

ORIGINAL

Digital Approaches to Planning Post-School Transition Program for School-Aged Individuals with Disabilities

Enfoques Digitales para la Planificación de Programas de Transición Postescolar para Personas con Discapacidad en Edad Escolar

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: individuals with disabilities often face significant barriers in accessing employment after completing school, particularly in regions where structured transition services are limited. In Indonesia, including the city of Magelang, post-school transition programs remain underdeveloped. The aim of this research is to provide post school transition program for work age individuals with disabilities in the city of Magelang, Central Java.

Method: this study employed a descriptive research design to map the population of work aged individuals with disabilities (19-50 years old) in Magelang District, Central Java. The dataset containing names and addresses was obtained from the District Office of Manpower. There were 256 work-aged individuals with disabilities. Based on the list, the researchers did home visits and interviewed them to get data on their types of disabilities, educational background, working experiences, training experiences, needs for training, and types of training needed. Data were analyzed descriptively

Results: There are 256 work aged individuals with disabilities in the city of Magelang, consisting of 110 mildly disabled, 97 moderately disabled and 49 severely disabled. Seventy eight of them had no education at all. Special attention should be paid to 78 individuals who do not work and want to work (there are 122 individuals who do not work, but do not want to work, might be due to the severity of their disabilities or there are others who support their lives)

Conclusions: Special efforts are needed to provide education to this group, especially those with mild or moderate disabilities, since basic education becomes compulsory in Indonesia. Recommendations are offered for individuals who did not work and wanted to work.

Keywords: Vocational Training; Disabled Individuals.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el objetivo de esta investigación es proporcionar un programa de transición posterior a la escuela para individuos con discapacidad en edad laboral en la ciudad de Magelang, Java Central.

Método: este estudio es de carácter descriptivo y tiene como propósito describir la existencia de individuos con discapacidad en edad laboral en el distrito de Magelang, provincia de Java Central. La Oficina Distrital de Trabajo proporcionó una lista de individuos con discapacidad en edad laboral (19-50 años) junto con sus direcciones. Se identificaron 256 individuos con discapacidad en edad laboral. A partir de dicha lista, los investigadores realizaron visitas domiciliarias y entrevistas para obtener datos sobre los tipos de discapacidad, nivel educativo, experiencias laborales y de formación, necesidades de capacitación y tipos de formación requeridos. Los datos fueron analizados de manera descriptiva.

Resultados: existen 256 individuos con discapacidad en edad laboral en la ciudad de Magelang, compuestos por 110 con discapacidad leve, 97 con discapacidad moderada y 49 con discapacidad grave. Setenta y ocho de ellos no habían recibido ningún tipo de educación. Se debe prestar atención especial a los 78 individuos que no trabajan pero desean hacerlo (hay 122 individuos que no trabajan y no desean trabajar, probablemente debido a la gravedad de sus discapacidades o porque otras personas les brindan apoyo económico).

Conclusiones: se requieren esfuerzos especiales para proporcionar educación a este grupo, especialmente a aquellos con discapacidades leves o moderadas, ya que la educación básica es obligatoria en Indonesia. Se presentan recomendaciones para los individuos que no trabajan pero desean incorporarse al ámbito laboral.

Palabras clave: Formación Profesional; Personas con Discapacidad.

INTRODUCTION

Efforts to provide educational services for individuals with disabilities through special education have become priority programs in most countries in the decades. The policy is due to the significant contribution of education to the quality life of people and due to the facts that despite the success of most countries to provide basic education for their youths, there are still parts many school aged population who do not get benefits of the services, including those with disabilities.

For individuals with disabilities, the content of education might be different from those served for individuals without disabilities. There are portions of the content that are developed specifically for individual with disabilities due to their types, severity and their special needs. During the education, there may be needs to adapt curriculum, instructional strategies, media, and evaluation. More importantly, for individuals with disabilities, education programs must be developed by considering the future of those individuals, i.e. what they will do after they finish schooling. In the USA regulation of special education, The University of the State of New York.

The State Education Department an individualized education program (IEP) for an individual with disabilities must include a coordinated set of transition activities.⁽¹⁾

Post school transition program is aimed at preparing an individual to live, work and play in the community, as fully and independently as possible. Successful transition process requires comprehensive team planning that is driven by the dreams, desires and abilities of youth.⁽²⁾ Post school transition program is designed for a youth who has a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment.

As described by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, post school transition services include pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services.

⁽²⁾ Pre-employment transition services consist of job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive educational programs at institutions of higher education; workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. Whereas vocational rehabilitation services consist of assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, counseling and guidance, referral and other services, job-related services, transition services facilitate the transition from school to postsecondary life, supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities; and services to the family of an individual with a disability

Lawson and Shields stated that an important indicator of the success of special education is the smooth transition process to bridge the gap between school and work.⁽³⁾ Special education is to bring students with disabilities compete school, gain employment, participate in post-secondary education, contribute to household, participate in community, and experience satisfactory personal and social relationship. From review of previous studies, they recommend that special education should:

- Facilitate graduation from high school for students with disabilities
- Incorporate vocational education classes that focus on job-specific instruction, during the last two years of high school.
- Provide transition planning for students in terms of education, workplace and personal development.
- Provide links to paid work experience in the community during the last two years of high school.
- Continue to link in with community workplaces and training facilities after students

A study to develop and implement a “results-oriented” transition planning process was conducted by Sutton in her dissertation for her doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at Rowan University, New Jersey, USA. The action research study took place in at Michael J. Hawkins High School. The student pre-transition planning process questionnaire clearly revealed that students with disabilities were not being prepared to transition

from high school to adulthood. The transition planning activities were divided into 10 weekly sessions:

- Introduction and Reviewing Transition Planning Process Questionnaire;
- Assess Interests & Skills;
- Transition Assistance Resources;
- Develop Goals, Priorities, & Career Plan;
- Resume Writing;
- Job Search & Job Hunting Techniques;
- Dress for Success;
- College as an Option;
- Military, Apprenticeship, & Other Options, and
- Post-Transition Planning Process Questionnaire.

Gains in competencies and skills of students were identified as a result of participating in the “results-oriented” transition planning process.⁽⁴⁾

In the 2017 USA Congressional Research Report, it was reported that two-year postsecondary programs were the most common destination for 60 % of students with disabilities after leaving high schools. In addition, among students enrolled in postsecondary institutions, roughly 11 % of all undergraduates and 5 % of all post-baccalaureate students, self-identify as having a disability, although there are many known limitations associated with self-reported data of this nature.⁽⁵⁾

Alias reported her study on the implementation of transition program in Malaysia. In Malaysia, there are no transition services and support teams in secondary schools. The responsibilities of special education teachers to identify the students’ strengths, suitable jobs, challenges and strategies, develop action plan, follow up, develop vocational skills and experience through internship. The study focused on the experiences of teachers’ experiences from different secondary schools. Interviews and self-reports were used to collect data. The results indicated that students with disabilities posed attitude problems during training sessions, lacked commitment to attend training sessions and faced difficulties adjusting to working environment. Teachers agreed that it is very important to find workplaces for students with special needs to gain working experience outside the school and to map the employers’ readiness to accept trainees with disabilities.⁽⁶⁾

Zainal et al. reported a qualitative study on the implementation of post school transition training for individuals with disabilities in a town in Malaysia. Data were collected from interviews. Vocational training was provided in addition to career training. The findings indicated that successful training required smooth collaboration among school administrators, families of disabled individuals, higher education institutions, and industries.⁽⁷⁾

Sin and Yang reported their study on post school transition program in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, special educational needs (SEN) are able to access the senior secondary education in the 12-year free education. To overcome the challenges of lifelong learning and career planning, a transition program for SEN, that may lead to students’ adaptive motivation to continuing higher education or employment opportunities, which contributes to good quality of life, is important. There are many post-school choices for further education or employment, including (a) degree programs, (b) nonlocal courses, (c) the mainland/overseas studies, (d) Project Yi Jin diploma, (e) associate degree courses, and (f) vocational courses. The study focused on three main themes: choices of post-school paths for SEN students, factors affecting post school outcomes of SEN students, and support to post-school transition to SEN students. Intensive interviews were conducted to 189 respondents, consisting of students, parents, teachers, social workers, and professional. The results showed due to their disabilities, they have limitation to choose the vocational courses provided by Hong Kong Vocational Training Council (VTC) and NGOs. SEN also faced a lot of difficulties in post-school education or employment, coming from individual, families, and community. Lastly, respondents felt lack of community support and resources for students with SEN. They have difficulties to identify the resources, training, exposure, and opportunities for meeting the needs of students with SEN.⁽⁸⁾

Conway and Chang reviewed studies on transition of youths with disabilities between secondary school and postsecondary school. They identified factors that affect the effectiveness of the provision of postsecondary support and services in improving participatory education, including: encouraging youths to be self-determined and self-advocated, and respecting their choices of future lives, introducing technology as early as possible, and maximizing the use of it, continuity of supports and services, making sure that there is smooth transition from school and post school conditions, and good management and coordination among many institutions that are involved in providing supports and services.⁽⁹⁾

Gaps remained between post-high school outcomes of students with disabilities and outcomes for other students. The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) conducted unbiased large-scale evaluations of education programs and practices (US Education Department).⁽¹⁰⁾ The findings indicated that:

- There were many more other different programs and strategies targeting different types of

students, compared with the previous reviews.

- The variety of offered programs suggested that work-experience activities need to be integrated with career and technical education classes or other aspects of students' educational programs.
- Participation in career and technical education and or getting a job while in high school may be related to better employment outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Inclusive education settings in high school may ease the path to post-secondary education.
- Several strategies, such as computer-based instruction and prompting, may by increasing the functional skills of students with intellectual disabilities help them live more independently.
- Post schools transition program for students with special needs are also available in special schools in Indonesia (Direktorat PKLK Dikdas).⁽¹¹⁾ The programs are designed for students with special needs at the secondary levels, consisting of:
 - Self-care skills, aimed at providing special needs students with competence in self-care skills in daily lives so that they can live independently in the community for examples, grooming, body cares, food preparation.
 - Vocational skills, aimed to provide special needs students with skills related to work, such as automotive repairs, hair dressings, cloth designs.
 - Soft skills, aimed at providing special needs students with skills to work successfully, for example individual interactions, collaboration with others, building careers.
 - Entrepreneurship programs, aimed at providing special needs students to open job opportunities, improve product quality, product marketing.

In her study about post school transition, Azizah described that transition from secondary school to adult life is a critical period in students' lives. Transition programs delivered at school play an important role in supporting students with disabilities to achieve successful post-school outcomes particularly in the case of transition to work whereby employment is acknowledged as the main target after graduating from secondary school. Her study concluded that post-school outcomes for students with disabilities related to employment, however, remain poor compared to students without disabilities.⁽¹²⁾

In their study, Sari and Budiyanto reported that post schools transition programs for autistic students in a secondary schools in Sidoharjo, East Java, were implemented by structured extra-curricular activities in handicraft skills and clothing science training, twice in a week for 2 hours. To support the transition program, the school had tried to cooperate with industry and trade world (DUDI), but no response yet.⁽¹³⁾

Farochi evaluated post school transition program for students with disabilities in on vocational highs school in Sidoharjo, East Java. The qualitative study employed interviews, observation, and document analysis to collect data. The findings indicated that that program was successful, showed from data that between 2017-2020, 30 students with disabilities graduated, 36 % of them worked, 20 % had their own business, 30 continued to higher education, and only 13 % still looked for jobs. The main barriers included lack of support from industries and limited facilities and budget for training.⁽¹⁴⁾

In their study, Widyastono, Supratiwi, Gunarhadi, Hermawan, Yuwono & Rejeki tried to provide mentoring on the post-school transition program to improve the understanding of the academic transition program for inclusive school teachers. This was an experimental study involving 30 inclusive school teachers in Surakarta. The results of the analysis showed that mentoring was effective in improving the understanding of inclusive school teachers about post school academic transition programs.⁽¹⁵⁾

In their study, Gunarhadi, Supratiwi, Yuwono, Widyastono, Hermawan, Rejeki, and Yasin conducted a survey to 12 special high schools in Central Java to identify the academic barriers to learning and the strategic preparation needed for college admission. They found that 1) students with disabilities interfere with both internal and external barriers to learning; 2) university policies are needed by students with disabilities to provide assistance in enrolling to universities; and 3) the modified curriculum and instructional strategies are best employed with a variety of extra-curricular activities.⁽¹⁶⁾

Magelang district, the location of this study, is a middle level district located in Central Java, Indonesia. The district, consisting of 17 villages, has a strategic mountainous location with a lot of interesting tourism spots. In terms of vocational programs for individuals with disabilities, as other districts in Indonesia, schools programs are managed by the Education Office, whereas post school vocational training programs are managed by the Office of Manpower. The Office of Manpower, however, showed more concerns with individuals with disabilities, indicated by the variety programs in collaboration with universities and industries. The aim of this study is to provide complete description of work aged individuals with disabilities in the district and recommendations of post school vocational programs to the district.

Despite the extensive body of international and regional research on post-school transition practices, most studies remain focused on school based interventions, teacher experiences, or program evaluations conducted within educational institutions. Very few investigations have provided systematic, district level data on individuals with disabilities who have reached working age and are no longer served by the school

system. This gap is particularly critical in Indonesia, where local governments especially Offices of Manpower are responsible for designing and implementing vocational programs but lack accurate baseline information about the population they are mandated to support. The absence of digital, data-driven mapping of work-aged individuals with disabilities at the district level further constrains evidence-based planning and inter agency coordination.

To address this gap, the present study aims to produce a comprehensive profile of work-aged individuals with disabilities in Magelang District and to formulate recommendations for strengthening post-school vocational programs in the region. This investigation employs a descriptive research design supported by digital data processing and mapping techniques to generate reliable baseline information that can guide the development of more targeted, coordinated, and effective transition services.

METHOD

This study is descriptive, aiming at describing the existence of work aged individuals with disabilities in the district of Magelang, in the province of Central Java. A list of work aged individual with disabilities (19-50) with their addresses was provided by the District Office of Manpower. There were 256 work aged individuals with disabilities. Based on the list, the researchers did home visits and interviewed them to get data on their types of disabilities, educational background, working experiences, training experiences, needs for training, and types of training needed. Data were analyzed descriptively. This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design conducted in Magelang District, Central Java, Indonesia, with data collected between March to June 2025. The target population consisted of work-aged individuals with disabilities (19-50 years old), and the initial list of 256 individuals was obtained from the District Office of Manpower. All individuals in the database were approached using a census-style sampling technique. Inclusion criteria included being within the defined age range, having a documented disability status, residing at the listed address, and providing consent to participate, while individuals who could not be contacted after three home-visit attempts, declined to participate, or had invalid addresses were excluded. The variables analyzed included sociodemographic characteristics, types and severity of disability, educational background, work experience, previous training, employment status, and training needs.

Data were collected using a structured interview guide developed by the researchers and validated through expert review involving three specialists in special education and vocational rehabilitation. The instrument contained closed and semi-open questions designed to capture disability-related information, educational history, vocational experience, and training interests. Home visits were conducted by trained enumerators who followed standardized procedures for administering interviews, ensuring consistency and sensitivity in interacting with individuals with disabilities. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes, and responses were recorded manually before being transferred into a digital database.

RESULTS

Work aged individuals by categories and degrees of disabilities

There are eight categories of disabilities found among worked aged individuals with disabilities in the city of Magelang. As shown in figure 1, the largest number was 62, physically impaired, intellectual disability (60), multiple disabilities (45), social - emotional disturbance (41), speech - hearing (25), visual (11), schizophrenic (9), and the category having the least number was autistic (3).

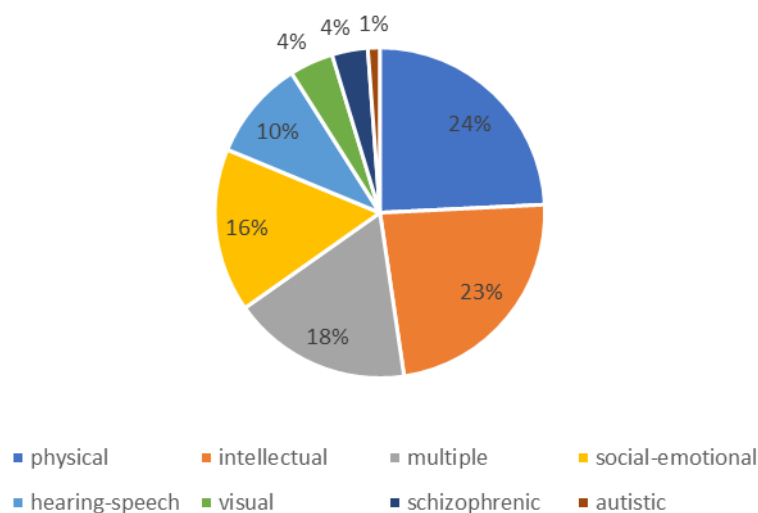


Figure 1. Types of disabilities

The data collection process involved verifying the list provided by the Office of Manpower, conducting home visits, explaining the purpose of the study to participants, obtaining verbal consent, and administering the structured interview. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to generate frequencies, percentages, and distributions of key variables, with the aim of producing a district-level profile of work-aged individuals with disabilities and identifying vocational training needs relevant to post-school transition planning.

Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained prior to each interview, and confidentiality of personal information was ensured. Data were used exclusively for research purposes.

When these individuals are further categorized by degrees of disabilities (figure 2), the majority belong to the mild category (110), moderate (97), and there are 49 of them who fall into the category of unable to be served educationally, i.e the severely disabled (schizophrenic are included here, 49). Education and vocation are needed by the mildly, and may be, some of the moderately disabled individuals.

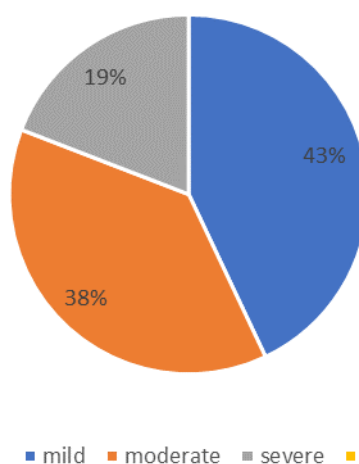


Figure 2. Degrees of disabilities

Work aged individuals with disabilities by education

There is a large number of disabled work aged individuals who never attended schools, 78 figure 2). There are, however two of them who finished their bachelor programs and six with diploma degrees. Forty five of them finished primary school, 42 finished secondary school, and 73 had high school diplomas.

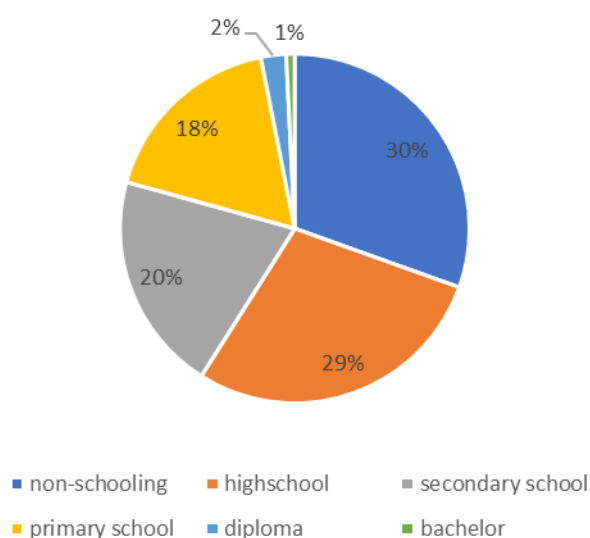


Figure 3. Levels of education

Follow up interviews to those who never attended schools (figure 4), the majority (29) said that the available

schools were not accessible for disabled persons. This is a reality that most schools in Indonesia were not designed to be accessible for disabled individuals, because in the past, schools for disabled individuals were special schools that were still rare and might be located away from the residence of disabled individuals. Eighteen of them did not go to school for financial problems, eight said that they were not supported by their families, seven did not go to schools for social stigma reasons. There are 14 who did not mention any specific reasons.

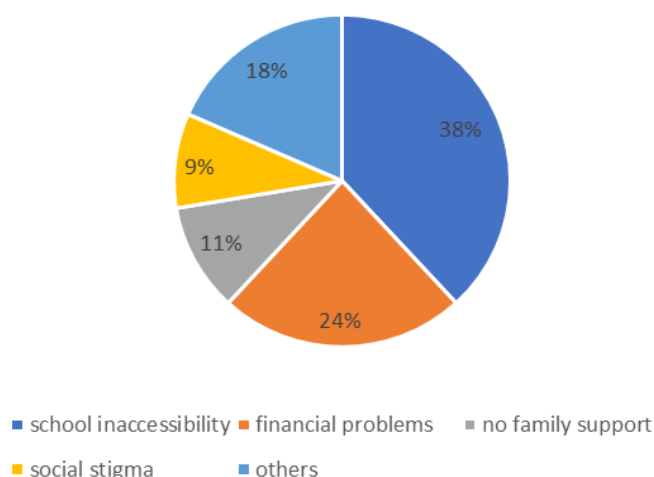


Figure 4. Reasons for not schooling

Extra efforts are required to provide education to those who did not get education due to economic reasons and lack of family supports. The government provides free education up to the high school level. Families must be involved in persuading all school-aged individuals to go to schools.

Work aged individuals by working status

The majority of the work aged disabled individuals, 122, were not working and did not want to work (figure 5). There were many reasons for not wanting to work. The severely disabled individuals did not want to work because of the disability condition. They were afraid that their disabilities would affect their working performance. Some of the moderately disabled did not to work either, because they had families taking care and supporting their lives. There are 56 disabled individuals already had work, and there 78 who do not work and want to work. These are the ones that the need help to find jobs.

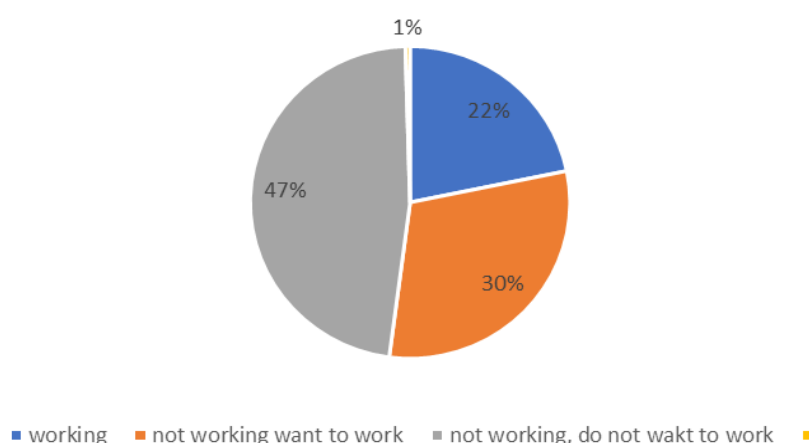


Figure 5. Working status

Follow up interviews to the individuals who did not work and wanted to work revealed a variety of interests in work (figure 6). Food processing (cooking), 16, and batik printing, 14, are the most popular preferences. Whereas hair cutting / hair dressing is the least preferred (3). The other preferences include automotive (10), tailoring (10), craftsmanship, bricklayers (8), restaurant worker (7), graphic designs (5), and marketing (5). It

is assumed that their working preferences have been decided after considering their categories and degrees of disabilities.

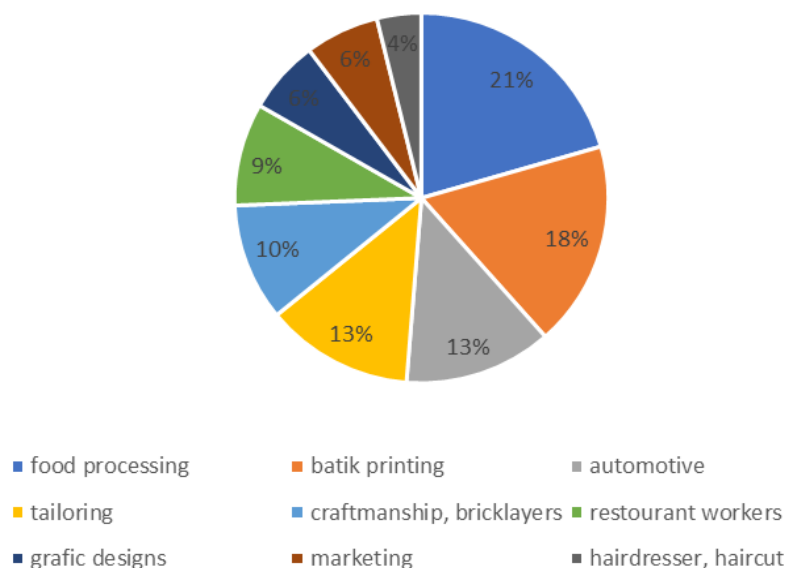


Figure 6. Working preferences

DISCUSSION

There are 256 work aged individuals with disabilities in the city of Magelang, consisting of 110 mildly disabled, 97 moderately disabled and 49 severely disabled. Seventy eight of them had no education at all. Special efforts are needed to provide education to this group, especially those with mild or moderate disabilities, since basic education becomes compulsory in Indonesia. This is the responsibility of the division of non-formal education in the District Office of Education.

Of the 256 disabled individuals, 56 have permanent jobs already. Special attention should be paid to 78 individuals who do not work and want to work (there are 122 individuals who do not work, but do not want to work, might be due to the severity of their disabilities or there are others who support their lives). The 78 individuals have stated their preferences for work.

As described in previous findings by Sin and Yang and Azizah, individuals with disabilities faced a lot of difficulties in post-school education or employment. A careful plan is therefore needed to match their preferences and their competence with the job requirements.^(8,12) As suggested by the US Education Department, assessment is needed for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training. These individuals need trainings.^(2,10)

Data in the District Office of Manpower, there are many small scale industries who have become the training and working houses of disabled individuals. This is a positive aspects. This networks could be utilized to provide training and work for the 78 individuals. As described by Zainal and Hashim; Lawson and Shields; Conway and Chang, smooth collaboration among local governments, families of disabled individuals, education institutions, and industries has high contributions to the success of individuals with disabilities.^(3,7,9)

The findings of this study reveal that 256 work-aged individuals with disabilities reside in Magelang District, with 110 identified as mildly disabled, 97 as moderately disabled, and 49 as severely disabled. A particularly significant result is that 78 of these individuals have never attended formal education, a condition that reflects the persistent educational barriers reported in Southeast Asian contexts by Sin et al.⁽⁸⁾ and also highlighted in the Indonesian context by Azizah⁽¹²⁾, who emphasized that students with disabilities continue to experience poor post-school outcomes due to limited access to appropriate educational preparation. This lack of educational exposure may also explain the relatively low number of individuals who currently hold permanent employment (56 out of 256), which is consistent with the assertion by Lawson ET AL.⁽³⁾ that educational preparation is one of the strongest predictors of successful transition into employment and adult life for individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, the fact that 78 individuals are unemployed but express a desire to work suggests a misalignment between their aspirations and the availability of training or vocational pathways an issue that has also been documented in international studies on post-school transitions. The U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, for example, underscores the importance of vocational assessments, work-based learning experiences, and workplace readiness training to support individuals with disabilities in preparing

for employment,⁽²⁾ while large-scale evaluations by the U.S. National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE) indicate that participation in career and technical education improves employment outcomes for students with disabilities.⁽¹⁰⁾ These recommendations resonate with the needs identified in the current study, where the majority of individuals expressing willingness to work have limited educational and training backgrounds.

An important contextual finding is the presence of numerous small-scale industries in Magelang District that have historically collaborated with the Office of Manpower to provide training and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This network represents a significant local asset and aligns with the conclusions of Zainal *et al.*⁽⁷⁾ as well as Conway *et al.*⁽⁹⁾, who emphasized that successful transition outcomes depend heavily on strong collaboration between government agencies, families, educational institutions, and industries. However, the results of this study suggest that such collaborations in Magelang have not yet been systematically leveraged to support the 78 individuals who wish to enter the workforce, indicating a need for more structured coordination, targeted vocational training, and skills matching based on individual capabilities and job requirements. Without such coordinated planning, the gap between available industry networks and the actual readiness of individuals with disabilities will continue to hinder post-school transition outcomes.

These findings have several important implications. First, the substantial number of individuals who have not received basic education highlights the need for the District Office of Education, particularly its non-formal education division, to develop accessible literacy and life-skills programs targeted at out-of-school individuals with disabilities. Second, the 78 individuals who have expressed a willingness to work should be prioritized for vocational assessments, job-matching efforts, and training programs based on evidence-based transition practices recommended in the international literature.^(2,10) Third, the existing partnerships between the Office of Manpower and local industries present an opportunity to institutionalize a district-level vocational rehabilitation pathway supported by digital profiling and systematic inter-agency collaboration.

This study, however, acknowledges several limitations. The data were obtained from a single administrative source, the District Office of Manpower, which may not have captured individuals whose disabilities were undocumented or whose addresses were outdated. In addition, the reliance on self-reported information during home visits introduces potential recall and reporting biases. The descriptive nature of the study also limits causal inference and does not incorporate employer perspectives or labor market analyses, which are essential components of workforce transition planning. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable baseline data that can support district-level policy development and strengthen post-school transition services for individuals with disabilities in Magelang District.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

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