

The Employment of Grab Riders with Physical Disabilities in E-Hailing Services: Challenges and Coping Strategies

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ABSTRACT

E-hailing services, such as Grab, has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. However, little is known about the participation of individuals with physical disabilities in this service sector. This study explores the lived experience of Grab riders with physical disabilities and their ability to cope with the challenges working as Grab riders. A qualitative research approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was adopted. Semi-structured interviews with three grab riders with physical disabilities in Klang Valley were employed for data collection and the data obtained were analysed thematically. Challenges highlighted include Grab job application process, movement and mobility limitations, weather conditions and customers' attitude. Various coping strategies were employed to overcome these challenges such as resilience and determination, support from family and friends, comfortable locations and areas, and overcoming misconceptions. This research provides a platform for the voices of Grab riders with physical disabilities to be heard. The findings can contribute better understanding about Grab riders with physical disabilities and discover valuable perspectives in the development of relevant policies for persons with disabilities in Malaysia to support the employment and well-being of individuals with physical disabilities in the e-hailing industry.

Keywords: employment, e-hailing, people with disabilities, Grab

Since the introduction of e-hailing services in Malaysia in 2012, there has been a notable shift in labour market trends, with e-hailing driving emerging as a prominent employment option. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020) reported that approximately 160,000 drivers were engaged in ridesharing services by 2019. The Malaysian government has actively supported the growth of the e-

hailing sector through various financial incentives since 2017, aimed at increasing job opportunities and enhancing the socioeconomic status of the B40 segment and unemployed individuals in the country. This economic activity is expected to bolster demand for e-hailing jobs. Yet, research has primarily focused on user preferences, service quality, and governance aspects of e-

hailing services, leaving a gap in understanding the characteristics and requirements of e-hailing jobs themselves (Aitken et al., 2019; Ebuenyi et al., 2019; Khayat-zadeh-Mahani et al., 2019).

According to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability (Lindsay et al., 2014). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize providing equitable job opportunities for people with disabilities (PWDs). However, PWDs often face significant barriers in the job market, including competitive hiring practices, skills mismatches, and societal perceptions, which contribute to lower employment rates than their non-disabled counterparts (Strindlund et al., 2018; Huang & Chen, 2014). Despite having equal educational opportunities, securing employment remains a challenge for PWDs, necessitating a focus on inclusive practices to enhance their quality of life (Hammad et al., 2018; Lindsay et al., 2019).

The employment of PWDs in e-hailing services is a relatively new phenomenon. Platforms like Grab and Food Panda are beginning to hire individuals with disabilities, albeit with varying availability across regions. Limited research has been conducted on the employment experiences of PWDs in the gig economy, particularly in the context of ride-hailing platforms.

This research aims to explore the challenges faced by Grab riders with physical disabilities, examining the barriers they encounter in the workplace and their adaptability to the working environment. Additionally, the coping mechanisms employed by these riders will be investigated, as understanding their resilience and support

systems is crucial for fostering an inclusive work environment (Carter et al., 2011; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2022).

While there is a scarcity of research specifically addressing the employment of PWDs in e-hailing services, insights from broader disability inclusion literature can inform strategies for promoting inclusivity within this sector. Creating inclusive work environments, providing reasonable accommodations, and diversifying the workforce are essential strategies that can be adapted to the e-hailing industry to enhance employment opportunities for PWDs (Hirano et al., 2023; Lee & Carter, 2012).

Addressing challenges such as negative stereotypes, economic trends, and the availability of support services is vital for fostering an inclusive workforce. Further research is justified to examine the participation of PWDs in e-hailing services and to identify effective strategies for promoting equal opportunities in this industry (McAlpine & Alang, 2021; Guzman et al., 2021).

This research seeks to fill the existing gap by investigating the employment opportunities and challenges faced by Grab riders with physical disabilities in the Klang Valley. By understanding the specific barriers they encounter and the factors that facilitate their employment, this study aims to contribute to developing inclusive employment practices and policies within the gig economy. Furthermore, it aspires to enhance social support, provide job options, and improve societal attitudes towards PWDs, ultimately encouraging organizations to hire individuals with disabilities and challenge prevailing stereotypes (Agyei-Okyere et al., 2018; Cunnah, 2015).

People with physical disabilities and employment

The employment landscape for individuals with physical disabilities presents unique challenges both globally and within Malaysia. Internationally, the limitations of disability civil rights legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, have been highlighted as insufficient in addressing employment barriers (Kaye et al., 2011). Discrimination and physical barriers in the workplace impede equal opportunities for PWDs (Mahasneh et al., 2023).

In Malaysia, negative perceptions and stereotypes surrounding disability further hinder employment prospects, as employers often express concerns regarding productivity and necessary accommodations (Hao & Xiao, 2022; Paušić et al., 2021; Ta et al., 2011). Physical barriers, including inaccessible facilities, exacerbate these challenges, underscoring the need for comprehensive strategies to promote disability inclusion in the workforce (Kiesel et al., 2019).

Implementing employer-recommended practices is one potential strategy to enhance employment opportunities for PWDs. Creating inclusive work environments, providing reasonable accommodations, and diversifying the workforce can significantly improve the employment landscape for individuals with disabilities (Emerson et al., 2018; Henry et al., 2014; Wong et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the availability of support services and vocational rehabilitation programs is also crucial in addressing barriers to employment, as highlighted by Verhoef et al. (Hemphill & Kulik, 2015). In Malaysia, enhancing the provision of these services can improve the employability of

individuals with physical disabilities (Park et al., 2018).

Government policies play a pivotal role in promoting disability inclusion in the workforce. In Malaysia, there is a pressing need for policies that specifically address the challenges faced by individuals with physical disabilities in employment. Ensuring accessibility in built environments, transportation systems, and digital platforms, alongside providing incentives for employers to hire and retain employees with disabilities, is essential for fostering an inclusive workforce (Bialik & Mhiri, 2022). The employment of individuals with physical disabilities is a multifaceted issue that necessitates a collaborative approach involving employers, government initiatives, and societal attitudes.

As of June 2024, the Department of Social Welfare (JKM) reported that there were 717,510 registered PWDs in Malaysia, with 37% of them having physical disabilities. Despite this, only a tiny fraction of PWDs are employed, indicating a significant bias in hiring practices. Research has shown that employers often perceive PWDs as unsuitable for work, leading to reluctance in recruitment (Ang, 2014) as they are frequently misunderstood (Barnes, 1992; Jayasooria et al., 1997; Gouvier et al., 2003; Haq, 2003; Brown et al., 2009) and overlooked (Colella et al., 1998). These negative perceptions have detrimental effects on the employment prospects of PWDs, necessitating efforts to challenge myths and misconceptions surrounding their capabilities (Lee et al., 2011; Narayanan, 2018).

In conclusion, the employment of individuals with physical disabilities is a complex issue

that requires a multifaceted approach. Addressing the barriers they face and implementing supportive strategies can significantly enhance their participation in the workforce, particularly within the growing e-hailing sector.

E-hailing services in Malaysia

E-hailing services have gained significant traction in Malaysia, providing users with increased competition and options. The number of e-hailing users in Malaysia is projected to rise from 1.67 million in 2017 to 6.0 million by 2023. Grab, in particular, has emerged as the leading e-hailing service in Southeast Asia, having merged operations with Uber in several countries.

The flexible work schedules offered by e-hailing platforms are particularly appealing in Malaysia, where underemployment is prevalent. Many individuals, including students and caregivers, utilize e-hailing services to earn supplementary income, with approximately 75% of active drivers in the Klang Valley working part-time (Shakil, 2024; Husin, 2022).

The transformation of the transportation industry through e-hailing services has provided convenient mobility solutions and created opportunities for drivers with disabilities. Although research on the employment of PWDs in e-hailing services is limited, existing literature suggests that strategies promoting inclusive work environments and reasonable accommodations can be effectively applied to this sector. Ensuring that digital platforms and vehicles are designed with accessibility features can facilitate the participation of individuals with physical disabilities in the workforce (Radzlan, 2023; Nawawi, 2023).

Moreover, the employment of PWDs in e-hailing services can contribute to a more inclusive and diverse industry, challenging societal stereotypes and fostering a positive perception of disability. E-hailing services can demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility and inclusivity by providing equal employment opportunities. The quality of e-hailing services is also critical for passenger satisfaction and the overall success of the industry, with factors such as service quality, reliability, and convenience playing significant roles in shaping passenger experiences (Rahmat et al., 2022; Hamdan et al., 2022).

In addition to employment considerations, the quality of e-hailing services is crucial for passenger satisfaction and the industry's overall success. Studies have highlighted the importance of service quality, reliability, and convenience in shaping passenger perceptions and experiences (Husin, 2022). Ensuring that drivers are well-trained, vehicles are well-maintained, and the digital platforms are user-friendly can enhance the overall passenger experience and encourage repeat usage of e-hailing services.

However, challenges persist within the e-hailing industry, including traffic congestion and the need for effective integration with public transportation systems. Reliable public transportation options are essential to complement e-hailing services and provide comprehensive mobility solutions. Collaborative efforts between e-hailing providers and public transportation authorities can lead to a more integrated and sustainable transportation ecosystem (Li et al., 2016; Al-Shakhrit et al., 2021).

In conclusion, e-hailing services have revolutionized the transportation landscape

in Malaysia, offering convenient mobility solutions while also presenting opportunities for PWDs. Ensuring service quality, addressing sustainability concerns, and integrating with public transportation systems are crucial for the industry's long-term success. Further research is needed to explore the specific challenges and opportunities related to the employment of PWDs in e-hailing services, informing policy decisions that promote inclusivity and efficiency in the transportation sector.

Research aims

The research objectives of this study are to examine the challenges faced by Grab riders with physical disabilities and investigate how Grab riders with disabilities cope with those challenges. To address these research objectives, the following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the challenges faced by Grab riders with physical disabilities?
2. How do Grab riders with disabilities cope with those challenges?

This research is novel in its focus on Grab riders with physical disabilities in the Klang Valley. It contributes to the limited literature on the employment experiences of PWDs in the gig economy, particularly within ride-hailing platforms. By examining the specific challenges faced by Grab riders with physical disabilities, the research aims to provide insights that can inform the development of inclusive employment practices and policies in the gig economy.

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative method, which focuses on examining how Grab riders with physical disabilities make meaning of

their real-life experiences in their own words and thinking (Cropley, 2002). The analytic method used in this study is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which involves exploring how individuals interpret their life events (Smith et al., 2009; Alase, 2017). The goal is to understand better the informants' psychological and physical experiences, including their challenges and coping strategies.

The study applies phenomenology (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012) by exploring the participants' personal experiences in depth. It also uses hermeneutics (Smith et al., 2009) and idiography (Noon, 2018) to interpret their stories, going beyond the surface to uncover the deeper meanings of their experiences.

The informants were purposively selected based on the inclusion criteria: Grab riders, physical disabilities, and willingness to participate without any psychological issues affecting their involvement in the research. Three informants (N=3), all male, aged 24, 27, and 32, who were hired from Grab Holding Inc. and have physical disabilities of forearm, wrist, and dwarfism, were interviewed.

The interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions and probing inquiries to gather detailed information. The average length of each interview session was approximately 30-60 minutes, conducted in Bahasa Malaysia. Prior to conducting the research, specific ethical considerations were made to ensure informant confidentiality, interview approach, and data management. Adherence to appropriate ethical guidelines is crucial to safeguard the researcher's and informants' safety. Informants' privacy and secrecy are paramount; therefore,

pseudonyms are used instead of their real names during the data analysis and writing.

The profiles of the informants have been summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Profiles of Research Informants

No.	Name	Gender	Details of disabilities
1	Din	Male	Forearm
2	Syed	Male	Wrist
3	Sidek	Male	Dwarfism

The analysis followed seven steps, including reading and re-reading the transcripts, developing emergent themes, searching for connections across themes, and looking for patterns across cases.

Since the interview was in Malay Language, the transcriptions were translated using back translation to ensure nothing important was lost while keeping the meaning clear. Discussion with the experts were also performed to ensure the data is accurate and culturally appropriate, so the data stays reliable for analysis.

Findings

Based on the data, developing themes following the research objectives requires two critical aspects: the challenges faced by riders with physical disabilities and their coping strategies to overcome them. Figure 1 summarises the thematic analysis of the data.

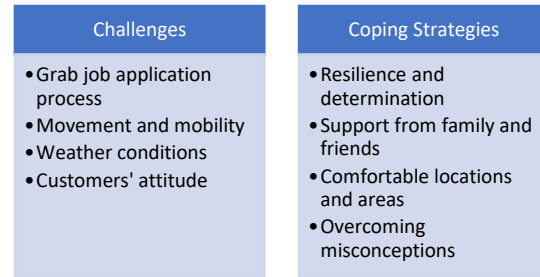


Figure 1. Summary of themes

Challenges faced by Grab Riders with Physical Disabilities

Grab riders with physical limitations face various difficulties in their daily lives as employees. Most informants share these difficulties, although their difficulty level may vary depending on their disability. The informants discussed their feelings about these obstacles and how they plan to overcome them.

Theme 1.1: Grab Job Application Process

In the context of becoming a Grab rider, the application process for individuals with disabilities is described as sloppy. The challenge they faced started from the application process of becoming a Grab rider, which was described as complicated and complex. They need to obtain a doctor's approval to work as a Grab rider, and the company's terms and conditions play a significant role in determining their eligibility. Obtaining the necessary documents, such as a hospital letter, can be time-consuming. One informant mentioned that the application approval from the company took about three weeks, and they had to visit the Grab office multiple times during this period.

“The trivial thing is the time to take the hospital letter for companies to see whether

the doctor will approve or not to ride a motorcycle.” (Din)

“They asked for a letter from the doctor and a vehicle license. So, it's a bit slow. Sometimes, there is an issue that riders with disabilities can either go to Grab Food or not because usually it is for Grab Car. So, it takes three weeks. Come to the Grab office three times, and I must wait for three weeks.” (Sidek).

Theme 1.2: Movement and Mobility Limitations

The challenges faced by Grab riders with physical disabilities are related to their difficulty due to limitations of movements. Informants with limb disabilities, for example, shared their struggle to ensure the stability of movements in fulfilling their jobs.

“I used to fall but not bad because the U-turn time is quite stressful. So, I got stuck and fell just like that.” (Din)

Another informant mentioned difficulties in balancing while riding a motorcycle and lifting heavy motorcycles with only one hand.

“I want to lift the motorcycle, but I can't because the motorcycle is too heavy, and luckily there is a Food Panda boy, help to lift it.” (Din)

Another informant with dwarfism mentioned that moving from one location to another was difficult, especially when picking up and delivering customer items. The most challenging situation was when he had to pick up an order from a vendor in a large mall as he needed to navigate through the mall and find the specific vendor. Therefore, he will choose to pick up the order from the vendor in a location that is more convenient for him.

This could be closer to his current location or easier to access.

One of the study informants mentioned that they have mobility constraints, which affect their ability to move from one location to another. As a result, they only accept orders that are within a reasonable range of their current location. They even turn off the application temporarily to avoid going too far from their buffer environment.

“Yes, it's usually farther, so when I send the food, I'll close Grab apps. If we cancel, our rate will deteriorate.” (Din)

Another informant said they face difficulties walking in malls when the distance from point A to point B is far. They said they would cancel the order if the distance were too far.

“For example, KL East. I want to turn from Tealive, which is not nearby. It's a long way to go down there. But if it's KFry, it could be because it's near to outside. If I get from the mall, if you must go in, it's hard because I have to find the vendor.” (Sidek)

Theme 1.3: Weather Conditions

Weather conditions pose significant challenges for Grab riders, especially those with physical disabilities. Two-wheeled vehicles, like motorcycles, are more likely to skid on rainy days due to the damp road. This makes it difficult for riders with disabilities to perform their duties effectively. Balancing the motorcycle becomes even more challenging for informants who can only use one hand.

Two informants highlighted rain as a significant problem, with one stating that they refuse orders during rainy weather due to safety concerns.

“The challenge is when it's raining.” (Syed)

“If it rains, I don't take it because my friend said that even the people with two hands don't dare to ride, not to mention like I am. Chasing the order when it's sunny like this. But if it's raining, I would think about accepting the order. Because if there is an accident, if I fall, I will have to take a leave because they will be on leave for a week, they won't be able to work right away.” (Din)

Incidents, such as accidents, can also stop work, leading to no pay for Grab riders on rest days.

Theme 1.4 Customers' Attitude

Another challenge faced by Grab riders is dealing with various types of customers. Some customers can be challenging to handle, as mentioned by one informant who had a friend dealing with customers complaining about goods being split due to riding a motorcycle. In such cases, the riders apologize and compensate for spilled food due to poor packaging.

“I've placed [the food] properly, but when I arrived at the customer's place, the food's turned upside down, so the only thing I could do is to apologise. There are cases with my friends where he had to refund to the customers as they complaint” (Din)

Another informant shared their experience of dealing with a customer who did not understand his dwarfism when he explained his difficulty and sought understanding from them. Some customers even lied about being unable to go down and get their food, even though they had someone to assist them.

“I said, ‘Miss, I'm disabled. Come up, my children are all small.’ When I go to level 4. Her children are most at the age up to Form 5.” (Sidek)

This shows the lack of understanding among society about the difficulty among riders with physical disabilities, even though the company has stated the disability status in the system.

Coping strategies used to overcome challenges.

Theme 2.1: Resilience and determination

An informant mentioned that he usually behaves despite losing his hands in previous incidents. He acts like he has two hands when performing regular tasks, believing he can do anything like any other person. This shows their resilience and determination to live their lives as normally as possible.

“As other people can do, I also can do it, so why do I want to feel down and depressed all the time. I act like a normal person like I had two hands.” (Din)

Self-belief, regardless of talent, can substantially impact performance in each environment. One informant in the study mentioned that he has already discarded old habits in anticipation of a brighter future, such as getting married and having children, and he will not follow the behaviours of younger people.

“I decided to get rid of the behaviour, get married, have children, I can't follow the behaviour like young people anymore.” (Din)

Some suggestions from the two informants said they wanted Grab to raise their fares for delivery. They mentioned that they wanted to increase the delivery rate.

“... if there is, raise the fare a little bit.” (Din)

“My suggestion is to raise the fare.” (Syed)

Other informants expressed concerns about repeating the same patterns and behaviours in

the future. They mentioned that they don't want to be stuck in the same cycle and want their generation to have a better future.

“If we think, how long do you want to be like this? If I were busy doing the same thing like that, our grandchildren would not want to do that either. It will be miserable.” (Sidek)

Theme 2.2: Support from family and friends

According to Borgen Magazine (2002), individuals with disabilities often require specific assistance for daily tasks, which can be seen as a burden by their family members. According to research on family support, it has been linked to reduced work-family conflict, increased work-family life resolution, and employee welfare. All the informants in the study indicated that they receive support from their family and friends, even if they are different from others. They mentioned that their family and friends are crucial in gaining support and making decisions. For example, one informant noted that his family was involved in decision-making when he bought a motorcycle to work with Grab.

“My friends are the ones that are always giving me support, together with my wife and family. For instance, I bought this motorcycle last year to work with Grab. Before this, I had only an old motorcycle. I've discussed it with my family, and they asked if I could ride the motorcycle with one hand, to which I answered yes.” (Din)

The support from family and friends creates a supportive environment that makes them feel comfortable and not different from others.

In addition, the informants also mentioned that people around them, including family,

friends, and even strangers, are doing a fantastic job of assisting them in living with their disabilities. They receive support and encouragement from their loved ones, who believe in their abilities and help them overcome challenges. This supportive environment makes them feel comfortable and accepted without making them feel different from others.

“Family and friends, they all support me. Always share the spirit of the words with what people want to say.” (Syed)

“Some of my friends said, ‘I believe you can do it’.” (Sidek)

The study highlights the importance of support from family and friends in the lives of Grab riders with disabilities. It shows that having a supportive environment and people who believe in their abilities can significantly impact their well-being and success in their job.

The findings highlight the importance of people helping individuals with disabilities. One informant mentioned that people around him assisted him in lifting heavy objects, such as a motorcycle, due to his disabilities.

“I want to lift the motorcycle, but I can't. Because the motorcycle is too heavy and luckily there is a Food Panda boy, please lift it.” (Din)

Another informant mentioned that the order's vendor assisted him by immediately sending the food to him rather than having him pick it up from the restaurant due to his loss of hands.

“Sometimes the vendor sends the food to me on the motorcycle.” (Syed)

On other occasions, the informant has noticed that people are more likely to assist him when

he is picking up food and people see him in difficulties. Hence, even when not asking for help, they benefit from intense environment and surroundings.

“There was once when I made a delivery in a flat in Gombak, and I was sure that I had placed the food inside the bag, 'pap' I fell. But the food was safe. The food was at a distance; it was just me who fell. Then, I braved myself and tried to stand, 'my back hurts'. But I told myself I can do it. A guy said, 'It's okay, I'll help.'” (Sidek)

The findings emphasize the importance of encouragement, as people surrounding individuals with disabilities provide encouragement and support. They mention that individuals embarrassed to seek help may not receive this support.

Understanding is emphasized as the first step towards inclusion for people with disabilities. Two informants shared that people around them encouraged them in their jobs despite their limitations, positively impacting their spirits.

“No, because even people have the same kind of spirit. When I received the order, people were like 'Bro, be careful' or something like that.” (Din)

“The second is, 'You are a good Sidek, I respect you. Other people without disabilities still don't want to work. Rainy days, you also accept the order.’” (Sidek)

This shows that understanding and support from others are crucial for including people with disabilities.

Theme 2.3: Comfortable Locations and Areas

The data mentions that persons with disabilities often have smaller social

networks compared to those without disabilities. However, one informant in the study mentioned feeling safe and comfortable in his neighbourhood near Seri Kembangan because he has many connections and acquaintances willing to assist him if needed while he is working as a Grab rider.

“Yes. I don't like to take the outside area because I'm afraid of it. If anything happens, it will be difficult for me. After that, I have many friends around here.” (Din)

Another informant mentioned feeling comfortable in certain areas, such as Gombak, where people don't recognize him, allowing him to make deliveries without issues.

“Usually when I make deliveries for Food Panda, I would go around Gombak because it's easier when people don't know/recognise me, and I can also make friends with people from Gombak.” (Sidek)

One of the informants in the document expressed the need for a suitable location for picking up and delivering items due to his inability to walk long distances. He suggested that Grab designate an area specifically for people with disabilities, making it easier for them to carry out their tasks. The informant also mentioned the importance of creating a system that allows riders with disabilities to find vendors' locations easily and for customers to understand and provide clear directions. This would greatly benefit riders with disabilities in delivering items to landed houses and improve their overall experience.

Theme 2.4 Overcoming Misconceptions

The excerpt highlights the importance of overcoming misconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudice towards PWDs. One informant mentioned that he helps others set up Grab

apps, even for tasks that may seem challenging due to their disability. For example, he taught a friend how to carry heavy non-halal goods while riding a motorcycle. This demonstrates their determination and ability to overcome physical limitations.

“Take Express, for example, which includes non-halal goods. One of my friends in Putrajaya I've seen them carrying computers, laptops, and printers. I said, 'How do you carry this type of goods? It's heavy, plus you're riding a motorcycle.' I then taught him how to reset the settings for the app.” (Din)

Dealing with the environment at work, another informant expressed that they could do whatever they please as long as their job does not disrupt others. They face challenges and negative perceptions from some individuals but remain positive and focused on their work. They emphasize the importance of adapting to the work environment and not letting others' opinions affect their performance.

“Directly. In front of me I also got it. ‘You’re like a tut...’ but be positive, get used to it. I want to work. They don’t contribute any money to me either. It’s just that I’m dealing with the environment at work.” (Sidek)

Nevertheless, the informants in the study mentioned that some people around them were supportive and treated them well. They expressed gratitude for the help they received, such as assistance in carrying heavy items or with their motorcycles. Moreover, some mentioned that they did not experience rudeness from others because they did not speak rudely to people. Overall, the informants appreciated the supportive environment and encouragement from those around them.

“I’m okay. There are people who are happy to help. When it looks like there are a lot of items, people are pleased to help to bring my motorcycle.” (Din)

“No. Because we don’t talk rudely to people either, so people don’t talk rudely to us either.” (Syed)

“It’s okay, we work sincerely.” (Sidek)

These positive acts emphasized the importance of treating others with kindness and respect, regardless of their differences. They also highlighted the need for society to empower PWDs to create a better society.

Discussion

This study reflects phenomenology by deeply exploring the lived experiences of Grab riders with physical disabilities. It focuses on how these individuals experience the world around them, such as the challenges they face with the application process, mobility limitations, weather conditions, and customer interactions. Their unique personal narratives provide insight into their struggles, highlighting the essence of their lived realities. For example, when riders speak of their difficulties with balancing motorcycles or navigating malls, the study captures their direct experiences and personal interpretations of these challenges. Phenomenology is especially reflected when participants describe the emotional weight and practical impact of these issues, such as feelings of frustration over the slow application process or the stress of handling deliveries under harsh weather conditions.

One of the most significant challenges identified is limited mobility while working, which is exacerbated by physical disabilities. This aligns with findings from (Ahmad et al., 2017), which emphasize that individuals with

disabilities often face mobility constraints that hinder their ability to engage fully in the workforce. Weather conditions, mainly rain, pose additional risks and challenges for these riders, impacting their ability to perform their jobs safely. This concern is echoed in the study by (Radzlan, 2023), which highlights how environmental factors can significantly affect the health and performance of e-hailing drivers in Malaysia. The necessity for precautions during adverse weather conditions indicates that Grab riders must constantly navigate their physical limitations while ensuring safety.

Interactions with diverse customers also present challenges, particularly when riders are required to navigate physical spaces that may not be accessible. For instance, one rider reported difficulties reaching customers on higher floors, illustrating the physical barriers that persist in urban environments. This experience resonates with the findings of (Amin, 2020), who noted that environmental barriers at workplaces remain a significant issue for disabled employees in Malaysia, often leading to exclusion from job opportunities. The cumbersome application process for e-hailing services, which requires medical documentation, further complicates their employment journey, reflecting systemic barriers that must be addressed.

The hermeneutic element is seen in how the study interprets and makes sense of these experiences. The research does not merely report the participants' challenges but also delves into the underlying meanings, such as the societal perceptions that compound these difficulties. For instance, when riders discuss customers' attitudes, such as misunderstanding their disability or making unreasonable requests, the research interprets this as part of a broader societal

misunderstanding of disability, reflecting the hermeneutic process of interpreting deeper meanings in the data. Similarly, riders' coping strategies, such as their resilience or support from family and friends, are not just practical solutions but are interpreted as expressions of their self-determination and societal dynamics of support. This adaptability is crucial, as highlighted by Husin (2022), who discusses the importance of service quality and customer experience in the e-hailing industry. Their ability to navigate job-related issues effectively indicates their determination to succeed despite obstacles.

Support from family, friends, and the broader community plays a vital role in these riders' coping mechanisms. The research emphasizes the importance of recognizing their resilience and advocating for their rights in the workplace. This aligns with the findings of Jais & Marzuki (2020), which highlight the significance of social support networks in enhancing the well-being and employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. The presence of empathetic individuals in their lives fosters a supportive environment that encourages these riders to persist in their roles.

Grab riders' coping mechanisms include engaging in activities that define their identity and help dispel feelings of weakness. This reflects the findings of (Wahab et al., 2022), which emphasize the need for inclusive environments that allow individuals with disabilities to thrive and express their identities. Treating others kindly and blending into their surroundings, these riders navigate challenges and contribute to a more inclusive society.

The idiographic focus is demonstrated by the detailed case-by-case analysis of individual experiences. Each informant's story, such as how Din struggles with motorcycle balance or Sidek's difficulty in navigating large malls due to his dwarfism, is treated uniquely, highlighting the specificity of their personal challenges and strategies for coping. This approach ensures that each participant's experience is explored in its depth and complexity, avoiding generalization and providing a nuanced, individual-focused understanding. The idiographic nature is further reflected in how the study acknowledges the diversity of challenges even among the small group of participants, illustrating that each disability experience is unique.

Moreover, the research highlights the necessity of raising awareness about the challenges faced by PWDs in the e-hailing sector. Addressing misconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices is essential for fostering an inclusive work environment. This is supported by the work of (Daud et al., 2021), who argue that understanding the experiences of individuals with disabilities can lead to more effective policies and practices within the e-hailing industry.

Considering the rising cost of living in urban areas such as the Klang Valley, many Grab

riders work in this sector to supplement their income and meet their financial needs. This economic reality underscores the importance of creating supportive policies that enhance job security and provide fair compensation for these riders. As suggested by (Daud et al., 2021), economic initiatives aimed at improving the socio-economic status of the B40 segment in Malaysia are crucial for fostering inclusivity in the gig economy.

In conclusion, the experiences of Grab riders with physical disabilities reveal a complex interplay of challenges and coping strategies. By understanding their struggles and resilience, this research contributes to the broader discourse on disability inclusion in the workforce, particularly within Malaysia's evolving gig economy. Future efforts should focus on enhancing accessibility, promoting awareness, and advocating for policies that support the employment of individuals with disabilities in the e-hailing sector.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the informants participated in the interviews for this study and reviewers for providing helpful and constructive comments on an earlier draft of this article.

Disclosure statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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