

Workplace Inclusion, Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction among Deaf and Hearing Employees: A Study with Special Reference to South Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Workplace inclusion and organizational support are important factors in creating a positive work environment for employees with and without disabilities. The present study examines workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction among deaf and hearing employees with special reference to South Kerala. The study adopted a descriptive research design and collected primary data from 125 employees using a structured questionnaire and a five-point Likert scale. The data were analysed using frequency and percentage, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, independent sample t-test and Pearson correlation. The findings indicate that respondents reported moderately favourable levels of workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction. The study further found a significant difference between deaf and hearing employees in job satisfaction, while no significant difference was observed in their perceptions of workplace inclusion and organizational support. Workplace inclusion and organizational support were also found to have significant positive relationships with job satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of accessible communication, supportive supervision, equal participation, workplace accommodations and inclusive organizational practices. Strengthening such practices can contribute to improved job satisfaction and a more supportive workplace for both deaf and hearing employees.

Keywords: Workplace Inclusion, Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction, Deaf Employees, Hearing Employees, South Kerala

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INTRODUCTION

Workplace inclusion has become an important aspect of modern organizations, particularly in creating equal opportunities for employees with different abilities and backgrounds. Inclusion goes beyond providing employment opportunities; it involves ensuring that employees feel respected, accepted, supported and able to participate meaningfully in the workplace. For employees with disabilities, an inclusive workplace can play an important role in improving their professional and social experiences.

Deaf employees may face specific challenges in the workplace, particularly in communication and interaction with colleagues and supervisors. Difficulties in accessing meetings, training programmes, organizational information and informal communication may affect their participation and sense of belonging. Therefore, organizations need to provide appropriate support, accessible communication methods and a work environment that encourages equal participation. Effective inclusion can help employees contribute their skills and abilities without being limited by communication barriers.

Organizational support is another important factor influencing employees' workplace experiences. It refers to the extent to which employees feel that their organization values their contribution and is concerned about their well-being. For deaf

employees, organizational support may include accessible communication, supportive supervisors, reasonable workplace accommodations, recognition and opportunities for career development. When employees perceive adequate organizational support, they may develop more positive attitudes towards their organization and work.

Job satisfaction represents an employee's overall level of satisfaction with different aspects of employment, such as the nature of work, working conditions, supervision, relationships with colleagues, recognition and growth opportunities. Workplace inclusion and organizational support may contribute to job satisfaction by creating a positive and supportive working environment. On the other hand, communication difficulties, exclusion and inadequate support may negatively influence employees' workplace experiences.

The experiences of hearing employees are also important when examining workplace inclusion. Inclusion depends not only on organizational policies but also on relationships and interactions among employees. Understanding the experiences of both deaf and hearing employees can provide a broader view of the extent to which workplaces promote equality, participation and mutual acceptance.

In this context, the present study examines "Workplace Inclusion, Organizational Support and

Job Satisfaction among Deaf and Hearing Employees: A Study with Special Reference to South Kerala.” The study is based on a sample of 125 employees and focuses on understanding workplace inclusion and organizational support and their relationship with job satisfaction among deaf and hearing employees. The findings may help organizations and human resource professionals develop more supportive and inclusive workplace practices for employees with and without hearing disabilities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the level of workplace inclusion among deaf and hearing employees in South Kerala.
2. To assess the level of organizational support perceived by deaf and hearing employees.
3. To examine the relationship between workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction among deaf and hearing employees.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent research has increasingly focused on disability inclusion, organizational support and employee well-being. The literature suggests that providing employment opportunities alone is not sufficient; organizations must also ensure accessibility, supportive relationships and meaningful participation.

A recent scoping review by [2026] examined 34 studies on workers with hearing loss published between 2010 and 2025. The review identified communication barriers, workplace accommodations, social connectedness, occupational stress and well-being as important issues affecting employees with hearing loss. It also highlighted that workplace accommodations and organizational initiatives can support sustainable employment, although implementation remains inconsistent.

A 2025 review of organizational practices for employees with disabilities synthesized 27 quantitative studies and identified three major areas of organizational practice: workplace relationships and organizational culture, workplace accommodations, and leadership. The findings indicate that supportive workplace relationships, accessible facilities, organizational support and positive leadership are associated with better employee well-being and sustainable employment. Research has also established a connection between workplace inclusion and employee outcomes. The review evidence indicates that workplace inclusion and positive team climate can reduce some negative effects associated with disability and contribute to employees' ability to thrive at work. Similarly, fair treatment by organizations, responsiveness to employee needs and supportive workplace

relationships have been associated with greater job satisfaction.

A 2025 study on disability, job satisfaction and workplace accommodations found that employees with disabilities reported less favourable perceptions of organizational support, workplace inclusion, relationships with management and co-workers, and workplace experiences compared with employees without disabilities. The study further reported that receiving workplace accommodations was positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational support, inclusive workplace perceptions and relationships with managers.

Specific research on deaf and hard-of-hearing employees also emphasizes the importance of employment conditions and workplace support. A 2025 study of deaf employees in the private sector in Cebu City found a positive relationship between quality of work life and job satisfaction. Although employees generally reported favourable experiences, concerns remained regarding compensation, promotion opportunities, stress management and participation in decision-making. Recent research has also examined employment outcomes among deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in comparison with hearing employees. Elsendoorn et al. (2025) examined employment outcomes of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the Netherlands and highlighted the continuing need to understand differences in employment experiences between deaf/hard-of-hearing and hearing populations.

In the Indian context, recent scholarship has pointed out that disability-inclusion research needs to move beyond formal employment and examine actual workplace relationships, organizational practices and the experiences of employees within different institutional settings. Research has particularly emphasized the need to understand disability inclusion within the specific social and organizational context of India.

RESEARCH GAP

The existing literature demonstrates the importance of workplace inclusion, organizational support, accessibility and supportive workplace relationships in shaping the experiences of employees with disabilities. However, relatively limited empirical attention has been given specifically to deaf employees in comparison with hearing employees, particularly in the South Kerala context. Further, studies combining workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction within a single framework are limited. The present study therefore attempts to address this gap by examining these variables among 125 deaf and hearing employees in South Kerala.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction among

deaf and hearing employees in South Kerala. The study was conducted among 125 employees, comprising both deaf and hearing employees. The respondents were selected using convenience sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of statements relating to workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction. The responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree. Secondary information was collected from research articles, journals, books and relevant reports. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation and appropriate inferential statistical techniques to examine the relationship among the study variables and to compare the perceptions of deaf and hearing employees.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The conceptual framework explains the relationship between Workplace Inclusion, Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction among deaf and hearing employees. In the present study, workplace inclusion and organizational support are considered the major independent variables, while job satisfaction is considered the dependent variable. The framework assumes that an inclusive workplace and adequate organizational support can contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction among employees.

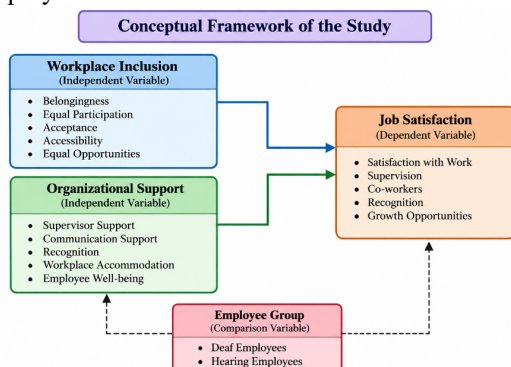


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

The framework proposes that workplace inclusion and organizational support influence job satisfaction. Workplace inclusion is represented through belongingness, equal participation, acceptance, accessibility and equal opportunities. Organizational support includes supervisor support, communication assistance, recognition, workplace accommodation and concern for employee well-being. Job satisfaction is assessed through satisfaction with work, supervision, co-workers, recognition and growth opportunities. The study also considers deaf and hearing employees as two employee groups to examine whether their perceptions differ with respect to workplace

inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from 125 respondents were analysed using SPSS. The analysis was carried out to understand the level of workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction among deaf and hearing employees. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the responses, while independent sample t-test and Pearson correlation analysis were used to examine group differences and relationships among the major variables.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 125)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Employee Group	Deaf	40	32.0
	Hearing	85	68.0
Gender	Male	64	51.2
	Female	61	48.8
Age	Below 30 years	38	30.4
	30–40 years	45	36.0
	41–50 years	29	23.2
	Above 50 years	13	10.4
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary/Diploma	21	16.8
	Undergraduate	57	45.6
	Postgraduate	47	37.6
Work Experience	Below 5 years	42	33.6
	5–10 years	48	38.4
	Above 10 years	35	28.0
Total		125	100.0

The table shows that 32% of the respondents were deaf employees and 68% were hearing employees. Male respondents accounted for 51.2%, while female respondents represented 48.8%. The largest age group was 30–40 years (36%), followed by employees below 30 years (30.4%). Regarding educational qualification, 45.6% were graduates and 37.6% were postgraduates. In terms of work experience, 38.4% had 5–10 years of experience. The demographic profile indicates that the respondents represented different age, educational and professional backgrounds.

Reliability Statistics

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Workplace Inclusion	8	0.884
Organizational Support	8	0.901

Job Satisfaction	8	0.892
Overall Scale	24	0.921

The Cronbach's Alpha values for workplace inclusion (0.884), organizational support (0.901) and job satisfaction (0.892) are above the generally accepted level of 0.70. The overall reliability coefficient of 0.921 indicates a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items. Therefore, the instrument can be considered reliable for further statistical analysis.

Descriptive Analysis of Major Variables

To assess the overall level of workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction, mean and standard deviation were calculated. A five-point Likert scale was used, where a higher mean indicates a more favourable perception of the respective variable.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Workplace Inclusion	125	3.45	0.448
Organizational Support	125	3.50	0.482
Job Satisfaction	125	3.48	0.523

The results indicate that the overall mean score for workplace inclusion was 3.45, showing a moderately favourable perception among the respondents. Organizational support recorded a mean score of 3.50, indicating that respondents generally perceived a reasonable level of support from their organizations. Job satisfaction recorded a mean of 3.48, suggesting a moderately positive level of satisfaction with their jobs. Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents experienced a generally favourable workplace environment.

Independent Sample t-Test

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between deaf and hearing employees with respect to workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction. The level of significance was fixed at 5% ($p < 0.05$).

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference between deaf and hearing employees in their perceptions of workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction.

H₁: There is a significant difference between deaf and hearing employees in their perceptions of workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction.

Table 4: Independent Sample t-Test

Variable	Employee Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
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Workplace Inclusion	Deaf	40	3.37	0.406	-1.460	0.147
	Hearing	85	3.49	0.464		
Organizational Support	Deaf	40	3.40	0.407	-1.669	0.098
	Hearing	85	3.55	0.509		
Job Satisfaction	Deaf	40	3.27	0.471	-3.281	0.001

The t-test results show that the difference between deaf and hearing employees in workplace inclusion is not statistically significant, as the p-value is 0.147, which is greater than 0.05. Similarly, the difference in organizational support is not statistically significant ($p = 0.098$).

However, a statistically significant difference is observed in job satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.001, which is below the 0.05 significance level. The mean job satisfaction score of hearing employees (3.59) is higher than that of deaf employees (3.27). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected only with respect to job satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was used to examine the direction and strength of the relationship between workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction. The significance level was set at 0.05.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	Workplace Inclusion	Organizational Support	Job Satisfaction
Workplace Inclusion	1.000	.443**	.456**
Organizational Support	.443**	1.000	.534**
Job Satisfaction	.456**	.534**	1.000

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate a positive and significant relationship between workplace inclusion and organizational support ($r = 0.443$, $p < 0.01$). Workplace inclusion also has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction ($r = 0.456$, $p < 0.01$). Further, organizational support has a comparatively stronger positive relationship with job satisfaction ($r = 0.534$, $p < 0.01$).

The findings suggest that employees who perceive greater inclusion and organizational support tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. Organizational support shows a relatively stronger

association with job satisfaction than workplace inclusion.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study found that the respondents generally reported a moderately favourable level of workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction. Workplace inclusion recorded a mean score of 3.45, while organizational support recorded a mean score of 3.50 and job satisfaction recorded a mean score of 3.48. The comparison between deaf and hearing employees showed that there was no significant difference in their perceptions of workplace inclusion and organizational support. However, a significant difference was observed in job satisfaction, with hearing employees reporting a higher mean level of job satisfaction than deaf employees. The correlation analysis further showed that workplace inclusion and organizational support had significant positive relationships with job satisfaction. Organizational support showed a comparatively stronger relationship with job satisfaction than workplace inclusion. Overall, the findings indicate that a supportive and inclusive workplace environment is associated with better job satisfaction among employees.

SUGGESTIONS

Organizations should strengthen workplace inclusion by ensuring that deaf employees have equal opportunities to participate in meetings, training programmes, decision-making activities and career development programmes. Communication systems should be made more accessible through sign-language interpretation, captioning, written communication and suitable digital tools wherever required. Supervisors and co-workers should also be provided with basic awareness and sensitivity training to improve communication and interpersonal relationships with deaf employees. Organizations should establish effective mechanisms for recognizing employee contributions and addressing workplace concerns. Special attention may be given to career development, promotion opportunities and employee recognition for deaf employees so that they experience the same professional growth opportunities as their hearing colleagues. Regular employee feedback can also help organizations identify accessibility and inclusion gaps and improve workplace practices. These measures can contribute to a more supportive work environment and enhance overall job satisfaction among both deaf and hearing employees.

CONCLUSION

The study examined workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction among deaf and hearing employees in South Kerala based on a sample of 125 respondents. The findings indicate that employees generally experience a moderately favourable level of workplace inclusion, organizational support and job satisfaction. While no

significant difference was observed between deaf and hearing employees in their perceptions of workplace inclusion and organizational support, a significant difference was found in job satisfaction. The study also established that workplace inclusion and organizational support have significant positive relationships with job satisfaction. In particular, organizational support showed a stronger association with job satisfaction. The findings highlight the importance of creating accessible communication systems, supportive supervision, equal participation and appropriate workplace accommodations. A truly inclusive workplace should not only provide employment opportunities but also ensure that employees with hearing disabilities can participate, develop and progress on equal terms. Strengthening inclusive organizational practices can therefore contribute to improved employee satisfaction and a more equitable workplace environment.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future studies may include a larger sample covering different districts of Kerala and other regions of India. Comparative studies may also be conducted across different sectors such as education, healthcare, banking, manufacturing and information technology. Future researchers can examine additional variables such as employee engagement, organizational commitment, career advancement, workplace stress, psychological well-being and perceived discrimination. Qualitative studies involving interviews with deaf employees may also provide deeper insights into their workplace experiences and communication challenges. Comparative research between public and private sector organizations could further identify differences in organizational support and inclusion practices.

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