

Chapter 15

The Diversity Management for Employment of the Persons With Disabilities: Evidence of Vocational Rehabilitation in the United States and Japan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the latest knowledge of effective diversity management—from businesses and academia—with regard to the employment of persons with disabilities. From a broad perspective, this knowledge is found in the field of industrial-organizational psychology. From a more narrow perspective, and based on evidence from a substantial study, the knowledge of vocational rehabilitation has relevance for persons with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation is the practice of providing employment supports that will build win-win relationships between employers and persons with disabilities. This chapter reviews recent findings documenting the effective employment and management of persons with disabilities, and summarizes effective actions and workplace considerations for the employment of persons with disabilities.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on diversity management in industries and organizations in the employment of people with disabilities in the United States (USA) and Japan. Diversity in the labor market has previously focused on race or gender. However, diversity now is “any and/or every dimension of attributes one may have” (Taniguchi, 2008, p. 69), and includes disabilities (within that dimension). Employment of individuals was previously an issue that fell under the welfare domain in both the USA and Japan. However, employment of people with disabilities is now becoming an industrial and/or organizational issue. Globally, the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, the nationwide promotion of Employment First in the USA, the amendment of the Disabled Persons Employment Quota System and the enforcement of the Comprehensive Support for Disabled Persons Act in Japan, have facilitated protection of the rights of people with disabilities in society and emphasizes a shift from welfare to employment.

This chapter has two objectives. The first is to contribute to the development of companies and society by introducing effective management of people with disabilities in the labor market. The second is to contribute to the promotion of attaining independence, social participation, rehabilitation, and right through the employment of people with disabilities. In order to achieve both these objectives simultaneously, research from the field of vocational rehabilitation focusing on employment support for people with disabilities is required. This is because vocational rehabilitation concentrates not only employment for the sake of social contribution by an employer, but is also an accumulation of studies, utilizing many methods, with the goal of constructing a “Win-Win relationship” between an employer and a person with disabilities.

However, there has been little cooperation (interaction) between the field of vocational rehabilitation research and the field of industrial/organizational research. Therefore, reporting the findings from vocational rehabilitation research in this chapter may also contribute to the promotion of industrial/organizational research. Based on this background, in this chapter, we report findings and examples of effective practices for organizations and industries hiring individuals with disabilities, from the field of vocational rehabilitation research. This chapter’s objective is to clarify effective employment management for people with disabilities in the workplace, from both the USA and Japan; therefore, we identified the following research questions and keywords:

1. What is effective employment management for people with disabilities from the field of vocational rehabilitation research?
2. What are good examples of employment management of people with disabilities conducted by companies?

Additionally, the following three keywords were common in both USA and Japanese studies:

1. Evidence from vocational rehabilitation
2. Customized employment
3. Universal design

Regarding the third keyword, “universal design,” effective management with consideration of those with cognitive and physical function disabilities, is not only effective for affected individuals, but also

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