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Study on the retention rate of workers with disabilities

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Submitted to : Viet Nam Assistance for the Handicapped

Prepared by : Phung Thi Yen



Friendly working environment



H.T.K.L, Danang



L.T.V, a person with hearing impairment, works as a designer



N.T.H, a person with low vision

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We are looking forward to getting feedback from all interested readers!

The Evaluation Team

Team Leader: Phung Thi Yen



An enterprise office in Da Nang



D.V.N, Son Tra district, Danang

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BREC	Blue Ribbon Employer Council
DOLISA	Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
DPO	Organizations of persons with disabilities
MOLISA	Ministry of Labors, Invalids and Social Affairs
ILO	The International Labor Organization
TOR	Term of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VNAH	Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	2
Executive summary	5
I. Introduction and Background	8
1.1. The information of project	8
1.2. Study significance	8
1.3. Study objectives	9
1.4. Methodology	9
1.5. Data management and analysis	12
1.6. Scope and limitation of this report	12
II. Job leaving, Retention rate and cost of turnover	13
2.1. Job leaving rate and retention rate among persons with disabilities	13
2.2. Influences of job leaving rate to employers	15
III. Reasons why employees with disabilities leaves jobs – from the perspective of insiders ...	16
3.1. Reasons for leaving jobs – from the perspective of workers	16
3.2. Reasons to leave jobs – from the perspective of employers and stakeholders	20
IV. What factors promote workers with disabilities’ commitment with their jobs?.....	23
V. What could employers and stakeholders do to improve workers with disabilities’ commitment and retention to an enterprise?.....	24
5.1. Improvement of working environments.....	25
5.2. Improvement of working conditions	28
5.3. Fair pays based on capacity and application of social welfare policies	29
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations	31
6.1. Conclusions	31
6.2. Recommendations	32
References	34

Executive summary

The survey on the retention rate of workers with disabilities at their workplaces was conducted in three regions (Hanoi, Da Nang and Dong Nai) from June to August 2014. The objectives of this survey were **to understand the reasons why persons with disabilities left their jobs, and to provide solutions and recommendations for both employers and employees with disabilities to increase the job retention rate.**

The study was designed by the principles of qualitative methodology and a purposeful sampling technique. There were a total of **76 respondents** who actively participated in this study, in which **women** accounted for **54%**. These included **50 employees with disabilities** having left/moved jobs, 20 employers and 6 stakeholders.

Job retention and leaving rates among workers with disabilities

This research found that, the job retention rate among employees with disabilities was higher than those without disabilities (nearly 100% and 97% respectively). Accordingly, average annual job leaving rates (in 2013) were 0.1% for employees with disabilities and 3% for employees without disabilities. These figures were observed from 10% of BREC companies. Companies report that, retention rate trend in recent years (2013-2014) were stable due to the difficult economic situation and fewer employees leaving jobs, generally.

Turnover cost. Most surveyed enterprises do not count the cost to employers when employees left their jobs. These costs are more difficult to quantify but they are very real. Turnover and job leavings cannot be avoided by all enterprises. Lessons learned from some companies surveyed indicate that, employees with disabilities have better retention rates, reducing the high cost of turnover and it is also recommended that employers could avoid turnover by doing the right things for all employees.

The reasons to leave jobs

There were many reasons for workers with disabilities to leave jobs, three of which most mentioned were (i) **salaries** (44%), (ii) **unfriendly working environments and discrimination** (40%) and (iii) **inappropriate working condition** (30%). Though dissatisfied salaries were more mentioned, unfriendly working environment was the original cause. Low pays would make workers move jobs when possible but unfriendly working environment and conditions made them leave jobs more quickly.

Other reasons making workers with disabilities leave jobs included inappropriate work (16%); inconvenient distance and transportation (12%); work under high pressure and times (over 8

hours per day), disadvantaged family circumstances or poor health conditions (8%); inappropriate professions or lack of social welfare policies (6%); and others (10%).

Contrary with the workers' views, employers and stakeholders believed that the reasons for workers with disabilities leaving jobs were due to (in order from the highest to lowest rates): **(i) personal circumstances, (ii) inappropriate working conditions, and (iii) working environment.**

The risk of workers leaving jobs would be higher if they were not provided with guidance or coaching during the first period at work (for the first 3 months).

74% of surveyed workers objected to the opinion that "employees with disabilities often leave/turn over the job because they had bad attitudes toward the companies, or did not understand the employers' requirements". While most of surveyed employers, 64% agreed with that opinion, only 35% (05 employers) disagreed. Five of the employers having positive views on workers with disabilities were international companies.

Factors promoting the employees' commitments to the jobs

Friendly working environment and appropriate working conditions were fundamental reasons promoting workers with disabilities' commitment or satisfaction with the jobs.

Health conditions, high salaries, convenient distance and transportation from home to the workplace were fostering factors but mentioned less than the others mentioned above.

Solutions to improve workers with disabilities' commitment and retention to their jobs

Solutions mostly recommended by the workers, employers and stakeholders to improve workers with disabilities' commitment and retention to their jobs included (i) Improvement of working environment towards friendly and equal orientation (90%); (ii) Improvement of material facilities and working conditions to make it appropriate for workers with disabilities (60%); and (iii) Application of equal payment and rewarding based on their capacity and of insurance policies (48%).

Regarding the development of friendly working environments, it was recommended by stakeholders that, at the recruitment stage, employers should employ persons with disabilities based on their rights, not for charity purposes. Equal treatment was also the "key" to success by employers having lowest rates of workers leaving/turn over jobs (an IT company in Da Nang, a helmet company in Hanoi). There was no discrimination in a friendly working environment.

Improvement of working conditions was understood as flexible working time for workers with disabilities because of their difficulty in movement, and improvement of material facilities such as accessible toilets, aisles, motorbike parking areas or assistive devices, etc. Those changes would not only reflect the employers' responsibilities but also their respect of the workers' rights.

Equal pay based on workers' capacity and basic social welfare were necessary and sufficient conditions to promote the workers' commitment with employers.

In order to increase productive level and reduce turnover costs of BREC members, this survey recommends employers to increase the recruitment of employees with disabilities and improve employee's retention in the work place.

Apart from recommending a focus on employers, the survey team believed that BREC should consider solutions toward workers with disabilities such as providing capacity training courses on life skills, job seeking skills, communication skills at the workplace, or teamwork skills, etc. Training courses on soft skills will help people with disabilities get more occupation opportunity and increase retention rate in the workplace.

I. Introduction and Background

1.1. The information of project

In 2007, Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) joined in partnership with Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) to develop a national employer council which was named the Blue Ribbon Employer Council (BREC). Since then, BREC has been actively involved in the promotion of employment opportunities for people with disabilities through various activities including job fairs, awards and recognition events to recognize employers hiring workers with disabilities, and employees with disabilities, raising general public awareness on employment for persons with disabilities. During this period, BREC efforts have resulted in more than 2,000 people with disabilities obtaining employment and more than 600 persons with disabilities entering vocational training. BREC has been funded through a grant from USAID through December of 2014. The project has supported BREC to become an employer-based organization that has capacity to provide needed services to its business members and persons with disabilities, and generate funding for its operation.

In 2013 BREC conducted a survey on labor trends; job requirements and employment in Hanoi for people with disabilities in order to help persons with disabilities to have a clearer view on which positions that employers' need and which ones recruit workers with disabilities.

In 2014, VNAH and BREC continue to conduct research on the retention rate of workers with disabilities in the workplace in Hanoi. This study aimed provision of recommendations and solutions for both employers and workers with disabilities on how to keep people with disabilities on their jobs.

1.2. Study significance

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Vietnam has a very large number of enterprises specifically for people with disabilities and many enterprises have recruitment of both employees with/without disabilities. Over 8,000 people with disabilities are employed in the enterprises specifically for people with disabilities¹. Unfortunately, at present Vietnam data of retention rate/job leaving rate among employees with disabilities are not available. Similarly, searching internal studies related to this theme is difficult. This survey on workers with disabilities retention rate supported by VNAH/VCCI/BREC seems like **a first study** in

¹Sources: ILO, Employment-related services for persons with disabilities in Vietnam

the context of limited information on retention rate as well as job leaving among employees with disabilities.

Survey results will help employers to know how to improve the retention rate with workers with disabilities and improve levels of productivity. This survey is documentation significance for employers who want to know why their employees left their job. This issue might be raised in some exit interviews but never adequate. Furthermore, this research is a valuable reference for other studies related to retention rate, turnover cost, jobs leaving, particularly for quantitative studies in this field in the future.

1.3. Study objectives

The key objective of the survey as given in the TOR was to understand the reason **why people with disabilities leave their jobs and to provide solutions and recommendations for both employers and workers with disabilities to increase the retention rate.**

In relation to program objectives, the study objectives can be mapped as:



1.4. Methodology

Study questions

Based on the purposes and study objectives, three main study questions given as below:

- ✓ What are the causes making workers with disabilities leave jobs? Of these, which are the primary ones?
- ✓ What factors make workers with disabilities feel satisfied with the jobs and encourage them to be more committed to employers?
- ✓ What could stakeholders and employers do to improve the workers' commitment and retention to the enterprises?

Responses were recognized from the view of insiders, including workers with disabilities having left jobs, employers and stakeholders.

Approach of Information collection

The research construct for the study has been designed in a two phase approach:



Desk study: The consultant undertook a literature review of the program’s available documents including all BREC concept papers, other documents related to the study objectives, such as survey on labor trends, research reports related to workers with disabilities by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) like employment-related services for persons with disabilities in Vietnam and a report survey on Vocational and Employment for persons with disabilities in Vietnam. For a list of reference documents see Appendix of the report.

Qualitative study. Mainly individual in-depth interviews and case studies were used for gathering information with three target groups including workers with disabilities, BREC companies and non BREC companies, and stakeholders. 70 individuals had in depth interviews and 6 of the 20 employers had shortened interviews to find out the retention rate. All discussions with persons with disabilities took place in private rooms to ensure that interviewees could easily express their opinions as well as talk about the reasons why they left jobs or turn over.

Sample size and sample characteristic

Sample size

Purpose sampling methods were applied in this survey due to challenges of mobility of target groups. Based on the list of persons with disabilities provided by BREC, 50 people were selected randomly. The study team selected a back up of 10 cases to each survey site (Hanoi, Danang, and Dong Nai) in addition to missing or absent cases.

The consent mentioned the study objectives as well as commitment kept anonymous ensure that to limit an affect to employment has been sent to all participants before investigators met and interviews.

Total number of sample size was 76 (N=76), 54% of whom were female. There were 50 employees with disabilities and 20 employers and 6 stakeholders.

Table 1: Sample size

Location	Target group			Total
	Worker with disabilities	Employers	Stakeholders	
Ha noi	25	11	6	42
Da Nang	10	6	0	16
Dong Nai	15	3	0	18
Total	50	20	6	76

Sample characteristic

Among workers with disabilities (N=50), 74% were persons with mobility disabilities, 22% were those with hearing impairment, 2 % were those with autism and 2% were those with low vision.

One third (15/50) were those with unemployment. 70% remaining (45/50) have been working fulltime. The types of jobs undertaken by the employees with disabilities were diverse. They included supervisor, shopkeeper, waiter, baker, customer service staff, delivery man, fashion designer, graphic designer, web designer, information technology (IT) network administrator, photoshop technician, order processor, accountant, cashier, purchaser, security officer, maintenance technician. Please note that, this survey only interviewed workers/employees who left their jobs in the past period.

There were 19/20 BREC companies and 1 non – BREC companies, of which 50% (10/20) of international companies and 50% national companies/organization. The surveyed BREC companies were selected randomly from the list of members in three regions (Hanoi, Danang and Dongnai). The non – BREC members were included in this survey in order to compare the rate of employees with disabilities leaves/turn-over between enterprises with and without BREC.

Stakeholders participated in this survey including representatives of MOLISA/DOLISA, Hanoi DP, and organizations working with people with disabilities.

1.5. Data management and analysis

After data collection, all interview minutes were checked for completeness, coding and processing by NVIVO software 10.0. Two thirds of interviews were tape recorded. One third of interviews were manually recorded due to confounding sounds at interview sites or informants refusal.

As mentioned above, 14/20 companies had in depth interviews conducted. In order to get significant statistics of the retention rate and job leaving rates, this survey conducted further rapid interviews with 6 enterprises. Thus, the figure of retention rate and job leaving rates were calculated based on the quantitative sample of 20 companies. Statistical base on 20 companies (equally 10% of total BREC members) allow us to get confidence level at 95%. However, most figures remaining (such as reasons for leaving/reasons for staying with job, solution to improve commitment with employment) is based on the qualitative sample of 14 enterprises plus 50 workers with disabilities and 6 stakeholders (equally N=70).

1.6. Scope and limitation of this report

The information provided in the report was qualitative evidence of the reasons why workers with disabilities left or turned over jobs, and what efforts would be needed to retain them working longer for employers. This picture was drawn primarily from the perspectives of insiders including employees and employers. The picture was also seen from the perspective of stakeholders.

The research used qualitative methodology to get knowledge on sensitive issues (the reasons left/quit job). We have strong belief that this qualitative survey is significant and valuable for the quantitative studies related to retention rate surveys in the future.

The biggest challenge for the survey team was the respondents' changes of contact details (phone numbers, emails and even addresses). Besides, the criteria conditions given in this survey were for interviews with workers with disabilities who have ever worked for BREC companies or who have been working for BREC companies. All workers with disabilities have experience and left their jobs in the past period. With strict conditions, searching respondents in the short time was a big challenge for the survey team. Thus, the survey duration had to be extended to two weeks longer than expected.

Despite that, after 1,5 months, 96% of the expected sampling size (48 respondents) was achieved. The survey team discussed with BREC to have sampling size conditions expanded.

Accordingly, this survey included 48 workers with disabilities who worked for BREC's employers and 2 of those having never worked for BREC's employers.

II. Job leaving, Retention rate and cost of turnover

2.1. Job leaving rate and retention rate among persons with disabilities

The survey results with 50 workers with disabilities revealed that, on average, workers with disabilities left jobs 2.17 times since he/she started working. The highest frequency was 6 times and while the least was once (see Table 2). Those leaving/turn-over jobs the most were among workers with hearing impairment and unskilled workers doing unstable jobs (shopkeepers at clothes shops or pharmacies, selling lottery, painting, making bird cages, and other seasonal work, etc.). On average, workers with hearing impairment had left jobs 3 times, while those with mobility disabilities did 2.2 times.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Times left job	46	1	6	2.17	1.510
Last job working experience	21	1	13	3.67	2.989
Total working experience	40	1	24	5.98	5.166

Source: Survey results

Over half (52% or 24/46) of surveyed workers had left jobs once since they started working. Nine persons (19.6%) had moved jobs from twice to three times; 12 (26%) persons did it from four to five times; and only one (2.2%) did six times.

The table above shows that the average job retention duration was 3.67 (or almost 4) years. The workers' working experiences were almost six (5.98) years, on average.

Please note that, data regarding how often the people change jobs differ with data of retention rate documented by companies. Because, each employee may have worked for many companies/workshops before they worked for BREC companies. Besides, unstable job negative affect to change job frequently. Survey results indicated about 60% (30/50) of workers have experiences with unstable jobs before such as shopkeeper, waiter, baker, customer service staff, delivery man...That is why the times left job of workers with disabilities averaged 2.17 times.

This research identified that, the job leaving rate among workers without disabilities was higher than those with disabilities. Accordingly, the rate of workers without disabilities leaving jobs in 2013 averaged 3%, meanwhile this ratio is 0.1% for those with disabilities. In general, the figure observed from 20 BREC companies showed the job leaving rate among workers with/without disabilities was relatively low.

Typically, the job leaving rate in private companies in Danang city, an enterprise employing the most workers with disabilities (70% of total employees) have only one worker left job in 2013. Other companies working in the field of helmet assembling in Hanoi shows only a few people with disabilities (1%) have left over the past 5 years.

“I can confirm that we have had an exceedingly low turnover rate amongst our persons with disabilities (less than 1%). Only a few people with disabilities have left over the past 5 years, usually for family circumstances or personal health reasons...” Sources: A.I.P, Hanoi.

The survey found that job leaving rates are not related to number of disabled people working in the company. Some enterprises in Dongnai have relatively large number of employees from 900 to 25,000, of which, workers with disabilities counted for 1%, job leaving rates was quite low (0.02%). Other small companies have 10 – 30 employees, of which ratio of workers with disabilities fluctuate from 20%-80%, leaving jobs averaging 2% in 2013. A medium-sized business in Hanoi with about 380 employees also reports that, leaving jobs among disabled people about 1% and 8-10% for people without disabilities over the past three years.

Based on the average annual job leaving rate reported by each employer, it can be seen that the job retention rate was relatively high (nearly 100% among workers with disabilities and about 97% among those without disabilities). These indicate working environment of companies joined in this survey is the ideal destination for many workers with disabilities.

According to a study on employees with disabilities conducted in US in 2002², it was indicated that after one year of employment, the retention rate of persons with disabilities was 85 per cent. Findings from the survey in Hanoi, Da Nang and Dong Nai were of higher proportions to those of the study in the U.S. in 2002. Unfortunately, currently³, there have not been any statistics of job leaving or job retention rate among persons with disabilities. Thus, there are no data available locally for comparisons or references.

²An American survey on Disability Employment, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=18>

³Currently: time of the survey being conducted in the three regions, from June to August 2014.

2.2. Influences of job leaving rate to employers

It was reported by the employers that the average annual job leaving rate of over 10% was a considerable number. However, it should not be too worried if the average annual job leaving rate was under 5%. It was reported by a small fashion business in Hanoi that, if a worker left jobs, the company lost about 2,000,000 VND (almost \$100 USD) on costs for training (for at least 2 months), interviewing, recruiting for replacement, and compensation for others who had to double their strengths and times for work, etc.

It was complained by some employers in computing and advertisement designing with 380 staff that, the company's production would be badly affected if the average annual job leaving rate among its personnel was 10% (i.e. about 38 persons left jobs annually).

"We haven't been able to calculate a specific number that we have to pay when staffs leave jobs, but we are sure that it would affect the production performance because we have to return clients' orders on a daily basis. When too many staff left jobs, we could not return all the orders and sometimes lost our prestige in the clients. The production section had to encourage other staff to work overtime, resulting in increases of bonuses and other administrative costs, etc. That could not be solved right away because it took time to recruit new staffs." Source: N.T.H, HR manager of an International company in Ha Noi.

Most companies surveyed do not count the cost that employer has to pay when employees left jobs. These costs are more difficult to quantify but they are very real. The cost of job leaving or turnover includes at least 6 items (please see the picture)



In general, turnover cost cannot be avoided. Lessons learned from an IT company joined in

this survey shows that employees with disabilities have better retention rates, reducing the high cost of turnover. That's why, this company planned to have 40% of employees with disabilities. This recommends employers can avoid the turnover cost by doing the right things for employee.

III. Reasons why employees with disabilities leaves jobs – from the perspective of insiders

3.1. Reasons for leaving jobs – from the perspective of workers

It was revealed from the survey that there were many reasons leading to the decision to quit a job. But what was the main reason? Was it caused by the workers themselves or by the employers? The interviews with 50 workers with disabilities in three cities (Hanoi, Da Nang and Dong Nai) revealed the following main reasons:

Salary – the fundamental reason to leave a job

Salary was one of the reasons to leave jobs mostly mentioned by the workers involved in this survey. The reasons included: small pay was not enough for basic living needs; pays unequal among those at the same positions; or late pays or workers having to wait for several months before getting paid, etc.

Nearly half (44% or 22/50) of respondents were not satisfied with the pays that they received. As surveyed, the pays that the persons with disabilities received did not meet their basic living needs such as foods, accommodation (house renting) or transportation.

”The too small salary (3,500,000/month) did not meet the basic needs of myself and my family.” Source: K.,D.T, Hanoi.

For those leaving jobs because of low pays, it was the employees who made decisions to quit jobs. Notably, 81% (18/22) of those quitting jobs because of low salaries were employees without labor contracts, social or health insurances.

Apart from low salaries, pay unequal among those at the same positions or unworthy of the workers’ qualifications were also reasons making workers with disabilities leave their jobs.

”Before I worked as an online marketing officer. The employer was my acquaintance but I didn’t like working there because of a lot of hard-to-say problems like unclear pays, and others. I found it hard to talk with my acquaintance about those sensitive problems and wanted to leave to work for strangers, which made me feel more comfortable and fair-minded.”

Source: N.T.H, Hanoi.

”I quit the job though being promoted to work as a foreman because my salary was not improved. The other foreman was paid in USD while I was paid in VND.” Source: N.V.H, Dong Nai.

Salary was an important issue being taken into consideration by not only workers with disabilities but all employees. However, it was not the decisive reason to quit a job. Most of those participating in this survey reported that salary was only a part of the reason making them leave jobs because both employers and employees had agreed on the salary at the beginning. The original cause was because the pay they received was unequal compared to others' at the same positions or to their efforts.

Unfriendly working environment – the most important reason to quit a job

Unfriendly working environment was also an important reason to leave a job, as confirmed by nearly 40% of the respondents (20/50), which was a relatively equivalent rate of those leaving jobs because of low or unequal salaries. In most cases, workers with disabilities left a job because of multiple reasons. Most of respondents gave more than three reasons. Being asked to put the reasons in order of importance, "unfriendly working environment" was always put in number one (as the decisive cause).

Characteristics of an unfriendly working environment described by workers with disabilities included:

- ✓ There was discrimination among colleagues and from employers towards employees with disabilities;
- ✓ There was no understanding or sympathy between staff and managers or supervisors;
- ✓ There was severe competition;
- ✓ There was no equality in distribution of tasks and benefits;
- ✓ They were scolded and shouted at by the employers;
- ✓ They were forced to overwork by their managers;
- ✓ They were looked at with a feeling of pity by their colleagues;
- ✓ It was difficult for them to integrate with their colleagues.

However employers were self-motivated to employ workers with disabilities but employees still felt being discriminated at the workplace.

"...I quit because of the employers' discriminated attitudes and treatment. They just cared about their business and did not care about workers with disabilities. They said what could you do with such arms and legs...." Source: D.H.Q, Da Nang.

There was also discrimination among colleagues:

"When I worked at the company, others often whispered to each other "how this girl could work with such disabilities", sometimes stole a glance at me, or observed each of my

gestures... Source: P.T.Q, Dong Nai.

Discrimination toward persons with disabilities seemed to be more prevalent in local enterprises. On the contrary, those used to work for foreign or foreign-invested enterprises did not face the difficulty in the working environment. They still highly valued the working environments in those enterprises even when having left jobs. ”

“...I have worked for four different companies. But I was most impressive with CL a foreign company that i had a chance to work with. Before getting the job, I told the Director that I would be able work for them for three months, because I will study overseas in Japan in September. I highly valued the company’s Director’s attitude as he has given me the best working experiences so far. I worked there and saw that everyone was respectful to each other....” Source: N.Tr.D, Ha Noi.

The survey revealed that workers with hearing impairments complained more about working environments than other disability groups. Over 91% (10/11) of workers with hearing impairment said that they left jobs because of unfriendly working environments. These respondents also noted that most of the enterprises that they left were Vietnamese enterprises and small businesses. It was especially difficult for persons with disabilities to communicate with employers and colleagues at the workplace.

Sharing the point of view, stakeholders surveyed also said that working environment was the fundamental cause for persons with disabilities to quit, leave or move jobs.

“...Working environment is very important. Persons with disabilities already feel a complex. Thus, they will leave jobs immediately if they are discriminated. Do you know why employers with disabilities are often close with their employees though their pays are not high? Because they are both persons with disabilities and have an empathy to each other....” Source: an organization in Hanoi .

Unsafe working environment not only make workers with disabilities feel anxious but also made their families worried. This was the reason that was popularly mentioned by workers with disabilities.

“...As my daughter has communication difficulty, she can find manual jobs only. She (a person with hearing impairment) worked for an incense business. The work was very noxious and affected on health. Despite all that, the business owner often scolded and discouraged employees. We did not care much about her earnings and told her to quit the job because of such situation....” Source: Mother of H.T.M.H (a person with hearing impairment), Hanoi.

Inappropriate working conditions – the third reason to quit jobs

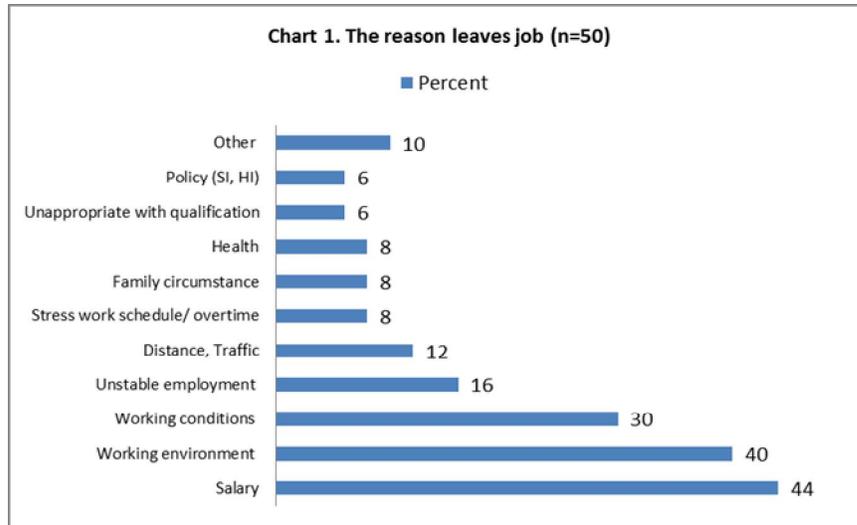
Working conditions are understood as material facilities, machines, and equipment supporting jobs; working conditions also include working areas, spaces, and toilets. It is easy for persons without disabilities to overcome poor working conditions. However, it is a big challenge for persons with disabilities.

30% (15/50) respondents left jobs for inappropriate working conditions. Workers with disabilities in industrial zones in Dong Nai clearly stated that working conditions were one of the three causes making them leave their jobs. Even when they were satisfied with the salaries, they still had to give up because it was difficult to move around in the work places. Inconvenient spaces for persons with disabilities to move around in the work place made those with mobility disabilities decide to leave jobs though they had tried their utmost. Some enterprises employed persons with visual impairment but did not actively provide assistive working equipments (the installation of assistive software on computers for persons with visual impairment because the employers were afraid of the noise making others annoyed or viruses being spread to the LAN network. At least two representatives of two enterprises showed their anxiety about that issue though they were employing workers with disabilities. When the employers were inflexible in management and did not support employees for their best work performance, it was the reason for the workers to leave the employers. It was recommended that the installation of JAWS⁴, a computer screen reader program for blind and users with visual impairment, would be allowable without affecting others by using headphones..

After working conditions, other reasons with less frequency of confirmation (or being reported by under 12% of respondents) included:

- ✓ Unstable jobs and inconvenient distance to travel from home to workplace (12% or 6/50);
- ✓ Close working time, strict management, family circumstances and health conditions (8% or 4/50);
- ✓ Inappropriate jobs, no application of social or health insurances, no policies to properly commend, reward, or encourage staff (6% or 3/50);
- ✓ Other reasons: no opportunities for further trainings or promotion at work, strikes by workers (in Dong Nai), or staff reductions by employers (10% or 5/50).

⁴**JAWS** (*Job Access with Speech*) is the best computer screen reader program blind and users with visual impairment to read the screen. This software is written in 17 languages



In short, from the workers’ perspective, three main reasons for persons with disabilities leaving/moving jobs included: (i) inappropriate pays (ii) unfriendly working environments, and (iii) inappropriate working conditions. It means that, from the workers’ perspective, the reasons making them leave jobs were from employers, not from themselves, because employers were not really supportive to persons with disabilities by improving working facilities, building friendly working environments, or paying equal salaries.

3.2. Reasons to leave jobs – from the perspective of employers and stakeholders

Almost contrary to the perspective of the workers, employers and stakeholders believed that reasons for workers with disabilities to leave jobs included (in order): **(1) because of themselves (personal reasons), (2) inappropriate working conditions, and (3) working environments** (see the chart 2 below):

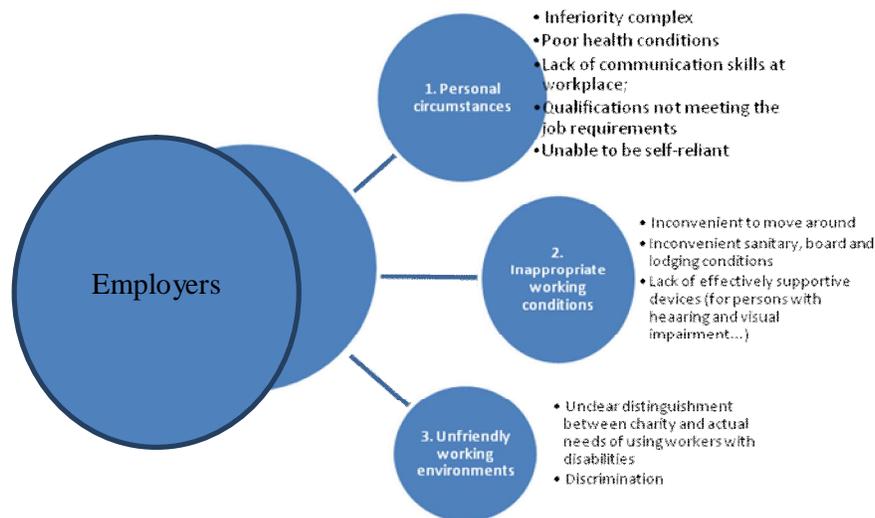


Chart 2. Reasons to leave jobs

The first reason as **”personal circumstances”** described by employers and stakeholders included:

- ✓ Felt inferiority complex about their disabilities, making them unbrave to better themselves; was ready for ”giving up” for simple reasons;
- ✓ Lack of communication skills at workplace;
- ✓ Did not meet the employers’ requirements;
- ✓ Poor health conditions;
- ✓ Got married, moved accommodation, had to take care of children;
- ✓ Those from rich families relied on their families and had no urge for improvement;

It was reported by 6 employers in Da Nang and Dong Nai that leaving jobs for personal reasons was more common among female than male workers. Sometimes, female persons with disabilities were working but then had to leave because of further distance from home to workplace after getting married or having babies while their husbands, who were persons with disabilities also, could still work.

There were different views between employers and employees about the common reasons to leave jobs

All respondents of the survey were asked a situational question, which was “Some people think that, employees with disabilities often left the job because they had bad attitude with the company and did not understand the employers’ requirements. How do you think about that?” The survey result showed that the 74% of surveyed workers objected to that opinion, while fewer than 10% (8 persons) agreed or partially agreed. Meanwhile, 64% of employers “partially agreed” or “agreed”, and 36% (5 persons), who were representatives of foreign invested enterprises, “disagreed”.

Table 2 - Employers’ and employees’ views on reasons to leave jobs

Answers	Employees with disabilities		Employers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Partially agree	5	10	6	42.9
Agree	3	6	3	21.4
Neutral	5	10	0	0.0
Disagree	37	74	5	35.7
Total	50	100	14	100

Source: survey result

It seems that employers and employees had contradicted views when identifying the reasons for a worker with disabilities to leave jobs. Does it mean that the actual reasons were not reported by the workers to employers, especially with such sensitive reasons as salaries or their dissatisfaction about inequality in distribution of benefits among employees? Or might it be the workers’ tendency to maintain good relationship with employers instead of leaving bad impressions so that sensitive reasons regarding salaries were hidden?

“Some people think that, employees with disabilities often left the job because they had bad attitude with the company or did not understand requirements of employer. How do you think about that?”

Under the workers’ perspective	Under the employers’ perspective
<p><i>”I disagreed with this opinion. Persons with disabilities are well aware of themselves. Thus, they always try their best to work when having a job. They even work better than those without disabilities.”</i> Source: N.M.C, Dong Nai.</p>	<p><i>”...I partially agreed. Our company has met some similar cases...”</i> Source: HH Ltd. Co., Hanoi.</p>
<p><i>”I disageed with this opinion. Some persons with mental impairment might have bad behaviors or poor awareness, but most of persons with disabilities tend to better themselves to find better jobs... They always do their best.”</i> Source: N.N.H, Hanoi.</p>	<p><i>” I ageed with this opinion. Some persons came to our company for probation but actively withdrew after a few days when seeing that they were not qualified for the jobs.”</i> Source: N.V.T, HG Joint-Stock company, Da Nang.</p>
<p><i>”No. Persons with disabilities are always very hard-working when having a stable job.</i> Source: N.Q.K, Da Nang.</p>	<p><i>”I disagreed. Persons with disabilities might have disabilities in their arms or legs but are very smart. It is imprtant for the enterprises to provide them with equal treatments and best working conditions.”</i> Sources: R.A.P, Ha Noi.</p>

Inappropriate working conditions and unfriendly working environment were also mentioned by employers when talking about the list of reasons why workers with disabilities leave jobs. However, the level of importance of these reasons were different than those ranked by the workers (see Chart 2).

It was stressed by stakeholders that, if employers did not care about or made light of coaching or providing guidance to workers with disabilities during the probationary period or the first three months, there would be high risk of higher job leaving rate. This happened more commonly among those having jobs for the first time or little working experiences. There were two explanations for that discussion. Firstly, many persons with disabilities were overprotected or dependent on their families for a long time, which resulted in poor self-reliant skills, it would be easy for them to give up if there were any challenges at work. Secondly, naturally, persons with disabilities often felt inferiority complex, and those feelings often hindered their determination during the social integration process. This was also mentioned in the final evaluation on the vocational rehabilitation demonstration program at Hanoi Employment Introduction Center conducted in 2014.

To summarize the discussions on the reasons why workers with disabilities left jobs, it was recognized by the survey team that there were four key reasons as mentioned by both employers and workers with disabilities, including **working environments, working conditions, personal circumstances and salaries**. Of these, **working environments and conditions** were especially noted by all respondents (employees, employers, and stakeholders). Employers and employees had different views when identifying the common reasons for persons with disabilities to leave jobs. Employers said it was the workers' personal circumstances, while the workers affirmed that unequal payment or rewarding policies were the main reasons. Despite of these, all respondents agreed that a worker with disabilities often left his/her jobs because of multiple reasons.

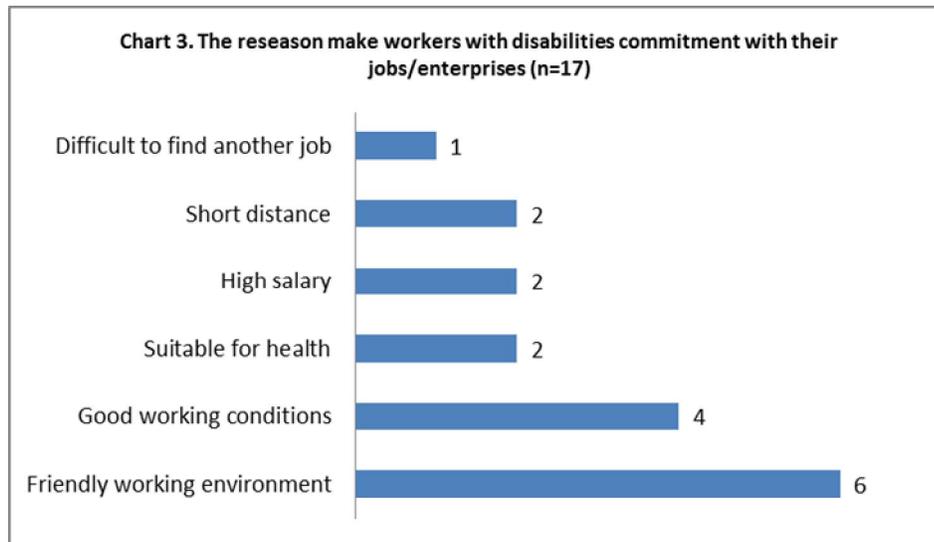
IV. What factors promote workers with disabilities' commitment with their jobs?

Under this survey, two questions on the longest time that a person with disabilities stayed on a job were asked. If the response was over three years, indepth questions on why or what motivated them to retain on a job so long.

It was revealed that 17/50 respondents had worked for one enterprise for over three years. Of these, two persons had worked for one enterprise for over 10 years, two persons for 4-5 years, and 13 persons for three years.

Friendly working environments and good working conditions were two fundamental reasons, which were confirmed by over half (10/17) of those having retained on a job for the previous employers for a long time. Other reasons included the jobs suitable for health

conditions, high salaries, or short distance from home to workplace. One said that he/she had worked for an employer for four years because it was difficult for her/him to find another job. Though he/she was not satisfied with that job but still worked there for being unable to find another one (see the Table below).



As noted from the above statistics, two factors of working environments and conditions are closely linked with the level of commitment to a job. If those two factors are fully met, it will surely result in the workers' satisfaction. One respondent said, *"if those two conditions are satisfied, I would retain on the job as long as the employer still employs me. Because it is more difficult for a person with disabilities to find a job than others...."* Source: N.N.H., Dong Da, Hanoi.

V. What could employers and stakeholders do to improve workers with disabilities' commitment and retention to an enterprise?

Under the ILO⁵'s survey on "vocational training and employment for persons with disabilities in Vietnam", it was reported that the biggest problem at industrial zones on garment and shoes industries was the movement of workers or workers' noncommitment to employers. At the beginning of each year, enterprises in these

Improvement of working environment

Improvement of working environments to make it friendly and equal should be highly prioritized to improve workers with disabilities' commitment to the enterprise.

"Persons without disabilities only need to be given a fishing-rod, while persons with disabilities need showing the way to get to the river. Source: N.N.H, Hanoi"

⁵ The survey report on Vocational training and employment for persons with disabilities in Vietnam, funded by ILO, 2008.

industries spent relatively big amounts of money on recruitment and training for new workers as big numbers of experienced workers moved to other companies. Obviously, high job leaving rate would affect enterprises' production performance.

In order to find solutions to improve enterprises' production performance, the question "what could we (employers and stakeholders) do to improve workers with disabilities' commitment to enterprises?" was asked to all respondents.

5.1. Improvement of working environments

Improvement of working environments to make it friendly and equal is the best way to retain a person with disabilities on a job.

90% (63/70) of respondents confirmed this under the report. 82% (41/50) of respondents said that they would be willing to work and be committed to an employer even if the salaries were low if:

- ✓ There were equal treatment among workers with and without disabilities;
- ✓ Appropriate work was suitably assigned to the workers' capacity;
- ✓ Workers received refresher and capacity trainings.

As understood by workers with disabilities involved in the survey, the criteria of a friendly environment included:

- ✓ There was no discrimination between employers and employees with disabilities or among workers with or without disabilities;
- ✓ Persons with and without disabilities were equal in responsibilities and benefits;
- ✓ Facilities, toilets, spaces, board and lodging areas were accessible to persons with disabilities;
- ✓ Employers had trust on the workers' qualifications;
- ✓ Employers and colleagues were understanding and empathy with their disabilities;
- ✓ They were provided with training/coaching and support during the first time at work;
- ✓ Work safety was ensured at workplace.

Among those criteria, non-discrimination, equality, and accessibility, were highly prioritized.

"It is such a happiness when a person with disabilities can work inclusively. They do not take high salary for basic living needs into consideration." Source: N.T.D, Hanoi.

"There should be equality regarding working time and equal pays for persons with disabilities like others. Employers should know about the workers with disabilities' qualifications and their family circumstances for better understanding them." Source: H.V.A., Hanoi.

To develop a friendly working environment, right from the recruitment stage, employers should change their recruitment approach from charity purposes to rights base. If the employers think that they recruit persons with disabilities as a way to help them or improve their social responsibilities instead of giving money to charity programs, sooner or later, workers with disabilities would quit the jobs. Because employers are expected to have trust in their employees with disabilities, and employ them because of their qualifications and skills. Persons with disabilities are not those who need help but are potential workers. One respondent with disabilities in Hanoi honestly shared that, *"I would feel self-pity if knowing that I am employed because of their feeling of pity. I come to the company to work, not to act as a decorative plant. A job would bring me joy. I only feel happy and useful if I actually work."* Source: L.T.Th, a person with mobility disabilities, Dong Da, Hanoi.

An enterprise in Da Nang employed over 70% of workers with disabilities. Their job leaving rate in the last year was about 1%. It was shared that, the key to make workers with disabilities committed, dedicated, and retained to the enterprises was *"equal treatment"*. *"We apply equality between benefits and responsibilities, equality between the manager and staff, equality of rewarding based on capacity."* Source: T.M.H – Director of a company in Da Nang.

The story below about H.T.K.L. is evidence for the solution to develop a friendly working environment to make workers with disabilities committed with the employers and improve the enterprise's production performance. More than that, a friendly working environment also helped the worker with disabilities to overcome severe health and mental conditions.

Friendly working environment helped me overcome severe health and mental condition

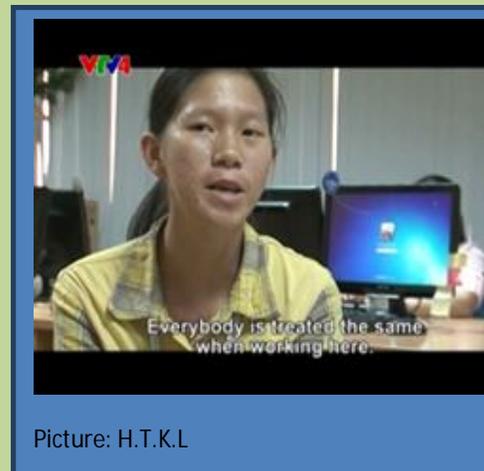
L 23 years old was born in a poor family in Quang Nam province. She had three siblings. Her father had passed away and she was living with her mother. She had two friends at junior high school and three at senior high school. She disliked and often felt embarrassed being in a crowd. She had communication difficulties since early age, and was often isolated. The manager at the company said that she suffered from severe autism.

After graduation from senior high school, L was employed by a company in Danang as introduced by Da Nang Disabled People organization. It took her twice as long as others to learn the job. After the first year at the workplace, L. only communicated with one person, her supervisor.

At the company, most of the workers (73%) were young (from 22-27 years old). At lunch time, L. was often asked to have lunch out with her colleagues and supervisor. Employees often did exercises at break and salutations to the national flags at the beginning and end of each working day. Each staff got a free massage once per month. Whenever L. made any mistakes at work, she was wholeheartedly advised by her supervisor. L. clearly felt the friendliness among her colleagues and supervisor. She said that “there was no differentiation between Boss and employees. The employer was very fair and friendly. The salary was paid based on workers’ capacity”. L.’s salary in the first year was 1,000,000 VND (or \$50 USD) per month. Currently, her monthly pay is 3,000,000 VND (\$75USD).

After two years, L.’s communication skills have been significantly improved. She has interacted more with her colleagues and supervisor. She says that she has more friends now, “might be 30 people” (L.’s words). More importantly, L. finds joy at work every day. “I feel very happy at work every day. Now I don’t feel embarrassed when talking in front of the crowd anymore. Because everyone would know who I am if I talk. I feel very comfortable when working here. I plan to stay long with the company...”

Source: H.T.K.L.Da Nang⁶



⁶ Note: Respondent agreed to use her image

It can be seen that a friendly working environment mainly focuses on human issues. It requires the efforts of not only the employers but also all the employees as a team to build a friendly working environment. Colleagues in a workplace should not discriminate or differentiate workers with disabilities or consider them as burdens. In fact, they are absolutely qualified and need fair treatment to make them strengthened. The lessons learned by some employers participating in this survey showed that, during the initial orientation for newly employed workers, the employer should stress that “*all colleagues and differences should be respected.*” (Source: a hotel in Ha Noi).

5.2. Improvement of working conditions

Improvement of material facilities at workplace for better accessibility of workers with disabilities is the second priority mentioned by all the respondents.

60% (42/70) of respondents agreed with this solution to promote workers with disabilities’ commitment and retention to employers. Improvement of working conditions for better accessibility of persons with disabilities was also a way to show the enterprises’ social accountability.

Improve the working conditions to make it appropriate for workers with disabilities

Improve the material facilities and make it appropriate for persons with disabilities – the second priority to help improve their work performance and commitment to employers

Employers’ responsibilities and equality should be represented in specific actions such as providing material facilities appropriate with workers’ capacity (convenient spaces and toilets, adjustment of tables or chairs for more comfortable work, for example). Appropriate jobs without far-away business trips should be arranged for workers with disabilities.

“The more advantageous it is, the happier they are, to make contributions back in all sincerity.” Source: N.A.B, Dong Nai.

“There is parking areas for persons with disabilities”. Source: P.T.Q, Dong Nai.

“Good paths to move around, and the refectory is not too far away from the work place.” Source: B.T.T, Da Nang.

However, different disability groups have different requirements of material facilities. For example, person with visual impairment need text-to-speech assistive software; persons with mobility disabilities require accessible ways for wheelchairs or appropriate working tables; or

persons with hearing impairment need support with translation of sign language, etc. In fact, it is difficult for employers to fully meet all requirements for all disability groups.

Among 8 employers involved in the survey in Hanoi and Da Nang, none had received government's fundings for the improvement of working environments or working conditions as defined in Article 9, Decision No. 28/2012/ND-CP by the Government⁷. Some employers did not meet the criteria to benefit from these policies (i.e. having at least 30% of employees as persons with disabilities), some did but did not want to get or care about the benefits. They thought it would take them a lot of time to complete administrative procedures to do that. 4/8 employers recommended BREC to help them access MOLISA's policies in the future.

Flexible working time makes workers with disabilities feel comfortable, resulting in better work performance. Workers at industrial zones in Dong Nai recommended to have flexible working time for workers with disabilities, allowing them to leave or have lunch 5-10 minutes earlier than others because it was challenging for them to move around at rush hours. Jostling or pushing often happened in the industrial zones where there were a lot of workers.

5.3. Fair pays based on capacity and application of social welfare policies

Fair pay based on capacity and application of social welfare policies is always the motivation for workers with disabilities to be committed and retained with employers.

Policies regarding salaries, payments and social welfares (social, health and unemployment insurances) were recommended by nearly half (48%, 24/50) of respondents as a way to enable them to stay longer to make contributions to enterprises.

Once again, high salary was not the only one factor making employees committed to remain long with an enterprise. Some were willing to accept low salaries but full social welfares were also the motivation for them to be more committed to employers.

It was revealed from the survey database that, fair payments based on the workers' capacity and basic social welfares were necessary and sufficient conditions to improve the workers' commitment to employers.

Application of appropriate payment and social welfare policy

Fair pays based on capacity and social welfare are the third priority to make workers with disabilities commit and contribute more to employers.

"If the benefits, payment and rewarding policies are good, workers will work to be deserved with what they receive." Source: N.Q.Kh, Dong Nai

⁷Decision No. 28/2012/ND-CP about detailed regulations and guidance on the implementation of some articles under the Law on Disabilities. Source: <http://www.moj.gov.vn>.

The following lessons learned by employers experiencing low job leaving rate (under 1%) in Hanoi, Dong Nai and Da Nang would provide more evidence on why the job leaving rate among persons with disabilities were low and what they did to get their workers' commitment to the enterprises.

Measures enterprises using to reduce job leaving rates

Revisions of management procedures to be suitable for persons with disabilities: *“To retain workers, we especially focus on developing our organizational cultures. Flexible working time is applied for workers with disabilities. The company’s management procedures were even amended to make it suitable for workers with disabilities. Source: P.V.V representative of private company in Dong Nai.*

Caring about their challenges and timely support: *“We have a unit called Labors Relations, which meet and ask employees if they have any challenges. It would be solved right away if related to the work or management. We are concerned about and provide timely support to persons with disabilities. When being cared about, they become committed to the company.” Source: HR manager of foreign company in Dong Nai.*

Fair treatment: *“Workers need a comfortable working environment to improve production performance. We have no tips but fair treatment to them. Equality is a value which helps improve production performance.” Source: T.M.H Director of Company in Da Nang.*

Opportunities for capacity improvement and non-discrimination: *“A stable job is not enough. There should be opportunities for promotion or capacity improvement. Especially, the company should make them feel non-discriminated.” Source: A.D, HR manager of a hotel in Hanoi.*

Arrangement of work suitable for the workers' health conditions and qualifications: *“They can only retain long with a job if it is suitable for their health conditions and qualifications/skills. Our lesson learnt is to assign them with the job suitable for their health and professions/skills. Source: L.S, Director of a Food company in Hanoi.*

Social welfares ensured for the workers: *“Proper provision of social welfare policies (health, social and unemployment insurances, payment and rewarding, etc.) will motivate the workers' commitment. At the same time, convenient and comfortable working environments will retain them with the jobs.” Source: D.V.H.G, HR manager of an international company in Dong Nai.*

It was also shown from the survey results that a lot of other solutions were mentioned by employers and employees, but with less frequency. These included:

- ✓ Training opportunities to improve the workers' capacity;
- ✓ Additional training courses on job seeking skills, teamwork skills or skills to work with management levels;
- ✓ Appropriately arrangement of work (suitable for the workers' health conditions, professions and qualifications);
- ✓ Support with transportation or accommodation near the workplace;

In short, improvement of working environment, working conditions and application of wage/social welfare policies were three fundamental solutions to improve the workers' commitment to employers.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

This research identified that job leaving rates among employees with disabilities was lower than those without disabilities (0.1 % and 3%). BREC companies surveyed noted the employees with disabilities tend to stay on the job longer than those without disabilities. Accordingly, the job retention rate among employees with disabilities is higher than those without disabilities (nearly 100% and 97% respectively). This figure observed from 10% total BREC companies. Companies report that, retention rate trend in recent years (2013-2014) were stable due to the difficult economic situation.

Specific costs paid by employers when workers left jobs were not calculated, but it was admitted that their productions were affected. Especially, the job leaving rate of over 10% was a concerning issue for employers. Job leaving or turn over were unavoidable. It was believed by the employers that increasing the workers' job retention rate was a way to reduce costs. Also, employment of workers with disabilities was a way to reduce job moving rate as persons with disabilities tended to retain longer with their jobs once the working environments were appropriate.

There were many reasons for workers with disabilities to leave jobs, three of which most mentioned were salaries (44% or 22/50), unfriendly working environments and discrimination (40% or 20/50) and inappropriate material facilities at workplaces (30% or 15/50). Though dissatisfied salaries were more mentioned, unfriendly working environment

was the original cause. Low pays would make workers move jobs when possible but unfriendly working environment and conditions made them leave jobs more quickly.

Others reasons making workers with disabilities leave jobs included inappropriate work (16% or 8/50); inconvenient distance and transportation (12% or 6/50); work under high pressure and times (over 8 hours per day), disadvantageous family circumstances or poor health conditions (8% or 4/50); inappropriate profession or lack of social welfare policies (6% or 3/50); and others (10% or 5/50).

On the contrary, with the workers' perspective, employers and stakeholders believed that the reasons for workers with disabilities to leave jobs were due to (in order from the highest to lowest rates): **(i) personal reasons, (ii) inappropriate working conditions, and (iii) working environment.**

Workers with disabilities and employers had different points of views; workers with disabilities' working attitudes and ability to meet the job requirements and 74% of surveyed workers objected to the opinion that "*employees with disabilities often left the job because they had bad attitudes toward the companies, or did not understand the employers' requirements*"; meanwhile 64% of employers and stakeholders agreed with this opinion.

It was agreed by stakeholders that the risk of workers leaving jobs would be very high if guidance or coaching during the first three months were not provided.

Friendly working environment and appropriate working conditions were fundamental reasons promoting workers with disabilities' commitment or satisfaction with the jobs. Health conditions, high salaries, convenient distance and transportation from home to workplace were contributing factors but mentioned less than the others mentioned above.

6.2. Recommendations

Although this study shows that the retention rate for persons with disabilities indicates that workers with disabilities remain on the job much longer than workers who do not have disabilities, possible improvements might occur based on the following:

Working environments should be improved to be friendly and fair. Fair treatment should be provided to persons with or without disabilities. The view point of recruiting persons with disabilities for charity purposes should be changed to a rights-based approach based on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Material facilities and working conditions should be improved to be appropriate with workers with disabilities. Material facilities should be improved to be appropriate for

persons with disabilities (accessible toilets, spaces and parking areas, or assistive devices for persons with visual impairment, for example). Working time should be flexible, allowing workers with disabilities to leave work earlier.

Fair payment policies should be applied based on the workers' capacity and social welfare policies such as insurances should be provided. To ensure equity, payment and rewarding policies should be based on the workers' capacity. Especially, there should be no differentiation between workers with or without disabilities.

Improve retention rate and increase level of productivity: Employees with disabilities have better retention rates. This research recommends employers to recruit more employees with disabilities and improve employee's retention in work place as a good way to reduce turnover cost.

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