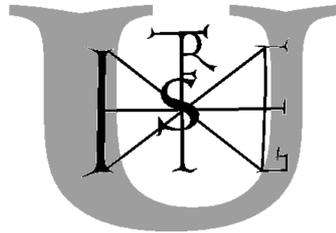


**SZENT ISTVÁN UNIVERSITY
GÖDÖLLŐ**



**THE EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OF PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

DOCTORAL (PhD) THESIS

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1 ANTECEDENTS AND THE GOALS OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Antecedents and the relevancy of the topic

In Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Hungary the forecoming economic and social changes made a significant impact on the place of people with disabilities in mainstream society. The previous system – although not in the right way and not with the right intention – assured safety and reliability for people with disabilities. This has been ceased by the changes.

As the colleagues of Cornell University conclude in their study: „...disabled people experience the transition to a market economy largely as a disaster: a profound social decline which leaves them poor and excluded.” Gladnet (1995) These changes can be observed in Hungary, too. There have been several actions made to promote the social integration of people with disabilities during the last decades. Among others for example the New Program of the Disabled has been approved by the parliament 10/2006. (II.16). The program outlines the priorities for seven years the following way:

- Changing the social perception,
- Improving the standard of living,
- Active involvement in society,
- Rehabilitation.

In order to promote integrated employment of people with disabilities there is a quote levy system in place in Hungary since 1987. According to the system all companies of all segments of economy employing at least 20¹ people must pay rehabilitation fee if the ratio of people with disabilities does not reach 5 % of the overall yearly headcount. The amount of the rehabilitation fee has been raised significantly as of 01.01.2010 to 964,500 HUF/year in order to raise efficiency. This legal change is supposed to create a situation in which the companies are economically interested to employ people with disabilities.

The current economic situation has especially bad impact on both already employed and yet to be employed people with disabilities. The support system – on purpose – provides them with less and less supplies while the international and national economic situation makes it even harder for them to gain employment. In such a situation it is extremely important that the government arrangements to promote the employment of people with disabilities are effective.

1.2 Goals and hypotheses of the research

Main goal

Outlining my research I have set the goal on recognizing a wide range of aspects on the employment conditions of people with disabilities. The complex examination of the topic touches many disciplines as it is interdisciplinary. It contains of - among

¹ According to the law during the data collection. Since 01.01.2012 the law applies to the companies with an average number of at least 25 employees.

many more – sociology, labour study, agriculture and food study and certain parts of legal disciplines as well.

During my research I have aimed at outlining the relating national and international literature in a structured way. This gives me the opportunity of analysing the compatibility of the Hungarian situation within the international frameworks and experiences.

In addition to the analysis of the literature I have carried out an empirical data collection. Through the primary data collection I intended to gather information on the effects of the significantly raised amount of rehabilitation fee after the 1st of January 2010 based on the Act on Promoting Employment (IV of 1991) in the disability employment practice of the companies. Based on this information it can be decided whether the strict quota-levy system is in reality a good tool in promoting the integrated employment of people with disabilities.

The sub-goals of the research in line with the overall goals are:

- Collecting primary data in order to understand the effects of the raised rehabilitation fee in the employment practice of people with disabilities.
- After data analysis concluding whether the field of operation is related to the employment practice of people with disabilities.
- After data analysis concluding whether the size of the company (number of employees) is related to the employment practice of people with disabilities.
- Examining the effects of regional differences on the employment practice of people with disabilities.
- Base on additional information clarifying the range of factors that influence the employment practice of people with disabilities.

It is important to clarify the above mentioned factors as based on the results targeted and categorized action packages can be established for better promoting the employment of people with disabilities.

Based on the sub-goals of the research my hypotheses are:

H1 It is not possible to reach the designated 5% employment ratio of people with disabilities only by raising the amount of the rehabilitation fee.

With the restriction the government wanted to create a situation where the companies are economically interested to employ people with disabilities. In my opinion it is not enough, lacking supporting actions the employment ratio of people with disabilities at the companies with more than 20 employees on a yearly basis will not reach the legally set ratio of 5%.

H2 The different organisations (in size, economic situation and field of operation) react differently to the restriction.

In my assumption companies with more employees can comply with the regulation easier as they have more differentiated positions that creates more possibilities for identifying or creating suitable positions for people with disabilities.

I assume that the companies operating in economically challenging regions employ people with disabilities in a higher ratio in order to avoid any extra costs by not paying the rehabilitation fees.

In my assumption at the agricultural companies the ratio of employees with disabilities is lower than at food industry companies as the ratio of highly manpower required and hard physical positions is higher.

H3 There are factors that apply to all kinds of companies that have major impact on the employment practice of people with disabilities.

In my assumption it is possible to identify factors (e.g. lacking sufficient qualification, difficulties in creating contact to people with disabilities, etc.) that apply to all kinds of companies and can be targeted by actions that create a significant difference in the employment practice of people with disabilities.

H4 The definition of disability is not unified in Hungary. The differences of interpretations have an impact on the employment of people with disabilities. There is a need for a unified definition that is open and inclusive in order to shape both social and economic perception.

Nowadays in Hungarian practice the disability related definitions differ according to the ways of usage and in some cases they even do not comply with the international definitions. In my opinion there is a need for a definition that is broad and high level and complying with the international definitions clearly identifies the group of people with disabilities.

Final goal

Based on the results of carrying out the sub-goals I intend to evaluate the effectiveness of the legal changes on the employment practice of people with disabilities. I draw suggestions for complementary actions. I list other possible solutions to promote the integrated employment of people with disabilities.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of my research is that based on analysing the Hungarian and international professional **literature** and the employment **practice** of agricultural and food industry companies evaluate the decision of the government to raise the amount of the rehabilitation fee significantly as of 1st of January 2010 as a major promotion move in employment of people with disabilities. The rehabilitation fee applies to companies with no lower number of employees than 20 (as of 1st of January 2012, 25) in case the ratio of employees with disabilities does not reach 5%.

2.1 Professional Literature

Working on the professional literature of the topic I have evaluated the Hungarian and foreign – mainly European Union related - literature. My attention was focused on the (special)education, economical, sociological, legal and political aspects of the

topic. I have evaluated both printed and electronic literature of the topic with special attention to the major changes occurred during the last period.

After outlining the changing acceptance of people with disabilities along the different historical ages I have presented the place of people with disabilities in the society and the life of work. I have also highlighted the complexity of the definition system with regards to people with disabilities as well as the international and Hungarian legislation aspects of the topic. After analysing the employment situation of people with disabilities I have paid attention to the occupational health aspects of the topic as well. As an addition to that I have shown the role of human resource management in the process of employing people with disabilities and have outlined the costs of exclusion.

2.2 Data collection

The utmost important part of the research – next to the analysis of the professional literature is the primary data collection that has been carried out among the agricultural and food industry companies operating in Hungary with an average employee number over 20. The data collection was concluded between August 2010 and September 2011. As an addition to the data collection from the companies I have carried out an interview with an occupational doctor who provided me with information with regards to the role of occupational health specialists in the process of employing people with disabilities.

I had to take certain constraints into account when planning primary data collection. These were mainly time and cost related factors. I used simple random sampling supplemented by stratified sampling in order to raise the accuracy level of the sampling. First I was planning to do survey based data collection but due to the nature of the topic I needed a data collection method that supports individual situations and can be adjusted to unforeseen situations. The best matching method seemed to be the qualitative interview. As this technique requires significant resources (personal interviews need to be well planned, involve lots of travelling and require significant time from both the interviewer and interviewee) I have used it only at a certain ratio of the overall interviews (around 10%). In the second part of the data collection I used phone interviews as they require less resource therefore unable to conduct more.

During the interviews I have recorded the following data:

Basic information about the company

Research related data of the companies.

Headcount data of people with disabilities

With special attention to the before and after situation of the legal restriction.

Supplementary information about the employment of people with disabilities

The way of employing people with disabilities, resources and method of connection, educational background and other information.

As part of secondary data collection I have used mainly the data of the national consensus of year 1990, 2001 and 2011. I have complemented it with the data of the agricultural consensus of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Unfortunately not

all related information of the 2011 national consensus were available during the time of the preparation of the dissertation.

2.3 Applied methods for data analysis

During the data analysis of the interviews first of all I have used the analysis of frequency distribution in order to understand the practice of the companies in employing people with disabilities with regards to the legal requirements.

Following this the two-sample T-test method was applied to clarify if there was a statistically significant difference between the employment ratio of people with disabilities before and after the legal restrictions.

The method of single factor analysis of variance was applied to analyse if there is a difference in the employment ratio of people with disabilities along the basic characteristics (field of operation, location, size) of the companies. I have examined this before and after the legal restrictions.

Based on the results of the analysis of variance I have conducted a crosstab analysis with chi-square test to check if there is difference between the certain categories and the compliance ratio.

The above shown data processing and statistical analysis were concluded with MS Excel and SPSS (PASW Statistics 18) statistical software package.

3 RESULTS

3.1 General characteristics of the sample

The *first finding* of my research is that there were 17,024 people employed by the 77 companies reviewed by me. Out of these altogether 460 were people with disabilities. This means a 2.7% *ratio* instead of the legally requested 5%. This factor on its own suggests that the legal restriction did not lead to the desired result.

This can be underlined by the *second finding* according to which *only 24.7% of the reviewed companies apply* to the legally required employment ratio. But if we take into consideration the fact that before the introduction of the raised amount of rehabilitation fee only 1.3% of the employees of the reviewed companies were people with disabilities and only 7.8% of the companies applied to the 5% ratio that has been introduced 25 years earlier the result cannot be considered to be marginal.

At the next step I have examined the overall database in order to identify what percentage of the companies pay any attention to the topic and employ people with disabilities at all – even if not matching the legally required ratio of 5%. The *third finding* of my research is that *62.3% of the reviewed companies do employ people with disabilities*. This number can be considered as a positive figure but if we take the employment circumstances into account it can be seen that sometimes it is only a statistical solution without real efforts.

According to the *fourth finding* of my research *28.6% of the reviewed companies employ people with disabilities newly hired after the introduction of the legal*

restrictions. The rest of the companies either report their already employed colleagues with disabilities or do not employ people with disabilities at all.

I had a high priority on identifying whether there is a statistically significant difference between the employment rate of people with disabilities before and after the restrictions. The *fifth finding* of my research outlines that the results of the two-sample T-test the average of the two related samples ($p < 0,01$) *statistically confirms the positive effect of the legal restriction on the employment of people with disabilities*.

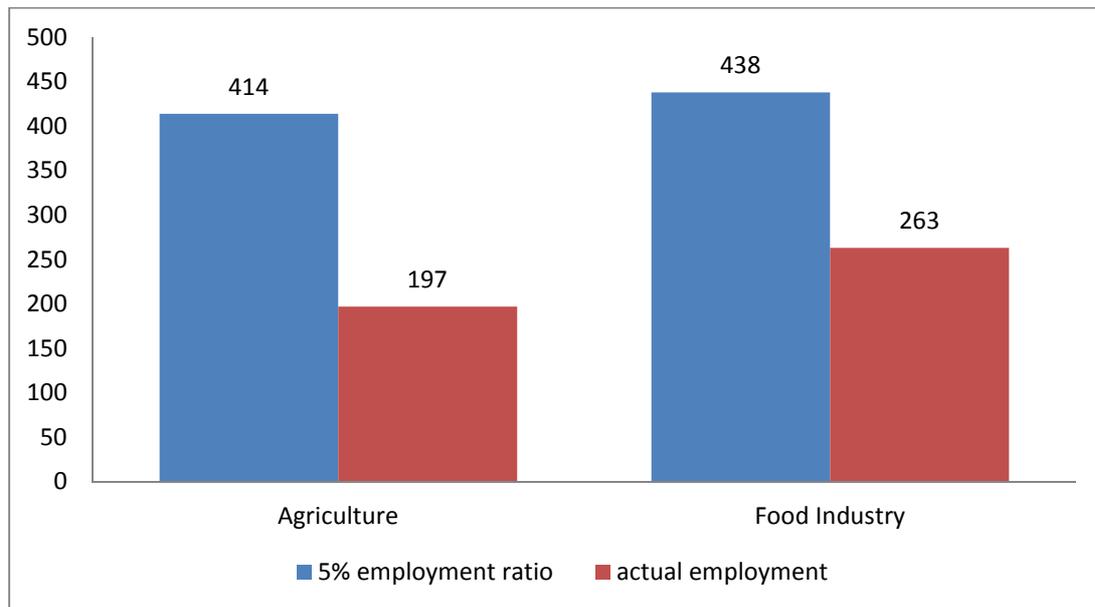
Although the effect of the legal changes can be statistically proved the result is rather small. This raises the question: is the introduction of a strict quota-levy system the best tool in promoting the integrated employment of people with disabilities? To answer the question I have further analysed the available data.

First I have analysed the data according to field of operation, then geographical situation and at the end the size of the companies. As an addition to these I have analysed the effect of the many times claimed problem of not sufficient level of education and the lack of employee databases. Further I have outlined the problem of creating suitable positions for people with disabilities and the not supportive management attitude. The results I have completed with an interview with an occupational doctor. I have also driven the attention to the fact that some of the companies do not pay any attention to the employment of people with disabilities.

3.2 The impact of the field of operation on the employment of people with disabilities

During data analysis – in order to ensure the right number of sampling units – I have established two categories: agricultural and food industry companies. Those companies that have multiple operations I took the major profile into consideration.

Figure 1: Employment ratio of people with disabilities according to the field of operation



Source: Own research data, N=77

Comparing the data of the two categories of operations it can be seen that the employment ratio of people with disabilities prior to the legal restrictions was higher at the agricultural companies (1.83%) than at the food industry companies (1.06%). A higher rate of agricultural companies has reacted to the introduction of the restrictions (30.77% versus 20%). Although the shift in the number of employees with disabilities was higher at the food industry companies still even at the time of the data collection the overall ratio of people with disabilities employed was higher at the agricultural companies than at the food industry companies (2.78 % versus 1.62%).

Based on the above displayed data it can be concluded that although the change of the employment ratio of people with disabilities was lower at the agricultural companies due to the higher base level, the agricultural companies had a higher employment rate of people with disabilities at the time of data collection than food industry companies.

Further analysing the data with chi-square test I drew the following conclusions.

Table 1: Analysis of correlation between field of operation and employment ratio after the introduction of legal restrictions with chi-square test and Fisher test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.868 ^a	1	,005		
Continuity Correction ^b	6,522	1	,011		
Likelihood Ratio	7,778	1	,005		
Fisher's Exact Test				,007	,006
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,765	1	,005		
N of Valid Cases	77				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.42.b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

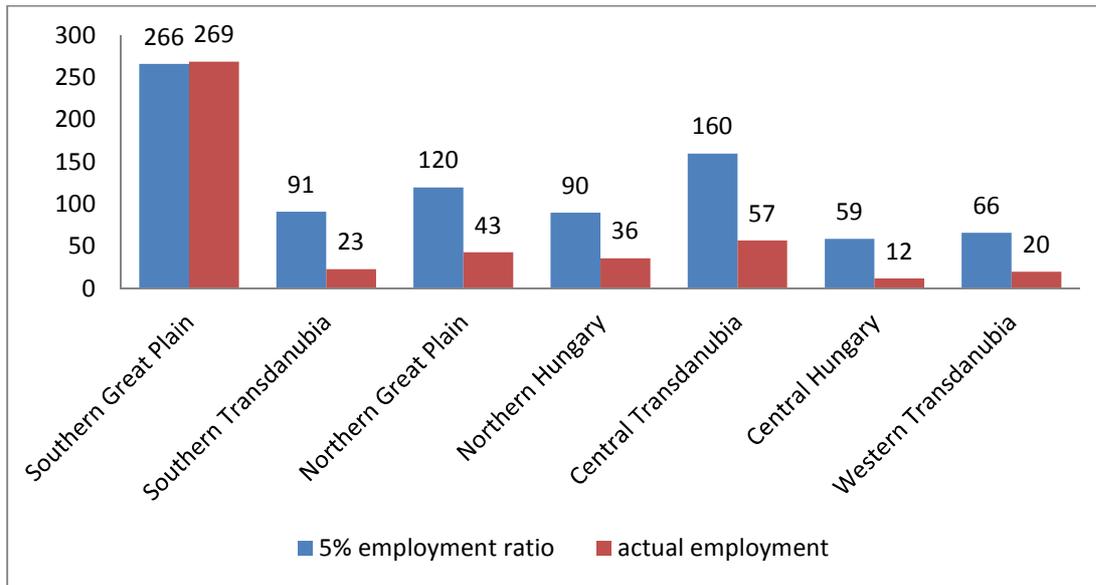
Source: Own research data, N=77

The results of the chi-square test ($p=0,005$) and Fisher test ($p=0,006$) confirm the statistical correlation between the field of operation and the employment ratio of people with disabilities after the introduction of the legal restriction. The significance of the correlation is weak.

3.3 The impact of the geographical location on the employment of people with disabilities

The second data evaluation factor during the analysis of gathered data was the geographical location of the interviewed companies. The importance of the geographical location lies in the fact that the certain territories of the country have different natural and economical settings that have a direct effect on the employment opportunities. I used the official segregation of regions created in 1999.

Figure 2: Employment ratio of people with disabilities according to the geographical location



Source: Own research data, N=77

Comparing the data of the regions it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the regional location (and with that the natural and economic environment) and the employment practice of people with disabilities.

Further analysing the data with chi-square test I have created three clusters to attain relevant number of sampling units according to the 3 large regions of Hungary: Central Hungary, Transdanubia and Great Plain and North. The following conclusions have been drawn after analysing the data:

Table 2: Analysis of correlation between the regional location and employment ratio of people with disabilities with chi-square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.206 ^a	2	,122
Likelihood Ratio	4,262	2	,119
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,980	1	,046
N of Valid Cases	77		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.14.

Source: Own research data, N=77

The chi-square test confirms ($p=0.122$) that there is no correlation between the regional location and employment ratio of people with disabilities.

It is also important to emphasize that although the Central Region is historically in an outstanding economic situation the employment ratio of people with disabilities is way lower than at the other regions.

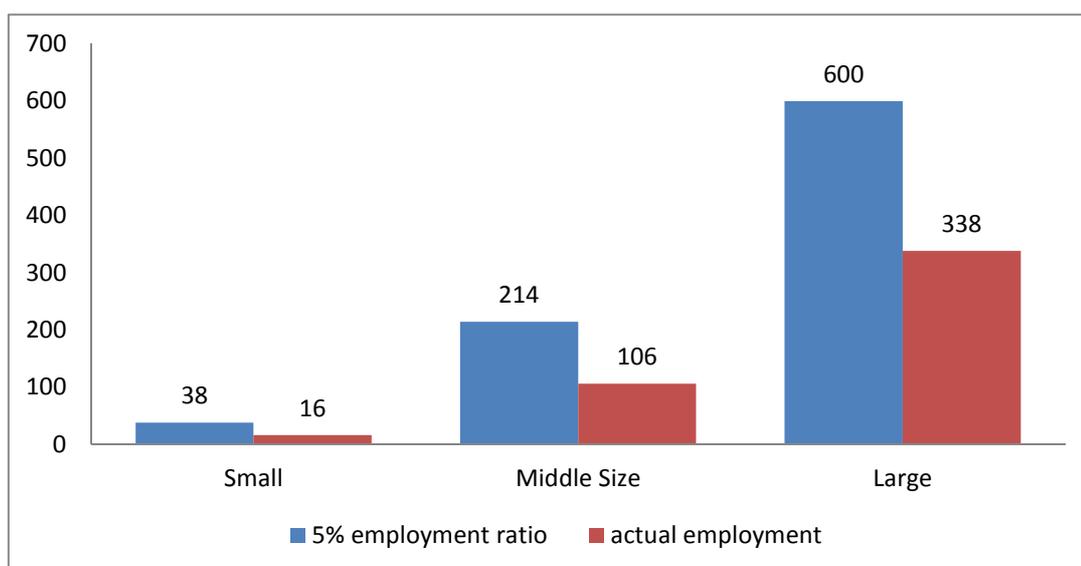
3.4 The impact of the size of the company on the employment of people with disabilities

During the analysis of the primary data the third analysing factor was the size of the company. Creating the different size categories I have taken the main determining factor into consideration: number of employees. I followed the categorization of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. The three defined groups were:

- Small (10-49 employees)
- Middle size (50-249 employees)
- Large (over 250 employees)

The employment ratio of people with disabilities shows the following numbers according to the size of the companies.

Figure 3: Employment ratio of people with disabilities according to the size of the company



Source: Own research data, N=77

Finalising the data analysis of the different size groups it can be concluded that although the changes in the legal requirements involved the least changes at the middle size companies due to the favourable starting data still this size category performs the best in employing people with disabilities (2.84%). Although the large companies have an outstanding number in newly employed people with disabilities they still hired only 1.86% at the time of the data collection well as at the small companies this number was 2.18%. Further analysing the data the following findings could be identified.

Table 3: Analysis of the correlation between the size and employment ratio of people with disabilities with chi-square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.905 ^a	2	.636
Likelihood Ratio	.900	2	.638
Linear-by-Linear Association	.847	1	.357
N of Valid Cases	77		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.16.

Source: Own research data, N=77

The chi-square test underlines ($p=0.636$) that there is no statistical correlation between the ratio of people with disabilities employed and the size of the companies.

3.5 Non-satisfactory level of qualification

Large proportion of publications refers to non-satisfactory level of qualification as one of the major reasons of low employment level of people with disabilities. Furthermore the existing qualifications are not always considered when employing people with disabilities. It is also important to take into consideration that the skills and abilities of those who spend significant time away from work might erode. Based on this it is important to consider the existing level of competencies at the point of time of employment.

Keeping the significance of the topic in view I have gathered information with regards as well. I have not examined the qualification level of the people with disabilities already employed but focused on the lack of qualification as stopping factor when hiring people with disabilities. This allowed me to discover the deviation between demand and supply directly.

Among the 77 interviewed companies 12 mentioned lack of adequate qualification as a problem when recruiting people with disabilities. That is 15.58% of the interviewed companies. If we take a look at the employment numbers of these companies we can see that the employment ratio of people with disabilities does not differ much from the overall average of the sample (2,1% versus 2,4%).

3.6 Non-accessible employee database

Another well published area of problems is the lack of information about people with disabilities. In specific the regional labour centres do not have a good working relationship with the companies in this regards (regional labour centres are supposed to gather, store and communicate related information).

In order to clarify the situation I have collected related data. I have gathered information whether there was any problem in contacting people with disabilities during recruitment and the nature of the relationship between the interviewed company and the regional labour centre.

Altogether only 3 companies gave a negative answer on the connection with people with disabilities which is a marginal number. If we further analyse the connection with the regional labour centres the results are a bit more diverse. There was only 1 company classifying the relationship with the centres bad. 58 companies – that is more than 75% of the companies – find the relationship with the regional centres neutral and 18 companies (23.4% of all interviewed companies) have a good working relationship with the regional labour centres. If we put the employment data next to this information we can see that those companies that do not employ people with disabilities – with one exception – classified their relationship with the regional centres neutral. This points to the fact that these companies did not really put effort into starting any relationship with the regional labour centres in this matter.

As of 1st January a central bureau, the National Labour Office handles all employment political, occupational safety, vocational and adult training duties. The work of the National Labour Office is helped by the regional labour centres creating the system of National Employment Service. These changes have been made in order to modernise and simplify the system.

3.7 The possibilities of creating the right positions

Although the problem of matching positions was not part of the interview questions 35 out of the 77 interviewed companies mentioned the lack of matching positions as reason for not employing people with disabilities. Nevertheless 2 companies out of these 35 managed to hire people with disabilities in the ratio of at least 5%. It means that for the remaining 33 companies the problem of defining the right positions was at least one of the reasons for not employing people with disabilities. These 33 companies mean 56.9% of the overall 58 companies that do not meet the legal requirements.

This means that the importance of the problem is not questionable. It is important to see what it means in practice. There is a wide range of reasons out of which I would like to highlight only the following three:

- a) Not complying working environment for employing people with disabilities (e.g. hazardous industry),
- b) Not competent human resources management,
- c) Non supportive attitude.

a) Those companies that operate in hazardous circumstances face a real challenge in employing people with disabilities. These companies have very limited positions that might be suitable for people with disabilities.

b) Not competent human resources management can be the reason of either lack of knowledge of the possibilities or despite the knowledge the person dealing with human resources topics cannot apply his/her knowledge in practice. This is an issue mainly at those small companies where the HR tasks are handled together with other functions. In such cases there is no specialist available.

c) Non supportive attitude can be the result of many factors. It can be due to lack of knowledge, due to non-supportive management, fear of additional work or responsibility.

3.8 Managerial attitude

Next to the above mentioned factors I find it important to highlight that there were 10 companies interviewed that although did not employ people with disabilities could not give any reason to that. In my opinion one of the possible reasons to that is the non-supportive managerial attitude. This can be underlined by many publications in the topic. One of the interviewees put it this way: „It only depends on the attitude of the top management.”

Based on the above it can be concluded that the top management of the companies play a crucial role in the employment of people with disabilities. The motivation level of the top managers is highly influenced by the overall expectations of society. It is our responsibility to create and follow a norm in the society where the mainstream employment of people with disabilities is part of our everyday life. This has to be taken into consideration by the government when creating programs for promoting the employment of people with disabilities.

3.9 Occupational health factors of employing people with disabilities

The importance of the role of the occupational health specialist in the process of employment of people with disabilities can be summarized the following way.

Entry health check assessment

During the assessment of health condition with regards to the position the occupational doctor evaluates if the candidate meets the health requirements of the specific position he/she is applying for. In practice in many cases the result of the evaluation is that there are certain changes required in the level of load of work. This means that in reality many of those people with disabilities who attained a proof of working conditions during their evaluation by the national health authorities do not get a chance to fill in the real positions available on the labour market.

Periodic, emergency and closing medical examinations

In addition to the entry health check the employer is obliged to supply its employees with periodic, emergency and closing medical examinations. The importance of these examinations lay in the timely recognition of harmful conditions and immediate response to their elimination.

The importance of the level of knowledge and ability of the occupational health doctor

The work of occupational health professionals is very diverse. Gaining the relevant qualification provides them with an overall average knowledge. In order to meet the high requirements the occupational health specialists have to continuously further educate themselves. Further education is not only costly but also time consuming. What is more their attendance requires significant organisational tasks that not many people are willing to tackle. As a result of that there are significant differences among the level of knowledge of different health occupational doctors.

Based on the above mentioned it can be said that the occupational health doctor has a major impact on the employment of people with disabilities.

3.10 The common factors of companies complying with the legal requirements

Further analysing the data it can be seen that those companies that 78.9% of those companies meeting the 5% employment ratio in employing people with disabilities have already employed people with disabilities prior to the legal changes.

What is more 47.9% of these companies have met the 5% ratio even before the raise in the rehabilitation fee.

All in all there are only 4 companies meeting the 5% employment ratio that have not employed people with disabilities at all prior to January 2010.

3.11 New scientific results

1. During the academic research displaying and analysing the concerned literacy **I have created** a generally usable, clear definition as follows:

Disability is a physical or intellectual state in which the person affected has long term disadvantages in participating in society.

2. During the statistical analysis of data gathered from the companies **I have determined** the employment level of people with disabilities in the agriculture sector.
3. Further analysing the data **I have demonstrated** that the different companies in different (size, economical, field of operation) circumstances can react to the legal restrictions partially different ways.
4. **I have concluded** the range of factors that have a major impact on the ratio of people with disabilities at the companies.
5. By consequently systemizing the data **I have pointed out** the fact that the legal changes had only minor effect on the previously passive companies.
6. As a final closure of the whole research **I have evaluated** the effectiveness of the legal changes in the employment of people with disabilities.

4 CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 Introducing the analysed general characteristics

Based on the analysis of data gathered during the field research and the conclusion of domestic and international literacy the following conclusions can be drawn about the employment practice of people with disabilities.

Based on the data from the interviewed companies it can be said that there is a statistical correlation between the field of operation and the level of people with disabilities employed.

It can also be concluded based on the analysis of the research data that there is no statistical correlation between the employment practice of people with disabilities and the size of the companies.

Although there is a correlation between the regional situation of the companies and the ratio of people with disabilities employed this relation does not follow the economic development pattern of the regions. This might lead to the conclusion that there is no correlation between the economic environment and the employment practice of people with disabilities.

4.1.2 Supplementary factors of the analysis

Introducing the inadequate level of qualification and non-supportive regional labour centres as informational channels as supplementary factors it can still be outlined that there is no correlation between the analysed factors and the employment ratio of people with disabilities.

The difficulty of creating matching positions for people with disabilities proved to be one of the factors in blocking the employment of people with disabilities.

Managerial attitude has a great influence on the employment practice of people with disabilities at the reviewed companies.

Based on the interview with the occupational health doctor I have concluded that the level of knowledge, ability and attitude greatly influences the employment possibilities of people with disabilities at the companies.

Based on the analysis of data of the companies complying with the legal requirements it can be said that 78.9% of them have already employed people with disabilities prior to the legal restrictions. There are only 4 companies meeting the 5% employment ratio at the point of time of the interviews that have not employed people with disabilities at all prior to January 2010.

4.1.3 Evaluation of the hypotheses

Two out of the originally formulated hypotheses got verified and one got rejected based on the results of the empirical research.

H1: It is not possible to reach the designated 5% employment ratio of people with disabilities only by raising the amount of the rehabilitation fee.

Based on the results of the research Hypothesis # 1 got verified. Although in percentage the shift after the introduction of the significantly raised rehabilitation fee in the employment of people with disabilities is 54.5% the final employment ratio of people with disabilities remained at approximately half of the desired 5%.

H2: The different organisations (in size, economic situation and field of operation) react differently to the restriction.

As a result of the research Hypothesis # 2 got only partially verified. Analysing the listed factors there was a statistical correlation between the field of operation and the employment ratio of people with disabilities.

H3: There are factors that apply to all kinds of companies that have major impact on the employment practice of people with disabilities.

After analysing the results of the research Hypothesis # 3 got verified. During the research the following factors proved to be such: difficulty in creating suitable positions, managerial attitude and the role of the occupational health specialist.

Based on the relevant literacy aspects the demand for a comprehensive, high level definition that is in line with the international guidelines is valid. Based on that the following definition was established:

Disability is a physical or intellectual state in which the person affected has long term disadvantages in participating in society.

4.1.4 Fulfilling the overall goal of the research

One of the final aims of my research has been to evaluate – in line with the sub-goals – the decision of the Government of significantly increasing the amount of the rehabilitation fee as of 1st January 2010 if the 5% employment ratio of people with disabilities is not met. Based on the results of the research it can be concluded that prior to the legal changes the interviewed companies had a 1.56% employment ratio of people with disabilities that has been raised to 2.41% at the point of data collection.

Unfortunately there are no data available to clarify the triggers and the timing of the initial employment ratio. It is clear that the legal restriction made a positive shift in this employment ratio. Unfortunately it can be assumed that this growth was not achieved by involving the most severely affected groups but still it is a valuable

result as in the system of continuously decreasing level of supplies any result is a sign of hope.

Based on the above I find the legal restriction a positive but weak move. The effectiveness of the levy system is further questionable as the government does not keep the amount of the rehabilitation fee bound to the minimum salary and the system of supportive actions has not been established during the 3 years of existence of the high amount of rehabilitation fee. There is a need for stable, predictable, long term existing programme in order to really promote the employment of people with disabilities.

4.2 Suggestions

When outlining suggestions I keep the long known fact into consideration that as each disability case is unique each solution has to be unique, too to achieve long term success. As an addition to that I find it important to emphasize that the accommodating employers have unique situations as well so any high level suggestion should be considered only in the frame of the specific situation of the certain companies.

When framing the suggestions next to the results of the research I have incorporated my over ten years of experience in the field of employment of people with disabilities.

4.2.1 Approach forming and general suggestions

Change of attitude in the approach

There is a need of change of attitude in order to achieve a definite shift in the employment practice of people with disabilities. This change has to happen in the attitude of legislators, the operative organizations and people with disabilities themselves.

Legislators

The most important factor from this perspective in my opinion would be to listen to the voices of economic institutions (although civic organisations try to transmit between the government and the institutions in many cases the real meaning is lost in this process). In this regards the establishment of the Regular Consultation Forum between the Government and the Economical Sector in February 2012 is a milestone. According to the agreement it provides the members with a platform for liaise among many others in the field of employment policy, employment market and wage regulations, occupational law, vocational training and all labour force related legislation plans, etc. Apart from these any other economy or social welfare related topics should be discussed that the parties see necessary to liaise.

In my opinion instead of the „what has to be done and what happens if not” type of thinking or next to it the implementation of a „what can be done and what benefit does it make” type of thinking would be forward leading. What does it mean in practice? The legal framework the „what has to be done” is rather well defined

already. As I have shown in the previous parts of this work the anti discrimination legislation is already in place in Hungary. I find a big shortage in the forward leading measures apart from the follow up actions. These could be drawn by the respective ministries or by the organisations supervised via them.

Profit oriented organisations

Next to emphasizing the recently fashionable topic of social responsibility I believe the clear communication of economic advantages caused by the employment of people with disabilities should be better promoted. Major changes can only be achieved in my opinion if the management of the companies does not consider the employment of people with disabilities to be a social move but as part of their usual operation that does not require sacrifices but might even bring economic opportunities.

Public sector

Unfortunately there are no specific data about the employment figures of people with disabilities in the public sector. Therefore it is not possible to judge the correspondence rate to the legal requirements. This kind of secret policy does not have a positive effect on the promotion of employment of people with disabilities. Clear engagement and open communication would be forward leading. In numerous countries the respective data is openly available and well communicated.

People with disabilities

The situation of people with disabilities is complicated as they themselves do not form one unified group. They have become members of the category „people with disabilities” due to different reasons in different points of time in different circumstances. In order to achieve success in the life of work they have to have a solid high performance level with the right attitude. I find it also important that the people with disabilities should also be economically motivated to work. To achieve this the establishment of a system where the mainstream employment brings more to the table than living off of aids or working in sheltered employment. The current legislation system next to promoting the employment of people with disabilities with the reform of the supply system further urges it. As a result of this groups of people who have been enjoying the system of social aids re-enters the employment market „forced” to work. The right motivation system of these people is necessary in order to create the right attitude as their number is constantly rising.

Information system of the companies

During my interviews with the representatives of the companies I have come across the fact that they do not have the right level of concerning information (whether it was the HR manager or the CEO of the company). Clear, simple and easy to understand set of information would be of help to them. As a help in this field at the end of last year a new website started to operate under the name of Occupational Rehabilitation Knowledgebase „frtt.hu” that aims to help those companies willing to employ people with disabilities. The website not only communicates the legal aspects and the system of available subsidies but also contains human resource

management information. A separate part deals with the introduction of advantages of employing people with disabilities and examples of best practices from the field of profit oriented, sheltered and public sector as well.

Legal aspects, communication of possible financial subsidies

In my opinion there is a need for a document (paper based and electric) that not only outlines the major legal aspects of the topic but also lists the available subsidies in a clear simple way that catches attention. The document needs to be passed to the decision makers of the companies.

Communication of economic advantages

Especially for the profit oriented companies it is important to show the economic opportunities of employing people with disabilities.

Promoting best practices

All around the world and in Hungary there are several companies that employ people with disabilities successfully. Their solutions and sets of experience could be used as learning materials for all other companies. I find it important that the best practices should be promoted among companies with similar economical orientation in order to better identify themselves with these possibilities.

Unifying the already existing labour market services

There have been great efforts made in promoting the employment of people with disabilities in the last years in Hungary. Many non-profit organisations have chosen the topic for their field of operation and have real achievements. During their operation they have created a large amount of learning based on practice. The collection of this knowledge, identification of the best working methods and standardization of it has never happened. Such a work would mean a major step in the promotion of employment of people with disabilities

Identifying labour market niches

It is a common tendency in the employment market that although there is an overflow of certain occupation there is a great demand in others. I find the identification of such labour market niches very important. Reacting to these opportunities in a fast and effective way can be a key factor in successful employment of people with disabilities. Having targeted trainings based on real market demands people with disabilities could attain long lasting and stabile positions instead of going through old fashioned trainings that are not market oriented and sometimes providing people with old knowledge.

4.2.2 Supporting the level of knowledge of human resources management

Based on the findings of the research I find it utmost important to support the human resources management employees of the companies. Based on the information of the interviews I find the following areas lacking the most information.

Possibilities of creating suitable positions

One of the key factors in employing people with disabilities is to identify the right position for them. The professionals dealing with this topic need support in achieving this. It is important that the already existing tools and best practices are available and easy to access for them. One of the targeted methods for evaluating the employees and the positions is the Lantegi method. Although the method can be successfully introduced and there are certified experts available all over Hungary none of the interviewed companies have mentioned as one of their used or planned methods. The promotion of the method (or any other successful method) would be a major help for the human resource management specialists of the companies.

Promoting flexible employment methods and flexible vacation practice

One way of helping to find a long lasting successful solution in the employment of people with disabilities is to be flexible in certain aspects of work. There are several legal possibilities to do so. Among others the system of working from home, part-time work, job-sharing, etc. Give an opportunity to better meet the common requirements of the employer and employee in order to achieve successful cooperation. These possibilities and especially the advantages of these possibilities are not known for every decision makers.

4.2.3 Supporting the work of the occupational health specialist

I believe that the knowledge of the occupational health specialist has a certain level of knowledge of human resource management as with that information he/she could have a wider range of suggestions for alteration in order to employ people with disabilities.

4.3 Further research directions

There are an endless number of topics related to the employment of people with disabilities as it affects the whole economy and society. Therefore it is hard to identify directions for further research. Following I highlight those that in my opinion connect to my research the best. But it is important to emphasize that any research in this long ignored field is very important.

4.3.1 Research on other sectors of economy

Next to the two major sectors of my research (agriculture and food industry) it is important to make similar researches in the other sectors as well. Only based on a wider range of results can be decided whether the results are representing only the two sectors or can be seen as overall indicators of the situation of the whole economy in Hungary. Analysing the sector specific data can be a help in identifying the best promotion system of people with disabilities (even with different set of tools according to different sectors).

4.3.2 The role of public sector in the employment of people with disabilities

As the respective data of the employment practice of the public sector is missing or is only partially available it is hard to judge the role of the sector. Next to missing the above mentioned opportunity of showing a good example it is unfortunate as the possible experience is not promoted and is lost. I find it important to have a research in this direction as well.

4.3.3 The role of education in the employment of people with disabilities

Although the research data has shown that the level of training was not a major blocking factor in the employment of people with disabilities the topic requires deeper research. Based on the level of qualification among people with disabilities it can be assumed that they are employed in positions that do not require special education, typically in physical work that might lead to further erosion of their physical status.

4.3.4 The experience of regional labour centres in the employment practice of people with disabilities

Many of the companies have mentioned that the regional labour centres played a major role in identifying their future employees with disabilities. On the other hand many companies have characterized their relationship with the centres as neutral in this regards. It would be important to understand what causes such a difference and identify if there are common features that could be widely used successfully.

4.3.5 Identifying the price of exclusion and communicating it

In my opinion the open communication of the price of exclusion of people with disabilities from the world of work would be beneficial. I have shown above that the methodology to create such a number is available based on international indicators. It would be important to update the number based on the results of the 2011 consensus and widely communicate it.

4.3.6 The effects of the world economic crisis on the employment practice of people with disabilities

It is unfortunately a well-known fact that the world economic crisis has caused changes in the labour market as well. There are no data available yet about the impact on the previously not very good employment ratio of people with disabilities. The data of the International Labour Organisation can be a guideline in this respect. One of their respective researches declares: „Evidence collected on European countries shows that the crisis has deepened inequalities, and that certain categories of workers have been hit more than others.” Vaughan-Whitehead (2011)

The research outlines that the labour market effects are further hitting the counties and although in the beginning mainly atypical workers have been affected and young, low educated workforce have suffered the most outlays the depths of the crisis will have an impact on other groups of employees as well. Next to the

previous crisis handling actions now cost effective solutions are in focus. This will have an impact on the support system as well. It is easy to see that the employment of people with disabilities is not the number one priority in the decision making of human resources management. In such a situation I find it even more important to identify the economic advantages of employing people with disabilities and openly communicate them.

4.3.7 The problem of aging society, the consequences of the raise of retirement age on the employment of people with disabilities

Nowadays it is a cliché that our society is getting old. This puts lots of challenges on our societies. As one of the related actions the raise of retirement age can be seen (in Hungary by 2018 up to 65 from the current 62 in a step by step approach). Although as a result of modern medication the general health standards are better than before the natural aging processes affect the physical performance of people.

The age group representation of people with disabilities is not even. According to the data of the 1990 and 2001 consensus with age it shows a higher tendency. According to Dr. Lakatos and Dr. Tausz: „among the disabled population the ratio of 40 years and above age is significantly growing (in 1990 68.3%, in 2001 80.4 %)”. Dr. Lakatos – Dr. Tausz (2009) Based on this it is very important to deal with this aspect as well.

4.3.8 The role of non-profit organisations in the employment of people with disabilities

According to the data of the Hungarian Tax and Financial Control Administration there are approximately 23 thousand non-profit organisations operating. Out of this number around 750 organisations work in a field of my research topic.

In my opinion this 750 is a high number but if we consider the number of organisations related to the topic (education, vocational training, health, curative services, social services, rehabilitation, etc.) it can be seen that over ten thousand – that is almost half of the overall non-profit organisations – deal with some aspects of the topic. It would be important to make researches on the possibilities of the effective co-ordination of their work.

5 SUMMARY

Preparing my thesis I have been using the materials of my research on exploring the conditions of employment of people with disabilities between 2001 and 2012. In particular I have studied the impact on the employment of people with disabilities in agricultural and food industry companies of the government decision about significantly raising the rehabilitation fee for companies employing more than 20 employees (25 from 1st of January 2012) as of 1st of January 2010 if the ratio of people with disabilities of the employees does not reach 5 %.

During my research I set the aim of getting acquainted with as many aspects of the topic as possible. In order to achieve this I have elaborated the available domestic and international literary on the topic in a systemized way. This enabled me to

analyse the situation of people with disabilities in Hungary with regards to the international frameworks and practices.

Presenting the literary aspects of the topic I have outlined the perception of the topic during the different ages, I have demonstrated the place of people with disabilities in society and I have analysed the relationship between people with disabilities and the world of labour by comparing the parameters of the domestic and European Union labour data. After outlining the political perception of disability I have reviewed the two basic approaches of defining disability and I have exposed the current definition system available in Hungary. After showing the chronological order of the definition systems I have created my own disability definition as follows:

Disability is a physical or intellectual state in which the person affected has long term disadvantages in participating in society.

I have presented the related domestic and international legal aspects paying special attention to the legislation promoting social integration. In addition to reviewing the status of people with disabilities in the labour market within the European Union I have presented the domestic figures as well and outlined the important role of occupational health in employing people with disabilities. I have also expressed the determining role of human resources management and presented the internationally used indicator system to determine the price of exclusion.

After analysing the literary I have presented the results of my interview based research carried out between the summer of 2010 and the autumn of 2011. Based on this in line with the original aims of the research I have concluded that among the companies interviewed by me there is a statistically proved relation in employing people with disabilities according to the profile of the company. According to the results of my research although there is a difference in employing people with disabilities according to the size of the company this difference cannot be confirmed by statistical methods. Analysing the regional differences in employing people with disabilities I concluded that based on data collected by me although there is a statistically confirmed difference between the western transdanubian and northern Hungarian region to the data from the southern great plain region it cannot be linked with the economic situations of the regions.

Next to the above mentioned features I have examined the role of qualification and the regional labour centres in employing people with disabilities. Based on the data collected during my research I did not find any connection between these factors.

Based on the information shared during the interviews it can be said that at more than half of the companies that do not comply with the legal requirements creating proper positions was a problem in employing people with disabilities.

We can conclude based on the data gathered during the interviews that the managerial attitude has an influence on the employment practice of the companies.

After analysing the data I have pointed out the fact that among those companies that complied with the legal requirements at the time of the data collection the majority (78,9%) have already employed people with disabilities prior to the legal restriction.

Based on the information gathered during the interview with the occupational doctor I have concluded that occupational doctors play a major role in the process of employing people with disabilities.

On the grounds of research results and conclusions drawn from them I have formulated proposals in order to promote employment of people with disabilities. These proposals include change of attitude and better information flow within the companies. I have also proposed professional support for the human resources management systems of the companies and the unification of the already existing labour market services. I have outlined the possibilities in identifying the labour market service „niches” and I have drawn the attention to the importance of professional support of occupational health.

After presenting proposals I have listed possible areas of further research in the topic. These are the following ones:

- inclusion of other economical segments;
- research on the public sector;
- research on the role of education;
- research on the experiences of the regional labour offices;
- detailed research on the price of exclusion;
- further research on the effects of the economic crisis.

As a final conclusion of the thesis I can say that although the topic was set aside for a long period of time the integrated employment of people with disabilities is justified. They represent 2.41% of the employees in the companies interviewed by me holding positions that create value. All acts promoting their main stream employment should be supported.

6 LIST OF RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Scientific journal papers in English:

1. **Katalin Dióssi:** Regulating the Employment of People with Disabilities – Does the strict quota system bring real results? Journal of Central European Agriculture, No.1, Volume 12 p. 165-178
2. **Katalin Dióssi:** Employing People with Disabilities – What is a More Successful Approach: Legal Obligation or Social Responsibility? Regional and Business Studies, No. 3, Volume 1 p. 11-17

Scientific journal paper in Hungarian:

1. **Dióssi Katalin:** Regulating the Employment of People with Disabilities – Does the strict quota system bring real results? Munkaügyi Szemle, 2011/4 p. 95-102

Scientific conference paper (published in English):

1. **Katalin Dióssi:** Employment policy – Being Different, 2nd International Conference for Young Researchers, SZIE, 2002. ISBN: 963 9483 05 20
2. **Katalin Dióssi:** Employment policy – Being Different, International Conference for PhD Students, Brno, 2003.
3. **Katalin Dióssi:** The Role of Education in Raising the Employment Chances of People with Disabilities, International Conference and Workshops on Higher Education, Partnership and Innovation, BKF, 2010. ISBN: 978-615-5001-15-4
4. **Katalin Dióssi:** Employing People with Disabilities – Supportive Legislation?, 6th International Conference for Young Researchers, SZIE, 2010. ISBN: 978-963-269-193-0
5. **Katalin Dióssi:** Employing People with Disabilities – The Effects of Quota Levy System in the Agricultural Sector of Hungary, Jubilee Scientific Conference with International Participation, Agricultural University Plovdiv, 2010. ISSN:1312-6318

Scientific conference papers (published in Hungarian):

1. **Dióssi Katalin:** Employment policy – Being Different, 9th Scientific Youth Forum, Keszthely, 2003.
2. **Dióssi Katalin:** Employment policy – Being Different, 2nd Scientific Conference in the name of Ferenc Erdei, Kecskemét, 2003.
3. **Dióssi Katalin:** Employing People with Disabilities in the Field of Agriculture, 9th International Agroeconomical Scientific Days, KRF, 2004. ISBN: 963 214 313 2
4. **Dióssi Katalin:** Regulating the Employment of People with Disabilities – Does the strict quota system bring real results?, International Conference Celebrating the Day of Science, NYME, 2010.

Other publications:

1. **Katalin Dióssi:** Enabling People with Disabilities, OD World Summit, Budapest, 2010.