The concept of ‘work ability’ from the view point of employers

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• The concept work ability

• Work characteristics

• Participation in working life among people with disabilities

• Presentation of an interview study with employers on their perceptions of the concept work ability

• Conclusion
Work ability – a crucial concept: medical insurance perspective versus employer perspective
Work characteristics

- Diversity of jobs
- Specialization
- Division of labor
- Altruism
- Income
Participation in working life among people with disabilities

- Less educational possibilities
- Higher unemployment
- Higher underemployment
- Lower salaries
- Less career possibilities

Synergy effect

Poverty trap
Employers’ concerns when considering hiring a person with disability

Uncertainty and doubt

Reactions from others

Costs associated with hiring

Doubts regarding work performance
Method, context and participants

- Phenomenografic study
- Performed in the South of Sweden
- Individual interviews with 12 employers: six men and six women representing
  - various branches
  - companies with 5 to 1000 employees
  - gender mixed and male/female dominated work places
  - various educational demands
  - experiences of employees with disabilities
Results: Employers’ perceptions of work ability

- Employee’s contribution to work ability
- Employer’s contribution to work ability
- Productivity
- Circumstances with limited work ability
Results: Employers’ perceptions of work ability

- Employee’s contribution to work ability
  - Being of service
  - Ability to communicate

- Employer’s contribution to work ability
  - Shaping work ability
  - Providing a social team spirit

Circumstances with limited work ability

“We teach new ways, new methods to be able to manage the orders we have today. What we did in five hours we now have to do in two and a half hours.”
Results: Employers’ perceptions of work ability

Employee’s contribution to work ability:
- Commitment, interest and will to develop
- Being your own supervisor
- Delivering lean production

Employer’s contribution to work ability:
- Motivating through involvement
- Coaching and supporting
- Managing and organizing work

Circumstances with limited work ability:

Supervisors – we can’t afford them.”
Results: Employers’ perceptions of work ability

Employee’s contribution to work ability

Employer’s contribution to work ability

Circumstances with limited work ability

Health problems
Personality

Love accommodation problems

Limited adaptation ability

“Two [employees] here are building houses and they . . . I have to tell them . . . you have to have focus on the job.”
Results: Employers’ perceptions of work ability

**Employee’s contribution to work ability**
- Being of service
- Ability to communicate
- Commitment, interest and will to develop
- Being your own supervisor
- Delivering lean production

**Employer’s contribution to work ability**
- Shaping work ability
- Providing a social team spirit
- Motivating through involvement
- Coaching and supporting
- Managing and organizing work

**Circumstances with limited work ability**
- Health problems
- Personality
- Love accommodation problems
- Limited adaptation ability
Conclusion

• Not only health problems impact on the ability to work
• Discrepancy between employers’ perspectives and medical insurance perspectives on work ability
• A reciprocal contribution from employee and employer creates work ability
• Interest and commitment can bridge other shortcomings


Thanks for listening!
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