

# Factors Influencing Employers' Willingness to Hire People with Mental Illness: Based on Planned Behavior Theory

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**Purpose:** The purposes of this study were to: 1) explore the willingness of employers in Taiwan to hire people with mental illness; 2) determine the factors that influence employers' willingness; 3) understand employers' attitudes and concerns about Taiwan's employment policy for people with mental illness; and 4) analyze the conditions, problems, and intervention protocols for employment of people with mental illness. **Methods:** Based on the results of a literature review and qualitative research, we developed a questionnaire to investigate employers' willingness, attitudes, and perceptions toward hiring mentally ill people in Taiwan. Stratified sampling was used to select 501 employers. The overall response rate of employers who completed questionnaires was 93.81% (470 employers). **Results:** The results showed that: 1) employers held negative views regarding hiring people with mental illness; 2) although most employers agreed that people with mental illness have the right to work, more than half had negative emotions and concerns regarding symptoms and work competencies; 3) the main factors that affected employers' willingness to hire included employers' perceptions of their ability to hire people with mental illness and employers' emotional reaction toward mentally ill people and acceptance of their right to work; and 4) most employers were not aware of the employment policy and for some who were aware, its economic incentives seemed weak. Most employers had insufficient knowledge regarding mental illness. **Conclusions:** To increase employers' willingness to hire people with mental illness, the government should strengthen the supported employment system for both the employers and the employees. For example, the government could not only increase the number of job coaches, but also their professional requirements, pay, and benefits. In addition, we suggest the government modify the economic inducements to enhance employers' willingness to hire. Finally, effort should be made to increase social awareness of the government's employment policy and to enhance knowledge and acceptance with regard to mental illness.

**Key words:** mental illness, employment, policy intervention, anti-stigmatization

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