



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***MEDIATING EFFECT OF JOB SATISFACTION AND MODERATING  
EFFECT OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS ON RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN CORE SELF-EVALUATION AND WORK  
ABILITY AMONG EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITY  
IN MALAYSIA***

***SEYED SOBHAN LAVASANI***

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By

**SEYED SOBHAN LAVASANI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**June 2015**

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my beloved family, my wife and my daughter  
For their support and patience  
During my study in Malaysia



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia  
in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**SEYED SOBHAN LAVASANI**

**June 2015**

**Chairperson: Nor Wahiza Abdul Wahat, PhD**  
**Faculty: Educational Studies**

This study was designed to extend the holistic multidimensional model of work ability by including the direct relationship between core self-evaluation and work ability as well as the indirect relationship through the mediating effect of general and specific facets of job satisfaction among employees with disability in Malaysia. The studies on work ability were developed by Finnish researchers of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health-Helsinki-Finland since the beginning of the 1980's to prevent the inability to work across aging workers and have been extended to other non-aged employees in all groups of employees across many countries of the world. However studies on the predictors of work ability are still ongoing. Furthermore, Limited studies showed that there has been not enough attention paid to work ability of some particular employees like employees with disability. In this regard a conceptual model was developed to examine the relationship between core self-evaluation of employees with disability and their work ability. In this model the general and specific facets of job satisfaction was considered to mediate the relationship between core self-evaluation and work ability as well as the employment status was considered to moderate this relationship.

In order to meet the objectives of the study a cross-sectional, correlational survey design was used and standard self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data among 275 employees with disability who were randomly selected from members of disability Non-government Organizations (NGOs) in 8 Malaysian state. Descriptive analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM ) was conducted for data analysis.

The descriptive findings of the study revealed that most of the respondents reported moderate (49.1%) and high (43.6%) levels of core self evaluation. Majority of the respondents also reported high job satisfaction in general (70%) and most of them expressed that they were satisfied with work itself (74.5%), with coworkers (78.9%)

and with supervisions(76%). More than half of the respondents reported high satisfaction with the pay (58.9%) while above half of respondents were not satisfied with opportunities for promotion (53.5%). Results also showed that 29.5% of respondents perceived their work ability as poor, 32.08% perceived it as moderate, 28.7% perceived it as good and just 6.5% perceived excellent level of work ability. The results of the Structural Equation Model analysis indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between core self evaluation and work ability. The results also revealed that although there is a positive significant association between job satisfactions in general and work ability but among specific facets of job satisfaction, only satisfaction with coworker and supervision have positive and significant relationship with work ability. The results also unveiled that among job satisfaction in general and specific facets of job satisfaction just satisfaction with coworker and satisfaction with supervision mediated the relationship between core self-evaluation and work ability. Finally, the results revealed that employment status moderated the relationship between core self-evaluation and work ability.

This study provided a unique contribution to research by developing a framework for future researches by combining empirically grounded findings together with theoretical explanation from the literature. This study also highlighted some implication and recommendations for policy and practice toward the improvement of employees with disability's work ability.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KESAN KEPUASAN KERJA SEBAGAI PENGANTARA DAN KESAN  
STATUS PEKERJAAN SEBAGAI PENYEDERHANA TERHADAP  
HUBUNGAN ANTARA TERAS PENILAIAN KENDIRI  
DAN KEBOLEHAN BEKERJA DALAM HUBUNGAN  
PEKERJA KURANG UPAYA DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

**SEYED SOBHAN LAVASANI**

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Kajian ini telah direkabentuk untuk memperluaskan model multidimensi yang menyeluruh terhadap keupayaan kerja termasuk hubungan secara langsung antara teras penilaian sendiri dan kemampuan kerja dan hubungan tidak langsung melalui kesan pengantara dari aspek umum dan khusus kepuasan kerja di kalangan pekerja kurang upaya di Malaysia. Kajian terhadap keupayaan kerja telah dibangunkan oleh Finnish, seorang penyelidik dari Finland di Institut Kesihatan Pekerjaan - Helsinki - Finland, sejak awal tahun 1980-an untuk mencegah ketidakupayaan untuk bekerja merentasi pekerja umur dan telah diperluaskan kepada kakitangan bukan berumur lain dalam semua kumpulan pekerja di banyak negara di dunia. Walaubagaimanapun kajian terhadap ramalan keupayaan kerja masih berjalan. Tambahan pula, kajian menunjukkan bahawa keupayaan bekerja beberapa tenaga kerja tertentu seperti pekerja kurang upaya OKU tidak diberi perhatian. Dalam hal ini, satu model konseptual telah dibentuk untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara teras penilaian sendiri pekerja kurang upaya dan kemampuan kerja mereka. Dalam model ini, aspek umum dan khusus kepuasan kerja dianggap sebagai pengantara hubungan antara teras penilaian sendiri dan kemampuan kerja dan juga status pekerjaan yang dianggap sederhana hubungan ini.

Dalam rangka untuk memenuhi objektif kajian rentas ini, rekabentuk kajian korelasi telah digunakan dan standard self-administered questionnaires turut digunakan untuk mengumpul data di kalangan 275 pekerja kurang upaya yang telah dipilih secara rawak daripada Organisasi Bukan Kerajaan (NGO) di lapan negeri di Malaysia. Analisis deskriptif dan Persamaan Permodelan Struktur (SEM) telah dijalankan untuk analisis data. Hasil deskriptif kajian menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan responden dilaporkan sederhana (49.1%) dan tinggi (43.6%) terhadap tahap penilaian teras diri. Majoriti daripada responden juga dilaporkan memperoleh kepuasan kerja yang tinggi secara umum (70%) dan sebahagian besar daripada mereka menyatakan bahawa mereka berpuas hati dengan bidang pekerjaan (74.5%), dengan rakan-rakan

(78.9%) serta terhadap penyeliaan (76%). Lebih separuh daripada responden melaporkan yang mereka berpuas hati dengan gaji (58.9%) manakala separuh responden tidak berpuas hati dengan peluang kenaikan pangkat (53.5%). Keputusan juga menunjukkan bahawa 29.5% daripada responden berpendapat, keupayaan kerja mereka sebagai lemah, manakala 32,08% dari responden dianggap sebagai sederhana, 28.7% dilihat sebagai baik dan hanya 6.5% tahap cemerlang keupayaan kerja diperolehi.

Keputusan analisis Structural Equation Model menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang negatif antara penilaian teras sendiri dan keupayaan kerja. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa walaupun terdapat hubungan signifikan yang positif antara kepuasan kerja dalam kebolehpayaan secara umum dan kemampuan kerja, tetapi dalam aspek tertentu kepuasan kerja, responden hanya berpuas hati dengan rakan sekerja dan penyeliaan dimana mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan keupayaan bekerja.

Keputusan juga menunjukkan bahawa di antara kepuasan kerja secara amnya dan khususnya mereka hanya berpuas hati dengan rakan sekerja dan memiliki kepuasan yang positif dengan penyeliaan dan juga hubungan positif antara pengantara teras penilaian sendiri dan keupayaan kerja. Akhirnya, keputusan mendapati bahawa status pekerjaan yang sederhana antara hubungan teras penilaian sendiri dan keupayaan kerja.

Kajian ini memberi sumbangan yang unik kepada penyelidikan dengan membangunkan satu rangka kerja untuk kajian masa depan dengan menggabungkan penemuan berasaskan empirik bersama-sama dengan penjelasan teori dari kajian literatur. Kajian ini juga menekankan beberapa implikasi dan cadangan dasar dan amalan ke arah peningkatan pekerja dengan kemampuan kerja yang kurang upaya.



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>aJDI</i>	<i>abridge Job Descriptive Index</i>
<i>aJIG</i>	<i>abridge Job In General</i>
ACS	Asia Community Service
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
B	Unstandardized regression weight
$\beta$	Standardized regression weight
BC	Bias-Corrected
BMI	Body Mass Index
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CI	Confidence Interval
CR	Critical Ratio
CR	Construct Reliability
CSES	Core Self-Evaluation Scale
$D^2$	Mahalanobis d-squared
df	Degree of Freedom
DM	Diversity Management
DSW Malaysia	Department of Social Welfare Malaysia
DV	Dependent Variable
ES	Emotional Stability
ERG theory	(Existence needs, Relatedness needs, Growth needs)theory
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ECHP	European Community Household Panel
FIOH	Finnish Institute of Occupational Health
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFI	Goodness-of-fit Index
GSE	Generalized Self Efficacy
HRQL	Health Related Quality of Life
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

IFI	Incremental Fit Index
ILO	International Labour Office
IOR	Index of Organizational Reactions
IV	Independent Variable
JDI	Job Descriptive Index
JD-R	Job Demand-Resource Model
JIG	Job In General
JSS	Job Satisfaction Survey
KPWKM	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
SIE	Standardized Indirect Effect
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
LB	Lower Bounds
LOC	Locus Of Control
MCR	Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation
MMA	Multi Model Analysis
MSQ	The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire
MLE	Maximum Likelihood Estimation
MV	Mediating Variable
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NFI	Normed Fit Index
n/N	Number of members of sample or population
OKU	Job seeking information PWDS
PWD	People With Disability
QoWL	Quality of working life
QOL	Quality of life
R <sup>2</sup>	Coefficient of determination
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
S.D.	Standard Deviation
S.E.	Standard Error
SE	Self Esteem
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
SPOKu	System of placement for PWDS
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index

UB	Upper BOUNDS
WAI	Work Ability Index
WHO	World Health Organization



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter covers the background studies to the research in terms of the existing interconnectedness between individual dispositional factors, particularly core self-evaluation, specific facets of job satisfaction and work ability in the context of employees with disability in Malaysia. In addition to this, background information, the problem statement of the study, research questions, research objectives, research hypotheses, significance of the study, operational definition, definition of terms, assumptions, and limitations are provided to cast more light on the subtle issues of the current study.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

In this contemporary world, any changes associated with the structure and size of the population create challenges regarding the availability of the labor force in many developed countries. It is notable that strategic human resource development practices targeting at employment policies, attempts to use workforce diversity in order to conclude better outcomes such as higher performance as well as better creativity (Dib, 2004; Kochan et al., 2003; Selden & Selden, 2001). People with disability are the largest minority group among the mainstream workforce. It is reported that more than 1 billion people all over the world live with some kind of disability. Despite the fact that among this huge population, just 2.2% face with serious limitations in functioning due to their disability, it is believed that people with disability usually have been faced with enormous problems when it comes to gaining and maintaining employment.

During the last decade, the approach toward people with disability was developed from the conception of confining them to a lifestyle heavily dependent on pensions to one that help this minority group to realize their true aspiration of being an independent individual. The medical model of disability which states people with disability as incapable of work has been overhauled and much practical as well as academic efforts have been invested to help this kind of people move into work.

It has been strongly suggested that people with disability are valuable potential as proactive workforce under the condition that employer avoids wrong stereotyping regarding this minority group by giving them a fair opportunity for employment. Nevertheless, they are the most discriminated against with regards to gaining employment as well as being discriminated against by their employers and coworkers in the workplace, even after finding a job (Baldwin & Johnson, 2006; Blanck, 2001; Khoo, Leng, Ta, & Lee, 2013; Schur, Kruse, Blasi & Blanck, 2009; Ta, Wah & Leng, 2011). Recent researches have pinpointed the significant nonexistence of a proper understanding with regards to the real ability of people with disability as well as not having an adequate knowledge regarding managing disability issues among various

employers and organizations (Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011). Substantial and rewarding involvement of people with disability in work should be followed by employment policy makers as well as employers as a target policy in order to enhance their well-being and quality of working life. Well-being, in a turn, strongly relates to important organizational elements such as Job motivation, career success and job performance (Abele-Brehm, 2014; Thøgersen-Ntoumani et al., 2014; Broeck, Lens, De Witte & Van Coillie, 2013). In the recent organizational literature well-being in the workplace and high level of quality of working life has addressed at a high level of employees' work ability (Daws & Sa, 2011; Gould et al., 2008). In this modern era, maintaining and promoting the work ability of mainstream workforce is considered as a vital social goal in developed countries. Albeit, the importance of well-being and quality of working life in employment issues in particular concerning those with disability, in one hand and strong association between work ability and employees' well-being or quality of working life on the other hand have not been equally investigated and, a very few studies have adequate paid attention to the work ability of employees suffering from some sort of disability. Furthermore, it is to be noted that work ability is negatively associated with mental disorder and work stress (Boschman, Molen, Dresen, & Sluiter, 2014; Lindegård, Larsman, Hadzibajramovic & Ahlborg, 2014).

It has been suggested that employees' personality traits, in particular core self-evaluation could significantly influence their various behavioral and organizational outcomes. The theory of core self-evaluation has provided clear dispositional based explanation for employees' job satisfaction, work motivation, job performance, coping capability, wellbeing and objective and subjective career success that all related to employees' work ability (Judge & Bono, 2001; Chang et al., 2011; Erez & Judge, 2001; Kacmar, Collins, Harris, & Judge, 2009; Mueller et al., 2009; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002; Judge et al., 2009). It is also suggested that the most important traits of employees' core self-evaluation such as self esteem significantly impact on their work ability (Gould et al., 2008; Airila et al., 2014). However, despite the above discussion, to our knowledge, very little scholarly attention has been paid to the dispositional source of work ability. Work ability literature shows that most of the studies on work ability have focused on a few factors such as the individual physical and mental health condition, individual lifestyle, demographic and occupational characteristics, individual physical exercises, education level, age, economic condition, life condition, work demands, management, workplace condition, equipment and the condition or availability of various tools. In other word, most of the studies carried on work ability aimed to examine predictable role of individual physical and mental health condition as well as work related factors on employees' work ability rather than dispositional source of work ability. In the other hands, it is strongly suggested that people with disability's personality traits like coping behavior and their opinion about their capability as well as disability and functioning limitation alongside with environmental factors influenced their capability at work. It is stated that empowering programs which aims to enhance employees with disability's self evaluation significantly increase their job retention (Varekamp et al., 2010). It is also discussed that personality traits of people with disability have a significant effect on their coping ability at work place (Lawson et al., 2010; Boyce & Wood, 2011). Moreover, it is argued that that people with disability face negative psychological consequences that lead them to negative self evaluation.

Supporting the findings that people with disability often experience the increased level of psychological distress (Choi & Marks, 2008), it is stated that they often experience overprotection and discrimination as well as a lower level of expectation on their performance. These mentioned psychological distresses result in a negative self-view (Sanders, 2006; Smart & Smart, 2006; Smart, 2001) and, consequently, adverse effect on their work outcomes (Judge & Bono, 2001). Yet, there has been an inadequate attention given to the psychological source of employees with disability's work ability. Subsequently, the existing gap necessitates a particular investigation upon the work ability among employees with disability. Hence, to compensate the lack of dispositional explanation of work ability current study focus on the core self-evaluation to clarify the dispositional source of work ability. This study puts forth the idea that the core self-evaluation of employees with disability, as a higher order construct of positive personality traits, might be related to work ability of the People with Disabilities both in direct and an indirect way.

Furthermore, previous studies have shown the important link between employees' core self-evaluation and job satisfaction (Keller & Semmer, 2013; Ferris et al., 2013; Judge et al., 2012) as well as considerable studies have corroborated the strong link between employees' job satisfaction and work ability (Palermo et al., 2013; Gould et al., 2008; Berg, 2010). It was also suggested by Judge et al. (1997) that employees' core self-evaluation can indirectly effect their occupational outcomes by influencing the appraisals they make regarding their work such as job satisfaction. However, considering the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction (Kinicki et al., 2002), this study proposes the idea that specific facets of job satisfaction may have a mediating effect on the relationship between core self-evaluation and work ability.

On the other hand, it has been argued that the employees' employment status can significantly influence their fundamental self evaluation such as self esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Konrad et al., 2013). As a consequence, employees core self-evaluation may directly effect on their vocational outcomes like work ability (Judge et al., 1997). Indeed, involving in a high-status work role can enhance the employees' positive self view which in turn spills over to influence other outcomes such as work ability. Hence, this study puts forth the idea that the employment status may moderate the relationship between employees with disability's core self-evaluation and their work ability.

### **1.2.1 Work ability**

In order to introduce a discussion of the work ability concept and identification of effective factors on employees' work ability, it is useful to have a quick look at the given definitions of work ability.

An integral conceptual definition of work ability is "How good is the worker at present, in the near future, and how able is the one to do the work with respect to the work demands, health and mental resources (Ilmarinen & Tuomi, 2004). The defining characteristics of work ability have been suggested by some authors as health, professional competence, motivation, work requirement, work environment, basic standard competence, individual qualifications, occupational virtues and employees' attitudes, values and virtues (Gould et al., 2008; Nordenfelt, 2008;



Tengland, 2011). The output is a holistic concept regarding work ability taking into account all the existing aspects of individual sources, work related factors and environmental issues in the work context.

Dating back late 1970s, when Mini-Finland Survey was conducted, many studies have been carried out to develop the main concept of work ability and its dimensions. Several models have been established to evaluate work ability. Traditional models have primarily focused on workers' functional capacity and their health, including a significant balance between human resources and work demands. The latest models of work ability have surfaced not only the traditional aspects, but also some organizational factors; to just name a few; managements, work community and work life environment as well as different aspects of individual resources such as attitude and motivation, could be standing examples within the current framework. These models are so called multidimensional and integrated models(Gould et al., 2008; Ilmarinen, Tuomi, & Seitsamo, 2005).

Work ability and its relevant elements were investigated in line with multidimensional models from human resources point of view, the work organization and society (Ilmarin et al. 2008). Some researchers have addressed specific dimensions of work ability in coping at work, control over one's work and participation of employees in work community (Jarvikoski, Harkäpää & Mannila, 2001) whereas, from a totally different perspective, work ability was explained as being a holistic concept encompassing human resources including some objective factors such as physical and mental health, functional competence, skills, education as well as some subjective elements of individual resources. Some of the subjective individual resources could be, values, attitude and motivation. If we have a fresh look upon the issue, the dominant concept of work ability also contains all relevant factors associated with work, organization and even micro and macro environmental elements outside the employees' workplace(Gould et al., 2008; Ilmarinen & Tuomi, 2004; Ilmarinen, 2005).

Recent development in work ability concept has heightened the crucial need for concentrating on the work ability of any particular group of employees who are jeopardized by the individual resource-work demands imbalance at work (Berg, Elders, De Zwart, & Burdorf, 2009)for instance, aging employees and people with disability.

### **1.2.2 People with disability (PWD)**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2011), the term disability is defined extensively as an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitation and participation restriction. Impairment explicitly implies a problem in body function or structure whilst an activity limitation refers to a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action. The participation restriction in this definition states a problem experienced by an individual in real life involvement and associated situations. Therefore, disability is a complex phenomenon expressing an interaction between features of a person's body and characterizations of the society where he/she lives.



### 1.2.3 Disability in Malaysian Context

According to the latest report released from WHO, more than one billion people around the world live with some form of disability (World report on disability 2011). This figure is about 15% of the world's population. Furthermore, the World Health Survey estimates that just 2.2% of this population experience very serious difficulties in functioning, so the majority of disabled persons still could potentially get engaged in any sort of employment.

In Malaysia, the relevant statistics have been translated to 3 million disabled people from its total population equal to 29.4 million. Nonetheless, according to the most recent statistics reported by the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (DSW) just 458835 disabled people have registered with this department by the end of 2013.

Table 1 detailed out the number of registered disabled persons based on 7 categories of disabilities including visual disability, hearing disability, physical disability, learning disability, speech disability, mental disability, and others. Those registered with learning disabilities ranked as the highest percentage, followed by the ones with physical, hearing and visual disability. It is noteworthy that those with speech and mental disabilities, along with other types of disabilities were of the small percentage.

For many people with disabilities, assistance and support are prerequisites for participating in society. WHO recommended that some of the more common types of assistance and support services include.

- ◁ Community support and independent living
- ◁ Residential support services
- ◁ Respite services
- ◁ Support in education or employment
- ◁ Communication support
- ◁ Community access
- ◁ Information and advice services

Many countries have committed to provide these kinds of support services for their people with disabilities. In line with this global movement, The Persons with Disability Act 2008 was passed in the Malaysian Parliament on December 24th 2007. The Act has focused on the rights rather than the welfare of people with disability. The main objective of such stipulated Act is to allow equal rights and full participation of the disabled in various aspects relevant to registration, protection, rehabilitation, development and well-being. Part IV (Chapter 1) of the Persons with Disability Act 2008 declared the aspect of accessibility in promoting and developing the life quality and well-being of disabled persons including access to public facilities, amenities and services, access to public transport facilities, access to education, access to employment, access to information, communication and technology, access to cultural life and access to recreational centers, leisure activities and sports disciplines.

**Table 1.1 Number and Percentage of registered People with Disability in Malaysia**

Type of Disability	Frequency	Percentage
Visual Disability	42163	9.19
Hearing Disability	54937	11.97
Physical Disability	151937	33.11
Learning Disability	169186	36.85
Speech disability	2585	0.6
Mental disability	16359	3.56
Other	21668	4.72
Total	458835	100.00

Source: Department of Social Welfare Malaysia(DSW), (2013)

Malaysian Authorities have launched a year-long pilot scheme in 2005 parallel with the Social Security Organization which is extending its Return to Work program throughout the country. This plan was carried out through combining financial support via social security payments with physical and vocational rehabilitation to enable workers with employment-related injuries and diseases to return to work (World report on disability, 2011).

In spite of all national efforts in this way, it was estimated that just around 10-20% of people with disabilities in Malaysia have engaged in some forms of employment (Ta & Leng, 2013). Furthermore, it is depicted that even people with disability stand a chance to get a job, they may not experience well-being at work and a high quality of working life due to various difficulties they will probably experience in the workplace (Khoo et al., 2013; Ta & Leng, 2013). Well-being and high quality of working life have been addressed as important outcomes of employees work ability (Ilmarinen, 2009; Müller et al., 2012; Tuomi, Huuhtanen, Nykyri, & Ilmarinen, 2001). It has also been discussed earlier by previous researchers substantiating that there is inadequate understanding regarding the work ability of people with disability in Malaysia (Othman, 2013; Sharma, Singh, & Kutty, 2006; Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011). Work ability studies has suggested that the level of employees' work ability are significantly relevant to performance, volume of work absenteeism, coping ability regarding job demands, employees' well-being and physical and mental capabilities at work (Berg et al., 2008; Daws & Sa, 2011; Feldt et al., 2009; Gould et al., 2008; Ilmarinen, Tuomi, & Klockars, 1997; Ilmarinen, 2003; Lindfors et al., 2007; Martus et al., 2010; Tengland, 2012; Tuomiet al., 2001). It is also illustrated by earliest studies that low work ability significantly associates with employees' displacement, pre-retirement as well as reduced work ability anticipating decreased productivity at work (Berg, 2010; Karasek & Theorell, 1992; Rodgers, 1998; Sluiter, 2006; Yelln & Trupin, 2003). It is also suggested that promotion of work ability can improve the employees' quality of life (Gould et al., 2008). Therefore, it seems that more clarification about employees with disability could be realized in light of better understanding with regards to their work ability. Thus, it seems to be a high time for a broader study on work ability of employees with disability in Malaysia. This study attempts to explain the relationship between individual dispositional recourses like core self-evaluation, their particular attitude toward job via general and specific facets of job satisfaction and work ability of employees with disability in Malaysian context.

#### **1.2.4 Employment of People With Disability**

Malaysian national welfare policy developed in 1990 in line with Malaysia's vision 2020, to attaining the position of a fully developed nation, clearly emphasizes the right of people with disability to participate as well as experience well-being in all aspects of national development like employment. Experienced well-being at work has been addressed in the employees' high level of work ability (Gould et al., 2008). This study has mainly focused on the subjects related to employees with disabilities' well-being at work such as work ability. The results of this study provide some useful information about work ability of employees with disability, their crucial attitude towards their work and their personality traits at work. The obtained knowledge could be fruitful for both the employers and policy makers to get a better understanding about employees with disability at work aiming to improve their well being and quality of working life.

It has been pointed out that despite the willingness of Malaysian employers to employ people with disability, most of them don't have any particular employment policy for employing people with disability because they don't have adequate understanding and proper knowledge about the work capability of people with disability (Othman, 2013; Sharma et al., 2006; Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011). Interestingly enough, very scarce studies on work ability of employees with disability have been carried out and as of yet, none has been carried out in the context of Malaysia. It seems that gaining knowledge about work ability of employees with disability can provide a better understanding of their capability at work as well as providing a guideline for improving their well-being at work and quality of working life.

It is often reported that there is a lack of awareness among most of the employers as how to deal with employees with disability as well as the lack of understanding on the ways to handle the needs of employees with disability at work (Kaye, Jans, & Jones, 2011). Still, a very few studies have been conducted about employment issues of people with disability to provide useful information on their attitude towards work like their job satisfaction and moreover, none has attempted to assess specific facets of job satisfaction for employees with disability. Furthermore, although it is often suggested that employees' job satisfaction is significantly associated with the conception of work ability (Gould et al., 2008; Ilmarinen et al., 2005; Martinez, Dias, & Latorre, 2006; Berg et al., 2009), no study has considered the multidimensionality of job satisfaction to investigating the relationship between specific facets of job satisfaction and work ability (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim & Carson, 2002). In this study, efforts have been made to assess the level of general and specific facets of job satisfaction among employees with disability in Malaysia as well as aiming to explain the existing interconnectedness between the general and specific facets of their job satisfaction and work ability. This study also investigated the mediating role of general and specific facets of employed people with disability' job satisfaction on the relationship between their core self-evaluation and work ability.

This study aimed to assess employees with disability's core self-evaluation as well as to examine its direct and indirect association with their work ability. It is notable that core self-evaluation is described as the foundation assessment that an individual makes about his/her abilities, competencies, and overall value (Judge, Locke &

Durham, 1997). It has been pointed out that employees core self- evaluation is heavily rooted in many different organizational outcomes and behaviors such as job satisfaction (Ferris et al., 2013; Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998), job performance (Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge & Bono, 2001; Song & Chathoth, 2013), job burnout( Peng et al., 2014), career committment (Zhang et al.2014), subjective well-being (Montasem, Brown, & Harris, 2013), job engagement (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010), organizational commitment ( Joo, Yoon, & Jeung, 2012). It is also stated that individual core self- evaluation is strongly related to physical and psychological health (Tsaousis, Nikolaou, Serdaris, & Judge, 2007).

Werner (2012) suggested that having disability has a negative psychological impact on people with disability's life as it can create serious feeling of inferiority as well as a negative self-view.

It is reported that people with disability often experience some forms of overprotection from their parents or other relatives (Lee, 2011; Sanders, 2006). Being overprotected before transition to employment can lead people with disability to negative self-view and personality traits such as lower self-esteem and feeling less capable (Smart & Smart, 2006; Smart, 2001).

It is also discussed that people with disability are usually subjected to the lowered expectations before engaging in employment (Lee, 2011; Shah, Arnold, & Travers, 2004). Such lowered expectation follow people with disability into work place and putting them in a psychological position of feeling incapable of performing properly when faced with the performance expectations of employers. As a result of this, they might begin to reflect a negative self-view and consider their disability as the root cause of incompetency (Sanders, 2006).

People with disabilities may also be at high risk of experiencing a negative self-view because of being discriminant against their disability at the workplace. Although negative attitude towards people with disability has been changed during the decades in Malaysia, it is reported that employees with disability still are faced with some kind of workplace discrimination, such as discrimination in pay, job security, job authority, job training, promotion opportunity and participating in the process of decision making in their work (Khoo et al., 2013; Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011). What's more, it has been found that such employees with disability who are discriminated against at work, often experience a sense of worthlessness and inadequacy and tend to have a negative self-view (Price, Johnson, & Evelo, 1994; Smart & Smart, 2006). In light of the above findings, it appears that it is high time to provide more information about the level of core self-evaluation among employees with disability in Malaysia. This necessitates the examination of existing relationship between their core self-evaluation and work ability.

Previous studies regarding the employment of those people with disability stated that the employment status of employees with disability significantly associated with their perceived well-being as well as their self-evaluation at work (Konrad et al., 2012). It is also suggested that employment status strongly relates to employees' work ability (Gould et al., 2008). However, there is no information about how employment status may enhance disabled employees' positive self-view and consequently their work ability.



### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

The argument concerning disabled people and their employment has drawn a great deal of attention among recent studies from various aspects. Employment plays an essential role in the people with disabilities' life quality. It gives them the sense of survival and self-sustenance (Mansour, 2009) as well as enabling them to support themselves or their family members. Employment can also improve their self-worth and turn them to productive members of various communities (Latessa, 2012).

Interestingly enough, it appears that gainful employment develops the people with disability's status in society and gives them a feeling of identity (Khoo et al., 2013). Previous researches carried out in this regard also argued that being gainfully employed among people with disability has a significant association with their life satisfaction (Campen & Cardol, 2009). In addition, the exclusion of people with disability from mainstream society and the workforce can cause a huge loss in gross domestic product of countries. In the context of Malaysia, it is estimated that the exclusion of people with disability from the mainstream labor force will create a total loss in Malaysia gross domestic product (GDP) around US \$1.6 million (Khor, 2002). Conversely, until the present time, the main practical efforts regarding employment issue of the people with disability have been made to integrate them into mainstream employment as well as providing equal employment opportunities for this particular group (Khoo et al., 2013; Palmer & Brown, 2013; Schur et al., 2009; Campen & Cardol, 2009). Similarly, much of the research has tended to focus on employment participation as well as obstacles to accessing equal job opportunity among people with disability rather than their well-being at work and the quality of working life (Khoo et al., 2013; Othman, 2013; Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011). As it suggested, it is not just taking part in mainstream employment, but more of engaging in substantial and rewarding work, which should be followed as a target policy in order to enhance well-being of people with disability at work and increase their quality of working life (Edwards & Imrie, 2008; Campen & Cardol, 2009).

The relevant literature reveals that, so far, in comparison with numerous works carried out in the studies on the employment levels of people with disability, just a few researches have been undertaken on their work experience issues like their attitude towards the work, in particular job satisfaction as well as their well-being, coping ability, dispositional resources at work such core self-evaluation and their subjective and objective career success (Khoo et al., 2013; Schur et al., 2009; Wahat, 2011). So, the lack of knowledge about employees with disability's experience after joining the workforce has prevented a clear understanding of disabled employees' capability at work, their attitude towards work as well as their personality traits in the work context. According to the current literature, most of the public and private employers in Malaysia do not have an exhaustive understanding about the attitude of disabled employees towards their job, their personality traits as well as lacking a proper knowledge regarding the work ability of people with disability (Othman, 2013; Sharma, Singh & Kutty, 2006; Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011). Accordingly, due to this misconception, some key concerns raised by employers on the coping capability of employees with disability in balancing between their health, functional capability and work demands, preretirement, reduction in their productivity and the rate of absence from work, which all are addressed within the concept of work ability. Hence, it seems it is necessary to clarify more about the characteristic and attitude of

employees with disability at work and their work ability by employers in Malaysia. This study attempted to address following noticeable deficiencies in practical attempt and also existing researches regarding employees with disability:

### **1.3.1 Practical Gaps**

***The main attempts aiming to improve employment of people with disability are focused on the access to employment opportunity rather than their work life quality and well-being at work***

Until the present time the main practical efforts regarding employment issue of people with disability in Malaysia have been made to integrate them into mainstream employment as well as the provision of equal employment opportunity for this particular group (Khoo et al., 2013). Likewise, much of the recent research has tended to focus on employment barriers as well as obstacles to accessing equal job opportunity among people with disability in Malaysia rather than their well-being at work and their quality of working life (Khoo, Ta, & Lee, 2012; Lee, 2011; Ta & Leng, 2013).

***Lack of knowledge regarding work ability of employees with disability in Malaysia***

Most of the employers' concern about employment issue of people with disability like their performance at work, the rate of absence from work, their capability to coping with job mental and physical demands and furthermore, the employees with disabilities' feeling of well-being at work can be explained by gaining more insights to the heart of the work ability concept (Berg et al., 2008; Daws & Sa, 2011; Feldt et al., 2009; Gould et al., 2008; Ilmarinen et al., 1997; Ilmarinen, 2003; Lindfors et al., 2007; Tengland, 2012; Tuomi et al., 2001). It has been substantiated that there exists a lack of knowledge about the functional ability of people with disability among Malaysian employers (Ta et al., 2011).

***There has been no attempt to translate, validate and test the Work Ability Index (WAI) with regard to Malaysia sociocultural context***

The work ability index (WAI) is the widely used instrument of work ability assessment abounds in occupational studies. Work ability index has been translated and applied into over 25 languages in many countries (Feldt et al., 2009; Martus et al., 2010). Ever since, however, work ability index has not been translated, validated and tested in Malaysian context.

***Lack of knowledge about employees with disabilities' attitudes towards work***

It is also reported that most of employers hiring the employees with disability experience difficulty in managing disability issues. The nature of such problem lies in the proper way to interact with this particular group of employees at workplace. The employers are also unsure when it comes to the job selection process for employees with disability because they are often oblivious or not well-informed about disabled employees' attitude towards their job as well as not having a detailed

understanding about their crucial needs at work before hiring them (Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011).

***Employees with disability are at risk of negative self view***

In the context of people with disability, evidences demonstrate that they are more likely to be at risk of negative self-view. Previous studies about employment of people with disability substantiated the existence of such negative self-view among people with disability in Malaysia (Boo, Loong, & Ng, 2011; Lee, 2011).

***Low employment status of employees with disability***

It is reported that people with disability are more likely to be offered low-skilled, low-esteemed or non-standard jobs such as temporary and part-time careers that in most of the cases are unrewarding and undemanding (Khoo et al., 2013).

### **1.3.2 Empirical Gaps**

***Very few studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between specific facet of job satisfaction and work ability***

The researches on the linkage between employee attitude towards their job and work ability have highlighted the critical role of job satisfaction in employees work ability (Berg, 2010; Gould et al., 2008; Ilmarinen, Tuomi, & Seitsamo, 2005). However, a very few studies have been conducted to provide insight into the way job satisfaction can influence employees' work ability. Furthermore, it is argued that strongest attitude and behavioral relationships are obtained when the constructs are matched by the level of specificity (Ajzen, 2005). Despite the fact that job satisfaction has a multidimensional nature (Kinicki et al., 2002) just a very few study has been carried out to investigate the impact of specific facets of employees' job satisfaction in their work ability. To conclude, it is not yet clear what the relationships are between job satisfaction, its specific facets and work ability. Therefore, this study examined the relationships between general and specific facets of job satisfaction and work ability to match the predictor and criterion on the level of specificity via offering a more comprehensive test of the relationships among specific facets of employees with disability and their work ability. This investigation puts forth the idea that specific facets of job satisfaction among employed people with disability may have different influence on their work ability.

***Very few studies have been carried out to investigate the direct and indirect effect of job satisfaction on their work ability through the mediating effect of general and specific facets of job satisfaction***

There is ample scholarly evidence that employees' core self-evaluation traits are significantly linked with several important outcomes of work ability; namely, coping ability, mental and physical capability at work, subjective and objective well-being and employees' performance (Cloninger & Zohar, 2011; Josefsson et al., 2011; Lawson, Bundy, Belcher, & Harvey, 2010; Lindstrom, Doren, & Miesch, 2011; Varekamp, Verbeek, Boer, & Dijk, 2010). However, so far, work ability studies have

not yet investigated the role of individual dispositional characteristics such as employees' core self-evaluations with the same intensity as the other type of individual resources including physical and mental capacity, competence, individual attitudes and values as well as individual biographical and life-style factors such as age, alcohol consumption and physical exercise (Airila et al., 2014). To our knowledge, no study has yet been carried out to investigate the direct and indirect effect of the employees' core self-evaluation on their work ability. This study aimed to delineate direct and indirect relationship between employees with disability's core self-evaluation and their work ability by highlighting the mediating role of general as well as specific facets of their job satisfaction.

*Very few studies has been conducted to examine the moderating role of employment status on the relationship between core self-evaluation and their work ability*

It is discussed that employees with disability are more likely to experience a high level of job insecurity and underemployment (Kaye, 2009; Konrad, Moore, Doherty, & Breward, 2013; Schur, Kruse, Blasi, & Blanck, 2009). It is also argued that they often be offered low-skilled, low-esteemed or non-standard jobs such as temporary and part-time ones which are usually unrewarding and undemanding (Khoo et al., 2013; Schur, 2002; Schur et al., 2009; Yelln & Trupin, 2003). Such a situation can lead them to experience low well-being at work as well as psychological distress, which in turn may result in a negative self-view for employees with disability. It is also stated that employment status significantly relates to the employees perception of their work ability (Gould et al., 2008). However, there is very limited information on how employees with disability employment status may affect the interaction between their self-evaluation and work ability.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The above discussion has inspired the following research questions for the study:

- 1- What is the level of work ability, core self-evaluation and specific facets of job satisfaction encompassing satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with work itself, satisfaction with coworkers, satisfaction with supervision and satisfaction with promotion opportunities as well as general job satisfaction among employees with disability in Malaysia?
- 2- What is the relationship between employees with disability's core self-evaluation and their work ability?
- 3- What is the relationship between general as well as specific facets of employees with disability's job satisfaction and their work ability?
- 4- What are the relationships between employees with disability's core self-evaluation, specific facets of job satisfaction, and work ability within a path model that specifies a relationship between core self-evaluation and work ability mediated by general and specific facets of job satisfaction?
- 5- Does employment status moderate the relationship between core self-evaluation and work ability among employees with disability in Malaysia?



## **1.5 Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to extend the holistic multidimensional model of work ability by including the direct relationship between core self-evaluation, as individual personality resources, and work ability as well as the indirect relationship through the mediating effect of general and specific facets of job satisfaction among employees with disability in Malaysia. Specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1- To assess the level of work ability, core self-evaluation and specific facets of job satisfaction include satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with work itself, satisfaction with coworkers, satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with opportunities for promotion as well as satisfaction with job in general among employees with disability in Malaysia.
- 2- To examine the contribution of employees with disability's core self-evaluation to their work ability.
- 3- To examine the contribution of employees with disability's general job satisfaction as well as their specific facets of job satisfaction to their work ability.
- 4- To examine mediating effects of job satisfaction in general as well as specific facets of job satisfaction of employees with disability on the relationship between their core self-evaluation and work ability.
- 5- To determine if employees with disability's employment status moderate the relationship between their core self-evaluation and work ability.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study aims to expand the holistic multidimensional work ability model by assuming that individual dispositional resources such as core self-evaluation traits may play an influential role in work ability. Holistic multidimensional work ability model developed by the Finish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH, 1990s) provides a holistic view of work ability dimensions by considering them not only as health status and work demands, but also as other individual resources such as individual competence, individual attitude and motivation as well as considering work environment as an associated dimension of work ability (Ilmarinen, 2008). This study improved the existing model based on the surveying results indicating the significant direct relationship between employee's core self-evaluation, as the individual dispositional resources, and working ability as well as indirect ones through the mediating effect of some of the specific facets of job satisfaction. Incorporation of the new knowledge into the new dimensions of work ability can be used to cultivate the evaluating methods of work ability.

Although researches depicted that employees' core self-evaluation traits are significantly related to the main outcomes of work ability like coping ability, mental and physical capability at work, subjective and objective well-being and employees' performance (Cloninger & Zohar, 2011; Josefsson et al., 2011; Lawson et al., 2010; Lindstrom et al., 2011; Varekamp et al., 2010), up to now, no study has attempted to investigate the relationship between employees core self-evaluation and their work

ability. This study integrated core self-evaluation theory and holistic multidimensional model of work ability to develop a new theoretical framework to explain the direct relationship and mediated relationship between employees core self-evaluation and their work ability incorporating the mediating effect of general and specific facets of job satisfaction.

It was depicted by researchers that individual job attitude like job satisfaction can significantly impact on their work ability (Berg, 2010; Gould et al., 2008). Researchers have also argued that prediction of employees behaviors from their attitude are more exact when the used constructs matched on the level of specificity (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Ajzen, 2005; Bateman & Organ, 1983; Fisher, 1980). Hence, more explanatory of the relationship between job satisfaction and work ability, are likely to result from matching specific facet-level of employees' job satisfaction. Examining the relationship between job satisfaction and work ability at the facet-level of job satisfaction is important since there are possibility of differential relationships between specific facets of employees with disability's job satisfaction and their work ability as a result of the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction.

Despite that the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction has been demonstrated both conceptually and empirically (Kinicki et al., 2002; Smith, 1969), no study has been conducted to examine the relationships between specific facets of job satisfaction and work ability. This study has interpolated the multidimensionality of job satisfaction and relationship between job satisfaction and work ability by focusing on the holistic multidimensional model of work ability. The main objective of such an approach was to promote better theoretical understanding of the predictable role of employees' attitude toward their work and their work ability. The results of the study enriches the existing literature regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and work ability by highlighting the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction and focusing on the specific facets of job satisfaction as shown in the research framework.

This study also provides a theoretical explanation to how employees' dispositional traits like core self-evaluation may have an impact on their work ability through the mediating effect of general and specific facets of job satisfaction. The outcomes of the study can extend the predictive ability of both theories of core self-evaluation and holistic model of work ability.

And eventually, the current research provides more clarification on the relationship between core self-evaluation, as individual dispositional resources, and work ability by examining the moderating effect of demographic characteristics such as employment status on the conceptual link between core self-evaluation and work ability among employees with disability in Malaysia.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

Human resource development practitioners are consistently faced with the challenges of managing the issue of diversity based on the rationale that a diverse workforce is a more productive workforce (Selden & Selden, 2001). Lack of awareness

pertaining diversity management (DM) skills can lead to failure to obtain individual, process, and organizational performance goals (Kochan et al., 2003). Given that, people with disability are the largest and fastest growing minority communities in the world, thereby, when considering people with disabilities as a potential pool of labor, it is important that human resource development practitioners view the concept of disability diversity as an important issue under the umbrella term of diversity management. It also has been suggested that disability diversity management must pay attention to remarkable barriers to both gaining and maintaining employment for people with disability (Nafukho, Roessler, & Kacirek, 2010; Roessler, Hurley & McMahon, 2010). A growing understanding of personal and work related characteristics of employees with disability should be taken into account in order to ensure interventions to support the continued employment of people with disability. The current research aims to provide such information by investigating the level of work ability, core self-evaluation and general and specific facets of job satisfaction of employees with disability as well as the examination of the direct and indirect relationship among these designated factors.

The recent supportive efforts have been made within society programs regarding employment issue of people with disability in Malaysia to provide equal employment opportunity at a larger scale. The general implication of this study is to call the society's attention to this fact that it is not just taking part in mainstream employment, but some other important and novel features such as substantial and rewarding involvement in work that should be followed as a necessary component of employment intervention programs in order to enhance well-being of people with disabilities at work as well as increasing their quality of working life as the constituent concept of work ability.

It was suggested by researchers that although employers in Malaysia are willing to employ people with disability, most of them do not have any disability employment policy to manage disability in workplaces as well as lacking the adequate knowledge and experience regarding the way of interaction with employed people with disability in the workplace (Khoo et al., 2013; Ta et al., 2011). Furthermore, It was discussed that the Malaysian employers mostly worried about problems rooted in hiring and retaining people with disability because they didn't have adequate understanding and proper knowledge about functional capability, personality characteristics, the crucial work needs and work related attitudes of people with disability (Othman, 2013; Sharma et al., 2006; Ta & Leng, 2013; Ta et al., 2011). This study disseminates useful information about work ability of employees with disability, their personality traits and their general and specific facets of job satisfaction in order to provide a better understanding of people with disability for both employers and employment policy makers in Malaysia.

The findings of this study provide fruitful information about work ability among employees with disability in Malaysia. Work ability is strongly related to paramount occupational issues such as performance at work, quality of working life, the rate of absence from work, well-being at work and maintaining participation in the workforce (Berg et al., 2009; Berg et al., 2011). All the aforementioned issues are subjects of employers' and employment policy makers' concerns with reference to the employment of people with disability.

The findings of this study provide useful information regarding the personality traits of employees with disability as well as producing beneficial information about their general and specific job satisfaction facets. The outcomes of this study, could potentially clarify the issues concerning the employees with disability's personality characteristic and also their particular work needs in the workplace for both the employers and employment policy makers in Malaysia.

Although previous researches have addressed better job outcomes like performance promotion as well as the subjective and objective career success of employees with disabilities in their dispositional and psychological factors (Achterberg, Wind, Boer, & Dresen, 2009; Wahat, 2010; Wahat, 2011), only a very few studies has been conducted to examine the impact of individual dispositional traits like core self-evaluation on their work ability (e.g. Airila et al., 2012). Moreover, no research has been carried out to focus on the employees with disability's general job satisfaction as well as specific facets of job satisfaction as a significant determinant of their work ability. This study attempted to examine the association between general and specific facets of employees with disability's job satisfaction and their work ability. In addition to this, it took it one step further by investigating the impact of employees with disability's core self-evaluation on their work ability by addressing the mediating role of general and specific facets of their job satisfaction. This noticeable clarification can be used to help maintaining and improving the employees with disability's work ability as well as the provision of needed knowledge for a better prognostication of their work ability.

The result of this study also provides a guideline for Malaysian policy maker as well as employers to design and implement special psychological training programs for people with disability. These programs could potentially foster the employees with disability to become psychologically cultivated and enhance their personality traits like self-esteem, self-efficacy, their locus of control and also emotional stability before and after joining the workforce.

The results of examining the association between employees with disability's specific facets of job satisfaction and their work ability can shed light on the critical needs and attitudes of employees with disability's in their workplaces. The aforementioned transparency is a must and it has to be realized in order for employees with disability to be satisfied and motivated and consequently, be capable of maintaining and improving their work ability (Gould et al. 2008). The current argument is an important issue because it is often more plausible to improve positive aspects of the work than to enhancing the health condition and functional capacity of employees with disability. It is, hence, so important to gain more insight on the needs and attitudes of employees with disability at work to increase their satisfaction and work ability.

Furthermore, the results of examining the mediating role of specific facets of job satisfaction on the relationship between employees with disability's core self-evaluation and work ability can provide useful knowledge for employers and employment policy makers on how employees with disability may perceive the aspects of the work situation in a different way, based on their psychological traits. Such knowledge can provide a guideline to improve the undesirable aspect of people with disability' work and consequently enhance their work ability.



Eventually, taking in consideration that most of the investigations about work ability were conducted in western countries, the Work Ability Index (WAI) as a well-known organizational instrument to assess employees work ability has repeatedly been applied, tested and validated in western countries and in the context of the western culture. This is the first time that the Work Ability Index is translated, validated and applied in context of Malaysia through this study. Furthermore, the studies of work ability dominantly have tended to emphasize the issues of elder and injured employees rather than employees with disability. The current study attempted to examine the work ability index in the context of Malaysian culture and in the unit analysis of Malaysian employees with disability.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study focused only on employees with physical, vision and hearing disability employed in the public and private sector in Malaysia because of their ability to respond to questions of the survey.

The current literatures on the relationship between individual dispositional characteristic and work related outcomes have discussed various models for predicting work related outcomes, but this study has focused on the theory of core self-evaluation along with the multidimensional work ability model. The anticipation of various work outcomes has been accomplished through the application of core self-evaluation theory. The application of core self-evaluation theory has made it possible to examine the relationship between employees' core self-evaluation, as a higher order personality construct, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control and emotional stability and their work ability.

It should be pointed out that the application of core self-evaluation theory has afforded the opportunity to examine the mediating effects of general and specific facets of job satisfaction on the relationship between employees' core self-evaluation and their work ability.

Furthermore, a search of the literature revealed that there is not much information regarding employees with disability's work ability, specifically when it comes to the relationship between employees with disabilities core self-evaluation and their work ability. Until recently, there has been no reliable evidence concerning the relationship between general and specific facets of employees with disability's job satisfaction and their work ability and little is known about the role of general and specific facets of job satisfaction in the relationship between employees with disability's core self-evaluation and work ability.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Since, some of the employees with disability were not be able to respond to survey properly due to the disability type (e.g. mental and learning disability) as well as, according to the latest statistics provided by the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (2013), some groups of people with disability only take a very small proportion (0.6%) of the popiolation of the study. Hence this study was done only on

sample of employees with physical, hearing and vision disability employed within the public and private sectors in Malaysia. Therefore, the outcomes of the study cannot be applied to all employees with disability in Malaysia.

In addition, this study employed the proportional stratified sampling method as its sampling procedure. In order to guarantee the proper representation of disabled people with each type of disability in sample size associated with the study, the proportional sampling was applied and the official statistics data reported by the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (2013) was taken into account accordingly. However, the used proportions represent the number of people with disability in Malaysia who has been registered by the Department of Welfare Malaysia. Since the registration of people with disability in Malaysia is not considered as a compulsory practice, therefore this proportional trend may not reflect the actual proportion of each group of people with disability in Malaysia. Subsequently, due to the low level of education in most of the employees with disability, a considerable number of respondents couldn't properly reply to the survey questions. Therefore, some inadequately completed questionnaires were excluded by researchers from the analysis process.

## **1.9 Definition of Terms**

The variables in the framework of this study are supported by the multidimensional work ability model developed by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) (1990) as well as core self-evaluation theory developed by Judge and colleagues (1997). These variables can be operationalised as follows:

### ***Work ability***

Work ability is the extent to which an employee's capability is well-matched by the work demands (Berg et al., 2009). It is also defined as the balance between the demands of the work and individual resources includes health, competence and values (Gould et al., 2008). Work ability in this study was measured by Work Ability Index (WAI), a seven-item questionnaire includes Subjective estimation of present work ability, Subjective work ability in relation to job demands, Number of physician diagnosed diseases and disabilities, Subjective estimation of work impairment, Absence due to disabilities during the past year, the Own prognosis of work ability after two years and Psychological resources.

### ***Core self-evaluation***

Core self-evaluation in this study is a single higher order construct which merely represents an individual's self-concept. As Judge, Locke and Durham (1997) stated, this construct is an extensive dispositional trait identified by four more particular traits, including self-esteem, the worth that one person places on oneself (Harter, 1990) generalized self-efficacy, one's evaluation to how well one person can deal with life challenges successfully (Locke, McClelland, & Knight, 1996), locus of control, one's beliefs regarding the cause of event through out the life (Rotter, 1966) and finally emotional stability, inclination to be calm, confident and stable (Judge & Bono, 2001). Core self-evaluation was measured in this study by 12-items

core self-evaluation scale (CSES) developed by Judge, Erze, Bono and Thoresen in 2003.

### ***Job satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is a positive or negative evaluation that an employee has about various aspects of his or her job and job situation (Weiss, 2002). It is suggested that job satisfaction has a multidimensional nature (Kinicki et al., 2002). In this study, we considered Job satisfaction in terms of both general satisfaction and specific facets of job satisfaction. Present study employed Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) to identify specific facets of job satisfaction among employees with disabilities. The particular five facets of job satisfaction looked at in the JDI include satisfaction with regards to the work itself, supervision, co-workers, pay and opportunities for promotion. Job in General Scale (JIG) (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson & Paul, 1989) also, was used in order to assess the determination of employees with disability's job satisfaction in general level.

### ***Employment status***

For the purpose of this study, employment status refers to the extent to which people with disability have been given the opportunity to be fully engaged in their work as well as the extent to which they have been afforded the opportunity to fully utilize their knowledge, skills and abilities in their job. In this regards, employment status in the current study was defined as full-time employment, part-time and temporary employment.

Full-time employment refers to earning at least minimum wage and working  $\geq 30$  hours per week (for the purpose of this study). Part-time employment refers to being partially included through spending less time in the workplace. For the purpose of this study part-time employment was defined as working  $<30$  hours per week. Temporary employment refers to the limited contractual work of less than one year that associated with job insecurity.

## **1.10 Summary**

This chapter discusses the overview of the research. It begins with the introduction, background of study, statement of the problem, and the study questions and objectives. This is followed by significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study, and definition of terms. In the next chapter, the review of relevant literature and discussion of prior study is presented.

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