

# The Impact of Employers' Attitudes on Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

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## Abstract:

With the gradual improvement of the security system for the disabled, the employment status of the disabled group has continued to improve. The Chinese Government has formulated a series of policies, such as the Administrative Measures for the Collection and Use of Employment Security Funds for Persons with Disabilities, to promote and protect the employment rights and interests of persons with disabilities. According to a study that combined questionnaires with in-depth interviews, positive attitudes of employers towards job seekers with disabilities are one of the key factors in increasing their hiring rates. However, to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities more holistically, employers' cost-effectiveness concerns need to be addressed, taking into account the broader socio-economic context. It is worth noting that with the support of the government's overall policy, some enterprises have adopted the practice of "nominal employment" to achieve the purpose of cost-effectiveness. The pros and cons of this model need to be further explored.

**Keywords:** Employment; disabilities; policy support; employment security payments.

## 1. Introduction

In China, approximately 6.34% of the population (about 90 million people) are identified as disabled, which directly affects more than 260 million family members [1]. Despite certain progress in life, education and employment, people with disabilities still face many challenges. Employment has a special meaning for people with disabilities. It is not only a means of making a living, but also an important way

to realize personal value and social integration. Since the promulgation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons, China has made significant progress in improving the employment situation of people with disabilities in 2020. However, in a highly competitive social environment, there are still many obstacles to the employment of people with disabilities.

When discussing the employment difficulties of people with disabilities and the impact of new policies,

specific strategies for improving and promoting policy implementation are mentioned [1]. When examining the employment issues and social security of people with disabilities, the paper mentions the employment ratio and the company's interests [2]. When discussing the problems and achievements of employment of people with disabilities in China, the article mentions the low employment level and low-income level of people with disabilities [3]. However, in most of current research, it is not investigated what factors employers consider when making decisions during the company's recruitment process. To explore the underlying reasons behind these barriers, this study aims to examine how employers' perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities affect their hiring decisions. The study hypothesizes that when employers hold positive perceptions and show a high degree of tolerance towards people with disabilities, people with disabilities will have a higher chance of being hired.

By using questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews, the author interviews Chinese employers from different industries to understand their specific considerations when recruiting people with disabilities. The study not only reveals the psychological state and behavioral patterns of employers when facing job seekers with disabilities, but also provides valuable empirical data for policymakers to help them formulate more effective and targeted support policies. In addition, by raising public awareness of this issue, the paper seeks to promote a more open and inclusive social atmosphere, thereby encouraging more companies to take positive measures to improve the employment environment for people with disabilities. The study suggests that people with disabilities should enjoy equality in employment opportunities with non-disabled people and employers should reduce or even eliminate discrimination in the workplace.

## 2. Literature Review

On March 28, the "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Promoting the Development of the Cause of the Disabled" clarified the specific path for realizing the social rights of the disabled. Subsequently, on March 10, 2010, the General Office of the State Council forwarded the Circular on Accelerating the Construction of the Social Security System and Service System for Persons with Disabilities, jointly issued by the China Disabled Persons' Federation, which laid out in detail the main steps and measures for realizing the social rights of persons with disabilities [4]. At the same time, Article 6 of the Administrative Measures for the Collection and Use of Employment Security Funds for Disabled Persons stipulates that the proportion

of disabled persons employed by an employer shall not be less than 1.5% of the total number of employees in the employer.

The specific proportion shall be prescribed by the people's governments of all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government in accordance with the actual conditions of their respective regions. Where an employer arranges employment for persons with disabilities that does not reach the proportion prescribed by the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where it is located, it shall pay a security fund. In the development of the law in the past few decades, there has been a great breakthrough in the employment security of persons with disabilities. However, in the current precarious employment situation, many jobs are not only due to the difficulties of being a disabled person, but also because of the overall economic situation. In the process of supply-side structural reform, there is still a polarization of employment prosperity among different industries. The results show that the Internet/e-commerce industry still had the best employment boom in the first quarter of 2017, but the CIER index increased from 10.89 fell to 9.21 for the quarter. Specifically, compared to the previous quarter, the number of job applicants on the Internet/e-commerce industry increased by 24%, while the number of corporate recruitment needs increased by only 5%, and the change in the number of applicants was much greater than the change in demand, so the CIER index declined [5].

Therefore, there are also very big challenges in the choice of careers for people with disabilities. In order to raise the level of employment of disabled persons, the most important task is to improve the quality of disabled persons themselves. Many people with disabilities have a very low level of education and lack three vocational skills, which is an important reason for the low level of employment of disabled people [6]. In Xing Yun's research, education has a significant effect on the probability of people with disabilities choosing employment, especially for women with disabilities. Education is the main influencing factor for disabled people to choose employment in the labor market, which may be related to the academic qualification screening mechanism existing in the labor market for disabled people in China [7]. Xu Lin mentioned that due to the economic constraints in China, we are unable to provide comprehensive support for all disabled people. However, by tapping into and utilizing the potential of persons with disabilities who are partially able to work, and helping them to achieve employment, they can not only become self-reliant and reduce the pressure on the country, society and families, but also make effective use of human

resources and promote the development of productivity [8]. In addition, it also helps people with disabilities to integrate into society as equals and thus escape poverty. In addition, Zhu Jiangang mentioned that at present, supported employment is still the main form of concentrated employment for the disabled in China. Compared with the traditional labor and employment model, the concept of “job integration” better reflects the comprehensive function of social enterprises in promoting the employment and social integration of people with disabilities [9].

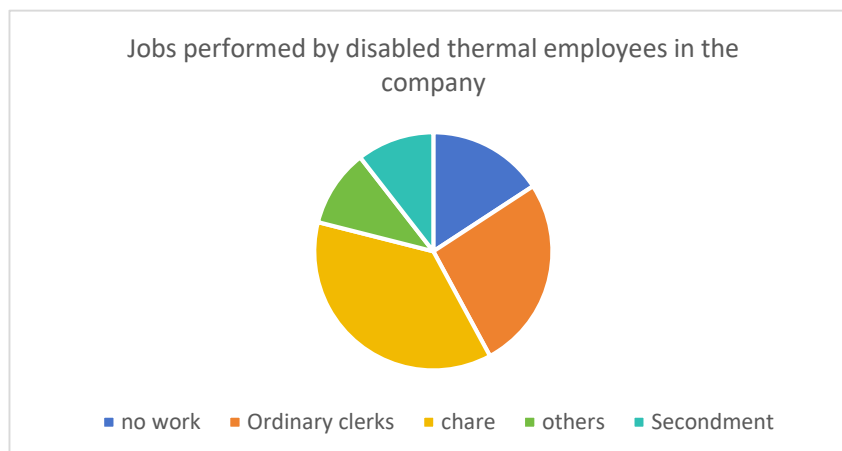
Compared with previous government-led centralized employment models, these institutions generally exhibit greater independence, autonomy, and market adaptability. In addition to the choice of employment, there are still some problems with employment. The characteristics of the labor force include gender, age, education level, major, intended position, etc., and the characteristics of the enterprise include industry, establishment time, nature of ownership, registered capital, place of registration, etc., as well as the mutual selection of each pair of “enterprise-labor” pairs in each link of recruitment [10]. From policy to economic development, from social security to company choice, the actual impact of employers’ attitudes, perceptions and acceptance of persons with disabilities on their employment has not been mentioned in previous studies, and this paper will use questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to study this topic.

### 3. Questionnaire Collection and Results Analysis

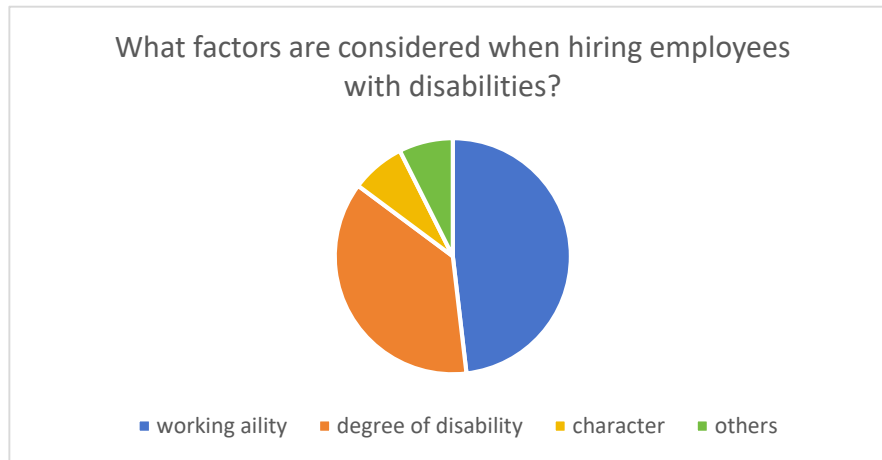
This study uses a questionnaire to ensure that all respondents receive the same information and questions, thereby improving the comparability of data and helping

researchers to conduct trend surveys. At the same time, questionnaire surveys tend to be more cost-effective and convenient and can be quickly collected in a short period of time, with a wide range of population samples. The sample of this study was selected by snowball sampling, covering employers from different companies. According to the questionnaire, the positions of the sample varied, with HR being the most common, followed by corporate management. The questionnaire consists of 11 questions, including fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice and multiple-choice questions, and is designed to obtain information precisely in a short period of time. The questions are divided into two main parts: the survey of personal career situation and attitudes.

About 85% of the respondents had experience in employee recruitment, while 15% had no experience in employee recruitment. It can be seen that most of the fillers have experience in employee recruitment. When discussing the positions of people with disabilities in the company, according to the word cloud map, the proportion of cleaners and miscellaneous employees is relatively high, followed by temporary positions, and there is no actual work, and a small number of them work as ordinary employees and clerical workers in the company. In addition, when mentioning what factors will be used to consider whether to hire the disabled person, most employers mentioned the disabled person’s ability to work and work experience. There are also some employers who cite issues of character and character, and at the same time, they also consider the degree of disability of the disabled and so on (Fig. 1). In the questionnaire, it was mentioned that employers considered people with disabilities to have special qualities, and most employers considered them to be empathetic, self-motivated, and have good psychological qualities.



**Fig. 1** Job types of disabled employees



**Fig. 2 Factors for Hiring the Disabled**

In the questionnaire, 70% of people with disabilities said they could have a positive impact on the company (Fig. 2). When asked if it has had an impact on their company's company culture, 70% of employers believe it will have a positive impact. However, in terms of cost, half of the respondents believe that hiring more employees with disabilities will not increase the company's operating costs, and that there will be corresponding benefits. However, there are also some people (25%) who are concerned about this. Another 25% of those surveyed said they did not know anything about the issue or did not have a clear opinion. Therefore, when employers are considering whether to hire or not, cost and benefit are still one of their current considerations.

When asked why people with disabilities are recruited as employees, the reasons for recruiting employees with disabilities are varied, ranging from practical interests such as tax incentives and cost reductions to moral responsibility and social values such as charity and social responsibility. At the same time, competence is also an important consideration. In addition, government regulations and corporate social responsibility also influence decision-making to a certain extent.

In addition, the results of the questionnaire also showed that 75% of respondents who did not believe that people with disabilities would have a positive impact on the company, including negative influences and lack of understanding, did not believe that it was important for people with disabilities to work in the company. This was also demonstrated in the outcome study, which was asked the question "How many employees with disabilities participated in interviews during each recruitment cycle?" What is the final number of employees with disabilities that your company hires in each recruitment cycle? Hiring results that were said to have a positive impact on the company were 25% higher than those who believed that

people with disabilities would have a negative impact on the company.

Although most employers recognize the importance of employment for persons with disabilities, the actual distribution of positions for persons with disabilities shows that the abilities of persons with disabilities have not been fully recognized and utilized. This observation shows that the potential and vocational ability of persons with disabilities still need to be further valued and developed by society and the business community in the actual job allocation.

Overall, most employers believe that employing employees with disabilities is beneficial to their businesses, but cost-effectiveness remains one of the most important considerations. In addition, employers' attitudes towards people with disabilities are directly proportional to the hiring rate of people with disabilities.

#### 4. Semi-Structured Interviews and Their Results

This study used a semi-structured interview method to explore the views and experiences of two interviewees in depth. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and each interviewee received a two-hour in-depth interview. Before the interviews began, the researcher had full communication with the interviewees and signed an informed consent form to ensure that all participants were clear about the purpose, procedures and rights of the interview. After the interviews, the terms of anonymity and the use of audio recordings were further clarified to protect the privacy of the interviewees. The design of the semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to flexibly adjust the content of the questions based on the interviewee's immediate feedback, while giving the interviewee ample space to express personal opinions and emotions. This

method maintains a certain degree of standardization to facilitate cross-case comparisons while maintaining flexibility to promote in-depth discussions.

Compared with unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews can promote interviewees to participate more actively in the discussion while maintaining a certain framework, thereby providing more real and natural responses, helping to overcome potential communication barriers and collect high-quality data. In terms of selecting interviewees, this study carefully considered and selected two representative individuals.

The first interviewee (A) is a female who is the head of the human resources department in the accounting industry. She has extensive experience in recruiting general employees and people with disabilities and has a deep understanding of China's recruitment policies. The second interviewee (B) is a male who is the general manager of a public welfare law firm. The law firm pays special attention to the employment of visually impaired people and provides them with professional services. The backgrounds of these two interviewees not only help researchers gain a comprehensive perspective, but also provide valuable empirical data for exploring the current employment status of people with disabilities.

When talking about the occupations of people with disabilities, interviewee A mentioned that "they do the same work as ordinary employees, which is probably some secretary, clerk and other jobs." interviewee B mentioned that "one type is financial business, which can be said to be further subdivided into the management of non-performing assets and accounts receivable. For example, credit cards. I think the work of debt collectors can be done by blind people. In theory, you don't need to meet people face to face, and you just need to use sound to remind them or sell your things, so I think debt collectors and customer service are similar jobs." Moreover, "We will regularly hold relaxation sessions in the law firm. We will give relaxing massages to colleagues in the law firm every month. Because we have more than 800 lawyers, we usually stretch the body and use some movements and methods to relax and heal the body. These jobs will cover the employees of our law firm, including providing massages to administrative staff, other lawyers and assistants." Both companies did not make a big distinction between the positions of people with disabilities and other employees, and there was no discrimination against the employment of people with disabilities.

In addition, during the recruitment and interview process, interviewee A mentioned that "we will see if they can come to work normally, because we mostly recruit people with some awkward hands and legs, so there is no issue of degree of disability. We will just look at their work ability,

because some skills will be trained after they come in." From interviewee A's answer, we can know that at the earliest stage, the interviewee had already excluded some people with severe disabilities from the recruitment scope, so further research should consider the impact of different degrees of disability on recruitment.

At the same time, interviewee B mentioned that "There are several factors that are taken into account during the hiring process. Work-related or disability-related issues are considered at an early stage. However, in our practice, for him to meet the standards of an ordinary employee, additional guidance and assistance is required, and the various resources, energy, human and material resources required are obvious. Optimize the manipulation process, I would find that this is a huge cost. However, for some people with disabilities, to achieve the level of service output of ordinary employees, they still have to put in a lot of their own efforts and environment, including software and hardware environments". In addition to considering ability and degree, interviewee B also mentioned the additional costs and the appearance of the company. Regarding the additional costs, interviewee B mentioned, "For example, he walks slowly, or not only disturbs others, but if he is in a wheelchair, he may also occupy some resources, resulting in less resources for other people. There are many such large and small environments that require additional costs, which are very important." He mentioned the real situation encountered by the company, "He has some resources and space in this company. When working for a blind person, it is difficult for him to quickly find the appropriate information from a large report. In order to optimize this one, I want to quickly optimize the process based on these characteristics of the blind person, as well as the various questions he may ask to the customer who owes money to the other party." He mainly mentioned the extra costs in process optimization and company resource occupation.

Interviewee A mentioned that the company adopted a policy of nominal employment (namely, not actually working): disabled people are listed as employees of the company, but they do not actually need to perform their job duties. They can still enjoy certain wages and benefits. In this way, companies fulfill their social responsibilities and sometimes enjoy preferential policies such as tax reduction and exemption.) It is understood that this policy is also being implemented in many other companies. Regarding the impact of disabled people on companies, interviewee B mentioned that "there are not too many units that will consider their employment issues for some relatively virtual cultural positive factors. They consider one issue, one of which is the disability insurance fund, which is also very Chinese." The introduction mentioned

the “Management Measures for the Collection and Use of Disability Employment Insurance Funds”. Many companies will choose to recruit disabled employees for cost considerations.

However, in the answer of interviewee A, she mentioned that “I don’t think it is very difficult for them to integrate into the company, and of course it helps to create a harmonious atmosphere for the entire company. Now the company is carrying out large-scale layoffs, so many disabled employees have been laid off. Of course, the method of nominal employment is also adopted to meet government regulations.” Therefore, although companies believe that disabled people will bring certain positive effects, they will still consider laying off disabled employees in the context of optimization. In addition, in terms of the results of hiring disabled people, the company of interviewee A has a rate of about 40% (the company’s internal data cannot be accurately obtained). “It’s mainly because of the recommendation of the labor service company, so the acceptance rate is very high, but if it’s a personal interview, it won’t be very successful.” Subject B’s company has about 80% acceptance ((the company’s internal data cannot be accurately obtained). He also mentioned that “There was a job fair for college students, but there weren’t many people with disabilities. At the time, I remember only one person with hearing impairment and one person in a wheelchair. I think his access to this information will also be affected. If he is not within the confines of this community, others will not receive this information.” The researchers believe that because B’s law firm is a charitable law firm, the acceptance rate for disabled people will be relatively high.

In addition, when it comes to interviewers, the lack of information access for disabled people is also one of the major problems currently existing. Combining the answers of the two, we can conclude that when both have a more positive view and attitude towards disabled people, the acceptance rate will be relatively high, but it is also affected by the economic environment and the company’s positioning and size.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, this study found that employers’ positive attitudes toward disabled employees are an important factor in improving recruitment rates. However, to further promote employment opportunities for disabled people, cost-effectiveness concerns and broader economic and social context factors need to be addressed. In addition, under the overall policy support of China, many companies will implement the nominal employment model for cost-effectiveness. The advantages and disadvantages of

this model still need to be discussed together.

This study still has many shortcomings. First, in terms of sample size and geographical coverage, the sample size of the questionnaire survey in this study is small and mainly concentrated in Guangzhou. Due to the snowball sampling method, the sample may have certain regional and interpersonal network biases, which may limit the representativeness and generalizability of the research results. Future research should consider increasing the sample size and broadening the geographical distribution of the sample to improve the general applicability of the research results. Second, the employers interviewed in this study came from larger multinational companies and public welfare organizations and failed to cover other types of enterprises such as small enterprises and self-employed individuals. Given that the practices and considerations of enterprises of different sizes and natures in recruiting people with disabilities may be different, it is necessary for future research to include a wider range of employer types to enhance. Finally, the questionnaire design of this study is mainly based on the personal cognition of the researcher, which may lead to differences between the questions in the questionnaire and the actual cognition of the employer, thereby affecting the validity of the research results. Future research should consider adopting a more systematic approach when designing questionnaires, such as conducting pre-tests or consulting experts in the field to ensure that the content of the questionnaire can accurately reflect the views and experiences of the target group.

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