

Customer Retention Among The Patrons of Food Service Providers Through Social Communication by Person with Disabilities: A Review

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Abstract

For every person, social communication is an essential part of everyday life, and the same goes for people with disabilities (PWDs). All working personnel is required to have good communication to carry out the basic tasks of management when referring to business entities. Consequently, the primary objective of this review is to strengthen and acknowledge the social impact of communication given by PWDs although discrimination and inequalities still exist anywhere. To facilitate optimum communications, the organization needs to have a contingency approach in place. This is to ensure that the information stream flows seamlessly from one to another. Nowadays the ability to communicate with others around the world is getting easier for normal people but for PWDs is still under debate. PWDs have long faced problems with personal and environmental factors including negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation, public buildings, and also limited social support. It is high time for employers to acknowledge the significance of integrating disability into their talent management policies. The Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development can provide continuous support to ensure job opportunities are being offered for PWDs. The challenges faced by PWDs have been heavily discussed where the experiences of individuals with disabilities are too frequently neglected or ignored. This paper looks into the significant contribution that PWDs can offer concerning customer retention as far as social communication is concerned

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper will focus on customer retention of the services provided by PWDs and take into consideration social communication and social inclusion in famous food service providers' settings in Klang Valley. Looking at the discrimination and inequality towards PWDs, this paper is important. The objectives of this review are to study the determinants affecting customer retention and to investigate the influence of both connotations between social communication and social inclusion.

Social communication is the usage of words in the context of society (Tanaka & Sung, 2013). It includes social contact, cognitive reasoning, pragmatics, and the use of words. Social communication is divided into two (2) types of communication which are formal and informal. Formal communication is when an organization or company gets together to express its intentions or thoughts pleasantly. They have one topic with more people around are thinking about the same issue. While for the informal type of social communication, people join

a community in which they will initiate their conversation and express their opinions on a certain topic they might choose or wish to share their views. In addition, social communication and networking have many advantages such as experiencing the discussion itself, sharing one's knowledge and thoughts, discovering new stuff, and having fresh information.

The Government of Malaysia ratified the Convention on the Protection of People with Disabilities at the United Nations Headquarters in 2008. Malaysia's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities affirms specific privileges for individuals with disabilities, including rights to life, freedom from prejudice, fair treatment before the law, and access to justice, education, employment, and welfare. The treaty went into effect in Malaysia on August 18, 2010 (UNDP, 2022). Looking at equality, PWDs need to be given fair treatment in terms of buying and purchasing.

Purchase is defined as the actual behavior of the customer resulting from the purchase of the same product

or service on more than one occasion. Most of the purchases made by the customer are potential repeat purchases (Peyrot & Van Doren, 1994) thus leading to customer retention. Customers will tend to have loyalty towards the product or services offered when they are satisfied with the product or services, and it will lead to the repurchase. Customers will buy similar products or services either from the same seller that they are comfortable with, or they will look from a different outlet or store just to get the same products. According to Hellier et al. (2003), an intention to repurchase is defined as "the decision of the person to buy a specified service from the same company and it is taking into account its current condition and probable circumstances." Here, social communication delivered by normal people and PWDs are of debate but it is interesting to further enhance it into a survey to look into the matters deeply as more business establishments are hiring PWDs to give them an equal chance in terms of employment.

Impairments of social communication abilities are a central characteristic of disabled people which involved deficits of social-emotional reciprocity, and non-verbal communicative activities used for social contact which is growth, retention, and comprehension of the relationships. Unfortunately, many individuals with disabilities have been found to have deficiencies in facial expression, possibly responsible for some of their social contact problems (Tanaka & Sung, 2013).

Most service providers generate and sustain their income and economic development relies on the ability to build long-term relationships with their customers who repeatedly purchase their goods or services (Reinartz et al. 2005; Rust et al., 2004). Everyone appears to have repeat purchase behavior, whether based on loyalty or based on a purchase triggered for the same products or services. Alba and Hutchinson (1987) identified that customers with a higher purchase level may have more knowledge of the re-purchase experience and the value of that behavior can be measured differently.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several companies have yet to offer disabled employees an equal opportunity for them to be working. The Malaysian Disability Act (2008) defines that persons with disabilities, such as those with long-term physical, emotional, cognitive, or sensory impairments, can impede

their full and effective participation in society in interaction with various barriers (Ta & Leng, 2011).

The Persons of Disabilities Act 2008 is ensuring the documentation of the protection, treatment, growth, and well-being of people with disabilities. In brief, it is important to eliminate obstacles such that individuals with long-term physical, emotional, intellectual, or sensory disorders will engage completely and efficiently in society.

According to Abdul Gafoor (2019), the Persons with Disabilities Act needs a review, whereby the Malaysian Bar is dismayed that persons with disabilities continue to encounter major challenges in the practice of human rights, even after a decade has elapsed since the entry into the force of the Person with Disabilities Act 2008. The Act as it exists is marred by the omissions, including the absence of laws banning prejudice against people with disabilities, the absence of limitations on the punishments for those that do not comply with the Act, and the explicit immunity of the Government from the liability for any misconduct (Abdul Gafoor, 2019).

People with disabilities remained ignored in many ways, especially in terms of employment. Their unemployment rate is slightly higher relative to people without disabilities. The high unemployment and low jobs have left most of them remaining in the poverty. Furthermore, they tend to be less educated, therefore, are restricted on an occupational basis (Hale et al, 2001). As discussed earlier, most people with disabilities have limited employment opportunities due to their physical and mental incompetence with normal people. Furthermore, a few problems have been arising and occurred recently for this study which are:

- Lack of job opportunities for disabled people.
- Normal people tend to look down on PWDs in terms of lack of knowledge and capability.
- There are barriers to communication between PWDs with the community and surroundings.
- Have low self-esteem and lack of confident level due to their physical disabilities.

When referring to PWDs, most employers or organizations do not want to take the risk to hire these groups of employees. Many employers are also reluctant

to hire disabled employees in their company and, most of the time; individuals with disabilities are not even allowed to apply for a position in a specific organization (Narayanan, 2018). Furthermore, employees with disabilities and non-disabilities tend to have interpersonal communication conflicts between them, leading to low productivity and dissatisfaction among disabled employees. On top of that, the PWDs have difficulties communicating and sharing information with colleagues and at the same time face some difficulties understanding and reacting accordingly to other colleagues promptly.

2.1 Social Communication

Word-of-mouth or social communication is the primary factor behind 20-50% of all purchasing decisions. It is a credible source of information for both generations of customers because it also involves sharing the personal experience of an individual who states his or her opinion about a product or service (Chawdhary & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2015). Immateriality and heterogeneity are two characteristics that make social communication even more important for a customer considering "purchasing" a service. Due to the risk incurred when purchasing, an individual needs further evidence that the service performance meets his or her expectations (Dabija, 2018). PWDs also need a quality of life that is equal to that of normal people.

Quality of life experiences for PWDs who are highly dependent on services that are delivered in home-based environments is strongly influenced by the nature of their interactions with service workers (Marquis & Jackson, 2000). It shows that PWDs are very dependent on others as far as their disabilities are concerned. They need to be shown, guided, supported and encouraged.

2.2 Person With Disabilities

Disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and contentious. The role of social and physical barriers in disability was significantly highlighted in previous studies (Wasserman, 2001). The change from a human, scientific perspective to a cultural, social perspective has been characterized as a transition from a "medical model" to a "social model" in which individuals are perceived as being impaired by culture rather than by their bodies. It is part of the human condition and at some point, in life,

almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired, and those who survive old age will experience increasing difficulties in their functioning.

2.2.1 Types of Disabilities

A disability is defined as a disorder or feature that is perceived to be substantially affected in comparison to the usual standard of the person or group of people (United Nations, 2022). The term is used to apply to individual functioning, including physical disability, visual deficiency, neurological impairment, academic deficiency of mental disorder, and different forms of chronic disease. Besides, disability is conceptualized as a multidimensional condition for the individual involved. Disabilities may impact individuals in various ways, particularly though one person has the same form of impairment as another. Any of the conditions can be concealed known as invisible impairment. Many types of disabilities can affect the person such as vision, hearing, thinking, learning, movement, mental health, remembering, communication, and social relationships.

2.3 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to participate in society," or more precisely, "the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people who are disadvantaged because of their identity to participate in society" (The World Bank, 2013 p. 72). The ways cultures and societies stratify and divide; how they account for customs centered on inclusion, exclusion, belonging, and togetherness; and how the processes of inclusion and exclusion are discussed, described, understood, and experienced all provide some insight into the role of social integration and stratification within a given society. There are numerous ways to promote social inclusion in society, including assisting socially excluded individuals and communities in overcoming the inequalities they face, as well as promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination. Promoting social inclusion, at its foundation, is creating inclusive societies that provide equal opportunities to individuals regardless of their circumstances (Anonymous, nd).

According to Karin Baron (2015), the researcher mentioned that social inclusion was briefly considered as

a theoretical concept. According to the research, the researcher is focused on social inclusion among children in Sweden which include disabled and non-disabled from the participatory observations of the children's interactions. This is reflected in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to free all nations, individuals, and parts of society from poverty and hunger, as well as to provide healthy lives and access to education, modern energy, and information.

2.4 Customer Retention

Communication is an important tool for everyone, but it is especially important for people with disabilities. Due to significant communication challenges, people with disabilities may require support from time to time. We communicate with others regularly, whether in person, over the phone, or in writing. When talking with someone who has a disability, it is important to remember to respect each person as an individual. On the other hand, we must treat people with the same respect and concern that we would like to be treated.

According to the Queensland Government website published on People with Disability towards Better communication. There are some general tips for communicating with disabilities below:

- Use a normal tone of voice – do not raise your voice unless asked to
- Be polite and patient.
- Speak directly to the person rather than the person with them.
- Ask the person what will help with the communication.
- Do not pretend to understand.
- Avoid saying anything that implies the person with a disability is superhuman, courageous, or special.

Based on the tips provided by the Queensland Government article, it is found out that they are trying to emphasize that people with disabilities are still human beings, able to be treated like a normal human but may be in a different way of communicating. Not all the

disabilities people are having the same disabilities and they have their levels of disabilities from low, to mild to high types.

Furthermore, referring to Grieg et al. (2018), communication is the act of giving or receiving information. A person's ability to communicate effectively may have an impact on his or her ability to build relationships, make choices and participate in everyday life. There are important principles for supporting people with disabilities and complex communication needs which include:

- The right to express their feelings needs and wants in a way that others can understand and respond to and understand the communication of others.
- Support the development of an effective, efficient, reliable, and independent means of communication.
- Support through a range of communication methods.
- Access to an effective means of independent communication, which provides a safeguard for people with disability and complex communication needs.

People with complicated communication requirements may lack the communication skills necessary to address all their needs. For some, this is a one-time occurrence, while for others, it is continuing.

To have customer retention requires good communication in various ways between the customer and the person with disabilities. By delivering effective communication from both parties, the involvement will be enhanced while the barriers will be minimized. They will also require a communication partner or someone who converses and communicates with another person. When a person with disabilities can overcome this and serve the customers well, this will be one of the steps that can lead to retaining the customer and being able to have repeat purchases when the customers are comfortable with the service provided.

2.5 Food Service Providers And PWDs

PWDs have an important role to play to make a positive contribution to the workplace. It is generally found that a person with a disability develops into a well-adjusted, productive worker in an atmosphere of acceptance, cooperation, and goodwill. It is often found that workers with disabilities are more productive than their co-workers and that they are less absent from work and show great loyalty towards their company. Furthermore, people with disabilities should be allowed to enter the workforce. Disability is a human rights and development issue, meaning that people with disabilities should enjoy equal rights and responsibilities to other people.

There are lots of benefits to hiring people with disabilities in the workplace. The outcome of hiring people with disabilities with a systematic review showed that there will be improvements in the profitability of the organization in terms of profits and cost-effectiveness, turnover and retention of the organization. Besides, the main cost-effectiveness of the outcome with those people with disabilities will tend to be more loyal towards their organization, have a great work ethic, and be more productive compared to normal people (Lindsay, Cagliostro, Alberico, Mortaji, & Karon, 2018). It has been found that employees with disabilities have the strengths such as in terms of loyalty towards their employer, the habit of being punctual, dependability, and cooperation. However, PWDs have the benefits of improving their quality of life and source of income. Allowing those disabled people to work in an entrepreneurial environment, will help them to enhance their self-confidence to be in the circle of the environment. In addition, this will help people to create and expand their social network and be in a sense of community.

Within this context, there will be much more benefits of hiring PWDs which will need further research to explore as the benefits may vary by the type of disability as well as the industry and the also types of jobs offered. There will be more positive employers' attitudes towards a person with disabilities employees where there are more likely they are going to hire or continue to hire the persons with the disability. Although there is no one type of small business that is unwilling to hire people with disabilities, employer decisions on hiring are often influenced by the type and severity of the disability (Liu et al., 2015).

Employers that hire persons with disabilities will have the advantage of the tax legislation.

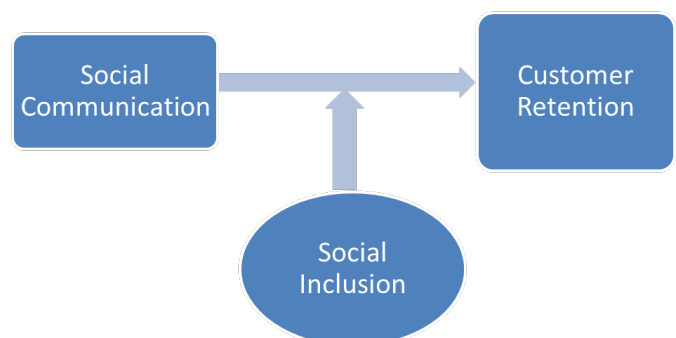
3.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is gathered by Festinger (1950) that there are two major sources of pressure toward uniformity among people, namely, social reality and group locomotion. Firstly, under social reality, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs which people hold must have some basis upon which they rest for their validity. Secondly, group locomotion covers the pressures toward uniformity among members of a group that may arise because such uniformity is desirable or necessary for the group to move toward some goal that it has. Again, they stressed that under such circumstances, there are several things one can say about the magnitude of these pressures toward uniformity.

1. They will be greater to the extent that the members perceive that group movement would be facilitated by uniformity.
2. The pressures toward uniformity will also be greater, the more dependent the various members are on the group to reach their goals. The degree to which other groups are substitutable as a means toward an individual or group goals would be one of the determinants of the dependence of the member on the group (Leon et al., 1950 p.10).

Indeed, while diversity tends to be pinpointed as an important aspect of organizational culture, recruitment of PWDs is seldom identified as a critical parameter, defining core values and sustaining social inclusion. Only 10 reports extend such statements to clarify their

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework



management approach to disability employment (Currie & Kahn, 2012). This framework (Figure 1) is to look at whether social inclusion moderates social communication to retain customers. Within this context, the success of food service providers relies on giving good service quality, value, and customer satisfaction thus creating repeat purchases and retaining them (Barber et al., 2011). Service quality is very subjective and more difficult to be evaluated but it is prominent to improve customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This is supported by Danesh, Nasab, and Ling (2012) that mentioned customer retention as the future propensity of a customer to stay with the service provider.

4.0 CONCLUSION

As a concluding remark, the study on social communication, social inclusion, and customer retention concerning the services provided by PWDs is non-existence. It is known that there are many challenges and barriers for PWDs to be seen in the workplace and job opportunities for them are very limited. Not only that, but there are also challenges faced by PWDs where lack of understanding by the employers do exist, difficulties in relationships with employers and coworkers because it is difficult to understand the PWDs' needs and feelings, frequent miscommunication between PWDs and normal people, and also on people's attitudes and stereotypes.

It is expected that this study will have its contribute to the PWDs and the related agencies, industries, and policymakers to reduce the gap in inequalities and discrimination. This special group has a significant contribution to the economy of Malaysia in terms of unique social communication. PWDs should be given more opportunities, motivation, and support for them to be able to live independently, and social inclusion is practiced at all times.

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