

Managers attitude to hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.

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The rate of new disability pensioners has increased in Iceland in past years. At the same time, employment rates remain low for persons with disabilities. The attitude of employers or high ranked managers is found to be an important influential factor in increasing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

In this qualitative study, manager's attitudes to hiring and retaining employees with disabilities was investigated. This is an ongoing study where at least 20 employers or HR managers will be interviewed. This analysis is based on 10 interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

It was found that all managers had some experience in employing or retaining persons with disabilities in their workplaces. Overall, the managers had a positive attitude towards disabled employees but that rests on if they were able to find them adjusted tasks (often simple tasks) and are able to achieve met goals. Otherwise they feared they would become an economic burden to their businesses. Managers were found to be more reluctant in hiring disabled persons than in retaining an employee who had become disabled due to accidents or illnesses that occurred while holding a steady job contract. The main barriers to hire disabled persons were found to be related to that managers thought they were unable to make adjustments for accommodating the disabled, they had doubts about the disabled person being able to meet the requirements for the job, their organizational culture was not favourable towards disabilities and they claimed that it could negatively affect their business profitability requirements.

This study suggests that there is a need for further attention to support and empower employers to be more willing to accommodating persons with disabilities in their workplaces. This can be done in various ways, such as in providing education and relevant information to Icelandic businesses to positively impact any misperceptions on persons with disabilities.