

Exploring supported decision-making with people with disabilities to sustain employment

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ABSTRACT

Hong Kong as one of the world's most dynamic economies, there were 1,377,733 registered companies as at 31 March 2021, of which, only 0.02% (294 companies) in 2020 recruited persons with disabilities (PWDs), implying that the acceptance of PWDs among employers was still low. Besides, vocational rehabilitation services and many of employers focus on the quantity of the number of job opportunities offered and the number of PWDs employed, giving little attention to the sustainability of employment. Many PWDs lack the skills and knowledge, even opportunities in decision-making. Supported decision-making can help PWDs build confidence to self determine and direct their own lives with support from the people they trust. To make decisions for themselves, PWDs can feel that they are in control of their lives and more satisfied with their lives, which may enhance their quality of life. This paper aims to first explore how supported decision-making was applied to facilitate persons with disabilities to not just obtain supported employment but were able to sustain the employment for at least 12 months. According to the "Supported Employment Training for Persons with Disabilities (SET)" Funding and Service Agreement, which is issued by the Social Welfare Department of Hong Kong SAR, all SET service operators are requested to provide support to participants (PWDs) with no less than 12 months post-placement service to help them settle in work environment and sustain employment. Secondly, the subjective views of quality-of-life outcomes of PWDs who had been involved in supported decision making were explored. Case study method was employed with in-depth interviews with PWDs and vocational workers. The thematic analysis reviewed the process and strategies of implementing supported decision-making. Tips and wisdom to carry out supported decision making will be shared. To sum up, this paper aims to give a comprehensive picture of how supported decision-making is carried out and whether there is any effect on the subjective views of their quality of life.