

SPECIFICS OF THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Tatiana Masárová – Monika Gullerová – Eva Živčicová

Abstract

Background: People with disabilities are still facing high unemployment rates and work integration-related problems. Sheltered employment is one of the options for individuals with disabilities to be employed. *Objective:* The purpose of the paper is to find the specifics related to the employment of persons with disabilities in the district of Prievidza. *Research methods:* Research methods used in the paper: theoretical general methods of scientific knowledge – induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis of available bibliographic references, scientific abstraction for generalization of the results. A questionnaire survey will be carried out with handicapped people – employees of sheltered workshops in the district of Prievidza. *Results:* With regard to the form of employment in a sheltered workshop, no significant differences between people with and without disabilities were identified. The most preferred form of employment in sheltered workshops (79.42%) is a permanent contract of employment. Concerning work hours in sheltered workshops, no significant differences compared to healthy population were found since the most preferred employment form in sheltered workshops (78.68%) is regular work scheduling. In addition, 97.06% respondents supported the statement on job security being an advantage of working in sheltered workshops. This finding was expected since job security has been one of the current trends in the quality of work life. Moreover, it was found that respondents considered repetitive work in sheltered workshops a disadvantage (50.00%).

Key words: sheltered workshop, sheltered workplace, persons with disabilities, employment of people with disabilities

JEL Code: J14, J21

Introduction

Disabilities seriously impact the quality of life in educational, social, occupational, economic, psychological as well as other areas. It is therefore essential to help disabled people comprehensively so that their disabilities do not harm their self-actualization and self-

development. Orgonášová (2014) maintains that integration refers to a process attempting to make sure that disabled people do not live their life in isolation, but are integrated in every-day social environment, such as schools, employment, and various social or sports activities. Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Act No.5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on amending and supplementing certain laws stipulates the right of citizens to work: The right to have access to work is the right of citizens to the services under this Act who want to work, can work and seek employment. The purpose of the Act is to help and support the facilitation of disabled job seekers' entry and retention in the labour market for at least six consecutive calendar months. Next, Article 14, paragraph 2 of the Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on amending and supplementing certain laws stipulates citizens' right to equal treatment: "Citizens have the right to work without any restrictions in accordance with the principle of equal treatment when it comes to labour-law relations and any other legal relations established by special acts. In harmony with the principle of equal treatment, discrimination on grounds of marital or family status, colour of skin, language, political or other conviction, trade union activity, national or social origin, health disability, age, property, gender or other status shall also be prohibited." Pursuant to Article 8, paragraph 1, letter h) of the Act No. 5/2004 Coll., individuals with disabilities are labelled disadvantaged job seekers due to their uneasy integration in the labour market. Regarding workers with disabilities, employers shall comply with the Article 119 of the Act No. 311/2001 Coll. Labour Code on the principle of equal pay for like work or work of equal value.

Sheltered workshop and sheltered workplace

Sheltered workshops and sheltered workplaces are an employment option for persons with disabilities. Employment support measures should be implemented for employees in sheltered workshops and the target group should participate in the process (Rathmann, Nellen, Brambrink, Krause, 2019). Sheltered workshops and workplaces can be established by natural or legal persons. Their establishment requirements are listed in Article 55 of the Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on amending and supplementing certain laws. As worded in Article 55, paragraph 1 of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on amending and supplementing certain laws, "a sheltered workshop is a workplace established by legal persons or natural persons employing at least 50% of disabled citizens. A sheltered workplace refers to a position where a legal entity or a natural person creates a job for a citizen with a disability while the job is not created in a sheltered workshop. A sheltered workplace is also considered a workplace where a person with a disability carries out self-

employed gainful activities. A sheltered workplace may be also established in the household of the disabled person."

Reinders Folmer, Mascini, Van der Veen (2020) found that measures to facilitate everyday life as well as measures in favour of sheltered work mean better chances of employment. At the same time, several authors say that the purpose of sheltered workshops is highly ambivalent. On the one hand, their existence should serve the social-rehabilitative purpose with regard to employees with disabilities. On the other hand, they should make profit. Thus, the institutional dual purpose leads to conflicting expectations of participants in everyday practice (Karim, Waldschmidt, 2019).

Obligations for employers in employing people with disabilities

In order to employ persons with disabilities, employers are obliged to observe several provisions as stipulated in the Act No. 311/2001 Coll., Labour Code as amended and Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on amendments to certain laws. In harmony with Article 63, par. 1 of the Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on amendments to certain laws, employers shall:

- a) provide individuals with disabilities with suitable conditions to perform their work,
- b) enable employees with disabilities to study and/or get trainings to attain the necessary qualification, and attend to the development of such qualification,
- c) keep records of workers with disabilities,

Obligation to employ disabled people: This obligation arises when an employer is employing more than 20 employees and at the same time the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family keeps people with disabilities as job seekers in its evidence in the amount that represents 3.2 of the total number of employees of the employer.

Employers shall be obliged to assign persons with disabilities to suitable posts. The provisions of employment contract shall regard the type and severity of impairment.

Workplaces shall be equipped so that employees with disabilities do not face any restrictions that would prevent them from reaching work results comparable with staff without disabilities.

Employers may give notice to employees with disabilities only with the prior consent of the relevant Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Employers may give notice to employees who have reached the age entitling them to old-age pension or for reasons of closing down their operations. Moreover, notice may be given on the grounds for which employers could immediately terminate the employment relationship with employees with disability.

1 Purpose and method

The purpose of the paper is to find the specifics of employment of the individuals with disabilities in sheltered workshops in the district of Prievidza.

Respondents were selected from the district of Prievidza, as there are several organizations employing workers in hazardous environments, such as Hornonitrianske Mine of Prievidza and Military Repair Plant Nováky. There are also some organizations in the district that pollute the environment and affect the health of population. The biggest polluters are Nováky Power Plant and Fortischem Chemicals Production Plant.

In the district of Prievidza, there are people with disabilities who developed occupational diseases, or their disabilities are associated with occupational accidents. According to the 2019 analysis of occupational diseases, occupational accidents, and major industrial accidents under the jurisdiction of the Labour Inspectorate, Trenčín, the number of occupational accidents decreased to 1,621 compared to 2018 in the region of Trenčín (18% in the Slovak Republic). Nevertheless, the region of Trenčín was evaluated worst. In the district of Prievidza, there was no major accident resulting in a death. There were, however, 1 serious occupational injury with bodily harm and 324 occupational accidents recorded. In 2019, 61 cases of occupational diseases were registered in the region of Trenčín, of which not a single case occurred in the district of Prievidza.

Sheltered workshops and sheltered workplaces are listed on the website of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Prievidza. As of 31 December 2019, there were 114 founders with 299 workers with disabilities in the register. Of the 299 questionnaires administered during the months of March and April 2020, 136 questionnaires (sample) were returned (45.48% return rate). A 5-point Likert scale was used to convert the qualitative data to quantitative data. Descriptive statistics was used to treat the data obtained and to calculate and describe the mean values, such as modes, medians, weighted arithmetic means and standard deviation estimates.

The mode refers to the most probable value of the file; it is the one with the highest relative frequency. It is one of the descriptive characteristics of the statistical file.

A weighted arithmetic mean is the sum of a collection of numbers divided by the count of numbers in the statistical file.

The median (Med (x)) is the value that divides the sequence according to the size of the ordered results into two equally numerous halves. It holds that at least 50% of the values are less than or equal to and at least 50% of the values are greater than or equal to the median. In

a distribution with a defined mean (weighted arithmetic mean) and a median, the difference between the median and arithmetic mean of the given distribution is less or equal to a standard deviation (Knežo, Andrejiová, Ižaríková, 2011).

2 Problem solution and results

Work is an activity of people who use their physical or mental effort during their active years and a source of pension they might benefit from after retiring (Čapošová, 2020). Persons with disabilities are disadvantaged in the labour market as their economic activity is significantly lower. Moreover, their employment rates are lower and unemployment rates are higher when compared to employment and unemployment rates in the Slovak Republic (Masárová, Koišová, 2019). Several authors maintained that the employment rate of persons with disabilities was influenced by institutional factors (Demianova, 2015; Curnock, Leyland, Popham, 2016). If persons with disabilities are unable or unwilling to find a job, they can find a meaningful employment a sheltered workshop. There are a variety of issues that employers face when employing workers with disabilities. They, for instance, have to ensure that their workplaces and access to workplaces are barrier-free. Not only are such building and workplace modifications costly, but also often impossible to be done. Other issues are the issues of absenteeism due to the health condition of workers with disabilities and the legislation on their dismissal. Individuals with disabilities find it more difficult to get adapted to the work regime and can experience communication challenges. As a matter of fact, they have low labour productivity and lower education. Furthermore, the administrative requirements related to obtaining contributions for the employment of disabled individuals are demanding and not easy to be met.

According to the data of the Office for Labour, Social Affairs and the Family, there were 1,545 sheltered workshops and 4,131 sheltered workplaces in the Slovak Republic as of 31 December 2019. The data on the establishment of sheltered workshops and sheltered workplaces in the district of Prievidza from 2010 to 31 December 2019 are given Table 1 and Table 2. There is a greater interest in establishing sheltered workplaces as they are easier to be established in terms of meeting the applicable legislative conditions.

Tab. 1: Sheltered workshops registered by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAAf), the town of Prievidza

ESTABLISHED IN (YEAR)	NUMBER	ABSOLUTE INCREASE	BASE INDEX	CHAIN INDEX
2010	73	-	BÁSE YEAR	-
2011	96	23	131.51	131.51
2012	132	36	180.82	137.50
2013	159	27	217.81	120.45
2014	199	40	272.60	125.16
2015	175	-24	239.73	87.94
2016	163	-12	223.29	93.14
2017	159	-4	217.81	97.55
2018	135	-24	184.93	84.91
2019	122	-13	167.12	90.37

Source: authors' own calculations based on OLSAAf data

The base index refers to the evolution of a number from one point in time to another point in time. The indicator values are compared to a base. Compared to the base year of 2010, the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAAf) in the town of Prievidza registered an increase in sheltered workshops in the course of the period under analysis; absolute increases were negative from 2015 (Table 1). Regarding sheltered workplaces, the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAAf) in the town of Prievidza registered an increase compared with the base year. In 2015, the highest negative absolute increase was recorded (Table 2).

Table 1 and Table 2 list the chain index values for sheltered workshops and sheltered workplaces registered by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAAf) in the town of Prievidza.

Tab. 2: Sheltered workplaces registered by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAAf) in the town of Prievidza

ESTABLISHED IN (YEAR)	NUMBER	ABSOLUTE INCREASE	BASE INDEX	CHAIN INDEX
2010	173	-	BÁSE YEAR	-
2011	273	100	157.80	157.80
2012	337	64	194.80	123.44
2013	398	61	230.06	118.10
2014	421	23	243.35	105.78
2015	369	-52	213.29	87.65
2016	449	80	259.54	121.68
2017	482	33	278.61	107.35
2018	472	-10	272.83	97.93
2019	528	56	305.20	111.86

Source: authors' own calculations based on OLSAAf data

In the paper, four out of the specifics related to the employment of people with disabilities were addressed. The first two areas dealt with the forms of employment and work time scheduling as stipulated in the Slovak Labour Code.

Tab. 3: Form of employment in a sheltered workshop

	Absolute Frequency n =	Relative Frequency %
Permanent contracts	108	79.42
Fixed-term contracts	16	11.76
Part-time	12	8.82
Agreement on work performance	0	0.00
Agreement on work activity	0	0.00
Σ	136	100.00

Source: authors' own questionnaire survey (March, April 2020)

Permanent contracts were concluded with 108 (79.42%) respondents and 16 respondents (11.76%) work in a sheltered workshop under fixed-term contracts. 12 respondents (8.82%) work part-time. No respondents work under agreement on work

performance or agreement on work activity (Table 3). Permanent contracts were the mode in the statistical description of the form of employment item.

Working under permanent contracts equals job security. Moreover, it is also one of the factors contributing to employee satisfaction. Persons with or without disabilities prefer working under permanent contracts to other forms of employment.

Next, respondents working in a sheltered workshop were asked about their work time. Respondents could select one option out of regular work scheduling, irregular work scheduling and flexible hours.

Tab. 4: Work time in a sheltered workshop

	Absolute Frequency n =	Relative Frequency %
Regular work scheduling	107	78.68
Irregular work scheduling	21	15.44
Flexible work scheduling	8	5.88
Σ	136	100.00

Source: authors' own questionnaire survey (March, April 2020)

107 employees (78.68%) have regular work scheduling and 21 employees (15.44%) have irregular work scheduling. 8 respondents (5.88%) work on flexitime basis (Table 4). Regular work scheduling is the mode in the work time characteristics. It can be concluded that regular work schedule is the most popular form of employment for both employees with and without disabilities.

Next, feeling secure in their job is important for persons with and without disabilities. For people with disabilities, job security plays even a more important role since they face many barriers when searching for a job.

Job security is considered an asset by 100 (73.53%) respondents working in a sheltered workshop. 32 (23.53%) respondents somewhat agree with the statement. All in all, 132 (97.06%) respondents were positive about the statement. One respondent did not agree and three respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 5).

The results of several studies suggest that people with disabilities experience difficulties in work environment when searching for, understanding, evaluating, and applying health-related information (Rathmann, Nellen, 2019). It happens frequently that people with disabilities get a job which they find neither interesting nor fulfilling. Some authors (Schwangler, Wahl, Neuperdt, et al., 2020) found a relationship between work stress and a high risk of burnout, while others found that giving people with disabilities preferential

treatment undermines their trust and development (Gupta, Priyadarshi, 2020). It is apparent that the forms and intensity of disability and the experience of people with disability are strongly correlated with the perceived intensity of discrimination in a professional context (Bach, 2018).

Tab. 5: I consider job security to be an asset of working in a sheltered workshop

Item	Absolute Frequency n	Relative Frequency %
Strongly agree	100	73.53
Somewhat agree	32	23.53
Neither agree nor disagree	3	2.20
Somewhat disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	1	0.74
Σ	136	100.00

Source: authors' own questionnaire survey (March, April 2020)

There are several factors which are considered disadvantages by those working in sheltered workshops as well as by people without disadvantages, such as minimum wage, commute or underused expertise. Repetitive work is, however, not mentioned as it is mostly associated with the target group, i.e. people with disabilities. With regard to people without disabilities, repetitive work is being replaced by robots which can streamline production processes and increase business profitability.

Tab. 6: I consider repetitive work to be a disadvantage of working in a sheltered workshop

Item	Absolute Frequency n	Relative Frequency %
Strongly agree	25	18.38
Somewhat agree	43	31.62
Neither agree nor disagree	41	30.15
Somewhat disagree	23	16.91
Strongly disagree	4	2.94
Σ	136	100.00

Source: authors' own questionnaire survey (March, April 2020)

The table 6 indicates that 68 (50%) respondents agree with the statement that repetitive work is a disadvantage of working in a sheltered workshop. For 27 (19.85%) respondents, repetitive work is not a disadvantage. The neutral option was selected by 41 (30.15%) respondents who might indicate that they have not experienced monotony at work.

The finding is supported by the research outcome saying that work engagement is high when workers with disability experience more support and higher autonomy (Ybema, Koopman, Peeters, 2020).

Conclusion

Descriptive statistics was used to treat the data obtained and to calculate and describe the mean values, such as modes, medians, weighted arithmetic means and standard deviation estimates. As job security is one of the recent trends in quality of work life, such answers were expected. Job security as an advantage of working in a sheltered workshop is the mode in the statistical description of the job security item (4). The weighted arithmetic mean is 4.69 on a scale between the somewhat agree and strongly agree options. The median value is 3 (according to the formula $Me = (n+1)/2$). The standard deviation is the difference between the median and the weighted arithmetic mean, $SD \leq 1,69$. Statistical description shows that the sample is markedly skewed to the right of the median and a big standard deviation. In the statistical description of the item, I agree is the mode of the "repetitive work is the disadvantage of working in a sheltered workshop" statement (4). The weighted arithmetic mean is 3.45 on a scale between the neither agree nor disagree and somewhat agree options. The median value is 3 (using the formula $Me = (n + 1) / 2$). The standard deviation is the difference between the median and the weighted arithmetic mean, $SD \leq 0.45$. Statistical description shows that the sample is slightly skewed to the right of the median and a small standard deviation.

The work situation of the disabled must be perceived from holistic perspective as the interdisciplinary field of rehabilitation also covers occupational rehabilitation, which concerns the employment of individuals, such as vocational training (acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits, i.e. qualifications), job market research, career counselling, creation and protection of job opportunities (from occupational therapy, through retraining to full-time employment of disabled people in sheltered workshops or in the open labour market), etc. It needs to be borne in mind that work is one of the basic human needs and when not satisfied, frustration and stress may occur.

Acknowledgment

VEGA 1/0357/21 Multiplier effects of human capital quality on economic performance and competitiveness of the Slovak economy

References

- Bach, H.W. The Situation for Blind and Visually Impaired Persons in the Labour Market, in Employment and in Continuing Education - Including International Perspectives. *Right to Work for Persons with Disabilities - International Perspectives*. 2018; [online]. [cit.2020-04-27]. K dispozícii na: http://apps.webofknowledge.com/full_record.do?product=WOS&search_mode=GeneralSearch&qid=29&SID=F3HC6ZzUg981YcH2NTu&page=1&doc=6
- Curnock, E., Leyland, A.H., Popham, F. The impact on health of employment and welfare transitions for those receiving out-of-work disability benefits in the UK. *Social Science and Medicine*. 2016; [online]. [cit.2020-04-06]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.05.042>
- Čapošová, E. Assessment of unemployment in the regions of Slovakia. *Reproduction of Human Capital - mutual links and connections*. RELIK 2020. p. 42 - 54
- Demianova, A. Measures of state supporting employment of persons with disabilities in Russia. *Voprosy gosudarstvennogo i munitsipalnogo upravleniya-public administration issues*. 2015; [online]. [cit.2020-04-06]. K dispozícii na: http://apps.webofknowledge.com/full_record.do?product=WOS&search_mode=GeneralSearch&qid=29&SID=F3HC6ZzUg981YcH2NTu&page=1&doc=17
- Gupta, A.; Priyadarshi, P. When affirmative action is not enough: Challenges in career development of persons with disability. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*. 2020; [online]. [cit.2020-04-27]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-05-2019-0146>
- Karim, S.; Waldschmidt, A. Ungeahnte Fähigkeiten? Behinderte Menschen zwischen Zuschreibung von Unfähigkeit und Doing Ability. *Österreich Z Soziol* 2019. [online]. [cit.2020-04-06]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11614-019-00362-3>
- Knežo ,D.; Andrejiová,M.; Ižaríková, G. *Základné štatistické metódy*. 2011. [online].[cit.2020-07-02].K dispozícii na https://www.sjf.tuke.sk/kamai/literatura/stat_metody
- Masárová, J.; Koišová, E. Postavenie osôb so zdravotným postihnutím na trhu práce v Slovenskej republike. *Zdravotnícke listy*. 2019; 7(4): p.64-69.

Orgonášová, M. Bio-psycho-sociálny pohľad na osobu so zdravotným postihnutím, predpoklad jej úspešnej inklúzie. *Vzdelávanie a zamestnanie osôb so zdravotným postihnutím*. 2014. Bratislava: Vysoká škola zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce sv. Alžbety v Bratislave [online]. [cit.2020-03-24]. K dispozícii na: https://www.iprba.sk/dokumenty/ipr/20150109_zbornik_sympozia_tp.pdf (2019-12-12).

Rathmann, K.; Nellen, C. Gesundheitskompetenz von Menschen mit Behinderung. *Präv Gesundheitsf* 2019. [online]. [cit.2020-05-05]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11553-019-00704-9>

Rathmann, K., Nellen, C., Brambrink, J. et al. Gesundheitsbezogene Lebensqualität von Beschäftigten in Werkstätten für Menschen mit Behinderung: soziale und behinderungsspezifische Unterschiede. *Präv Gesundheitsf* 2019. [online]. [cit.2020-05-05]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11553-018-0696-4>

Reinders Folmer, C.P.; Mascini, P.; Van der veen, R.J. Evaluating social investment in disability policy. *Soc Policy Adm.* 2020;1(21): [online]. [cit.2020-05-27]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12579>

Schwangler, J., Wahl, L., Neuperdt, L. et al. Berufliche Belastungen und Burnout-Risiko von Leitungs- und Fachkräften in Werkstätten für Menschen mit Behinderung: Ergebnisse der bundesweiten WeCareOnline-Studie. *Präv Gesundheitsf* 2020. [online]. [cit.2020-05-18]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11553-020-00766-0>

Ybema, J. F.; Koopman, A.; Peeters, M. (2020). Working in sheltered employment: A weekly diary study. *International Journal of Stress Management*. 2020; 27(2): p. 160–171. [online]. [cit.2020-04-29]. K dispozícii na: <https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000141>

ZÁKON č. 311/2001 Z.z. – Zákonník práce a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov.

ZÁKON č. 5/2004 Z.z. – Zákon o službách zamestnanosti a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov

Contact

Tatiana Masárová, Monika Gullerová, Eva Živčicová

Trenčianska univerzita Alexandra Dubčeka v Trenčíne, FSEV

Študentská 2; 91 50 Trenčín

tatiana.masarova@tnuni.sk

monika.gullerova@tnuni.sk

eva.zivcicova@tnuni.sk