigated the impact of inclusive practices on the hiring of PwDs in Kenyan banks. Human resources professionals at the largest and second-largest commercial banks provided responses to standardized questionnaires. The results indicated that recruitment efforts had a positive correlation with hiring people with impairments. A majority of the respondents noted that job advertisements, in the banking sector were diversity-oriented, thus encouraging PwDs to apply for the jobs. Most of the recruitment panel were diverse and respectful of different cultures and characteristics. Members of the interviewing panels had undergone training on disability awareness aimed at reducing bias and

stereotyping during interviews. When it came to job posting, the participants said that job openings were advertised through a variety of channels and formats which were favorable to PwDs.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable

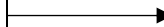
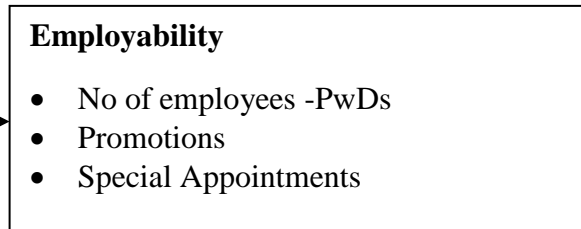


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design incorporating different approaches and techniques in order to elaborate the study variables (Yin, 2011; Cooper & Schindler 2010). Descriptive surveys comprise steps such as collecting data that defines action, classifying data, presenting the tables charts and finally analyzing it to come up with findings. Descriptive studies help interpret the variables to offer answers to critical research questions (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). The study population comprised of a total of 186 Human Resource Officers in state corporations since they play a key role in employability of PwDs (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). State Corporations in Kenya are governed under the State Corporation Act Cap 446 of 1st November 1986, which serves as a distinguishing factor from other organizations. The study used purposive sampling to obtain data from a 117 human resource staff in state parastatals. A pilot test was conducted, involving the issuance of 20 questionnaires. To ensure content validity, the opinions of experts and supervisors was sought. Internal consistency technique was ensured by determining the Cronbach’s Alpha values. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics used to summarize and present the data using percentages, frequencies, measures of central tendencies such as mean, and measures of dispersion such as standard deviation. Inferential statistics was employed to investigate the relationship between variables, using techniques such as correlation analysis. Additionally, regression analysis was conducted to analyze the relationship between a dependent variable and independent variables.

Findings of the Study

Response Rate

A total of 168 questionnaires were administered. The number 168 was arrived at as follows (186-18 for the pilot test which were drawn from the same study population). The need to examine response rate was based on the need to ascertain whether the proportion of response was representative of the targeted population

Descriptive Statistics

The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements provided on the indicators of Inclusive Recruitment Strategies on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree respectively as shown on table 1 below:

Table 1: Inclusive Recruitment Strategies

	SD	D	MA	A	SA	M	SD
Disability is part of the description in our state corporations communication on diversity and inclusion statements	5.7%	3.7%	6.5%	46.5%	37.6%	4.2	2.744
Our state corporation has clear goals for recruiting persons with Disability	1.7%	6.2%	17.7%	49.8%	24.6%	4.03	2.7
Top management in the state corporation demonstrates a visible and strong commitment to the recruitment and hiring of persons with disability	6.2%	3.0%	9.2%	54.5%	27.1%	4.04	2.241
All our interview panelist are trained on disability awareness, etiquette and ways of reducing bias/ stereotype during interviews	2.2%	6.2%	14.2%	46.8%	30.6%	3.97	0.948
Recruiters regularly attend employment fairs targeting known populations of PwDs e.g. universities and training colleges	4.0%	5.0%	14.7%	43.3%	33.1%	4.1	2.74
The state corporation post jobs on disability related publication websites like national Council of Persons with Disability (NCPWD)	4.7%	4.2%	7.8%	52.0%	31.3%	4.02	0.985
The state corporation partners with community based organizations /NGO to promote employment of PwDs	9.2%	13.4%	25.30%	33.6%	18.5%	3.40	1.20
The state corporations makes recruitment locations inclusive e.g making restrooms accessible to PwDs	0.3%	15.9%	1.6%	15.6%	66.6%	4.32	1.117

The corporation organizes for new employee orientation that is accessible to PwDs	2.6 %	0.6 %	1.40 %	16.2%	79.2 %	4.69	.770
The state corporation continues to project an inclusive friendly environment by providing different recruitment strategies	0.0 %	2.9 %	2.3%	12.3%	82.5 %	4.74	.643
Average						4.151	0.884

It was observed that (46.5%) of the respondents agreed that disability was a part of the description in state corporation communication on their diversity and inclusion statements. A further 5.7% Of the respondents strongly disagreed, 3.7% of the respondents disagreed and 6.5% of the respondents were neutral. (M= 4.2, SD=2.744) 1.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed, with the indicator on state corporation clear goals for recruiting PwDs, 6.2% disagreed and 17.7% of the respondents were neutral. A further 49.8% of the respondents agreed and another 24.6% strongly agreed that there are clear goals for recruiting PwDs. (M=4.03, SD=2.7) These findings concur with (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012) who supported that recruiting of PwDs into organization as they too are talented. 6.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed, that top management was committed to the recruitment and hiring of PwDs, 3.0% of the respondents disagreed and 9.2% of the respondents were neutral. Approximately 54.5% of the respondents agreed and another 27.1 % strongly agreed that top management was committed to the recruitment and hiring of PwDs (M=4.04, SD=2.241). Respondents were asked to comment on the panel's composition about interview panelist having been trained on disability awareness, etiquette and ways of reducing bias and stereotype during interviews. A cumulative 46.8% of the respondents agreed that interview panelist had been trained on disability awareness, etiquette and ways of reducing bias and stereotype during interviews. It was observed that 2.2% respondents strongly disagreed, 6.2% disagreed and 14.2% were neutral (M=3.97, SD 0.948).

The study sought the views of respondents on recruiters' regular attendance of employment fairs targeting known populations of PwDs e.g. universities and training colleges had the following response Some 43.3% of the respondents agreed and another 33.1% strongly agreed that recruiters regularly attend employment fairs targeting known populations of PwDs e.g universities and training colleges. Some 4.0% strongly disagreed, 5.0% disagreed, while 15.7 of the respondents were neutral (M=4.1, SD=2.74). A cumulative (52.0%) of the respondents agreed state corporation post jobs on disability related publication websites like national Council of Persons with Disability (NCPWD). A further 4.7% respondents strongly disagreed, 4.2 disagreed while 7.8% of the were neutral. (M=4.02, SD=.985) These results concur with those of (Kingori, 2020) who noted that most recruitment panels in the banking sector were diverse and respectful of different cultures and characteristics. Members of the interviewing panels had undergone training on disability awareness aimed at reducing bias and stereotyping during interviews. When it came to job posting, the participants said that job openings were advertised through a variety of channels and formats

which were favorable to PwDs. Approximately (33.6) of the respondents agreed that state corporation partners with community based organizations /NGO to promote employment PwDs. A further 9.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 13.4% disagreed and 25.30% were neutral. In addition, 18.5% strongly agreed that state corporation have been partnering with community based organizations /NGO to promote employment PwDs (M=3.40, SD=1.20).

0.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed that State Corporation have been making recruitment locations inclusive e.g. making restrooms accessible to PwDs while 15.9% of disagreed and 1.6% were neutral. A further 15.6% of the respondents agreed while 66.6% strongly agreed that state corporation have been making recruitment locations inclusive e.g. making restrooms accessible to PwDs (M=4.32, SD=1.117). These findings are consistent with those of (Crane & Hartwell 2019), who contend that inclusive hiring strategies benefit a company's reputation. Indeed, research suggests that customers favor firms that hire PwDs over those who do not. The result on the indicator that state corporation frequently organized for new employee orientation that is accessible to PwDs revealed the following. The distribution was as follows, 2.6% strongly disagreed, while 0.6% disagreed and 1.4% of the respondents were neutral. In addition, 16.2% of the agreed and another 79.2% strongly agreed that state corporation frequently organized for new employee orientation that is accessible to PwDs (M=4.69, SD=.770). 82.5% of the respondents agreed that state corporation continue to project an inclusive friendly environment by providing different recruitment strategies, and another 12.3% strongly agreed while 0.0% strongly disagreed, 2.9% disagree and 2.3% were neutral (M=4.74, SD=.643) The findings are consistent with those (Ebuenyi, et al 2019) who argued that providing a disability friendly environment for different recruitment strategies is the best model for attracting innovative and creative employees with disability.

Correlation Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using inferential statistics; correlation and regression of the variables were analyzed and findings presented and discussed. Correlation between and among the predictor and the predicted variables was analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient. This was done with respect to the direction, the magnitude and significance, with perfect correlation, $r=\pm 1$, high degree correlation, $r\pm 0.5$ to ± 1 , moderate degree correlation, $r\pm 0.3$ to ± 0.49 , low degree of correlation, r below ± 0.29 and no linear correlation, $r=0$ (Cooper & Schindler, 2011)

Table 21: Inclusive Recruitment Strategies and Employability of PwDs

Employability of PwDs	
Pearson Correlation	.486*

Inclusive Recruitment Strategies	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	117

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 2 the correlation statistics established a strong and positive relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability of PwDs in state corporations in Kenya at $r=0.486$, $p=0.000<0.05$. This implies that the variables have a moderate positive relationship that is significant at 0.05% levels of significance. This is consistent with (Kulkarni and Kote, 2014), who contend that the presence of formal disability hiring policies and training specifically focused on hiring and retaining workers with disabilities predicts managers' positive intentions and attitudes toward PwDs.

Regression Analysis

The study sought to examine the the relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability of PwDs in state parastatals in Kenya The linear regression line with an equation of the form $Y = a + bX$, where X is the explanatory variable and Y as the dependent variable was estimated for the predictor variable. The findings are presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5 in the sessions that follow

Table 3: Model Summary on Inclusive Recruitment Strategies

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.486	.236	.231		.68899

a. Predictors: (Constant), Inclusive Recruitment Strategies

This model's coefficient of determination (R-square), also known as its explanatory power, was found to be.236 This demonstrates that difference in predictors in the model (Inclusive recruiting strategies) explains 23.6% of the variation in employability of PwDs in Kenyan State Corporations. The difference percentage, 76.4%, is the share of variance explained by other factors not included in this model, Table 3 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA)

Table 4. ANOVA on Inclusive Recruitment Strategies

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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1	Regression	20.689	1	20.689	43.584	.000 ^b
	Residual	66.933	141	.475		
	Total	87.622	142			

a. Dependent Variable: Inclusive Recruitment Strategies

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employability of PwDs

Table 4 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the model the relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability of PwDs was significant as supported by a p value of 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. The relationship between inclusive recruitment strategies and employability of PwDs was thus found to be significant in this study which agrees with the findings of (Ratsifandrihamana, 2019) who argues that inclusive recruitment strategies are able to recognize talented individuals from all walks of life.

Table 5: Model Coefficient for Inclusive Recruitment Strategies

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.006	.240		8.361	.000
	X2	.447	.068	.486	6.602	.000

a. Dependent variable: Employability of PwDs

Regression of coefficients on table 5. showed that inclusive recruitment strategies have on effect on employability of PwDs $Y = 2.006 + .447 X_2$ The findings are in line with those of (Mtetwa, 2018) who agrees that designing open policies for making merit-based decisions about promotions, enhanced employability of PwDs.

Conclusion

From the analysis, the study found that inclusive recruitment strategies had a significant influence on employability of PwDs in state corporations in Kenya. Results also showed that using inclusive recruitment strategies improved the chances of hiring PwDs in state corporations in Kenya. Thus, the results indicated that inclusive recruitment had a positive and significant impact on the employability of PwDs in state corporations in Kenya, suggesting that an increase in inclusive recruitment strategies would lead to employability of PwDs in State Corporation. The Research concluded that PwDs benefited greatly from inclusive recruitment strategies. These state corporations are actively encouraging the hiring of people with disabilities by forming partnerships with local nonprofits and ensuring that their recruitment sites are accessible to people with special needs. Moreover, communicating available positions for PwDs promoted the positive state

corporations image to external observers, such as customers, investors, and future employees with disability

Recommendations

The study concluded that for state corporations to attain 5% employability goal, the corporations should match their staff recruitment messages that signal inclusive working environment. State corporations are urged to share their job postings on disability-related publications and/or disability-related websites, such as the National Council Persons with Disability (NCPWD) Job Portal, to boost PWD recruitment outcomes. Implementing internal diversity and inclusion recruitment best practices is important thus state parastatals need to prepare inclusive job descriptions, and organize for inclusive interviews. Adopting modern technology can also be a great tool to support state parastatals inclusion hiring initiatives. Future changes in state corporations must have a strong disability-mainstreaming angle. The study suggests that policymakers adopt policies on inclusion management at the leadership level. They need to make sure that state employees with disabilities have the opportunity to receive the guidance and assistance they need to fulfill their full potential and progress up the corporate ladder. State firms should also adopt rules for dealing with employment discrimination.

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