



Job Embeddedness: Factors and Barriers of Persons with Disabilities (PWDS)

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Abstract: Addressing the employment problems facing persons with disabilities (PWDs) is complicated as it depends on the presence of certain core values of others such as non-discrimination, to recognize their capabilities. PWDs can engage in many economic activities in Pakistan, however, in general, the employment rate for PWDs is relatively low. Qualitative research was used to ascertain insight into a central phenomenon. Data was collected through interviews and observation from five different workplaces through purposive sampling, and a thematic analysis technique was used to analyze the data. The participants were 50 years or less and were mainly men who had worked with people with disabilities for 2-5 years. The study revealed that the major issue of employers was their perception that PWDs were less productive than those employees without a disability. The study reported that the responsibility to create a positive image and to think inclusively about PWD's working capabilities was the responsibility of the persons with disabilities.

Keywords: Employer perception, job embeddedness, informants, persons with disabilities, workplace

1. Introduction

People with disabilities frequently are living in extreme poverty and dependence in underdeveloped nations. Access to essential services like education and job training is restricted, which is one of the causes of this. Disability and poverty have been shown to interact strongly, with disability causing poverty to result in impairment and disabilities (Rosen *et al.*, 2015). After the beginning of the Education for All movement by UNESCO and several other international organizations in 1990, there was a major improvement in technical and vocational education. The development of skills, especially those that are technical and vocational, is covered under its third goal (UNESCO, 2014). Vocational education is the best tool to support the economic empowerment and general well-being of people with disabilities in nations where

they live in destitution because of poverty. For Instance, providing more chances for education and employment training, encouraging flexible and accessible employment, covering the additional costs of impairment, and combating discrimination towards persons with disabilities are only a few of the pertinent initiatives recommended by (Beresford, 1996).

Inclusion is explained as a philosophy of acceptance where all people are valued and treated with respect (Bourke & Carrington, 2007). Initially, the term "inclusion" was derived from the underpinning concept that all people should freely and openly be accommodated without restrictions of any kind. This perception embraces the diversity that each person brings to the workplace, creating an environment of trust, mutual respect, and appreciation. Such a conducive environment allows all employees to collaborate effectively in the ongoing development of citizen-centric services to any community (Heron et al., 2020; Shore et al., 2011). Accordingly, people with disabilities (PWDs) can prepare for and expect a working life like others without disabilities. However, PWDs and their families view employment as risky (Angelides, Antoniou & Charalambous, 2010). The concept of inclusion is supported by a theoretical and philosophical perspective of social justice and equal opportunity, yet many PWDs share deep reservations about its practical implementation (Lashari et al., 2020, De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). It is well-documented that the successful implementation of inclusive education, policies, and practices is mainly dependent upon positive attitudes (Forlin, Keen, & Barrett, 2008, Poon et al., 2014;). The positive inclusion of PWDs in the workplace ultimately contributes to society's development; every year, many PWD open the labor market. Employers have numerous factors to influence their employment of a PWD move to employment and paying the minimum wage, particularly in developing countries, is one of them. PWDs work longer hours, earning lower incomes (Heron et al., 2020). Research has reported that successful initiation, implementation, and maintenance of inclusive education, policies, and practices largely depend on positive attitudes (Angelides, Antoniou, & Charalambous, 2010; Ernst & Rogers, 2009; Poon et al., 2014).

People with disabilities express a desire to work (Best & Kahn, 2016; Bourke & Carrington, 2007), yet their efforts to find and keep a job are not always successful. In practice, due to the abundance of factors that contribute to a lack of success, one important factor often overlooked is "negative attitudes" in the workplace (Bruyère & Filiberto, 2013). Additionally, negative attitudes at the workplace often reflect practical concerns rather than ideological dissonance. While legislation exists to prosecute discrimination, it does not prevent prejudice, discrimination, behavioral harassment, or aggression. The discrepancy between theoretical philosophies and practical implications among employers generally results in apprehensive and undervaluing perceptions, particular about their capacity to manage a PWD (O'Leary-Kelly, Bowes-Sperr, Bates, & Lean, 2009). Their anxiety and inadequacy may manifest as resistance to inclusive practices and mindsets.

According to statistical evidence collected by the World Health Survey regarding the employment rates of PWD, a survey of 51 countries revealed that the employment rate was 19.6 % for women with disabilities and approximately 52.8 % for men with disabilities. In contrast, the employment rate figure was 29.9 % and 64.9%, respectively, for women and men who do not have disabilities, respectively. The latest Research conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2005 analysed the data of 27 countries, considering the numbers of PWD and their working age, and concluded that these persons experienced substantial drawbacks in the worse labor-market oriented outputs, compared to persons without disabilities and in their working age (Thornton, 2005). Employers generally see the disability only in a 'medical' mode. However, this viewpoint has been challenged by those who perceive a disability as a 'socially constructed' sect due to the negative impact of physical hurdles and social attitudes.

To minimize discrimination and maximize inclusion in the workplace in Pakistan, there is a need to address the many issues and challenges associated with PWDs. Employment is not only the primary means of livelihood generation; it also provides the purpose of playing a productive role in society. When PWDs are formally employed, they are more likely to be in low-paid, low-level positions with poor prospects for career development. Equal access to finding and keeping a job is therefore vital, and barriers to work faced by PWDs must be removed. For this purpose, this study explores the factors associated with the perception of employers and employees toward inclusion in the workplace in Sargodha, Pakistan. Based on the literature review and the related issues, four objectives have been formulated as follows:

- To explore the factors associated with disability and the perception of employers and employees.
- To explore the barriers to inclusion that PWD experience in the workplace
- To examine why PWD are paid low wages
- To identify the ideas and strategies to maintain commercial viability regarding the employment of PWD in an inclusive workplace.

2. Theoretical Foundations

The review focused the two sections; the first section describes models of disabilities, and the second section focuses on identified issues that influence perceptions of work classes towards PWDs. The explanation is given below:

2.1 Models of disability

The following models of disability are explained by Addlakha (2020).

2.1.1 The Charity Model

The Charity model (Bruyère & Filiberto, 2013) emphasizes the care, help, and protection of non-disabled people with different disabilities. The main objective of this approach leads toward a perception that reflects the 'felt of burden' phenomenon on society (Bruyère & Filiberto, 2013). Barnes & Mercer (2003) claimed that this version of the Charity model reinforces the concept that PWDs cannot be productive citizens in economics and social terms because of their reduced capacity to contribute. Application of this approach can be deemed by the organizations which provide services to disabled persons when there is no one ready to do so. Currently, many institutions are working with the same ideology to help such vulnerable persons in developing and developed countries.

2.1.2 The Medical Model (Edmond, 2005)

In 1951, the initial submission of the medical model of disability was made. It is based on the notion that a person's disability is related to their unique qualities. Due to considerable growth and development in pharmaceuticals, health sciences, and technology, the medical model appeared after World War II (Edmond, 2005). This model of disability reinforces the impairment-related that disabled persons are "sick." Although disabled persons have the right to obtain medical services and are reintegrated into society, medical specialists decide how to 'treat' these sick people. To attain functional independence, PWD were empowered but experienced less success via rehabilitation. Essentially, the experts and specialists in the field of medicine worked as controllers and governed the lives of PWDs. The medical approach for managing problems related to PWD gave rise to where a disability was perceived as 'impairment,' and one should try to avert and treat this impairment and disease.

2.1.3 The Social Model (Hans & Patri, 1985)

Between the 1970s and 1980s, another model arose named as 'social model' (Hans & Patri, 1985). This model arose mainly to interrupt and review the existing perception regarding the 'medical model' for PWD. This approach rectifies the adverse effects and society's overall poor attitude towards the self-identity of PWDs. As a result, a comparatively positive attitude developed among society toward PWD (Lewis et al., 2019). According to this approach, a better philosophy was generated to enlighten the various barriers, which may be social, environmental, and economic ones, that detract from the ability of PWDs to contribute and fully take part in the community. Social life Supporters of the Social model realistically claimed that the problem of personal disability must not be addressed either biologically or medically but instead as a social issue.

2.2 Issues That Influence Perceptions of Work Classes Toward Persons with Disabilities

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs can help to improve the employability of people with disabilities (PWDs) by providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce. However, there are several issues that can influence perceptions of work classes toward PWDs. One issue is the negative stereotypes and biases that many people hold about PWDs. These stereotypes may include beliefs that PWDs are less intelligent, less capable, or less productive than non-disabled individuals, which can make it more difficult for them to find employment. Another issue is the lack of accessibility and accommodation in many workplaces. Many PWDs may require certain accommodations, such as assistive technology or physical modifications to the work environment, to be able to perform their job duties. If these accommodations are not provided, PWDs may be unable to fully participate in the workforce.

Finally, the lack of employment opportunities for PWDs can also be a significant issue. In some cases, employers may be unwilling to hire PWDs due to the perceived costs or challenges associated with doing so. This can create a cycle of unemployment and underemployment for PWDs, which can further reinforce negative stereotypes and biases. Overall, these issues can create significant barriers for PWDs in TVET programs and in the workforce and addressing them is critical for improving employment outcomes for this population.

2.2.1 Cost of Employing Persons with Disabilities

The cost of employing persons with disabilities (PWDs) may vary depending on several factors, such as the specific needs and abilities of the individual, the type of work being performed, and the accommodations required. Any perspective of employment that enhances the cost to the business and contrarily executes money may be attributed to a monetary value; however, such calculations are complicated (Clare et al., 2006). Some potential costs that may be associated with employing PWDs in TVET programs may include Training and support: PWDs may require additional training and support to perform their job duties effectively. This may involve providing additional resources or hiring additional staff to provide the necessary support.

Accommodations: PWDs may require certain accommodations, such as assistive technology or physical modifications to the work environment, to be able to perform their job duties. These accommodations may come with additional costs. Supervision: Depending on the level of competence and motivation of the individual, PWDs may require more supervision than non-disabled employees. This may involve hiring additional staff or dedicating more time and

resources to supervision. Lost productivity: In some cases, PWDs may experience lost productivity due to their disability or the accommodations they require. This may involve additional costs for the organization, such as providing additional training or support to help the individual increase their productivity. These factors become significant when in a highly competitive job market and if there is no legislation to promote the employment of PWD (Burchardt, 2000).

Overall, the cost of employing PWDs in TVET programs may involve additional costs for training, support, accommodations, and supervision. However, it is important to note that these costs may be offset by the benefits of hiring PWDs, such as increased diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and the potential for increased productivity and innovation.

2.2.2 Organizational Policy

There are several organizational policies that may influence perceptions of work classes toward persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. These issues may include:

Lack of equal opportunity and non-discrimination policies: If organizations do not have clear policies that promote equal employment opportunities for PWDs and prohibit discrimination based on disability, PWDs may be more likely to face barriers to employment and may be perceived as less capable or valuable as employees.

Insufficient accommodations: If organizations do not have clear policies or do not adequately implement policies that require the provision of reasonable accommodations to PWDs, PWDs may be unable to fully participate in TVET programs or in the workforce. This can lead to negative perceptions of their ability and value as employees.

Lack of diversity and inclusion policies: If organizations do not have clear policies or do not adequately implement policies that promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace, PWDs may be more likely to experience social isolation and discrimination. This can lead to negative perceptions of their ability and value as employees.

Insufficient training and support: If organizations do not have clear policies or do not adequately implement policies that provide training and support to PWDs, PWDs may be more likely to struggle with their job duties and may be perceived as less capable or valuable as employees.

Overall, organizational policies play a significant role in shaping the employment experiences and perceptions of PWDs in TVET programs. By establishing clear policies that promote equal opportunity, accommodation, diversity and inclusion, and training and support, organizations can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for PWDs.

In principle, an employer's process of recruiting PWDs should be like hiring a person without a disability. Furthermore, there is always the involvement of the risk component during the employment decision-making process, as the future is unreliable, and benefits and costs calculation may not fulfil the expectations (Ali, Mustapha, & Jelas, 2006). Employers are likely to categorize their employees by their net worth. However, employed PWD is already perceived with a lower net price and are only permitted to enter/obtain employment when plentiful jobs are available and pressed out of employment when a short supply of jobs is encountered. Many theories, such as X, Y, and Z, provide several estimations regarding employers and their decision-making process related to PWDs. First, suppose there is a similar expectation for benefits and costs. In that case, the employer will make a different decision, which ultimately depends upon the employer's approach to the possible hazard and the decision-making. Secondly, PWDs may have more possibilities to be employed if their efficiency is much higher. Similarly, from a financial point of view, PWDs have considerable human assets and expertise; thus, they have a higher chance of getting hired than those with little human assets and reduced levels of skilfulness and productivity.

2.2.3 Disabilities

One of the crucial responsibilities of an employer is to define the kind, quantity, and value of labor input which is essential for the industry. Among many, disability is one of the human features, and in some situations, few or even no relevance to the work identified. For example, a person that has restricted movement and uses a wheelchair does not mean that their circumstance is directly linked to the ability to perform the tasks of a telephonic operator. Disability can be a significant issue in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs for persons with disabilities (PWDs). One issue is the negative stereotypes and biases that many employers hold about PWDs, which may lead them to perceive PWDs as being less capable or less productive than non-disabled individuals. This can make it more difficult for PWDs to find employment and may result in them being disproportionately employed in low-skilled, low-paid jobs. Several employers link PWDs with decreased productivity. The most common explanation for employers who do not wish to engage PWDs is that disabled persons are incapable of doing the work they are involved in, or at minimum, some of them (Dewson et al., 2005). Moreover, they also revealed a general belief that PWDs are disproportionately employed, particularly in jobs and workplaces with low salaries and less-skills. Though this could be taken as an indication that PWDs have decreased productivity, it is unclear whether such a relationship may associate with a disability or not.

2.2.4 Benefits to The Organization or Business

The most noticeable advantage to a business/employer after employing a PWDs is the creation or worth derived straight from such employees. employing PWDs in TVET programs can bring a range of benefits to an organization or business,

including increased diversity and inclusion, improved reputation, compliance with laws and regulations, increased productivity, and cost savings.

However, organizations who have employed PWDs frequently claim that there are other, less tangible advantages to hiring them, which include the benefits that increase business presentation and effectiveness. However, mentioning such an association with business presentation is difficult, as there are many other factors determining business performance, and talking about the impact of any single one separately is almost impossible (Clare et al., 2006).

2.2.5 Recruitment Process

Indications regarding the recruitment process suggest that employers usually pursue to discover the 'best person for a particular job' and always try to hire the persons who may fit in well with the business practices and cultural procedures (Roberts et al., 2004). If a business is functioning in competitive markets where the main priority is cost effectiveness, they commonly recruit include those who may make an instantaneous productive input without requiring additional money. Both in terms of disturbance of the work or rest of the employees and the philosophy of the 'best person for the particular job' and 'fitting in,' both generate unintentional barriers to the employment of PWDs (Dixon, 2003). Similarly, several surveys taken from employers by Meagre et al. (2001) provided a variety of confirmations linking to the recruitment procedure. Employers cite many reasons for not hiring PWDs. Including that employer received only a few applications from PWDs. In addition, the absence of work experience and relevant skills on the applicant's part makes them inappropriate for the positions they applied for. Other employers concluded that the work is integrally unsuitable for PWDs and would become too costly to accommodate them. TVET programs can provide PWDs with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce. By offering specialized training and education programs that are tailored to the needs and abilities of PWDs, TVET programs can help to improve their employability and competitiveness in the job market.

3. Methodology

In this study, the phenomenology approach is used as ethnography studies the intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period whereby Phenomenology identifies the individual essence of human experiences. Furthermore, there were two main reasons for considering qualitative research instead of quantitative. Firstly, it allows the researcher to gather experiential, meaningful, and personal perspectives of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This methodology facilitates the researcher in gathering a deep insight into a specific problem and assists with a detailed deliberation of a central phenomenon. A central phenomenon is the key concept, idea, or process studied in qualitative research. In this study, the perception of employees and employers towards inclusion in the workplace is the central phenomenon requiring exploration of factors and barriers associated with the perception. Secondly, this study focuses on the exploration of the phenomenon from the perspective of participants rather than investigating the existing body of knowledge. Additionally, a collective case study approach was used. A collective case study refers to a few similar cases involved in the study for exploring and investigating a phenomenon or general condition. The collective case study was also considered appropriate for an in-depth understanding of the instance or phenomena within a real-life context such as conducting an interview The (interview protocols were developed to measure workplace-related matters).

3.1 Population and Sample

Sampling is a process of selecting just a small group of people as representatives from a large group called the population (Burchardt, 2000). In this study, purposive sampling was used; informants were selected for reasons tied to the purposes of the topic. Purposive sampling is a procedure in the qualitative study whereby informants are selected because of some characteristic (Patton, 1990). There were three core features upon which the sample was chosen; (a) primarily male informants working with hearing impairment were chosen; (b) the number of years informants had been working with PWDs, specifically those working between 2-5 years. For this study it was decided that the informants who had been working with PWDs for at least two years, were an excellent choice to answer the research questions. Only informants working in an urban area of Sargodha city were selected in this study.

The target population refers to a group of individuals with some common characteristics that interest the researcher (Best & Kahn, 2016). The target group of this study consists of five different non-profit organizations, workplaces, or rehabilitation centers. A total of 15 informants, three from each rehabilitation center (one employer and two employees), one of the employers was principal in the special education center, other were PA, they were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Authors such as (Guest et al., 2006) claim that 15 is an acceptable sample size in qualitative research, whereas Morse (cited in Guest et al., 2006) recommends different sample sizes depending on the qualitative approach employed, from at least six for phenomenological studies. Francis et al. (2010) proposes a '10+3' formula to establish data saturation. Specifically, at least ten interviews will be conducted, followed by a further three to evaluate if any new insights are being produced. This rolling, 'last three samples' stopping evaluation is done after each successive interview after the tenth.

3.2 Instrument

Research requirements were considered while developing interview protocols, such as the purpose of the instrument, measuring variables, and the population of interest. To elicit the phenomena thoroughly, an interview protocol was employed, with purpose-focused questions developed for workplace-related matters. For the stakeholders, different questions were designed to elicit participants' perceptions, practices, and challenges related to workplace inclusion in Sargodha. The interview protocol comprised 21 questions. A further correction was made to the interview protocol questions after the pilot study resulting in 15 questions. The 15 interview protocol questions were short-listed and translated from English to Urdu because the means of communication at some workplaces were Urdu, especially in the private sector.

3.2.1 Interview Protocols: Development and Procedures

After conducting the interviews, the gathered data was transcribed from all the sources. Redundant information was removed, and the remaining data were coded and analyzed individually, then collaboratively by the researcher to compare the coding schemes between different sources to overcome research bias (Ghesquière, Maes, & Vandenberghe, 2004). The research objectives guided the data analysis, which was analyzed in three steps.

- Data was fully transcribed and coded for the participant's actions as strategies and reasons as reflection. Initial categories that emerged from interviews were then compared with observation notes to increase the evaluation's validity (Ghesquière, Maes, & Vandenberghe, 2004).
- In the second round, the data underwent a microanalysis of the participants' terms, phrases, or sentences to describe their actions and strategies (Kolb, 2012). Strategies that were described using similar terms and phrases were differentiated into categories
- In case of overlapping or indecisiveness over assigning specific terms and phrases into a particular category, the final decision was taken based on the outcome of those actions. The draft of the findings was given to the participants to read and understand as a member check. Member check is considered crucial for confirming the credibility of the information given by the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In the final round, emergent themes were apparent and significant instances and reflections were chosen for reporting.

3.3 Data collection

Data were collected using multiple sources such as observations, in-depth interviews, and reflective journals. In-depth interviews and class observations functioned as the primary research tools for obtaining information. The open-ended questions during the interview were intended to elicit information regarding the perceptions of respondents in more detail. A semi-structured interview protocol guided the interview sessions. The interview followed a pyramid model of interviewing which began with specific questions and opened with details with examples and instances during the course. Five one-hour interview sessions that were audiotaped and transcribed, they were conducted at different times during a time of two months. Observations were conducted to get a first-hand account of what happened in real settings, and what were the actual practices. These observations were conducted parallel to the interview sessions, but only sometimes on the same day. Observations served as the second source of information that often confirmed, elaborated, or clarified the interview contents. The employees were observed five times across two months. For the validity of a study involving a single phenomenon, data collection was triangulated using different methods to corroborate one another. Data triangulation is a strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings (Patton, 1990; Ghesquière, Maes, & Vandenberghe, 2004). During the preparation of the interview protocol, the questions were discussed with three university Ph.D. lecturers with more than 10 years of service and one headmistress of a government secondary school for hearing impaired boys, Sargodha. They guided the construction of statements and were asked to delete statements they found irrelevant. In light of their suggestions, the interview protocol was finalized. A pilot examination was completed to see if the inquiries were sensible, valuable, and effectively grasped by the interviewees and the utilization of Urdu language in gathering data since this is the language the participants knew. The interpretation from English to Urdu was checked for language proficiency.

A pilot study was done by interviewing three employers. The sample size of three interviews was adequate for pilot testing, as suggested by Creswell (2017). The data collected and analyzed in pilot testing was not included in the main study.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Five ethical considerations were taken into consideration while conducting this study. These are informed consent, self-determination, protection from harm, anonymity, and confidentiality.

- Informed consent: The research participants were provided with sufficient, comprehensive information about the research project, and their consent was taken for the research activity.
- Self-determination: The acknowledgment of the right of the participant to participate in the research work and to come out from the research activity at any time during the research process.

- Protection from harm: The research procedure should not create any risk of threat or harm to the participants.
- Anonymity: The identities and the information given by the participant should be always protected
- Confidentiality: The data given by the research participant should be always secure.

4. Results

The findings are discussed under five major categories: such as factors associated with perception, barriers, ideas, strategies, inclusive thinking, and wages (See Table 2).

Table 2 - Major categories or themes

Broad categories	Initial codes
Factors associated with perception	Inclusion
	First interaction
	Possible problems
Barriers	Motivation in the private sector
	Negative aspects to hire them
	Management problems
Ideas & Strategies	Required training
	The present gap between skill and the labour market
	Minimization of gap
	Role of government
Inclusive thinking	Positive aspects to hire them
	Minimization of aspects
	Positive thinking
Wages	Equal wages
	Reasons of inequality

5. Discussion

The discussion section is segregated into three sub-categories: first, the factors associated with the perception of employers are discussed, then the barriers faced by a person with disabilities (PWDs) are explained followed by a discussion about ideas and strategies.

5.1 Factors Associated with The Perception of Employers

Four out of five employers provided positive opinions on the topic of inclusion and consider it an important and constructive idea that should be followed. One of the respondents stated:

"It should be done according to the nature of required jobs of disabled persons; there should be no direct public dealing" (Employer 1). Another employer added, *"Then they will find no option to get a job"* (Employer 4).

Many other employees of different organizations felt comfortable and had a good working relationship with PWDs from their very first interaction at the workplace. Most of the organization's employers were keen to learn something new from PWDs. However, according to employer 5, *"Kin from the family was jobless and due to family pressure, I offered him a job in my shop"* (Employer 5).

All employers felt in the initial stage of their PWD job placement as they had trouble making PWD understand job routines. Employer 5 stated that *"PWDs are less productive to perform their duties"*, whilst Employer 3 said *"they are unable to perform office job adequately, they should be placed on menial jobs"*.

The employers from the private sector thought that if the government provided them with some financial incentives for hiring PWDs they would offer more jobs to PWDs. Employer 2 stated, *"The media should play its role to create a positive image and awareness about PWDs"*.

According to employer 1, who stated that *"The PWDs are more focused and determined towards their jobs, if proper practical training workshops is provided to them, they may prove to be even more productive worker"*.

Moreover, all 9 employees of these organizations were highly in the favour of inclusion, whilst employees 7, 4, and 3 were comparatively less expressive on this subject. As established by employee 1, *"Due to inclusion, PWDs with a moderate level of disability will be more benefited, in comparison to the PWDs having a severe disability"*. As stated by

employee 2, *“Inclusion for the personality development should be done, but sometimes PWDs with severe disabilities get more benefits from the individual and segregated setup”*.

First interaction:

The first interaction of PWDs with their employers was found to be very positive, as stated by six out of nine employers. As established by,

“I felt pleasure as how confident and motivated they are. They can compete with the world and all their problems” (Employee 2); PWDs are highly motivated and determined (Employee 4)

“PWDs provide us with a way to learn sign language” (Employer 7).

“Initially, I was worried about how to manage them. Later, I learned the sign language and now it is comfortable” (Employer 6).

Possible Problems

The basic problem at the workplaces was communication, which was mentioned by employers 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9. These employers further provided some assumptions to support their hypothesis. These assumptions depict the reduced work efficiency and PWDs' decreased work ability, which included sign language, not enough pre-job training, and a new work environment. Some comments included:

“He can't properly communicate with the other shopkeepers in the market” (Employer 4)

“There is a communication gap that sometimes creates misunderstanding. Involved people remained unable to understand the logic and reasoning behind a work that destroy the working relationship among them” (Employer 2).

Employers 5 and 3 disagreed with the rest of the employers and affirmed that PWDs do not come across problems in the workplace.

Employee 1 pointed out that sometimes PWDs come to the workplace, and they do not have awareness of their basic human right and showed a lack of knowledge of their rights and duties, thus, other people in the workplace take benefit of their ignorance and exploit them. According to employee 4, *“PWDs need proper guidance and supervision, as most of the time they are not independent at the workplace”* (Employee 4).

Motivation in the private sector:

The organisations in the private sector had several comments to make about the level of worker motivation. Comments included:

“We have to create awareness about PWDs strong point to the private sector as well as their rights of equal job opportunities should be realized to the general public” (Employer 1).

Add quotes from employers 5, 3, 4, and 7 Employers 5, 3, 4, and 7 have suggested that financial incentives to the private sector from the government can also improve the situation, believed that *“Improvement in the professional capabilities of PWDs will surely make them attain the jobs”* (Employee 5).

This study has shown a key problem that highly influenced the participants' perception regarding the hiring of PWDs, i.e., such persons are comparatively less productive. Dewson, et.al., (2005) described one of the major motives which most of the employers indicated in their survey, was employer's perceptions towards PWDs, i.e., they cannot properly perform the assigned duties of the job or at least some parts of that job. According to them, almost 65 percent of employers would not appoint PWDs only due to their belief that these persons are less productive.

Thornton (2005) claimed that generally employers have so stereotypical and conservative concepts of disability, that they did not recognize the personal potential of a disabled person. Mostly, employers recognize the disability only in one direction and in a medical way, which is a view that has been confronted by a person who perceives disability 'socially constructed', due to restrictive factors by the employers and society, rather than a human being with mental and physical disorder. Employer's perceptions about jobs a disabled person can perform such as (cleaner, cashiers, teacher, and/or receptionists, is not unexpected because the general view of the community about disability or a disabled person, is that they cannot perform duties of such jobs which required higher skills. However, Baldwin and Johnson (1994) the environment of the workplace and the main task to be accomplished during the job are the main factors that determine the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

This study revealed four main ways through which motivation of the employers can be achieved to increase the recruitment of the PWDs. These include the provision of free training and courses work classes, and technology/devices for assistance at the workplace, along with exemption from tax, and quota-based benefits. The study suggests that if such incentives are provided to the working classes, this can encourage employers to hire more PWDs. Some suggestions have already been established in the Malaysian National Policy for PWDs (Galletta, 2013). This policy specifies that if a PWDs has been employed by any person/organization and/or if such person is involved in any business venture, special incentives should be provided to both the employer and the disabled employee (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Shore, et.al., 2011). It should be added in the policy that a tax rebate will be given to an employer who will induct five or more PWDs.

Another important factor that determines the employer's perception regarding the working potential of PWDs is the type of business they are engaged in. For example, employers in education, IT, and health showed a more positive attitude towards hiring disabled persons as compared to employers engaged in other businesses (Forlin, Keen & Barrett, 2008). However, these findings oppose the results of Thornton (2005), who claimed that employers have so stereotypical and conservative concepts of disability, that they did not recognize the personal potential of a disabled person.

5.2 Barriers Faced by A Person with Disabilities (PWDs)

While discussing the barriers to an inclusive workplace, most respondents felt that it was the personality features of any PWDs that created major barriers to communication with other employees and the employer. Some comments included: *"The aggression which PWDs showed, might be due to the communication gap with other employees and even with employers, during early days of their jobs"* (Employer 1).

"PWDs are generally less social and self-centered, and most of PWDs don't feel comfortable among the general public" (Employer 3).

In addition to PWDs' personality characteristics, some other employers pointed out the "management issues" such as lack of training, and command of the language, as a barrier to better inclusion of PWDs in any workplace. As employer 1 established,

"The language is the basic barrier which creates hurdles for better work performances of PWDs".

Employer 1 further highlighted the importance of initial training for the PWDs stating:

"Absence of initial training of PWDs for the proper accomplishment of the assigned duties is a foremost important factor, which contributes toward PWDs' performances".

5.3 Ideas and Strategies

Most of the respondents proposed that the relevant and proper training at the start of the job can enhance the job competencies of PWDs. It can also increase their chances to get a better job option and subsequently retain their jobs for longer periods as well.

Pre-Job training:

Employer 1 suggested that:

"The internship training must be carried out for the PWDs. Well-recognized professionals, from the field, must be hired for conducting workshops during their school years".

However, employer 4 did not share any ideas as he believed that the pressure and the demands of their job will automatically train them, stating

Behaviour management:

According to employer 2, *"PWDs need behavior management training at the workplace to fulfill the assigned tasks"*. Further, she added, *"They also need the training to utilize their energies more productively, instead of bursting out aggressive tempers. According to employer 4,*

"They need to be responsible enough to submit the assigned tasks and manage the work properly showing work ethics"

Socialization:

One of the employer also gave the idea of socialization training. She suggested that *"PWDs will learn how to cope with their environment and to be a productive part of a team. In this way, they can learn how to communicate with others"*.

Counselling:

In addition, employer 2 suggested that the counselor should be present at the workplace. Counselors should talk to PWDs and suggest to them how they can tackle their day-to-day psychological problems in a better way. She said, *"The counselor can suggest the resolution of their psychological complexes, which will make PWDs more productive"*.

The present gap between skill & market demand:

Most employers perceived that there is no gap between the skills of PWDs and the market demand. However, employer 5 believed that *"They need more practice to learn the demanded skills"*. Furthermore, according to employer 2, *"The reading and writing problems of the PWDs are responsible to create a gap to accomplish their duties"*.

As established by employer 3, *"The communication gap either of verbal or the limited written expression, make PWDs unable to completely express their skills which ultimately build a hindrance for the achievement of their work duties"*.

Minimization of gaps:

Employer 2 emphasized the need for different courses and training to enhance PWDs' reading and writing skills. However, employer 5 criticized the PWDs' schooling system and added comments that *"Their school should focus on the training of these people up to mark and/or to that level, where PWD's can compete easily within the market"*.

Employer 3 also suggested that the role of school should be very progressive and positive to make them able to communicate properly. He said, *"The school should target the efficiency of the communication skills. Different strategies for effective communication should be taught in the school"*.

Role of Government:

According to employer 2,

"Government is trying to fulfil its duties via providing the limited facilities within its resources". The different institutions are fulfilling their given tasks. Employer 2 further highlights the importance of the selection board of different institutions. As stated by employer 2, *"The selection boards in the different institutions should select PWDs to achieve their optimal level of productivity"*.

As stated by employer 4,

"Government should provide the institution with hearing aids that will eventually bring betterment in lives of PWDs".

Further, he suggested that *"Employers of PWDs should be exempted from the different types of government taxes"*.

According to employer 3,

"Different institutions which are relevant to PWDs, should make new policies and legislation to protect PWDs' basic human rights".

As established by employer 5,

"Government should provide financial aid to private organizations which are employing PWDs".

Employer 1 suggested that the *"Information Technology (IT) department is an ideal working place for the persons with disabilities. Thus, Government should provide PWDs with the education and training of related technical fields"*.

Inclusive thinking:

All the employers found PWDs as work-focused employees. Employer 4 affirmed that *"Persons with disabilities are hard workers and focused on their work"*. Employer 1 also shared his experience with PWDs and added that *"They concentrate on their work and do not interfere in the matters of other people"*. A similar opinion was shared by employer 2; he praised PWDs as, *"They are punctual and try to follow the instructions thoroughly. However, occasionally, they fail to follow the instructions"*.

Minimization of negative aspects:

Employer 1 concluded that *"They are self-conscious and feel their deficiency more than that they have. That's why sometimes they behave aggressively"*. They need counselling and comfort level from his/her co-worker.

Employer 3 suggested, *"Good rapport and the trustworthy relationship with other employees, can minimize their negative aspects, effectively"*. Employer 2 further added, *"Counselling and good role modelling can create a good environment which will minimize their negative behavioural aspects"*.

Positive thinking:

For the positive thinking of the inclusive setup, the following opinions were given by, who suggested that *"Education for the general public can bring positive thinking"* (Employer 1).

However, employer 5 said that *"People can talk good things and positive aspects for persons with disabilities, however, they never hire them as an employee for their work. The awareness about that attitude of different people can bring a change in the approach of the public"*.

"Media, nowadays, is a source of changing the mindset of people. We should use this to change our society" (Employer 2).

Wages:

In the government sector, the wages of PWDs and other employees are equal. According to employers 1 and 2, there should be no difference between the wages of PWDs and other employees. However, employers 4 and 5 opposed the suggestion. Employer 4 replied, *"Wages of PWDs and normal employees should be according to their work done"*. In addition, employer 5 added that *"They do work with lesser quality, so we pay them less"*.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

Hence, the results of the current study specified that a maximum number of respondents were at the age of 50 or less and are mainly men. Additionally, many of them were working with PWDs for two to five years - this information moved to the Methods/data collection section. According to this study, respondents from education, IT, and health showed a desire to hire PWDs. However, it was revealed that only a limited number of participants perceive that a disabled person can

perform duties effectively as an administrator. These participants thought that if they employ PWDs at the workplace, this can encourage the other working classes to decide to hire more disabled persons. The study also describes that the responsibility to create positive image/inclusive thinking about their working capabilities is the responsibility of the PWDs. This can be achieved when PWDs enhance their communication skills. It was also suggested that if the employer is provided with a different incentive, i.e., quota-based benefits, tax exemptions and provision of free training, and courses of work classes along with technology and devices for assistance at the workplace, it can stimulate many other employers to hire a higher number of PWDs.

The first recommendation concerns the implementation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs that can help to increase the marketability of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and reduce the gap between the employer's requirements and the competencies available to PWDs in several ways:

Providing relevant skills and knowledge: TVET programs can provide PWDs with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce. By offering specialized training and education programs that are tailored to the needs and abilities of PWDs, TVET programs can help to improve their employability and competitiveness in the job market.

Developing partnerships with employers: TVET programs can develop partnerships with employers to better understand their needs and the skills and competencies they are looking for in employees. This can help to ensure that TVET programs are providing training and education that is relevant and meets the needs of employers and may increase the likelihood that PWDs will be recruited by these employers.

Providing support and accommodations: TVET programs can provide support and accommodations to PWDs to help them succeed in their studies and in the workforce. This may involve providing assistive technology, physical modifications to the learning environment, or additional support and resources.

Promoting the value of PWDs as employees: TVET programs can work to promote the value of PWDs as employees by highlighting the skills and abilities of PWDs and dispelling negative stereotypes and biases. This can involve working with employers to educate them about the benefits of hiring PWDs and advocating for policies and practices that support the employment of PWDs.

Working to increase accessibility and inclusivity in TVET programs and the workplace: TVET programs can work to increase accessibility and inclusivity in their programs and in the workplaces where PWDs will be employed. This may involve making physical modifications to the learning and work environments, providing assistive technology, or implementing policies and practices that promote inclusivity.

Overall, TVET programs can play a critical role in increasing the marketability of PWDs and reducing the gap between the employer's requirements and the competencies available to PWDs. By providing relevant skills and knowledge, developing partnerships with employers, providing support and accommodations, promoting the value of PWDs as employees, and working to increase accessibility and inclusivity, TVET programs can help to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for PWDs in the workforce. New laws should be made that aim to discourage employers to terminate any person from a job who becomes disabled, either due to an accident or any disease while working hours. In this way, enforcement of laws will make it more likely to keep PWDs in their employment. Establishment and implementation of laws regarding tax exemption or even the tax reduction for the work classes that hired the disabled person should be done. This will enhance the employer's desire to hire the services of persons with disabilities.

The media influences societal perceptions and ideas regarding different aspects of life, however, the possible role of media in defining the views on disability has not been explored sufficiently. The media can lead to the development of false impressions about disabilities due to the imprecise information regarding PWDs, as well as their capabilities. Such false representation of disability by the media leads to a poorly defined cultural attitude with detrimental results for PWDs. Therefore, the stakeholders must harvest the complete benefit of this powerful and influential media and subsequently use it for the development of inclusive thinking about disabilities in society.

Another recommendation is made which concerns the empowerment and authorization of disabled persons via different organizations, e.g., the Directorate General of Special Education and Social Welfare Department. These organizations should ensure that different laws and policies such as the Provisions of National Policy for PWDs, should be implemented fully. Moreover, they should work for the establishment of new laws regarding tax exemption or even tax reduction for the work classes that hired the PWDs. In the developed world, industries have an increasing need for trained labour. Due to this, there is a need to raise the standard of vocational education to upgrade the workforce's technical skills. Information on the employment situation of people with disabilities and their vocational training is widely available in advanced nations like the United States. A review of the literature by Harvey (2001) revealed that most disabled persons in the United States were unemployed. Vocational training did, however, appear to have some positive effects on post-secondary employment in this group. It was determined that improving the employment prospects and job skills of people with disabilities was a key objective of secondary education (Rosen *et al.*, 2015).

Another recommendation involves the introduction of special employment programs by the government, aimed at increasing employment opportunities for PWDs. This can be achieved by the introduction of supported employment which would lead to the incorporation of the PWDs into the competition-based labour market. Such programs should also provide coaching for employment, specialized job training, custom-made supervision on an individual basis, transportation, and technology for assistance to empower PWDs so that they can learn and perform their assigned duties

of jobs appropriately. Providing specialized training and education programs that are tailored to the needs and abilities of PWDs. This can help to improve the skills and knowledge of PWDs and make them more competitive in the job market.

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