

Research on the Current Situation and Problems of Employment for Persons with Disabilities in Heilongjiang Province

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Abstract: Employment of disabled people is an important way to ensure their basic livelihood, social participation, and realize their life value. However, due to the varying degrees of physical or psychological deficiencies that disabled individuals have compared to healthy individuals, their employment rate and income level are often lower than those of healthy individuals. In addition, there is a cognitive bias towards people with disabilities in society, which leads to social exclusion in various aspects such as politics, economy, and culture, exacerbating the employment difficulties of people with disabilities and hindering their pace of social integration. This article takes Heilongjiang Province as an example, focusing on the disabled group with labor ability and studying their employment issues. At present, there are still a large number of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province with poor quality of life, making it difficult to integrate into mainstream society, which poses serious obstacles to achieving a comprehensive well-off society including disabled people. This article first explains the overview of disabled people and their employment in Heilongjiang Province; Secondly, relevant employment data for disabled people were obtained through a questionnaire survey; Finally, by combining the data from the overview of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province with the data obtained from the questionnaire survey, it was found that there are problems with the employment of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province, mainly including low employment rate, low level and stability after employment, low income level, and significant employment limitations.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

As a relatively vulnerable group in society, the attention of people with disabilities is an important symbol of social civilization and progress. Employment is one of the key ways to help disabled people achieve social integration. Therefore, in the context of the new era, studying how to promote the employment of people with disabilities, improve their employment situation, and promote their social integration by helping them achieve full employment has become an important research topic.

Heilongjiang Province, located in Northeast China, has unique geographical conditions. Its vast plain distribution and close proximity to the national border add unique features to the region. At

the same time, the harsh winter climate is also a major feature of this area, and this climate characteristic may have an impact on employment. In terms of economy, as a developing region, the industrial structure of Heilongjiang Province appears relatively unique. Agriculture has achieved significant development in this area, resulting in a relatively large rural population. All of these regional characteristics may have an impact on the employment of people with disabilities.

According to the second national sampling survey of disabled population in 2006, there are approximately 82.96 million disabled people in China; According to the sixth national census data, the disabled population in China currently exceeds 85 million. The total population of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province is 2.189 million, accounting for 6.87% of the total population, which is higher than the national average of 6.34%, highlighting the difficulty of employment services for disabled people in Heilongjiang Province. In the context of comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society, actively providing employment services for disabled people is crucial for the development of human society.

1.2. Research Purpose and Significance

This study aims to reveal the difficulties faced by disabled people in employment in Heilongjiang Province, in order to explore their low employment rate, low employment level and stability, limited income level, and limited employment opportunities, and provide empirical support for improving the employment situation of disabled people.

This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the practical difficulties faced by disabled individuals in employment in Heilongjiang Province, provide targeted recommendations for policy makers, promote the improvement of the employment environment for disabled individuals, and achieve the goals of social inclusion and sustainable development. At the same time, revealing the problem also helps to attract broader social attention, reduce prejudice against people with disabilities, and create a more equal and inclusive social atmosphere.

1.3. Advance research

Scholars such as Yang Weiguo, Qian Pengjiang, and Xu Lin have conducted thorough research on the employment status of disabled people, and pointed out that there are still many problems and bottlenecks in the employment of disabled people at present. Firstly, the employment rate of people with disabilities is generally low, and there is a significant gap compared to the overall employment rate. According to the results of the second national sampling survey on disabled people in 2006 (2007), the proportion of disabled people who are unemployed in urban areas exceeds 60%. Secondly, the level of employment positions for people with disabilities is relatively low and the structure is unreasonable. Zhao Yanping's (2010) survey found that over 90% of people with disabilities engage in simple physical labor. Luo Qiuyue (2015) found through data analysis that the average salary for disabled people working in welfare enterprises is less than 60% of the social average. Thirdly, the employment stability of people with disabilities is poor. Qing Shisong et al. (2008) found that when companies lay off employees, the first person to lose their job is often the disabled.[1]

In terms of factors affecting the employment of disabled people, Liao Juan's (2015) study found that the employment rate of male disabled people is higher than that of female disabled people, and that the employment rate of rural disabled people is higher than that of urban disabled people. The influence of age shows an inverted U-shaped feature, and the employment rate of married people is significantly higher. The improvement of education level and the acceptance of vocational skills training have a significant effect on improving the employment rate of disabled people, with mental and intellectual disabilities facing the greatest employment barriers.

The inadequate employment support policies for disabled people are also another factor affecting

their employment. Xu Lin (2010) believes that employment support for people with disabilities should not only develop protective policies, but also be synchronized with supportive policies. Zhang Yong'an (2015) pointed out that there are shortcomings in certain aspects of the current employment policy for people with disabilities, and there is great room for improvement. Therefore, it is urgent to improve China's employment policies for people with disabilities.

In recent years, China has formulated many inclusive or preferential policies to promote the employment of people with disabilities from the central to local levels. However, the issue of employment for people with disabilities remains severe, and this phenomenon deserves profound reflection.[2]

1.4. Research methods

This article mainly uses the research methods of literature research and questionnaire survey to analyze the current situation of employment of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province and summarizes the problems in the employment of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Disabled Persons and Their Employment in Heilongjiang Province

2.1. Current Situation of Disabled Persons in Heilongjiang Province

According to the national disabled population data released by the China Disabled Persons' Federation, as of December 31, 2020, 1.103 million people in Heilongjiang Province have obtained disability certificates, accounting for 50.39% of the total disabled population. A total of 37.807 million people in China have applied for disability certificates, accounting for 45.56% of the total disabled population. It can be seen that the disability certification rate in Heilongjiang Province is higher than the national average, reflecting the high awareness of disability certification in the region.[3]

2.1.1. From the perspective of age structure

Among the disabled who have obtained a disability certificate, the proportion of the main employment age group aged 15-59 is significantly higher than the national average (Table 1). This indicates that Heilongjiang Province needs to focus on the disabled population of employment age and actively solve their employment problems.

Table 1: Age Structure of Disabled Persons with Disability Certificates Obtained in Heilongjiang Province (Unit: Person)

Disabled person certificate has been obtained	14 years old and below	15 to 59 years old	60 years old and above
Heilongjiang 1103374	15886 1.44%	674209 61.1%	413279 37.46%
Nationwide 37806899	1109123 2.93%	19925672 52.7%	16772104 44.36%

Note: The data is sourced from the *2022 Statistical Yearbook of China's Disabled Persons' Undertaking*

2.1.2. From a gender perspective

Among the disabled people who have obtained disability certificates in Heilongjiang Province,

the total number of female disabled people exceeds 420000, which means that in terms of employment skills training, it is necessary to consider the employment needs of female disabled people. At the same time, the number of male disabled people is 1.57 times that of female disabled people (Table 2). The large number of male disabled people can cause significant pressure on family conditions and affect the formation of families. Men may bear more of the burden of family life and need employment to alleviate the economic pressure on families. [4]

Table 2: Number of Disabled Persons with Disability Certificates in Heilongjiang Province (Unit: Person)

Heilongjiang Province	Male	675141people, accounting for 61.19%	Female	428233people, accounting for 38.81%
Nationwide	Male	21923008 people, accounting for 57.99%	Female	15883891people, accounting for 42.01%

Note: The data is sourced from the *2022 Statistical Yearbook of China's Disabled Persons' Undertaking*

2.1.3. From the perspective of disability level

Among the disabled people who have obtained disability certificates in Heilongjiang Province, there are 125695 people in the first level of disability and 311957 people in the second level, accounting for 39.66%. People in the first level of disability have almost lost their employment ability due to physical reasons, but people in other disability levels have a certain degree of employment ability. The proportion of severe disabilities is relatively small, and most people with disabilities still have employability and can better integrate into society and create value. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen support for disabled people of other levels and increase their employability.[5]

2.1.4. From the perspective of disability types

Nearly 60% of disabled people still have physical disabilities, with visual disabilities ranking second and hearing and speech disabilities accounting for 9.45%, ranking third. These three types of disabilities have relatively good self-care and employment abilities compared to other types and are also key groups for employment (Table 3).

Table 3: Types of Disabled Persons with Disability Certificates Obtained in Heilongjiang Province (Unit: Person)

656977 people with physical disabilities, accounting for 59.54%	114469 people with visual disabilities, accounting for 10.37%
96609 people with mental disabilities, accounting for 8.76%	90527 people with hearing disabilities, accounting for 8.2%
35034 people with multiple disabilities, accounting for 3.18%	13789 people with speech disabilities, accounting for 1.25%

Note: The data is sourced from the *2022 Statistical Yearbook of China's Disabled Persons' Undertaking*

2.1.5. From the perspective of education level

Among the disabled in Heilongjiang Province, 84.51% have received nine-year compulsory education, and the illiteracy rate is relatively low. As of 2022, there are a total of 5 secondary vocational schools (classes) for the disabled, with 359 students and 73 graduates. Suihua College in Heilongjiang Province began recruiting hearing impaired students nationwide in 2011, offering

preferential policies such as free tuition and separate enrollment, promoting the development of higher education for people with disabilities and improving their educational level. The improvement of education level for disabled people has a positive impact on employment (Table 4). It can not only create more employment opportunities and improve income levels for people with disabilities, but also promote their self-development, enhance social identity, and promote social inclusion and equality.[6]

Table 4: Education Status of Disabled Persons with Disability Certificates Obtained in Heilongjiang Province (Unit: Person)

Illiteracy	Primary school education	Junior high school education	High school and technical secondary education	Bachelor's degree or above
89083	378250	465164	135143	35734
8.07%	34.28%	42.16%	12.25%	3.24%

Note: The data is sourced from the *2022 Statistical Yearbook of China's Disabled Persons' Undertaking*

2.2. Current Situation of Employment for Disabled Persons in Heilongjiang Province

Currently, there are three main ways of employment for people with disabilities in China: centralized employment, decentralized proportional employment, and independent employment. Centralized employment mainly arranges the collective employment of disabled people in welfare enterprises, which plays an indispensable role in solving the employment of disabled people. Decentralized proportional employment, where enterprises hire disabled employees to participate in enterprise labor at a certain proportion, also enhances the professional competitiveness of disabled people to a certain extent, enriches their employment forms, stimulates their work potential, reduces their employment pressure, and encourages them to integrate into society. In February 2007, the State Council issued the "Regulations on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities", which stipulates in Article 8 that the proportion of employers arranging employment for persons with disabilities shall not be less than 1.5% of the total number of employees in their own units, and the number of public welfare positions for persons with disabilities shall not be less than 10% of the total development amount of the human resources and social security department. Self-employment, with flexible and diverse forms, is mostly for individual employment. It operates traditional industry projects with low technical requirements and does not require a large amount of funds. The entry threshold for disabled people is also relatively low.[7]

2.2.1. From the perspective of employment rate

Among the disabled people who have obtained disability certificates in Heilongjiang Province, the employment rate of working age is 31.79%, which is lower than the overall employment rate of 49.5% for disabled people nationwide (Table 5). The employment problems faced by disabled people are relatively severe.

Table 5: Employment Rate of Persons with Disabilities in Heilongjiang Province (Unit: Person)

15 to 59 years old	Achieving employment	Proportion
674209	214332	31.79%

Note: The data is sourced from the *2022 Statistical Yearbook of China's Disabled Persons' Undertaking*

2.2.2. From the perspective of employment structure

Heilongjiang Province is located in the northeast region of China, with vast farmland and abundant agricultural resources. The region is suitable for agricultural development, including planting, animal husbandry, and fishing. People with disabilities are relatively easy to find employment opportunities in the agricultural field, and the working environment in agriculture is relatively open and flexible, with less physical limitations. Therefore, among the disabled people who have achieved employment in Heilongjiang Province, the type of employment they engage in accounts for the largest proportion, which is agricultural planting, breeding, and processing, accounting for nearly half of the total. Secondly, there are flexible employment and individual employment. However, less than 9% of people with disabilities are engaged in proportional employment and concentrated employment, which have relatively good employment stability. The overall employment situation lacks stability (Table 6).

Table 6: Employment Structure of Persons with Disabilities in Heilongjiang Province (Unit: Person)

	Engaged in agricultural breeding and processing	Flexible obtain employment	Individual obtain employment	Proportional employment	Public Welfare Post Employment	Focus obtain employment	Auxiliary employment
Heilongjiang Province	91060	74355	23146	15102	5402	4040	1227
	42.49%	34.69%	10.8%	7.05%	2.52%	1.88%	0.06%
Nationwide	4.301 million	2.503 million	635 thousand	818 thousand	148 thousand	268 thousand	143 thousand
	48.79%	28.39%	7.2%	9.28%	1.68%	3.04%	1.62%

Note: The data is sourced from the *2022 Statistical Yearbook of China's Disabled Persons' Undertaking*

In summary, in response to the current employment situation of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province, it is necessary to increase support and training for disabled groups of employment age, while paying attention to the employment needs of female disabled people and enhancing their ability to participate in professional competition. In addition, for other levels of disabled people, support should be strengthened to enhance their employability and better integrate into society. At the same time, encourage diversified employment methods and promote the development of more stable proportional employment and concentrated employment positions. Through these efforts, the employment status of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province can be improved, and social inclusion and equality can be promoted.

3. Problems in the Employment of Disabled Persons in Heilongjiang Province

In order to understand the problems in the employment of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province, a survey was conducted on the current employment situation of disabled people. During the survey and research process, a survey questionnaire was designed to address the three main factors that affect the employment of disabled individuals: government, society, and individuals with disabilities. The survey was conducted from the perspectives of service system, disability level, education level, and salary income. A random sampling method was used to select 240 disabled individuals from the provincial disability certification system for the survey. A total of 240 survey questionnaires were distributed and 205 valid questionnaires were collected. According to statistics, among the 205 disabled people who participated in the survey questionnaire, there were 110 males and 95 females, and 77 were employed, with an employment rate of 37.6%.

3.1. Low employment rate:

The employment rate of certified disabled people in the employment age group in Heilongjiang Province is 31.79%, far lower than the national average employment rate of 49.5%. Compared with advanced regions such as Guangzhou (with a disability employment rate of 77%), Jiangsu Province (with a disability employment rate of 60%), and Shandong Province (with a disability employment rate of 57.8%), there is still a certain gap (Figure 1). Many disabled people lack the awareness of independent employment due to their heavy reliance on thought, which also affects the overall employment rate of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province.

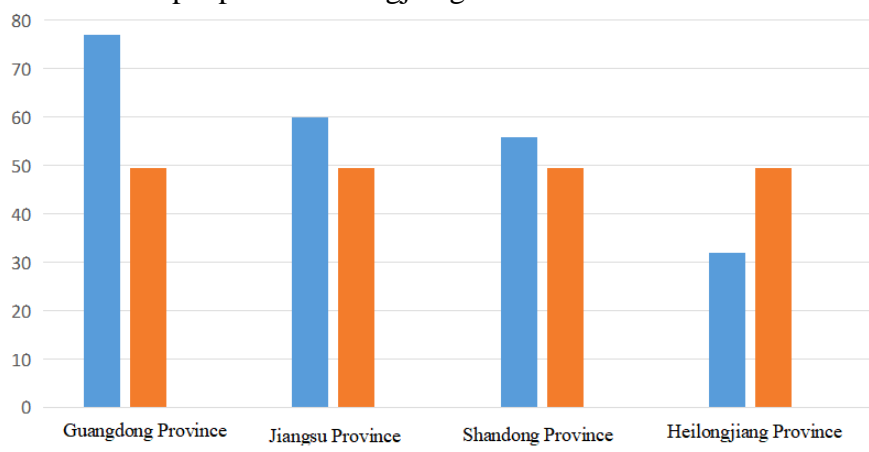


Figure 1: Comparison of Employment Rates for Persons with Disabilities in Heilongjiang Province and Advanced Regions

3.2. Low level of education:

The education level generally accepted by disabled people is not high. Among the 205 disabled people surveyed, 77 have no education, 63 have primary education, 45 have junior high school education, 12 have high school (vocational school) education, and only 8 have received vocational education or above. Only 10% of those who receive high vocational education or above. The education level of disabled people is generally low. In terms of vocational skills training, only 36 people have received training, and 62 people have not received training (Figure 2). The retraining of employment for disabled people is not widespread enough. Due to factors such as low education level and low cultural level, people with disabilities in Heilongjiang Province often have to work in jobs with a single structure, poor stability, and high substitutability, which also increases the difficulty of employment for people with disabilities in Heilongjiang Province. For example, although blind people can engage in blind massage, due to the limited labor demand in this industry, it is almost saturated. Therefore, even if many blind people have the willingness to work in this area, it is still difficult to achieve employment.[8]

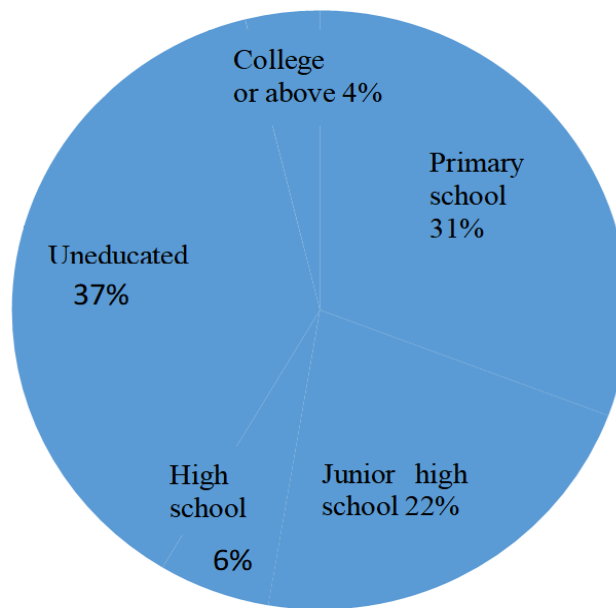


Figure 2: Education Level of Persons with Disabilities

3.3. Insufficient employment channels and poor stability:

Due to their own physical barriers and different occupational skills, the individualized employment needs of disabled individuals are relatively scattered and have significant differences, requiring a wider range of employment channels. From the perspective of the main channels for employment (Figure 3), among the 98 disabled people who have already been employed, 30 are engaged in agricultural planting, 28 are employed flexibly, 24 are self employed, and 16 are provided with public welfare positions through the government or relevant institutions. The employment channels for disabled people in Heilongjiang Province are mainly based on agricultural farming, flexible employment, and independent entrepreneurship, accounting for 84% of the employment channels. New channels such as auxiliary employment and public welfare employment have not been well utilized, far from meeting the diverse and personalized employment needs of people with disabilities, and the employment channels for people with disabilities are not wide enough. The problem of poor employment stability and lack of long-term employment security will result in a high likelihood of disabled people who have already achieved employment in Heilongjiang Province becoming unemployed again during the employment process, further reducing the employment rate of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province. Most people with disabilities who engage in relatively unstable employment types need to pay their own pension insurance. In addition, the low income causes them to give up their pension insurance payment. Without pension insurance protection, many people with disabilities will have a more significant burden on their personal and family life as they age.

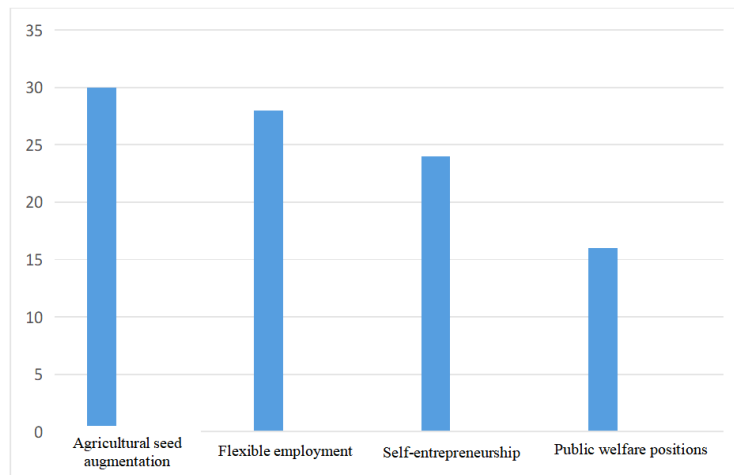


Figure 3: Main channels for disabled people to achieve employment

3.4. Low quality of employment and low income:

Due to the limitations of the physical, educational level, and personal qualities of people with disabilities, they often engage in jobs that require low technical skills, are easy to operate, have simple procedures, and have strong substitutability. Overall, they are at the lower level of employment and their work is unstable. Among the employed disabled people who participated in the survey, 68% were engaged in agriculture and frontline physical work. Among the 98 employed disabled people who participated in the survey, 41 were satisfied with their work and 57 were dissatisfied.

According to survey data analysis (Figure 4), 54% of people with disabilities have incomes below 1500 yuan, 36% have incomes between 1500 and 2000 yuan, and only 10% have incomes above 2000 yuan. The labor income of most employed disabled people is below the average minimum wage standard of 1640 yuan in Heilongjiang Province. Some are even lower than the annual subsistence allowance income of disabled people and cannot become their primary source of income. Such low income, coupled with increasing prices, medical and other basic living expenses, makes it difficult for people with disabilities to ensure their livelihoods and solve the basic problem of food and clothing. Among the disabled people who have achieved employment, there are still a large proportion who cannot rely on their own income to achieve self-sufficiency, which brings great economic pressure and burden to the families of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province.

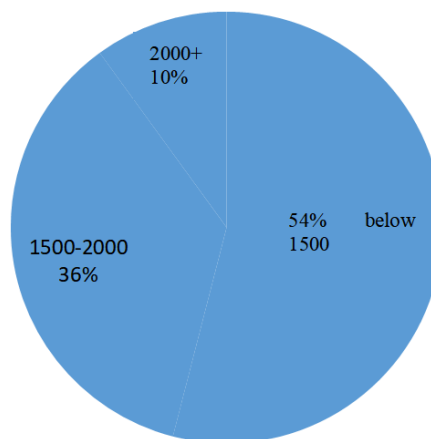


Figure 4: Income of Persons with Disabilities

3.5. Uneven employment development:

The imbalance in employment of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province is mainly reflected in aspects such as gender, household registration, disability category, disability level, and employment skills. From the perspective of disabled persons' household registration, among the 98 employed disabled persons, urban household registration is 62, and rural household registration is 36. The number of urban disabled persons employed is greater than that of rural disabled persons. From the perspective of disability types, 46 people have visual disabilities and 20 are employed; 30 people with speech disabilities and 21 people employed; 34 people with hearing disabilities and 22 people employed; 21 people with intellectual disabilities and 6 people employed; 17 people with mental disabilities and 0 employed; 45 people with physical disabilities and 29 people employed; 12 people with multiple disabilities and 0 employed (Figure 5). The number of people with mental and severe disabilities employed is much lower than that of other types of disabilities.[9]

The different types of disabilities objectively limit the scope of employment that disabled people in Heilongjiang Province can engage in. For example, most disabled individuals with visual impairments are unable to work in jobs that require high levels of vision, such as traffic police, enterprise controllers, art teachers, etc., while those with language and hearing impairments are mostly unable to work in jobs that require high levels of communication and expression skills, such as telephone operators, tour guides, secretaries, etc; Most people with intellectual disabilities are unable to engage in scientific research such as development and application research; Most people with physical disabilities are unable to engage in work that requires significant physical strength, such as transportation and construction. At the same time, the level of disability among individuals with disabilities also has a significant impact on the types of employment options available, such as the inability of individuals with secondary disabilities to engage in physical work. This will also make it difficult for many disabled people to achieve employment in certain fields they want to work in, further increasing the limitations of employment choices for disabled people. The limitations of employment choices for people with disabilities can lead many to have serious doubts about whether they can ultimately achieve employment, affect their confidence in employment, reduce their willingness to work, and thus have a negative impact on promoting the employment of people with disabilities in Heilongjiang Province.[10]

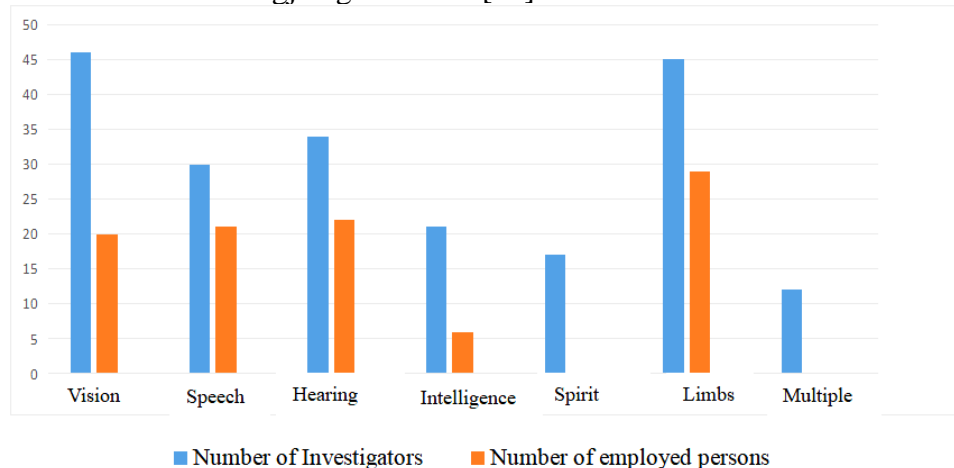


Figure 5: Employment Situation of Persons with Disabilities by Category

From the perspective of disability level (Figure 6), there are 45 first-level disabled people and 5 employed people; 58 secondary disabled individuals and 17 employed individuals. 40 third level disabled individuals and 22 employed individuals; 62 fourth level disabled individuals and 54 employed individuals; Employment difficulty ratio of severely disabled individuals Larger.

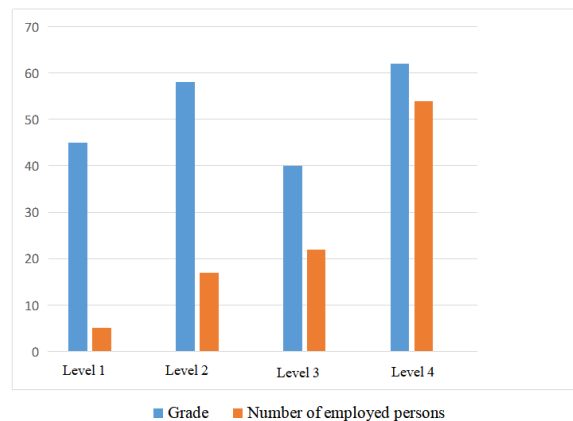


Figure 6: Employment of Persons with Disabilities by Class

4. Conclusion

In recent years, although the employment situation of disabled people in China has been improving year by year through the continuous efforts of the country and the government, the current employment situation is still not ideal. Especially in Heilongjiang Province, there are still problems with low employment rates, low levels of employment, low-income levels, and imbalanced employment for disabled people. The issue of employment for disabled people is a systematic work that requires the joint efforts of the government, society, and the disabled themselves. It is necessary to propose corresponding countermeasures based on the actual employment situation of disabled people in Heilongjiang Province, while drawing on the experience of advanced regions, to promote the continuous development of the cause of disabled people.

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