Inclusive Business and Its Contribution to Employing People with Disabilities

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Received Date : 10.01.2024
Revised Date : 13.03.2024
Accepted Date : 27.04.2024

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate how Kopi Sunyi’s unique approach to inclusive employment and education influences customer perceptions and fosters inclusivity. Utilizing a comprehensive research methodology, including analysis of online reviews, direct visits, and observational data, this study offers valuable insights into Kopi Sunyi’s role in fostering inclusivity and challenging societal norms. Results reveal that Kopi Sunyi’s commitment to providing employment opportunities and inclusive education through the Sunyi Academy program has positively influenced customer perceptions, fostering a welcoming atmosphere and friendly service. The cafe’s efforts in challenging societal stigmas have led to increased awareness and support for individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The findings underscore the transformative potential of inclusive business practices in promoting social inclusion and empowerment.

Keywords : Workplace Disabilities; Inclusive Environment; Equality in Workplace; Social Inclusion; Job Opportunities

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki bagaimana pendekatan unik Kopi Sunyi terhadap ketenagakerjaan inklusif dan pendidikan mempengaruhi persepsi pelanggan dan memupuk inklusi. Dengan menggunakan metodologi penelitian yang komprehensif, termasuk analisis ulasan online, kunjungan langsung, dan data observasional, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga tentang peran Kopi Sunyi dalam memupuk inklusi dan menantang norma-norma sosial. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa komitmen Kopi Sunyi dalam menyediakan peluang kerja dan pendidikan inklusif melalui program Sunyi Academy telah berdampak positif terhadap persepsi pelanggan, menciptakan suasana yang ramah dan layanan yang bersahabat. Upaya kafe dalam menantang stigma sosial telah meningkatkan kesadaran dan dukungan bagi individu dengan disabilitas di dunia kerja. Temuan tersebut menegaskan potensi transformatif dari praktik bisnis inklusif dalam mempromosikan inklusi sosial dan pemberdayaan.

Kata Kunci : Disabilitas di Tempat Kerja; Lingkungan Inklusif; Kesetaraan di Tempat Kerja; Inklusi Sosial; Kesempatan Kerja.
INTRODUCTION

Every human is born imperfect, possessing unique differences that extend beyond physical traits to encompass intellectual abilities, skills, and other non-physical attributes. These variations include differences in skin color, physical features, hair and eye color, intelligence, abilities, and more. Consequently, encountering individuals with disabilities in our daily lives should not be surprising (Goa et al., 2021). Disability is conceptualized as the result of interactions between individuals with physical or mental/intellectual impairments and attitudes and environments that hinder their full and fair participation in society (Ma’ruf et al., 2022).

Individuals with disabilities, as defined in Article 1 paragraph (1) of Law No. 8/2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, are individuals experiencing long-term physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitations. In their interactions with the environment, they may encounter obstacles and difficulties to fully and effectively participate with other citizens based on the principle of equal rights (Shaleh, 2018). This clear definition of individuals with disabilities encompasses those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory limitations. In the context of interactions with the environment and societal attitudes, they may face barriers that hinder full and effective participation based on the principle of equal rights (Widinarsih, 2019).

According to Law No. 11 of 2011, persons with disabilities are anyone experiencing physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitations. In interacting with the environment and societal attitudes, they face barriers and difficulties to fully and effectively participate with other citizens, but this must be based on the principle of equal rights (Widyantini, 2015). Goffman (Allo, 2022) states that persons with disabilities are those severely limited and unable to communicate with other individuals, highlighting the aspects of limitations in social interactions they face. The extent of employment opportunities is influenced by several factors, such as output growth, wage levels, and the prices of other production factors (Idris et al., 2014). Employment opportunities are defined as occupied (employment) and vacant (vacancy) job positions (Saputra, 2016). Uniqueness reflects something distinctive that is difficult to find in other individuals or objects. In the context of the disabled community, uniqueness lies in the maximum potential of the individual, providing companies with the opportunity to acquire quality talent (Poerwanti, 2017).

Negative perceptions toward individuals with disabilities reinforce discriminatory attitudes, significantly influencing their ability to secure suitable employment despite existing legislation ensuring equal rights. The Republic of Indonesia Law Number 8 of 2016 defines disability as a long-term limitation in physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory functions, hindering full and effective participation in society based on equal rights with other citizens (Ma’ruf et al., 2022). Various types of disabilities include physical, intellectual, mental, and sensory impairments, with intellectual disabilities characterized by below-average intelligence, such as learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and Down syndrome (Oktavianti, 2023).

Despite legal provisions, individuals with disabilities in Indonesia still face inequality, particularly in the workforce. In 2013, Indonesia recorded a high number of unemployed individuals with disabilities, reaching 900,000 (Rohman, 2019). Negative societal stigma towards disabled individuals at the workplace contributes to their challenges. Disabled workers encounter stigma and discrimination, impacting their employment prospects (Mustika et al., 2022).
As of February 2023, Indonesia's unemployment rate stands at a significant 7.99 million people (Central Statistics Agency). The government faces substantial challenges in addressing the complexities of employing disabled individuals, given the higher level of complexity compared to addressing unemployment among the non-disabled population (Goa et al., 2021).

This study is motivated by the desire to understand the influence of the café named "Kopi Sunyi" in reducing unemployment rates among individuals with disabilities in Indonesia. Additionally, it aims to investigate Kopi Sunyi’s role in challenging societal stigmas towards disabled workers. However, factors such as food quality, price-value alignment, and service quality encompassing reliability, responsiveness, tangible evidence, assurance, and empathy significantly impact customer satisfaction (Felix, Felina, et al., 2024). Hence, the company must provide excellent service while employing individuals with disabilities, presenting a unique service challenge due to physical limitations.

Companies like PT Sumber Alfaria Trijaya Tbk have started employing disabled individuals, but it remains insufficient. Mario Gultom, a 24-year-old Indonesian student, established "Kopi Sunyi" to challenge societal stereotypes and provide employment opportunities for disabled individuals. Despite facing initial skepticism and rejection, Gultom pursued his vision after studying in Singapore, bringing back the concept and opening a restaurant entirely staffed by disabled individuals.

The café, founded in 2019, now boasts three outlets. Despite companies making strides in employing disabled individuals and the government providing job opportunities, there is still a significant gap. Gultom states, "We initially recruited for four positions, but we had over a thousand applicants. That’s when we realized, even this café in Jalan Fatmawati, isn’t enough to provide jobs for them." Jalan Fatmawati is located in South Jakarta, Indonesia, serving as a vital thoroughfare that connects several districts in the region. Renowned as a crucial transportation route, it is heavily utilized by Jakarta residents. Its strategic position intersects densely populated areas and features various public facilities, including shopping centers, government offices, schools, and commercial establishments. Moreover, the road provides accessibility from various districts in South Jakarta, functioning as an integral part of the city’s transportation infrastructure. Gultom’s goal is to make Indonesia more inclusive and build trust in disabled individuals.

However, it goes beyond merely employing people with disabilities. With increasing consumer demands, especially with the acceleration of information technology, companies must adapt. They need to ensure that customer desires are met (Felix & Rembulan, 2023a). Facing ever-changing market dynamics, companies need to remain responsive and focused on improving quality and innovation to compete effectively in a tightening market (Felix & Rembulan, 2023a).

Kopi Sunyi distinguishes itself from other cafes through its pioneering commitment to inclusivity, specifically by providing meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This unique approach challenges the conventional norms within the café sector, setting Kopi Sunyi apart as an advocate for diversity and inclusivity in the workplace. The research question underlying this aspect is, "What are the distinctive features that position Kopi Sunyi as an inclusive employer, and how does it deviate from the standard cafe model?"

In addressing the second research question, the focus shifts to how Kopi Sunyi's service actively contributes to customer comfort. Despite potential challenges posed by physical limitations, the staff at Kopi Sunyi strives to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all patrons. This commitment to exceptional service not only enhances the
overall customer experience but also serves as a key element in dismantling societal barriers and reshaping perceptions surrounding individuals with disabilities in the professional sphere. Therefore, the second research question is framed as follows: "How does Kopi Sunyi's service foster customer comfort and contribute to reshaping societal perceptions about individuals with disabilities?"

The research method utilized in this study involved the observation of reviews and ratings provided by customers for Kopi Sunyi Cafe, conducted by several members of our research group as a primary data source. This enabled us to gain profound insights into customer perceptions of the cafe, providing a rich understanding of direct customer experiences and identifying factors influencing their views. Additionally, direct visits to the cafe were conducted, observing the atmosphere, staff-customer interactions, and the physical and non-physical elements of the environment, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the cafe's inclusive atmosphere. Furthermore, the analysis extended to online platforms such as Google Reviews, Instagram, and TikTok, exploring aspects including service quality, menu offerings, ambiance, cleanliness, and uniqueness from the customer perspective, offering insights into the broader community's perception of Kopi Sunyi Cafe.

The research objectives align with these questions, aiming to contribute to the broader goal of promoting inclusivity in the café sector and similar industries. The primary objective is to enhance and create inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, thereby fostering a more diverse and representative workforce. The second objective focuses on evaluating the uniqueness and customer comfort aspects of Kopi Sunyi, seeking to understand how these elements contribute to the cafe's distinctive identity. Finally, the third objective delves into the societal impact of Kopi Sunyi, specifically analyzing its potential role in economic improvement and crime reduction in Indonesia. By addressing these objectives, the research aims to shed light on the significance of inclusive business practices and their potential positive outcomes for both individuals with disabilities and the broader community.

Equality is defined as a condition in which all individuals in a society or group have the same status (Erika & Suryaningsi, 2022). The principle of equality indicates a level playing field, equal status, without noticeable differences between one individual and another. This principle serves as the basis for persons with disabilities to obtain the same rights as other individuals in society. The principle of equality involves not only granting rights but also ensuring that these rights can be fully accessed and enjoyed without hindrance or discrimination. Equality forms the foundation for persons with disabilities to engage in various aspects of social and economic life without being constrained by stereotypes or unreasonable limitations.

One unique aspect highlighted in this study is the groundbreaking initiative undertaken by Kopi Sunyi Cafe to challenge societal norms and promote inclusivity by providing meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This innovative approach not only sets Kopi Sunyi apart from traditional cafes but also serves as a beacon of diversity and inclusion in the professional sphere. By actively fostering a warm and welcoming atmosphere, despite potential challenges posed by physical limitations, the cafe staff not only enhances the overall customer experience but also plays a pivotal role in reshaping perceptions surrounding individuals with disabilities. This novel endeavor represents a significant departure from conventional business practices, underlining the transformative power of inclusive employment and its potential to create positive societal change.
RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology adopted in this study involved a multifaceted approach aimed at comprehensively understanding customer perceptions of Kopi Sunyi Cafe. Firstly, our research group observed and analyzed reviews and ratings provided by customers on various online platforms, including Google Reviews, Instagram, and TikTok. This meticulous examination allowed us to delve into key aspects such as service quality, menu offerings, ambiance, cleanliness, and the cafe’s uniqueness from the perspective of customers. By scrutinizing these reviews, we gained valuable insights into how Kopi Sunyi Cafe is perceived by the wider community, thus forming a foundational understanding of public sentiment towards the establishment.

Moreover, our research extended beyond online reviews through the execution of direct visits to Kopi Sunyi Cafe. During these visits, members of our research team conducted firsthand observations, meticulously examining the atmosphere, staff–customer interactions, and the overall physical and non-physical elements of the cafe environment. By immersing ourselves in the cafe’s ambiance and observing interactions between staff and patrons, we gained deeper insights into the context of the cafe, its operations, and how it fosters an inclusive atmosphere. These direct observations provided nuanced understandings of the intricacies of customer experiences at Kopi Sunyi, allowing us to identify subtle factors that may influence perceptions and contribute to the overall customer satisfaction.

In essence, the combination of analyzing online reviews and conducting direct visits enabled our research group to triangulate data from multiple sources, resulting in a robust and holistic understanding of customer perceptions towards Kopi Sunyi Cafe. This comprehensive approach facilitated the identification of key factors shaping customer experiences and perceptions, ultimately contributing to a richer analysis of the cafe’s position within the wider community and its potential for fostering inclusivity.

Furthermore, the analysis of online reviews provided us with insights into the virtual representation of Kopi Sunyi Cafe, as perceived by customers in the digital sphere. By examining the sentiments expressed in these reviews, we were able to gauge the overall satisfaction levels of customers and identify areas for improvement. For instance, recurring themes in reviews regarding service quality or menu offerings may indicate areas where Kopi Sunyi Cafe excels or requires attention. Additionally, the analysis of online reviews allowed us to assess the cafe’s reputation and popularity within the online community, providing valuable insights into its market positioning and competitive landscape.

Additionally, the direct visits to Kopi Sunyi Cafe allowed us to observe the physical manifestation of the cafe’s brand identity and customer experience. By immersing ourselves in the cafe’s environment, we were able to assess the ambiance, decor, and overall atmosphere that contribute to the customer’s dining experience. Moreover, direct interactions with cafe staff provided us with insights into the quality of service and customer engagement practices employed by Kopi Sunyi. These observations enriched our understanding of how the cafe operates on a day-to-day basis and how it fosters inclusivity in its interactions with customers.

Furthermore, by combining insights from online reviews and direct visits, we were able to triangulate data and validate findings across different sources. This triangulation strengthened the reliability and validity of our research findings, ensuring that our conclusions were grounded in multiple perspectives and experiences. Additionally, the iterative nature of our approach allowed us to continuously refine our understanding of
customer perceptions towards Kopi Sunyi Cafe, incorporating new insights and observations into our analysis.

Overall, the research methodology employed in this study provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of customer perceptions towards Kopi Sunyi Cafe. By leveraging multiple data sources and research techniques, we were able to gain valuable insights into the factors shaping customer experiences and perceptions, as well as the cafe's potential for fostering inclusivity. These findings contribute to the broader body of knowledge on customer satisfaction and service quality in the hospitality industry, while also highlighting the importance of inclusive practices in business operations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kopi Sunyi serves as a space for people with disabilities to thrive and develop skills for sustainable living. All employees at Kopi Sunyi are individuals with disabilities, ranging from baristas to parking attendants. The founder of Kopi Sunyi, Mario Gultom, has a mission to educate the public about disabilities. The cafe initially faced negative perceptions, but over time, it has become more accepted by the community.

In addition, the cafe teaches its customers to actively participate by using sign language to place orders. Customers who wish to order are provided with clear guidelines, fostering a positive environment where everyone can pay attention to each other despite their differences. This approach not only makes it easy for customers to place orders but also encourages interaction between customers and disabled colleagues, fostering close relationships.

Beyond being a cafe, there is also the Silent Academy. This academy offers various classes to acquire skills, such as Braille classes, V60, coffee theory, barista training, finance theory, and espresso machine training. These classes are open to prospective employees and non-disabled individuals who wish to learn together. The existence of these classes ensures that individuals with disabilities are not underestimated by outsiders, as they possess skills that can be on par with others.

Through the cafe, individuals with disabilities are given renewed hope to manage their lives independently based on their earnings. This empowers them to rely on themselves rather than depending on others for their livelihood. The cafe sets an example and inspires other communities to be more considerate, leading to an increase in cafes that employ individuals with disabilities.

Looking ahead, there will be more job opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and Cafe Sunyi can expand to various regions/places. Many of them still lack employment, and Cafe Sunyi can collaborate with more businesses or individuals who care about this issue, allowing our friends with disabilities to support themselves. Our friends with disabilities do not lack abilities but rather lack opportunities to showcase their skills.
Table 1. Kopi Sunyi’s Uniqueness’ Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer’s Review</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>JO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A super cozy place for a workstation or just a meet-up. It’s incredibly spacious, offering both indoor and outdoor options. The available pathways are wheelchair-accessible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am truly impressed with the coffee-making process that looks like art here.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kopi Sunyi is really great—comfortable, spacious, and cool. The baristas are friendly and kind, and the environment of Kopi Sunyi is neat and clean.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quiet and peaceful. It’s so much fun to learn sign language together, and the drinks are delicious too.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The place is comfortable and spacious. You can learn sign language because the staff is friendly. The drinks are also very affordable.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Friendly and good service. The owner is exceptional, able to assist and empower individuals with speech disabilities who might find it somewhat challenging to secure employment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Highly recommend this experience; Kopi Sunyi is built for a noble purpose. They employ people with disabilities and strongly encourage everyone to show their support.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The staff here is super friendly, and Kopi Sunyi truly cares about inclusion and job opportunities for people with disabilities.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Customer’s Review in Google Review, 2023

Note: U (Uniqueness), C (Comfort), and JO (Job Opportunities)

Kopi Sunyi Cafe stands out as more than just a coffee shop; it represents a destination imbued with a unique concept and mission. Beyond serving coffee, it offers an inclusive atmosphere where patrons can empower friends with disabilities. This inclusivity is exemplified through initiatives like the Sunyi Academy, which provides skill training and personal development opportunities for disabled staff. By going beyond the traditional confines of coffee businesses, Kopi Sunyi becomes a catalyst for societal change, reshaping perceptions of social inclusion in an industry often lacking sensitivity to diversity. Its model showcases how a business can be a vehicle for engagement and empowerment of potentially overlooked individuals.

Customer reviews consistently highlight the exceptional comfort experienced at Kopi Sunyi. From the moment visitors enter, they are greeted by a warm and friendly atmosphere. The interior design contributes to a homely ambiance, with spacious seating options enhancing the overall comfort. Moreover, comfort extends beyond physical surroundings to the service provided by Kopi Sunyi staff. Their success in delivering friendliness and professional service creates an environment that not only meets patrons’ physical comfort needs but also resonates with their emotional well-being. Testimonials from visitors often emphasize their positive experiences due to the welcoming service and facilities that provide additional comfort.

Central to Kopi Sunyi’s mission is its role in providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Customer reviews offer genuine insights into the appreciation for the courage and spirit of disabled staff. Kopi Sunyi serves not only as a workplace but also as a platform for individuals to develop skills and achieve economic independence. Through inclusive job opportunities, Kopi Sunyi not only sets a positive example of equality but also demonstrates the significant role businesses can play in creating inclusive and sustainable employment opportunities. Its success in fostering an inclusive work environment serves as both inspiration and a call for other businesses to adopt practices supporting equality and fair opportunities for all individuals in the workforce.
Beyond economic benefits, the presence of Kopi Sunyi contributes significantly to social change. For instance, the cafe may actively engage in public awareness campaigns addressing issues faced by people with disabilities. This involvement could include organizing charity events, educational workshops, or partnering with local organizations focusing on disability support. Through such initiatives, Kopi Sunyi evolves into a hub for positive societal change, transcending its role as a mere coffee destination.

Moreover, Kopi Sunyi’s Sunyi Academy program serves as a gateway to inclusive education. This program not only hones work skills but also provides additional educational opportunities for people with disabilities. For example, Sunyi Academy may offer courses or training tailored to the needs and interests of its staff. By providing inclusive education, Kopi Sunyi not only economically empowers individuals but also broadens access to knowledge and skills, further reinforcing its commitment to inclusivity and empowerment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the case of Kopi Sunyi Cafe exemplifies the transformative power of inclusive business practices in promoting social inclusion and empowerment. Through its unique model of employing individuals with disabilities and providing inclusive education opportunities, Kopi Sunyi has not only created a welcoming environment for patrons but has also served as a beacon of hope and opportunity for its employees. The cafe’s commitment to fostering genuine connections and breaking down societal barriers has resonated positively with the community, leading to increased acceptance and appreciation over time. Overall, the novelty of the research lies in its in-depth exploration of Kopi Sunyi’s innovative approach to inclusivity, its practical implications for both the cafe and society at large, and the comprehensive methodology employed to study its effects.

Furthermore, Kopi Sunyi’s success underscores the potential for businesses to drive meaningful social change by prioritizing inclusivity and diversity in their operations. By offering employment opportunities, promoting awareness, and providing education, Kopi Sunyi has demonstrated how businesses can play a pivotal role in creating a more equitable and inclusive society. As other businesses and communities take note of Kopi Sunyi’s impactful initiatives, there is a growing momentum towards greater acceptance and support for individuals with disabilities in the workforce and society at large.

Looking ahead, it is imperative for businesses, governments, and society as a whole to continue advocating for the rights and opportunities of individuals with disabilities. By fostering an environment of inclusion, understanding, and support, we can create a more equitable and prosperous future for all members of society. Kopi Sunyi’s journey serves as an inspiring example of what can be achieved when compassion, innovation, and determination come together to create positive change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For future research, several promising avenues could be explored to further understand and enhance the impact of inclusive businesses like Kopi Sunyi Cafe. Firstly, conducting a longitudinal study to track the long-term effects of Kopi Sunyi’s inclusive practices on the well-being and socio-economic status of its employees could provide valuable insights. This could involve analyzing employee retention rates, career advancement opportunities, and overall job satisfaction over an extended period.
Additionally, a comparative analysis comparing Kopi Sunyi Cafe’s performance and impact with other businesses in the same industry that do not prioritize inclusive hiring practices could offer insights into the benefits and challenges of such models. Understanding customer perceptions towards inclusive businesses could also be fruitful, involving surveys, interviews, or focus groups to delve into what factors drive customer loyalty and satisfaction in inclusive environments.

Furthermore, exploring the policy implications of promoting inclusive hiring practices in the hospitality industry and conducting comprehensive social impact assessments to measure broader societal benefits could provide valuable insights. Lastly, replicating the Kopi Sunyi model in different geographical or cultural contexts to assess its scalability and adaptability could shed light on its effectiveness in promoting social inclusion and economic empowerment. By addressing these research areas, future studies can contribute significantly to understanding the role of inclusive businesses in fostering more equitable and inclusive societies.

REFERENCES


