

INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

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Abstract

The recruitment, selection, and training processes are key components in developing a professional workforce. Recruitment plays a crucial role in determining the quality of prospective employees in a company. Every individual has the right to work, including persons with disabilities. This study aims to explain the recruitment system for employees with disabilities at Barokah Motor in Ngawi. This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. The sample was selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. The data were analysed using the interactive model, including data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. The results show that Barokah Motor practices affirmative action for employees with disabilities by allocating one position per branch. The recruitment system for employees with disabilities at Barokah Motor follows the same procedural steps as that for other applicants.

Keywords: disability employment; inclusive recruitment; informal sector; recruitment system.

Abstrak

Proses rekrutmen, seleksi, dan pelatihan merupakan salah satu kunci utama dalam menciptakan sumber daya manusia yang profesional. Rekrutmen pada perusahaan menjadi salah satu proses penting guna menentukan baik atau tidaknya calon tenaga kerja yang akan bekerja pada perusahaan. Setiap orang berhak untuk mendapatkan pekerjaan termasuk penyandang disabilitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan sistem rekrutmen tenaga kerja disabilitas pada Barokah Motor di Kabupaten Ngawi. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Sampel yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah purposive sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan yaitu observasi, wawancara dan studi dokumentasi. Uji validitas yang digunakan yaitu triangulasi data berupa triangulasi sumber, triangulasi teknik, dan triangulasi waktu. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, penarikan kesimpulan dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya afirmasi terhadap tenaga kerja disabilitas di Barokah Motor dengan kuota satu orang pada setiap cabang. Sistem rekrutmen tenaga kerja disabilitas di Barokah Motor secara prosedural tidak ada perbedaan dengan pelamar lainnya.

Kata kunci: rekrutmen inklusif; sektor informal, sistem rekrutmen; tenaga kerja disabilitas.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive economic development is one of the key agendas in realizing social justice for all citizens, including persons with disabilities. Within this framework, the world of work holds a strategic role as a space for participation and empowerment that must not exclude any group. Unfortunately, the reality shows that persons with disabilities still face numerous barriers in accessing equal employment opportunities, both in the formal and informal sectors (World Health Organisation, 2011). In this

context, the recruitment process becomes a crucial initial stage to ensure that companies acquire human resources who are well-suited to organizational needs and capable of working productively. Recruitment is not merely about attracting job candidates; it also reflects the extent to which a company upholds the principles of equality and openness toward all societal groups, including individuals with disabilities (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2015). Recruitment, selection, and training processes are among the key components in developing a professional workforce (Kurnia & Santoso, 2018). Recruitment is a critical step for organisations to determine the suitability and potential of future employees. According to Kasmir (2016), recruitment refers to the activity of attracting applicants to apply to a company in line with the required qualifications. Similarly, Kaswan (2017) defines human resource recruitment as “the practices or activities conducted by organisations with the primary aim of identifying and attracting potential or qualified employees.” The benefits of recruitment, as stated by Kurnia and Santoso (2018), align with the principle of “The Right Man on The Right Place,” which means that the selection process aims to place the right person in the right position so that they can perform optimally and remain with the organization for a sustained period.

Labour recruitment is one of the key strategies for reducing unemployment in Indonesia and has consistently been a part of the government’s ongoing programs. According to data released by the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) in BRS No. 86/11/Th. XXIII, dated November 5, 2020, regarding the Labour Force Situation in August 2020, the total labour force in August 2020 reached 138.22 million people, an increase of 2.36 million compared to August 2019. The open unemployment rate (TPT) in August 2020 was 7.07%, rising by 1.84 percentage points from the previous year. In response to the increasing number of unemployed individuals, the government, in collaboration with the private sector, continues to make efforts to provide more employment opportunities as a means to reduce unemployment. However, the availability of jobs must be accompanied by a clear and effective recruitment system to ensure that the workforce is absorbed appropriately and efficiently.

The protection and guarantee of human rights are granted to all citizens, including those with disabilities. These rights are clearly regulated under Law Number 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, particularly Article 5, Paragraph 1, which outlines a set of rights that must be afforded to persons with disabilities, one of which is the right to employment. Furthermore, Article 53 of the same law stipulates that private companies are obligated to employ persons with disabilities in a minimum proportion of 1% of their total workforce.

Records from the Ministry of Manpower indicate that only around 1.2% of workers with disabilities have successfully been placed in the formal employment sector. According to data from the National Labour Force Survey, there are approximately 21.9 million working-age persons with disabilities in Indonesia, with only 10.8 million of them employed. These figures suggest that the employment quota regulation, as outlined in Law Number 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, has not yet been fully implemented. Accessibility in the labour sector has yet to provide sufficient space for

persons with disabilities, as many companies still lack understanding regarding appropriate job matching with the skills of persons with disabilities, infrastructure accessibility, public service access, and access to justice.

Recruitment serves as the initial stage in bringing in a workforce that meets organizational needs while aligning with the values of social inclusion. In practice, persons with disabilities often do not receive equal treatment during the recruitment process, both systemically and culturally. A study by Molefe and Mkabile (2022) in South Africa revealed that, despite the implementation of affirmative policies, recruitment processes still contain biases that hinder job seekers with disabilities. In Indonesia, research by Suparno and Handayani (2021) found that while some micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have started to provide opportunities for workers with disabilities, they still lack standardised and inclusive recruitment systems. Meanwhile, Mulyono (2020) asserted that although the informal sector is more flexible in hiring, it lacks regulation, making access for persons with disabilities heavily reliant on the personal initiatives of business owners. These studies highlight the importance of micro-level investigations to concretely understand how inclusive recruitment practices are implemented on the ground, particularly in the informal sector.

Although various studies have examined the access of persons with disabilities to employment, most have focused on the formal sector or large-scale companies. Research on inclusive recruitment practices within the informal sector, particularly among micro-enterprises in regions such as Ngawi, remains very limited. In fact, the informal sector serves as one of the largest absorbers of labour for people with disabilities in Indonesia. This research seeks to address that gap. Based on this context, the study aims to explore the recruitment system for workers with disabilities at a micro-scale informal enterprise, namely *Barokah Motor* dealership in Ngawi. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research investigates recruitment practices from the perspectives of the business owner, workers with disabilities, and non-disabled employees. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more inclusive and applicable recruitment practices within the informal employment sector.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. The research subjects included the business owner, employees with disabilities, and non-disabled employees at the *Barokah Motor* business unit. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, considering the respondents' direct involvement in the recruitment process and their work experiences. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time to maintain the credibility of the information obtained. Data were analysed using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The recruitment system for workers with disabilities at Barokah Motor generally follows the standard recruitment stages as outlined by Sinambela (2018), including the submission of application letters, background and reference checks, selection, interviews, health evaluations, and final decisions in the form of signing a work agreement. Although Barokah Motor operates as an informal business unit, its recruitment practices are not entirely traditional. Instead, they incorporate modern approaches, particularly in the initial job vacancy announcement phase. Job applications at Barokah Motor are received through job vacancy announcements shared via social media. This indicates a commitment to open access and the utilisation of digital technology to reach potential applicants. Such a process deviates from the common patterns in the informal sector, which often rely on personal connections or internal referrals. By leveraging social media, Barokah Motor provides broader opportunities for all applicants, including persons with disabilities, to access employment information on an equal footing.

The selection and interview processes are conducted directly by the business owner. According to Siagian (2015), interviews and background checks are critical stages in identifying the right candidates for specific job positions. At Barokah Motor, certain adjustments are made during the selection process for applicants with disabilities, particularly by considering their physical capacity, skills, and appropriate job placement. For instance, applicants with mild physical disabilities are assigned to administrative or light cleaning tasks, rather than technical positions that require high mobility. In practice, there is no explicit discrimination during the interview process. However, the company implements an internal quota system, one worker with a disability per Barokah Motor branch, which serves as both an affirmative action and the company's commitment to promoting workplace inclusion. This practice aligns with Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, which mandates that private companies employ at least 1% of their workforce from the disability community.

The recruitment process at Barokah Motor also reflects the principle of The Right Man in the Right Place, as stated by Kurnia and Santoso (2018), which emphasises placing the right person in the right position. Although persons with disabilities are given affirmative opportunities in employment, their placement still considers the alignment between individual capabilities and job requirements. This is crucial to ensure that recruited workers can contribute optimally and remain in the company for the long term. However, despite the absence of formal training systems or specific mentoring programs for employees with disabilities, Barokah Motor demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering an adaptive and supportive work environment. Adaptations are carried out directly in the workplace through open communication among the business owner, coworkers, and workers with disabilities. This informal approach offers flexibility in task adjustments and helps cultivate a culturally inclusive work atmosphere. Moreover, the recruitment and job placement system at Barokah Motor is responsive to individual conditions and capacities, although it has not yet been documented in a written standard operating procedure (SOP). This indicates that inclusive practices in the informal sector can evolve organically, grounded in human values and mutual trust.

The presence of a performance evaluation system at Barokah Motor reflects the company's commitment to maintaining professional performance standards, including for employees with disabilities. Evaluations are conducted periodically and informally, relying on direct observation by supervisors as well as feedback from customers and coworkers. Although not yet fully documented in the form of written standard operating procedures, this practice has proven helpful in monitoring employee performance and adjusting work tasks based on individual abilities. This aligns with the findings of Lindsay et al. (2018), who emphasise that flexible, interaction-based evaluation practices are particularly effective in the context of disability-inclusive employment, especially in micro enterprises with simple organisational structures. Furthermore, the existence of such an evaluation system helps strengthen the self-confidence of workers with disabilities and enhances their sense of belonging in the workplace. Employees with disabilities are not judged solely by their limitations, but rather by their contributions and loyalty to the company. According to Schur et al. (2009), when organisations integrate employees with disabilities into an equal evaluation system alongside other workers, it increases motivation, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. Therefore, the practices at Barokah Motor serve as a positive example of how informal sector enterprises can still implement inclusive and adaptive evaluation principles that have a meaningful impact on workforce performance.

In addition to providing employment opportunities, Barokah Motor also demonstrates an adaptive attitude toward the conditions of workers with disabilities by assigning job placements that align with each individual's capabilities. This strategy reflects the principle of job accommodation, which refers to adjustments in the work environment to enable employees with disabilities to perform productively. According to Lengnick-Hall et al. (2008), providing appropriate accommodations not only enhances the productivity of workers with disabilities but also strengthens employee loyalty and bolsters the company's image as an inclusive entity. In practice, although Barokah Motor does not yet have formal SOP documents regarding disability recruitment, its flexibility reflects a needs-based approach that is both humane and contextual. Furthermore, social interactions between workers with and without disabilities at Barokah Motor occur harmoniously, indicating the organic development of an inclusive workplace culture. This aligns with findings by Lindsay et al. (2018), which emphasize that social acceptance in the workplace is a key factor in the successful integration of employees with disabilities often more so than formal policies. The presence of open communication, mutual respect, and teamwork among employees demonstrates that workplace inclusion is not solely determined by regulation, but rather by the human values embedded within the organizational culture.

The findings of this study indicate that Barokah Motor has implemented fundamental principles of inclusive recruitment, particularly by opening up job opportunities for persons with disabilities through social media platforms. This aligns with the ILO (2015) view that open access to job vacancy information is a crucial first step in creating a fair and equitable recruitment process. Although it does not possess a highly formalised system like large companies, the flexible approach adopted by Barokah Motor offers broader participation opportunities for prospective employees with disabilities. As stated

by Shakespeare and Watson (2002), genuine inclusion does not always depend on rigid systems but rather on the willingness and openness of the work environment itself. In this context, the existence of an internal disability quota at each Barokah Motor branch reflects a tangible commitment to workforce diversity, although there remains room for the development of a more structured system.

The recruitment system for workers with disabilities, as described by the three informants, presents a positive picture of how inclusive recruitment is implemented at Barokah Motor. According to Sinambela (2018), a well-executed recruitment process will result in hiring employees who are well-suited to the needs of the company. Overall, the recruitment process at Barokah Motor demonstrates sound stages that enable the company to place the right individuals in the appropriate job roles. The placement of workers with disabilities in positions that match their abilities represents a commendable step. The employment opportunities offered by Barokah Motor, combined with a recruitment procedure that is not overly burdensome, bring new hope for persons with disabilities in gaining access to decent employment.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the recruitment system for workers with disabilities at Barokah Motor, an informal business unit in Ngawi, has adopted inclusive principles in practice, despite the absence of formal written policies or standard procedures. The recruitment process generally follows common stages, including job vacancy announcements through social media, selection based on basic qualifications, and job placement that considers the alignment between individual capabilities and company needs. Affirmative action policies, such as the allocation of a specific quota for workers with disabilities in each branch, demonstrate a growing awareness and commitment to the empowerment of vulnerable groups. Although no formal training or structured mentoring is in place, the work environment at Barokah Motor is adaptive and supportive. Open communication among business owners, non-disabled employees, and employees with disabilities plays a key role in the successful social integration and productivity of the workforce.

These findings affirm that the informal sector holds significant potential in providing equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, provided that business owners possess the willingness, inclusive values, and social awareness. Therefore, it is essential for the government and policymakers to offer support and guidance to informal sector actors so that such good practices can be more widely replicated and sustained over time.

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