

Abstract of PhD Thesis

Development of disabled employees and increasing their performance

Scientific coordinator:

Prof. univ. dr. Maria Viorica BEDRULE – GRIGORUȚĂ

PhD Student:

Anca – Codruța MANOLACHE

Research design

The development and increase of disabled employees' performance is a novelty in the literature of human resources management. The investigation of the phenomenon evidenced a series of particularities in the literature. Thus, researchers have developed a set of specific development of employees with disabilities and other specific for growth performance. The study followed two directions: the professional development of disabled personnel and the increase of their performance. We deemed necessary to structure the literature in the field into two distinct chapters in order to describe as precisely as possible the phenomenon taking place in the organizational environment.

The research aimed at analyzing the Romanian organizational environment in the light of developing and increasing the disabled employees' performance. The purpose of the study was reached by testing rigorously and objectively the determined hypotheses and objectives.

The study was based on five general objectives which aim at identifying a series of particularities regarding: hiring disabled human resources, employers' satisfaction regarding the disabled employees' activity, development of disabled employees, increasing their performance and particularities regarding the organizational environment where the disabled personnel performs their activity. The general objectives were thus divided in order to outline the specific elements for the development and increase of disabled employees' performance.

Throughout the study we demonstrated which are the reasons for which organizations are reluctant to hire disabled people and also which criteria are used by managers in the recruitment and selection process. The managers' satisfaction related to the disabled employees' activity determined a series of relations deemed efficient. In addition, a series of organizational involvements was outlined in developing and increasing disabled employees' performance and, at a later stage, we observed and analyzed important relationships regarding the connection of the employees with the organizational environment where they work. All the five sets of objectives were subjected to statistic testing and the interpretation of the data was carried out by analyzing each of the items suggested for the research.

The hypotheses determined based on the documentary study aimed at validating whether disabled people are avoided by employers from miscellaneous reasons, whether the level of the disabled employees' education influences the development and the increase of their performance or which are the elements which determine the employer's satisfaction. The hypotheses were validated depending on the results of the statistical tests used throughout the research.

The study was centered on a deductive type strategy, based on a quantitative analysis method. The research was of an exploratory, descriptive and explicative type and its stages were set in a logical order to allow the reader to understand the elements described in the analysis on the study results. In order to describe the importance of developing and increasing disabled employees' performance, we started with the investigation of the phenomenon followed by the explanation of the process which takes place at an organizational level.

Testing and validation of hypotheses

The research hypotheses were taken over and formulated based on the documentary study, following the analysis of other researches conducted both nationally and internationally. Previous researches regarding the analysis of developing and increasing disabled employees' performance are vague and particularly focuses on the reasons behind the employers' reticence in recruiting and selecting disabled personnel.

The fundamental hypothesis starts from the premise that in Romanian organizations there are no specific elements for developing disabled employees which might lead to increasing their performance.

Following the research we determined that Romanian organizations (Iasi county) offer opportunities and methods of professional development to disabled employees and the underlying research hypothesis *is not validated*. Before offering development opportunities, the organizations first identify the needs of professional development of each employee, efficiently help disabled employees to develop professionally, identify and help disabled with high potential to develop professionally and only then contribute to the creation of opportunities for their professional development.

Organizations provide disabled employees with *exchanges of experience* in other organizations, *practical and theoretical courses for career development, professional development plans* specific to each employee, *specialized personnel* in view of improving the disabled employee's training, *socio-professional inclusion* (interaction with other disabled employees) and develop for them promotion possibilities based on the employees' competences.

The present research has identified the *reasons for which organizations are reluctant to hire disabled people*. We determined the criteria taken into consideration in the recruitment and selection process of disabled employees. The content of research have resulted in features on managers' satisfaction related to the disabled employees' activity, and the types and intensity of the relationships between the employers' satisfaction and the variables that outline behavior at the disabled employees' workplace. We set the level of the disabled employees' yield, the criteria which lead to an increase of disabled employees'

performance, and the most efficient and frequently used development methods. We highlight the most important factors: which influence the level of disabled employees' performance, determined the level of the organization's involvement in developing employees and as a result of observation and analysis of the links established between them, results in increased performance of this category of human resources.

The concern regarding the value of the investment managers should make in order to create proper working conditions for disabled people, the extra expenses related to the wages system, insufficient financial resources to acquire equipment/machines for disabled human resources lead to the rejection of disabled people from the organization. Some employers believe that problems can occur especially in the adaptation of these employees at work.

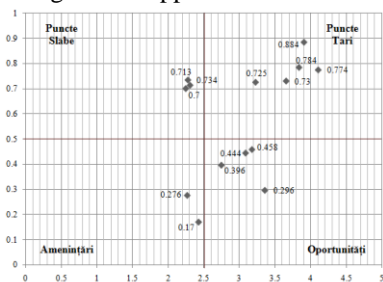
The employer consider the disabled employees' yield as insufficient because they have a reduced capability to assume the risks of their decisions, have difficulties in identifying solutions when confronted with hardships in fulfilling work duties, have lack of the will for professional improvement and also the difficulty to answer promptly to requests lead.

Employees' performance is also influenced by the employees' involvement in taking decision, the promotion opportunities, the creation of a harmonious workplace, the participation to continuous training programs, the use of feedback as an evaluation method, the desire to develop continuously, a positive work attitude, the determination and compliance with a career plan, the capacity to manage deadlines and to adapt to stressful situations. All these characteristics taken into consideration when determining the level of disabled employees' performance influence the manager's decisions to determine the evolution regarding the development of the disabled employee. All these variables are focused on the disabled employees' self-motivation and of the organization's involvement in their development.

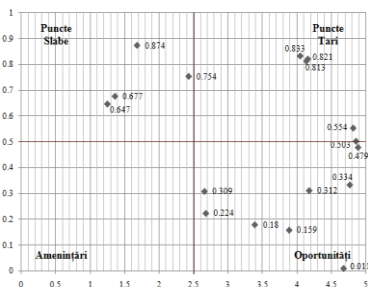
Personal contributions

The study of the literature, knowledge of the organizational environment specific to the analyzed sample (entities in Iasi) and the entire statistical approach allowed us to propose a *development strategy to support employees with disabilities increase their performance*. Thus, we determined the specific components of the SWOT analysis (strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities) that influence employers' satisfaction in terms of the criteria which form the basis of obtaining disabled employees' yield. For this, we have taken into account, in the statistical sense, the overall average of the values of variables and the Pearson correlation coefficient.

In the graphic below, the positioning SWOT matrix elements, (graphic no. 1), there are few threats and weaknesses and many more strengths and opportunities.



Graphic no. 1 - Positioning variables (SWOT) that affect employer satisfaction



Graphic no. 2 - Positioning criteria (SWOT analysis) to assess the efficiency of employees with disabilities

The managers' satisfaction is closely related with the integration of the employees in the work group, with the preference for team work, compliance with organizational values, the working schedule and the correct fulfillment of attributions, plus a low degree of absenteeism. These elements are characteristic for the strong points of the matrix.

The development opportunities are translated into the increase of the employers' satisfaction when disabled employees cope with critical situations, apply practically the knowledge acquired in the training courses, require the colleagues' help in fulfilling work related duties and contribute efficiently to the fulfillment of organizational objectives.

The weak points of the SWOT analysis suggest that the employees feel inferior to the other colleagues and request the enforcement of permissive measures when they commit errors. The interpretation of the results of this study has proved that the employers' satisfaction increases as the feeling of inferiority towards colleagues and the enforcement of milder measures decreases.

The analysis shows that disabled employees fail to share with their colleagues their knowledge and that involvement in the development of the organization is insignificant. These are the threats towards which managers should direct their attention when they evaluate the situation of a disabled employee.

With regard to the evaluation of the disabled employees' performance, a series of criteria stood at the basis of the analysis (graphic no.2). When the employer evaluated the disabled employees'

performance, he showed satisfaction towards a series of variables, translated into the analysis as strong points. Reaching objectives, obtaining quality results and compliance with discipline norms, work rules and deadlines are paramount elements in the employer's satisfaction for evaluating performance. Therefore, disabled employees successfully meet these criteria.

The employer is also satisfied if disabled employees fulfill correctly their attribution at the workplace, have an efficient communication and cooperation with the other employees and make efficient use of their knowledge, share their experiences, understand easily the messages transmitted to them and find solutions for the problems arising in their activity.

Although the analysis fails to describe threats in the disabled employees' performance, there are, nonetheless, certain weak points that take the form of assuming the risk of one's own decisions, the optimization of activity, desire of continuous improvement and identification of priorities. It seems that the employees don't assume the risk of their decisions, fail to find ways of optimizing activity when thus requested, show no desire to improve and cannot manage the identification of priorities.

All these criteria determined a series of particularities the employers should take into consideration when working with this type of personnel.

The proposed solution to the fundamental hypothesis of the research was to create a development strategy that can be applied to increase the performance of employees with disabilities is plotted by the research approach described in Fig. no. 1.

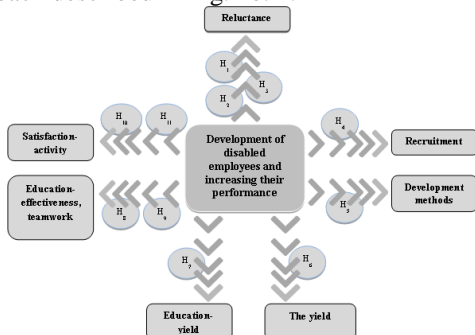


Fig. 1 - Research Process for the preparation of the strategy of development and increase of the performance for disabled employees

The strategy of development of disabled employees to sustain an increase of their performance focuses particularly on the correction of weak points and threats where there are any and on the explanation of

the phenomena where strong points and opportunities can be noticed. Therefore, as a human resource specialist, I provide the manager who intends to hire disabled personnel with a specific instrument of analysis, by means of which it is possible: to evaluate each of the mentioned criteria to see where there are wants and to make an analysis of amelioration of the identified deficient components. The strategy analyzed will be *applied* when the weak points and threats regarding the development of disabled employees will jeopardize the disabled employees' performance.

The strategic steps for development and increase of the disabled employees' performance are:

1. The determination of the objective's strategy: in this perspective the focus is on the development of the disabled employees which leads to an increase of their performance. We shall determine methods and development techniques for disabled employees which might lead to an increase of their performance.
2. The evaluation of disabled employees' performance at an incipient stage, prior to the application of the strategy. The determination of the level of disabled employees' yield and that of the managers' satisfaction in order to eliminate deficient elements and to enforce the new ones deemed necessary.
3. The selection of disabled employees with low performance and their adaptation to the specific and needs of the organization.
4. The implementation of necessary methods depending on the defective aspects presented by disabled employees.
5. Measuring the newly obtained results for the current performance with the results of the initially determined analysis by evaluating disabled employees' performance.
6. Possibilities to apply the strategy: (1) Convenient – which the employer desires because the results are exactly those expected, (2) Efficient – provided by better results than those expected by the manager (3) Inefficient – when the results obtained are below expectations and the strategy still needs to be applied .

The research strategy takes shape, from one organization to another, after analyzing its components.

The limitations and future research directions

Research limitations

The research results involved a series of important limitations for the analysis of the development and increase of disabled employees' performance. As a rule, the limitations of the research are of a methodological nature and include essential aspects articulated during the research. In addition, the limitations are part of the study cases we encountered. Because the area of the management of disabled human

resources is not yet very well developed we included from the very start a series of limitations of a procedural and documentary nature:

- *The literature in the field of disabled human resources management is not very vast.*
- *At a national level there aren't enough studies to attest the importance of developing disabled employees*
- *Another limitation of the research may be the use of selective research as a method of data collection for the companies located just in Iasi county.*
- *The research instrument was addressed only to employers*
- *We only operated with the quantitative data analysis, dropping the qualitative one altogether.*
- *Another limitation of the research is the impossibility of direct or indirect observation of the research.*

The documentary study attests that few researchers use quantitative research methods, reason for which we decided to make an objective analysis of the research without resorting to qualitative research methods.

Future research directions

The positive aspect of the research limitations is given by the tracing of future directions of research in the field. The impact of the limitations describes future research directions in the field of development and increase of disabled employees' performance. The future research directions are of a methodological nature and refer to both employers and employees, with or without disabilities, within Romanian organizations. Thus, the future research directions are:

- *Implementation, adaptation and application of strategy where possible to determine an improvement of the organizational environment regarding the development and increase of disabled employees' performance;*
- *The analysis of the development and increase of disabled employees' performance at the level off Moldova region or at a national level;*
- *A comparison of the situations appeared within Romanian organizations and those of developed European states.*
- *The orientation of the research towards disabled employees, not only towards the organizations' employers. In addition, the study may include employees without disabilities as well, in order to trace perceptions and perspectives for their disabled co-workers.*
- *Using other methods such as direct observation and / or indirect and / or interview (structured, semi-structured or non-structured) for identify the particularities regarding the development and increase of disabled employees' performance .*

The research directions form the basis of future studies in the field of human resources management and development and increase of disabled employees' performance of inside the organizational diversity. The description of possible directions may trigger an alarm to mobilize other researchers in the field of disabled human resources management.

References:

- Ali, M., L. Schur, and P. Clancik. "What types of jobs do people with disabilities want?" *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* Volume 21 (2010): 199 - 210.
- Barnes, C., and G. Mercer. "Disability, work and welfare: challenging the social exclusion of disabled people." *Work, Employment and Society* Volume 19, no. 3 (2005): 527 - 545.
- Barnes, C. „Extended review: disability and paid employment." *Work, Employment and Administration* Volume 13, no. 1 (1999): 147 - 149.
- Barrett, R. "Best disability employment practices: creating and implementing changes in recruiting and hiring." *Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management Journal*, August 2008.
- Bower, N. „Understanding barriers to online experience for people with physical and sensory disabilities using discursive social psychology." *Universal Access in the Information Society* Volume 9 (2010): 121 - 136.
- Browell, S. "Visual disability, learning and education - a practical approach." *Industrial and Commercial Training* Volume 30, no. 1 (1998): 24 - 29.
- Bruyere, S. M., W. A. Erickson, and S. VanLooy. "HR's role in managing disability in the workplace." *Employment Relations Today* Volume 27, no. 3 (2000): 47 - 66.
- Jaba, E., *Analiza statistica cu SPSS sub Windows*, Editura Polirom, 2004
- Jaba, E., *Statistica*, 3rd edition, Editura Economică, 2002
- Kulkarni, M., și R. Valk. "Don't ask, don't tell: Two views on human resource practices for people with disabilities." *IIMB Management Review* Volume 22 (2010): 137 - 146.
- Manolache, A., C. „Innovative techniques for developing disabled employee - Cost - Benefit Analize." *National Doctoral Seminar of Management and marketing* Volume 1 (2011): 172 - 177
- Schur, L. A., D. Kruse, and P. Blamck. "Corporate culture and the employment of persons with disability." *Behaviour Science Law* Volume 23 (2005): 3 - 20.
- Shier, M., J. R. Graham, and M. E. Jones. „Barriers to employment as experience by disabled people: a qualitative analysis in Calgary and Regina, Canada." *Disability Society* Volume 24, no. 1 (2009): 63 - 75.

Skedinger, P., and B. Widerstedt. "Cream skimming in employment programs for the disabled? Evidence from Sweden." *International Journal of Manpower* Volume 28, no. 8 (2007): 694 - 714.

Stone, D. L., and A. Colella. "A framework for studying the effects of disability on work experiences." *Academy of Management Review* Volume 21 (1996): 352 - 401.

Stone, D. L., and A. Colella. "A model of factors affecting the treatment of disabled individuals in organizations." *Academy Management Review* Volume 21, no. 2 (1996): 401-411.