

SUPPORTING INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE
LEBANESE WORKPLACE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON AREAS OF
ADHERENCE OF LEBANESE LAW 220/2000

A Thesis
presented to
the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics
at Notre Dame University-Louaize

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Business Strategy

by
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MAY 2023

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Dedication

I dedicate this academic work to my parents Ibrahim and Elham El-Hachem, my sister, Myriam El-Hachem, and my fiancé Charles Bou Maroun. Mostly, I worked so hard to complete this thesis to also dedicate it to my beloved brother, Anthony El-Hachem, an autistic individual who made me realize the importance of awareness needed in our society. To everyone listed here, without your continued support and encouragement, I would not have completed my work. Thank you!

Acknowledgments

The successful completion of this thesis could not have been possible if not for the immense help, support, and guidance of the following individuals:

In a distinct way, I would sincerely like to take a moment and acknowledge Dr. Mony Trad's patience and hard work, my Thesis Supervisor. You directed and encouraged me throughout this study and made sure to follow up regardless of my continued delays. Similarly, I would like to thank Dr. Sandra Khalil, my Thesis Reader, for her availability and suggestions.

In addition, I would like to thank each institution, including but not limited to: Anta Akhi, ProAbled, Al Younbouh, Arcenciel, and EPES. Your input was highly needed to further understand the situation in Lebanon.

Finally, I would thank all the employees, CEOs, and HR personnel, who took the time to complete the survey related to the companies and helped me reach accurate results.

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Abstract

This study examined the right of Persons with Disabilities in the context of Lebanon. The purpose of the study was to analyze and examine reasons behind not employing Persons with Disabilities and the abundance of companies operating in Lebanon in relation to the 220/2000 Law. Accessibility costs, open-mindedness of recruiters, and the centralization of decisions were studied in relation to lack of employability of PWDs. More than 200 participants and subjects were recruited in a snowball sample and answered two questionnaires. Results were analyzed and calculated in a Correlation and Regression statistical tests. Results revealed that PWDs are not treated equally in the society and are facing discrimination when it comes to their employment status. As for the hypotheses developed, the author could not prove that building accessibility play a crucial role in the employment but could confirm that the awareness and centralized decision making are affecting the employment of PWDs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. General Background

One of the basic rights of an individual is dignity. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “All human beings have inherent and equal dignity. The rights that flow from human dignity include rights against mistreatment, rights to freedom of speech and association, and rights to a decent quality of life, among many others.” Securing a job is an essential element for this to happen. Hence, any person, despite his/her gender, nationality, ethnic group, educational level, social class, health condition, etc. has the right to have a job, access a safe workplace environment, and be equally treated with his/her colleagues. With the rise of human rights, inclusion has become a very important topic not only in the day-to-day activities, but also in different professional setups whether the company is a well-established institution, or a startup, be it local, or international. Most companies are aware of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and are trying to implement it through innovation, inclusion, and diversity among the employees.

The term CSR is defined differently in several references and extracts, including libraries, the internet, articles, and even books. However, one can conclude and can notice that some similarities are available in almost all definitions out there and that CSR is the process of giving back and creating an impact on the society, which goes beyond the person’s or the companies’ legal obligations. To be more precise, nothing really binds the company to give back, however, some companies choose to implement CSR initiatives for various needs, be it their reputation, their aim to increase the market share, or simply their sense of humanity and citizenship where they choose to give back to the society. Corporate Social Responsibility can be applied through several approaches affecting key stakeholders in the organization itself or outside the company, reaching suppliers and clients. For instance, adapting specific behaviors to meet suppliers’, customers’, and employees’ expectations - like providing a specific amount deducted from the profits upon purchase that will be dedicated to good causes, including but not limited to fundraising for cancer patients, underprivileged youth training, orphans, women empowerment, etc. An additional act can also include creating an impact on society, such as events that target youth awareness and tree-planting initiatives. These activities aim to add value to the businesses and/or communities, hence ensuring improved brand awareness and reputation. On a more specific level, firms engage in CSR to maximize profits and to create positive brand perception, among other important business topics discussed by professionals in the field. CSR also positively affects the sustainability of the firms in the market, which is an extremely important goal that companies strive to achieve versus their rivals. By definition, business sustainability refers to the ability to prolong and to maintain a certain

process, product, or service. That is why most companies work to ensure that they are sustainable and maintainable on the market. That being said, both CSR and sustainability are two terms that are interrelated, and they directly affect the ethical beliefs of the firms. By itself, ethics can simply be defined as the values/morals and the right/wrong behaviors perceived, which differ from one society to another, based on several variables, including but not limited to religion, heritage, and parental influence. Thus, in the business world as well, ethics are available, which are usually highly dependable on the management. Various ethics should be applied in each organization, such as fair pay, non-harassment, and non-discrimination amongst race, religion, disability, gender, etc. (Peetz, 2019).

Moving towards inclusion, it is the process of improving involvement in human life for all people out there. Precisely, it is mostly aimed at the underprivileged communities and is achieved through several behaviors, such as enhancing all kinds of opportunities, raising voices, accessing resources, and admiring civil rights (UNESCO, 2013). In addition, the term underprivileged community refers to the minorities in the society or persons who do not fully receive their human rights, such as LGBTQ+, women, Persons with Disabilities, religion, among others. Worth noting that minorities differ from one society to another, and in some cases, a category that is a minority in one country might not be in another. For instance, one can notice that some countries are considered to have a high percentage of Christianity and in another a very rare percentage follows this religion. That is why, on another hand, pluralism exists, which is by definition the coexistence of several groups in the same society. By their turn, inclusion and pluralism are directly correlated. Successful inclusion requires a pluralism mindset for it to work and to flourish in a society. Moving towards a more precise environment, in the workplace to be exact, inclusion and diversity became attractive topics to be followed, maintained, and respected. Human Resources (HR) departments, by nature, are highly involved in ensuring that work ethics are being respected. Usually, HRs manage five major functions, which are staffing, compensation, safety and health, training and development, and finally employee relations. They are responsible for the orientation that promotes work inclusion and diversity, which falls under training and development function. Worth noting that some counter arguments defending the positions of HR departments are available (Bartram et al, 2018).

Knowing that every person, regardless of any challenges s/he is encountering while living, has the right to have a healthy, productive, and decent life. That is by accessing the minimum

resources needed to fulfil the basic needs, such as food, water, education, and employment. With that in mind, minorities deserve to be well represented in the society and given their human rights equally with all the other citizens. In many developing countries such as Egypt, India, and Lebanon, among others, the civil society is playing the role of the government in defending their rights, just because of the lack of resources, management, and governmental reforms. On a more specific level, and to focus on just one minority group, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are those who have mental (bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia, etc.), chronic illness (diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, etc.), long-standing physical (cerebral palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, hands or legs amputations, etc.), sensory (hearing, visual, etc.) or intellectual (Autism, Down Syndrome, Prader-Willi Syndrome, etc.) impairments which influence their interactions and/or delay their complete and efficient contributions in societal activities equally with others. Some disabilities are visible, where people can directly tell that there is a disability (amputation for instance), and some others are invisible, where no disability can be detected, although it is available (hearing impairment for instance) (The United Nations, 2016). PWDs make up to 15% of the world's population. Around 80% of them are considered within the working age (20 to 64 years). However, they face higher rates of unemployment, lack of social protection, and poverty compared to other people having the same age (International Labour Organization, 2019). In fact, many studies prove that recruiters and managers do not hire or sustain PWDs, and at some point, they do not even consider them for the positions. That is mainly because employers believe that this category of the society lacks the required knowledge and job performance, or simply due to other unjustified or unknown reasons. An additional concern is the accommodation required to welcome PWDs such as persons with physical disability at the offices who require specific accessibility in the office, such as ramps, which may cost institutions higher fees to adjust or to rebuild (Kulkarni et al., 2016). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law aiming to ban any kind of discrimination against PWDs all over the U.S.A. In reference to the ADA, People with Disabilities shall have access to equal opportunities as every human being. It includes various topics and daily activities such as work, education, transportation, and accessibility to public and private places (ADA, 2019).

Moving towards a specific market that will be targeted in this study, Lebanon, limited statistics regarding PWDs in general and employment are available. Nevertheless, data gathered, around 9 years ago, through the Ministry of Social Affairs cards estimated that around 78% of Persons with Disabilities that reached their active employment ages are unemployed. Worth noting

that, this information does not include any specific field or job preference and might have become outdated now. Additionally, most PWDs earn their living by being self-employed because they are not able to lock a full-time or part-time employment opportunity. Additionally, some others, who might have the capabilities to own a private business, are highly dependent on their parents' incomes to survive (UNESCO, 2013).

1.2. Need for the Study

Barkoff and Read mentioned in their article published back in 2017 that the early 1970s was considered a breaking point to Persons with Disabilities. In fact, it was up until that date, that many PWDs were still isolated and segregated from the society, and then, they started defending their independence and their need for inclusive societies. This led to the Rehabilitation Act of Disabilities, signed by Presidents Nixon and Ford in 1973, to protect the rights of Americans with Disabilities.

President Georges H.W. Bush, by his turn, signed the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) in 1990, which was created to fight against their human rights and to eliminate all kinds of discriminations against them, by creating economic independence and job placement equality, in addition to other societal participation, such as elections. The ADA became an important reference for this topic and is still being used till date. By its turn, and in 2000, Lebanon adopted a law to protect Persons with Disabilities on different levels and fields. Like the ADA, law 220/2000 emphasizes on social, economic, and environmental rights, including learning, employment, health and accessibility. For instance, and to protect their employment rights, this decree includes a clause that obliges small, medium or large organizations to recruit Persons with Disabilities. Precisely, for companies that employ between 30 and 60 employees, an obligation of at least one PWD employment is required. As for bigger firms, i.e., the ones that have more than 60 employees, at least 3% of their total workforce shall be of Persons with Disabilities. Otherwise, they will be penalized and should pay a fine to the Government (Law 220/2000, 2000).

As one might know, jobs are crucial for everyone to survive, as they give freedom, financial stability, health insurance, esteem, determination, etc. They are even more important for Persons with Disabilities, especially that they have been denied from the job market throughout decades and all over the globe, and still are at some point seen as incapable or not interested in work. While Persons with Physical Disabilities do face discrimination and under-employment opportunities, Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or serious psychiatric disorders situation's is even worse. They mainly reach a dead-end in the workshops or in the shelters and receive minimum wage as

remuneration (Barkoff and Read, 2017). As stated before, the situation is getting better nowadays, and companies are becoming more aware about its importance in the workplace, however, the problem is still available, and they are still facing various types of discrimination, be it in the workplace or in the society.

Employing this category of the society can support companies to achieve favorable results at the end of the day. For instance, studies prove that PWDs tend to have a higher performance, time management skills, and better results to the employers (Urbancová et al, 2020). In addition, some might have higher attention to details skills and superior talents, due to the innate skills they have. Finally, one cannot forget to mention their higher retention and loyalty rates proven in multiple research conducted (Bury et al, 2019).

Following all the ideas discussed previously, the lack of employability that Persons with Disabilities is facing is a very crucial topic to be taken into consideration and to be studied. In addition to everything discussed, in Lebanon, there is a lack of updated statistics regarding this topic, which is another endeavor to study this area.

Research Question

This study is designed to address a humanitarian subject that has limited resources or shared discussions and has been misrepresented throughout the decades and the countries worldwide, with an intention to hopefully spread more awareness and collect a collective interest about the topic, hence achieving better inclusive results, not only in the society, but in the workplaces as well, to be exact. The aim of that research is to understand the Lebanese professional market, precisely the companies' adherence to a law that obliges them to respect the rights of Persons with Disabilities and that makes them bound to its clauses rather than applying CSR principles by nature, without the need to emphasize on its application. It aims to study the areas of implementation of the law 220/2000, the needs, and the HR functions directly affecting these decisions. Briefly speaking, these will be measured by connecting with several companies operating in different fields across Lebanon, functioning locally and internationally, and by studying multiple HR functions directly correlated with inclusion, such as recruitment, compensation, and training, among others. The study will also aim to understand the needed areas and/or skills that need to be learned and developed by PWDs themselves at first to ensure higher employment success rates. These can be related directly to the lack of self-esteem and to the soft skills shown while being considered for a job opportunity and invited to interviews. On another

hand, the research will also target specialists, working in various NGOs and associations across Lebanon, who have direct impact on several areas of focus, such as the livelihood, health, education, and empowerment of PWDs in Lebanon, as they are in close connection with them and are working hard with them to achieve better inclusion in the society and in the workplace. For that to be achieved, discussed, and understood, the following research question will be adopted and discussed throughout the coming chapters:

“What are the factors that will motivate employers to enhance their HR functions aiming to support companies in Lebanon adhere to the law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?”

1.3. Objectives of the Study

As discussed in the section above, the main objective of this research is to study the Lebanese job market, its motivation to employ Persons with Disabilities, and its understanding of its legal obligations, when it comes to abiding by law 220/2000 clauses focusing on employment. In addition, it also aims to provide concrete and measurable results in this field, which will support interested stakeholders understanding the current standing of the Lebanese market.

The study will be showing two different points of view, the one showcasing the employer’s and the company’s side, and the other displaying the specialists’ opinion, so that the conclusion will be formulated accordingly.

This will be ensured by collecting quantitative primary data regarding the topic, by directly connecting with specific companies and institutions, with emphasize on the following:

- Statistics regarding Lebanese companies that are aware and are adhering to Law 220/2000 on the right of Persons with Disabilities
- Statistics on the employment of Persons with Disabilities and the availability of internal policies in the companies to protect their rights, be it international or local.
- HR areas of focus of employers, HRs, and decision makers that help companies hiring PWDs.

1.4. Brief Overview of all Chapters

This research is divided into three main chapters briefly summarized below. Chapter 2 is the literature review whereby several previous studies and international action plans were researched and provided to understand the current situation of PWDs all over the world. It includes

several initiatives followed by the United Nations (U.N.), the US, and other countries, to limit discrimination against that part of the society, in addition to a thorough explanation of the Law 220/2000 and a Lebanese study that were also discussed. This chapter did prove that PWDs have been treated in an unequal manner and they are facing several kinds of discrimination, be it on the educational or on the employment level, throughout the decades and across the globe, no matter how developed the country is and how many initiatives were implemented. The literature review also showcased the fact that discrimination was not only caused by the society, but was also triggered by PWDs themselves, who are not putting in the needed efforts into making their employment inclusion successful, due to their deficient soft skills or the low self-esteem they are showing while being interviewed or considered to job opportunities. In other words, fear is a huge obstacle for the PWDs to move forward.

Chapter 3 is the description of the methodology followed in that study. It lists the different components, hypotheses, variables, participants, among other important attributes. Throughout this chapter different terminologies related to the research will be explained and developed, so that the reader will get to understand the true reasoning behind this study. For instance, the positivist philosophy and deductive reasoning were adopted, whereby the author chose to deduce and to analyze objectively the results of this research. This section will also discuss the different samples chosen to be targeted and hence to help implement the research strategy and methods, which will mainly focus on data gathering through questionnaires and different tools, such as the internet.

Chapter 4 is the actual research completed that is followed by its results and discussion. This section will highlight the efforts done to complete this research and to come up with its results. In fact, 2 separate questionnaires were designed (the first targeting companies and the second targeting NGOs and institutions) and were distributed to more than 300 persons in total, so that the researcher could gather 110 responses from specialists and 112 responses from companies, which allowed the researcher to deduce and to analyze the shared results below. Worth noting that, interesting results were deduced, such as the lack of awareness related to the accessibility costs from both sides of the study.

Finally, that research is concluded with one last chapter which is its conclusion, and it allows for brief discussions related to the findings. In addition, the author did elaborate on the implications and the future perspectives from the researcher's point of view.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

2.1. State of Knowledge in the Area of Interest

A thorough explanation about the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals will be illustrated in the coming section. Briefly, this is the plan developed by the Nations to ensure that people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership are being tackled and supported for a better future overall. This plan was developed back in 2015 and is aimed to be achieved by 2030. In addition, the following section will discuss a detailed literature on different studies conducted, aiming to discover PWDs treatments and inequalities in different countries and cultures. The below will also show different areas of studies, such as education, employment, and openness of recruiters. In addition, it did prove that PWDs are facing discriminations all over the world, not only when considered for employment, but also when receiving education, using public spaces, among other areas. Finally, this section as well will include a comprehensive elaboration on the Law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that was developed back in 2000 in Lebanon. This law did tackle several areas, such as education, accessibility, employment, among other important topics displayed below, with an initial aim to increase the overall inclusion and to expose that part of the society to different civil, societal, and humanitarian rights / activities. Unfortunately, that law was not and is still not widely and accurately applicable across the country and in different sectors.

2.2. Previous Research

2.2.1. The United Nations | 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Back in 2015, the United Nations (UN) developed a series of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed to create awareness, a plan, and a call to actions to countries all over the globe, be it developed or developing, for them to promote prosperity for the planet and the people, not only in the present, but in the future as well, leaving no one behind. The plan was developed for a long-term basis and is aimed to have well-structured results by 2030 through various means, including Global Partnerships, resource allocation and control, capacity building, policy implementation, among other actions.

In a nutshell, the UN developed that plan to target several areas and has designed 17 SDGs. The areas targeted are: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership, which are illustrated in the image below:

Figure 1 UN SDGs



Source: UN, 2015

As their titles include UN is directly aiming to work on the following areas:

- **SDG #1 - No Poverty:** To end the poverty by all its forms, all over the world
- **SDG #2 - No Hunger:** To terminate the hunger, to gain a better nutrition and food security, in addition to market sustainable agriculture.
- **SDG #3 - Good Health:** To guarantee good and healthy life for all the human being all over the world.
- **SDG #4 - Quality Education:** To establish inclusive, quality, and equitable education while marketing Lifelong Learning Opportunities (LLL) for all.
- **SDG #5 - Gender Equality:** To empower all women and girls, hence ensuring and promoting gender equality.
- **SDG #6 - Clean Water and Sanitization:** To corroborate healthy, sanitized, and available water by developing sustainable management plans.
- **SDG #7 - Affordable and Clean Energy:** To ensure that all people have access to latest, trustworthy, trendiest, and most sustainable energy.
- **SDG #8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth:** To market and to work on an inclusive and sustainable economic expansion, in addition to ensure productive and decent job opportunities for all people, regardless.
- **SDG #9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** To construct strong infrastructure and to market sustainability and inclusion through various innovation and industrialization

- **SDG #10 - Reduced Inequalities:** To limit all kind of inequalities for all.
- **SDG #11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities:** To build inclusive, tough, secure, and sustainable cities and communities, so that people can live in dignity.
- **SDG #12 - Responsible Consumption and Production:** To work on producing different materials and patterns from the waste and the sustainable consumption.
- **SDG #13 - Climate Action:** To implement immediate action plans to battle climate change and its outcomes.
- **SDG #14 - Life Below Water:** To protect the marine resources, including the ocean, the sea, and their sustainable uses to promote their mentalities.
- **SDG #15 - Life on Land:** To guard, rebuild, and to raise awareness on sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, battle desertification, and stop and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss.
- **SDG #16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** To work on building inclusive and peaceful society by presenting access to justice and building accountability, effectiveness, and inclusivity for all institutions and people at all levels.
- **SDG #17 - Partnerships for the Goals:** To restore all the global partnerships aiming to the sustainable development and to fortify the instruments.

As clear as it can be, this research directly presents SDG #8 (Good Jobs and Economic Growth) and SGD #10 (Reduced Inequalities), has also a slight contribution to SDG #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG #16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), as these SDGs directly target minorities and Persons with Disabilities and promote their inclusion among the globe, in different societies and sectors, whether the country is developed or developing.

2.2.2. Human Resources Management

According to a study completed by Patrick, Parul & Mazhar, Shabana (2021), the HR division oversees several essential capacities in a firm. Several topics should be followed up on and it is the role of this department to ensure that these are compliant, including labour laws, recruitment processes, problem management, record keeping, among many other topics directly related to the employees. Previously, the Human Resources Department was focusing on improving the practices and the decisions within several moving parts of an organization, while within the evolution and the rapid environment, it is currently targeting other high level and strategic dimensions. However, one can notice that the management plays a crucial role by deciding on the structure of HR departments, while it usually decides on the nature of work to be

delivered and the skills required within the HR departments. HR work is divided into three major categories: Administrative, Operational, and Strategic. To begin with, the administrative role is highly oriented towards the legal activities and the execution of employment and other types of contracts. This role also entitles HRs to work on the internal policies, employee complaints handling, attendance tracking, legal taxes declarations, data entry, warning issuance, leaves, event management, etc. Secondly, when it comes to the operational role, it entitles advocacy for employees, whereby the department oversees the needed exercises and operations to answer all questions that might be raised by employees. Finally, when it comes to the strategic role, it prescribes direct employees as resources rather than individuals, by visioning the capabilities of individuals to meet future perspectives and goals, rather than focusing on the present potentials.

Moving towards a more specific area, other than these general roles, HR departments hold five important functions within well established companies. These roles are all directly related to the motivation and the well-being of employees, as HR departments' focus is the humans within the organisations. These functions are:

- **Staffing and Recruitment:** Services are mainly provided by the choice of the staff, estimated based on the number of positions they fill and the time it takes to fill them, which begins by the analysis of each need within the departments and ends by the job offers and the signatures.
- **Compensation and Benefits:** The pay and other benefits are also under the umbrella of HR responsibilities, which directly affect the performance and the capabilities of employees. In respect to this function, the HR department is usually responsible to allocate pay structures, pay ranges, and asset allocation to each department or position. One can still notice that the finance and accounting teams can also be an important part of the employee pay, however, for many circumstances, direct managers and HRs frequently interfere and decide on the redistribution of salaries, increases, etc., and then communicate with the finance or accounting departments.
- **Training and Development:** Employers and HRs are also responsible for the career advancement of everyone within the organization, which is measured by the adequate training given to him/her, hence affecting the performance scores of individuals. Training and development start by the onboarding phase, which is crucial for the new joiners, and continues throughout the life of the employees, by giving them access to multiple job and professional growth related opportunities. An important factor to consider here is also the

succession planning, which entitles managers to prepare their team members to be able to handle multiple responsibilities throughout the journey with the company.

- Employee Relations: Relationships between employer & employee or between employee and employee are under the control of Human Resources departments, which by its turn is responsible for safeguarding the business relations, by monitoring the work satisfaction and fulfilment and the worker motivation and commitment.
- Safety and Health: Workplace safety is an important factor. One of the main responsibilities of Human Resources is to support safety training implementation, to report work accidents, to ensure that employees are safe within working hours, and to keep emergency procedures and policies well implemented and monitored.

To sum it up, Human Resources departments are an essential element in each organization, whereby they act as a strong tool to oversee and to manage the work being delivered by everyone, affected by the motivation and many other factors, such as the pay, the safety, and the training. When it comes to modern HR, it is focusing on the strategic level, whereby it is targeting new approaches to intensify the integrity of employees, making them feel that they belong. The work of HRs is directly related to the integration of PWDs in the workplace, as they are responsible for multiple factors that might affect their presence, such as safety & health and training & development.

2.2.3. Employers Influence

Dadic and Mihanovic (2019) conducted a study to understand the Croatian market while employing Persons with Disabilities. It was titled: Employment of Persons with Disabilities and their Role with Employers. This research supported the below hypotheses:

- A Person with Disability is incapable to work because of his/her disability, which affects the actual performance, making companies hesitant to hire him/her.
- Tasks completed, work done, and on-the-job performance are the most accurate ways to prove to employers the employees' capabilities and not the physical abilities as it might seem.
- Persons with Disabilities do value their employers and workplaces more than other employees, which leads to significant institutional contributions and retention rates to the employing company.

The authors concluded that educational systems contribute heavily to the integration of PWDs in the workplace, as the schools and universities are the first interactions with the actual society. As

this area is not being tackled in a sufficient way, curriculum should be amended in a way that eases PWDs integration in the workplace, as schools and universities are also contributors for people's maturity and mental evolution. More specifically, PWDs students are not receiving adequate nor sufficient support and training on their soft skills (CV writing, professional English usage, professional attitude, interview etiquette, etc.), which makes them solid competitors in the job hunt, as these skills became important for recruiters. On the contrary, they are not as attractive as other applicants, because of their weak soft skills and personal representations, which automatically triggers companies to reject their job applications. In addition, self-esteem and self-promotion are important factors that are missed while considering a PWD for a certain position. That means that, whenever the person is shortlisted based on his/her qualifications listed on the CV, s/he fails the process due to the lack of self-confidence that is obviously showcased while conducting the job interviews, which makes the candidate not eligible for further considerations. This is also directly related to the educational system and the self-esteem that is deteriorated due to various societal observations and discriminations, which themselves become risk factors for the deteriorated performances.

The study also showed that although companies were supportive and had several previous experiences when it comes to the employment of Persons with Disabilities, employers agreed that PWDs are perceived based on their disabilities and not their actual capabilities, which triggers discriminations and inequalities. For example, whenever a wheelchair user attends an interview, and before even speaking or answering the questions, s/he is directly perceived as unable to complete all the required on-the-job tasks or as a person that needs additional support from the organization or colleagues (which might be the case sometimes, for sure, but not every time). Although not being able to complete all the required tasks might also be the case sometimes, if the company is willing to accommodate, it can make it happen, by allocating some tasks to other colleagues or by supporting the PWD to complete them. For instance, instead of making a deaf designer answering phone calls, it can assign these calls to another designer in the team. However, if that was the case and when appropriate, only the minority found PWDs attractive candidates to be employed, because tasks completed are the main criteria of performance assessment, especially in that innovative and fast paced environment and these tough times.

Many employers also confirmed that PWDs are equal members of the society and following the law implementation or what is known by the "quota system" in Croatia, PWDs are still treated and employed unequally with other candidates or members of the society, which leads

them to have a low quality of life in Croatia, because they won't be able to afford the basic needs required to live a decent life, such as food, shelter, and clothes. They'll still be dependent and reliant on their family members (if any) or on special institutions to be able to live properly and to sustain. Briefly speaking, this study presented the educational system and HR motivation/knowledge as direct attributes that affect the employment of PWDs in Croatia. That study did prove that PWDs are facing various types of discriminations and inequalities, due to societal and educational norms and to the person's perception of him/herself.

2.2.4. Work Ability Program and Theory - US-Based

Life-changing events are usually hard, especially the ones taken at an early age related to the transition from schools to universities, which shape the whole future of the students. For that, scholars might have concerns related to career choice, work readiness, and employment afterwards. That caused schools to implement support programs for their students, enabling career guidance advice, hence trying to positively shape the student's future career choice. The same program, funded by California Department of Rehabilitation, applies for students with Disabilities, which are perceived to be treated equally with other colleagues, and is titled: Work Ability (Jackson, 2020).

This program has been implemented ever since 1981 and over the time, both private and public universities became partners in its execution. The same program focuses on the preparation of youth PWDs to enter the real workplace following the completion of their universities' programs and degrees. It also concentrates on the professional side of the jobs, not only on the theoretical background, which was developed during their university studies. Since 1992, universities started to provide professional requirements for PWDs graduates to be, such as internships, job readiness preparations, and placement of PWDs to various jobs. That was implemented for the purpose of bridging the gap between the professional requirements and manners and the fresh PWDs graduates from universities. Jackson (2020) explored the importance of these kinds of coaching support in the professional life and in the work integration of PWDs afterwards, as this part of the society has been facing barriers to enter the professional world, such as discrimination, adaptability, social interactions, and hesitations. The research hypothesis proposed that the students who joined the program are more likely to get employed afterwards, which might of course be logical as they are working on improving their professional skills. To conclude the results, three variables were quantitatively studied: life skills, affective skills, and employability.

Life skills refer to the soft skills required, for instance the professional and personal appearance, communication skills, independence, and ambitions. These four terminologies proved to be crucial for a person to land a job. For instance, while attending a job interview, personal appearance should be professional to maintain a good first impression. Same goes for the communication, which is a key, prospective employees shall attract the hiring person and keep a print following the interview. As for the affective skills, these involve self-confidence, competencies, personal awareness, and conflict resolution. These are also assessed during the recruitment process because employees themselves need to be independent, passionate, and proactive. Finally, as its name indicates, employability skills are the talents needed to gain a job, which means the analytical, knowledge, and quality needed for the work. These skills are usually acquired at the universities, internships, or even informal learning approaches, such as training bootcamps. Following the thorough research, surprisingly, the author concluded that there are no differences between PWDs who attended the Work Ability workshop and those who did not. According to the study done, there were no statistical differences that differs life, affective, and employability skills of a PWDs who attended Work Ability and the ones who did not. However, the author could prove that three main factors are significant for the prediction of youth PWDs participation and interest in such programs, which are: family support, high school job experience, and job training. In addition, Jackson (2020) also explained that there was an uneven distribution of surveys between students who participated in the job readiness training and those who did not, which have affected the results of that study.

Although this study could not prove that educational systems are relatively important and efficient in the post-graduation employment of PWDs, one can differentiate between a person who was continuously exposed to disciplinary acts learnt at school and one who was not. Schools do teach us how to behave in society and how to become ourselves, even if it was not done through an explicit manner. Schools can still play important roles in the lives of PWDs and can teach them how to become influential and solid persons capable of achieving great results.

2.2.5. Career Self-Management Theory

Moving towards the person him/herself, Brown-Mason (2021) explored in his qualitative research the behaviors that are proactively followed by people to enhance their career paths, achieve remarkable results, and overcome the diverse types of barriers, which is the definition of “Career Self-Management Strategy”. This study emphasized the U.S. Persons with Disabilities, whereby 12 employed PWDs were interviewed to understand various self-management strategies

described in depth below. The study answered the following question: “What are the career self-management strategies used by U.S. PWD to improve career success?” Findings showed that there are 5 self-management strategies, crucial for a Person with Disabilities professional life, which are: Career Plan, Skills Development, Career Consultation, Connections and Networking, and finally the Can-do Attitude.

To begin with, the career planning includes well-defined career paths, well-prepared interviews, well-organized/designed CVs, well-structured decisions to change, well-preparations, and well-set goals. Over and over, researchers are still to elaborate on that topic, which is proving that it is crucial in professional life. CVs are the first communication with the recruiter, and it should be designed in a way that attracts him/her and that shows value. Following it, here comes the need for decisions to change, preparations, and well-set goals, which should be tackled during the meeting, to attract the hiring manager. Secondly, developing skills portrays a continuous appetite for learning and improvement, achieved through workshops, training, higher education, or certifications. That is why we always notice that people are picking up on the learning trends and certifications, to ensure that they will always be attractive to the market and up to date. Brown-Mason (2021) moved forward by identifying that employed PWDs usually seek assistance, consultation, and shadowing from HRs and/or direct supervisors. Hence, the healthier the relationship between both parties, the better offered accommodation and support, which leads to positive outcomes, such as high retention and tenure rates, employee satisfaction, and productivity. Furthermore, when talking about networking and connections, one’s mind directly jumps into relationships with others, be it on the personal or professional level. Networking is always important for successes, practices, challenges, and sharing experiences. It is through these human relations that a person can reach a greater potential and exposure for various opportunities and successes. Finally, one cannot neglect the importance of the attitude and the life perception. Having a positive and can-do attitude are the keys to achieving results. Confidence always contributed to the personal and professional successes and achievements of the participants.

The research developed by Brown-Mason (2021) proves that discrimination and the low employment rates that PWDs are facing, are not necessarily caused by the employer him/herself. Rather, PWDs should act proactively and improve themselves to overcome their disability and make an ability out of it.

2.2.6. Transformational Leadership Theory

Considering a Person with Disabilities for a certain position might not be as simple as it shows, but continuous efforts are needed from both sides for it to be successful: employer and employee. Nevertheless, filling this gap has always been a challenge in many countries, as shown in the previous studies. In this context, Nxumalo (2020) was focusing on the employer's side and has explored the role of transformational leadership in adjusting the workplace's culture by making it more adaptive and inclusive, especially in the public sector. The focus was to check whether these leaders had enough power to issue legislation rights for PWDs in the Municipalities, hence enforcing reforms to integrate more PWDs in the public sector. By its definition, a transformational leader is the person who offers personalized and customized support for employees, by ensuring continuous communication and great relationships with the subordinates. Nxumalo (2020) completed the study by using a qualitative research approach and by interviewing a sample of 12 leaders in several governmental institutions, mainly targeting Municipalities. The latter were chosen based on their power in the decision-making process and on the day-to-day operations in their respective departments. Some of them were directly influencing the overall company's strategy and inclusion and others had minimal interference in the big decisions. In addition to the leaders, five employees with disabilities were addressed in some questions; they were employed by the same governmental institutions as the above-mentioned leaders to ensure accurate results.

Nxumalo (2020) concluded that there was no consistent understanding for the legal term of disability, as it is defined differently in many sources, and even the people's perception of disabilities were not consistent, each had his/her own definition of that term. This was also approved by the employees interviewed and shown by the responses of employers. In addition, PWDs are shown as incapable individuals, which is a main trigger for the discrimination and unemployment. This was also proven in different cultures, companies' types and sectors, and countries. Furthermore, according to some leaders, imposing laws may not be as simple as it shows; that is because PWDs still face discrimination and stereotypes from a side, and employers need a mindset shift, budget, and training from another side. Finally, the author also concluded that transformational leaders are change agents, because they do have the power and they are influential on employees, due to the good relationship they maintain with their employees. On a more specific level, and for them to be even more effective while speaking about inclusion, they should be active members to guarantee inclusive mindset and to promote human rights. As one of the interviewees mentioned, one needs to change the management and action plans, to successfully

implement any change in the society, because managers are the key to influence subordinates. Nxumalo (2020) suggested that it is crucial to develop transformational leadership to promote disability initiatives in the professional world. That is by developing, educating, evaluating, promoting, changing, and organizing the desired management. Once done, leaders will become influential and will work on the cultures and budgets, hence creating an inclusive and equitable workplace.

This shared study proves that a mindset change is needed to guarantee better employment results for PWDs. Although one can notice that some institutions are working hard to integrate them in the workplace, it is not as easy as it seems. Knowing that legal laws are available, but not abiding by them is not the right way to do it. In contrast, public authorities and governments must become stricter when dealing with this issue, by imposing the right sanctions and negative reinforcement to the rule breaker, as all studies above show the alarming situation faced by PWDs, job seekers and citizens.

2.2.7. Lebanese Market and PWDs

On a more specific level, Loutfy (2019), studied the Lebanese market in his research, stating different important life components, such as education, social inclusion, and employment. His study was done in a qualitative research method, specifically by interviewing different PWDs in different educational institutions. By analyzing the results, it was not surprising that the findings are relatively similar to the other research shared above. In fact, PWDs in Lebanon remain tremendously marginalized in various fields. In addition to that, PWDs are still considered as a minority in Lebanon and are still treated in that way. Even more, a small part of them is attending the right specialized educational institutions to benefit from a better quality of life, due to the high tuition fees in the private institutions. Instead, they choose low-quality schools, whereby they have limited access to the job market, or get stuck in shelters, blue collar jobs or industrial opportunities. This is the case with a high percentage of PWDs that choose education, but the higher percentage goes for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, which have a worse situation, unfortunately. Their choice is directly correlated with the economic attachment of their parents, whom cannot always afford other educational options and are obliged to sacrifice the wellbeing of their child over their economical capabilities. Loutfy (2019), continues by stating that the civil society is playing a crucial role in their integration and their voices arose in media campaigns, whereby at some point, NGOs are playing the role of the government, as the latter is incapable of handling the basic needs of its citizens, although there is a good law drafted to protect their rights, but was never

implemented. In addition, and according to Loutfy, one can notice that the Lebanese society still has several segregation cases, whereby the PWD remains isolated and unseen.

The study of Loutfy shows the gap that falls between the Lebanese governmental obligations and the parental economic capabilities of PWDs as private specialized school fees are relatively high in Lebanon and is considered as a burden for parents. For that, parents either decide to register their PWD kid in public schools (which most of the time lacks basic elements of security and stability, but are affordable) or simply by refraining their education and keeping them sitting at home. Thanks to the civil society who is playing the role of the Government in Lebanon, despite that it is never sufficient and is never able to satisfy the needs of all the population. This is shown by the high percentage of unemployment among PWDs in Lebanon and the lack of updated statistics, as it is stated earlier in this paper. As a solution, more qualified persons should handle the Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon, allocate a higher budget, and impose reforms and sanctions. That may be by appointing a qualified minister, maybe someone who has been working in the Civil Society for a long period of time.

2.2.8. Lebanese Law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and as its name shows, this law was developed to protect the rights of PWDs in Lebanon. It was drafted back in December 1999, was signed by President Emile Lahoud and by Prime Minister Saleem El-Hoss, and was published in the Official Gazette on the 29th of May, 2000. This law consists of 102 articles and is divided into ten parts and five chapters, tackling different areas to promote inclusion and to enhance the implementation and protection of their rights.

Part 1 and Part 2 of the law describes some general yet important definitions, procedures, and committee roles. For instance, in Lebanon, the MOSA (Ministry of Social Affairs) card is the only way to prove that the person has a disability, hence to benefit from all the rights and privileges associated with that card. For a person to acquire that identification, a whole procedure should be followed and is described in Article 5 of the law. Worth noting that the law classifies the disabilities into four categories: Mobility, Visual, Hearing, and Mental, allowing Persons with Hearing Impairment to be the own guardians of their MOSA cards. As for the Persons with Mental Disabilities, the guardian would be the holder of the MOSA card. The law also defines the role of the NCDA (National Council for Disabled Affairs), which by law is constituted of 18 members, appointed for three years, and holds regular meetings to maintain and adjust the follow up on rules and their application.

Below is an example of a MOSA Card for a Lebanese PWD. Personal information and the picture were blurred for the sake of confidentiality.

Figure 2 Lebanese MOF Card



Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Now, and as of Part 3, the law lists all the rights that should be obtained by PWDs in Lebanon. The areas include: health and rehabilitation services, enabling environment, commuting / parking and driving license, housing, education and sports, work / employment and social benefits, social benefits, tax provision, and some other miscellaneous items. Referring to some articles in the law, any PWD has the right to benefit from medical coverage at the expense of the Government, and medical services include: all surgical operations (implant, straightening limbs, etc.), all medical treatment (dentists, ambulatory examination, etc.), external / internal rehabilitation (psychomotor, physiotherapy, etc.), and technical aids / equipment (hearing aids, wheelchair, etc.). In addition, when it comes to accessibility, the law indicates that all buildings, sidewalks, roads, owned by the private or the public sector, must follow a certain architecture and a set of conditions / criteria developed by the ministry to maintain a level of accessibility. The law also specifies fines for buildings or structures that do not follow the guidelines, that includes double the amount of the

building rental value and double the municipality fees. Moving towards public transportation, buses should also be accessible for all types of disabilities, and the driver should have two assistants to accommodate the needs, in addition to being subject to a fine if the driver refuses to transport a PWD. More details concerning the parking and driving license rules are also listed in Article 48 till Article 54 of the law. The decree did also tackle the educational rights of PWDs, whereby it described that all PWDs have the right to equal educational opportunities, in all schools and institutions, given that they are eligible to the requirements of the targeted organization. The ministry also covers the educational costs of the child, teenager, or adult, enrolled in educational and sports activities.

What is more interesting for this study is Part Eight (The Right of PWDs to Work, Employment, and Social Benefits) of the law, which can be summarized by the fact that PWDs have the right to access job opportunities just like any other individual in Lebanon, if they meet the requirements of the job, and have the right to an unemployment compensation equal to 75% of the minimum wage, if not employed. To abide by this part, the law has developed Article 74, which describes the allocation of work in the private sector, and is shown as is below:

- a) Employers from the private sector having no less than thirty (30) employees and no more than sixty (60) have to hire one PwD who meets the required qualifications.
- b) Companies employing more than sixty (60) persons must hire a minimum of three percent (3%) of PwDs meeting the required qualifications; in case of fractions in the calculations, it is rounded upwards.
- c) An employer infringing on this law after one year of its adoption must pay a yearly fine of twice the minimum wage for each PwD he didn't hire, to be paid to the Ministry of Labor, until adjustments are made.
- d) Is exempted from the fine any employer who proves to the Ministry of Social Affairs that he has sent a special request to the National Institution for Employment to hire a person with Disability and the concerned administration didn't have any person with the required qualifications, three months after the request was sent.
- e) The National Social Security Fund must verify the extent of employers' commitment to their duty to hire PwDs; any employer not abiding by this obligation shouldn't receive a quittance."

Nevertheless, and with all these rules and regulations, one can still notice that in Lebanon, a huge portion of the society is not abiding by Law 220/2000 and PWDs are still facing tremendous amounts of inequalities and restrictions. (UNESCO, 2013)

To conclude, based on the UN 17 SDGs goals and on the research studies mentioned above, the situation of Persons with Disabilities does not relatively vary from one country to another, be it developed or developing. The above shows that inclusion awareness is there, however, although the United Nations is working hard to fulfil that, one can still notice the discrepancies in implementations all over the globe, hence why the UN did include in its long term plan, lasting till 2030 several goals related to promoting equality and inclusion. In addition, although the high interest in employing PWDs, the high-performance scores, and the laws implemented, PWDs are still facing these kinds of discrimination and rejections, be it on an educational level or on a professional level, all over the world, including the USA. This issue has been available in different centuries up until today, and to solve it, various actions must be taken into considerations, starting from the education itself, self-empowering, and reaching governmental legislations and follow-ups. In addition, civil society and NGOs should function as assistants to the government, rather than being the first actors when trying to solve the issue. As a result, these studies show that additional international efforts should be implemented by different organizations and shareholders, to limit and to face workplace and cultural discrimination on PWDs. On another hand, PWDs themselves need to work on their self-improvement for them to be able to achieve greater results in the society, which can be done through training and coaching sessions, therapy, and self-evaluation. Finally, providing the right educational support and the right mentality for PWDs students to become effective members of society and companies shall not be neglected. This can be done through continuous performance monitoring and support from the placement/orientation departments. Moving towards Lebanon, lack of updated statistics about this topic can be noticed, especially when considering the job market topic. In addition, although laws and regulations are developed in an in-depth way, tackling all key areas of well-being, one can notice a lack of implementation and follow up, which raises question marks. For these reasons, it is important to tackle that issue and understand the Lebanese employment market position in terms of employment and inclusion.

2.2.9. Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Model

2.2.9.1. Hypotheses Development

This research is based on some hypotheses that reflect on the previous shared research, listed below:

H1: High costs associated with building accessibility and technological assets needed for business operations and day to day activities have a negative impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

H2: Recruiters' open-mindedness and knowledge has a positive impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

H3: The centralization of decisions issued in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has a positive impact on the recruitment process of Persons with Disabilities.

As previously mentioned, Persons with Disabilities constitute a large part of the society, and they should not be treated as a minority group. However, studies prove that many of them and even more are being treated unequally in various societal activities, including employment, to be exact. Adherence to the law 220/2000, employment, and integration of this category is the dependent variable of this study, as it is affected and triggered by other events or factors.

As its definition shows, and according to the Government of Sweden, accessibility is the ability to enter, move freely in a place or access information and technological tools. It is mainly designed to facilitate the movement and the access to needed information for PWDs in different areas, including the internet, the buildings, and other day-to-day needs. If a building was not designed following the accessibility standards, it might need a huge budget to renovate it. Accessibility in general is relatively high in cost, which is why companies prefer not to adjust their premises accordingly or not to invest in the needed technologies. For instance, making a computer accessible for persons with visual impairment may cost the company around thousands of dollars or even more, which might not be affordable for all the companies out there. However, some other modifications might not be that expensive, such as adding a small ramp for wheelchair users. Nevertheless, unfortunately, around 95% of Lebanese public institutions, schools, and universities are not accessible for PWDs, which has tremendous negative effects on PWDs freedom (UNESCO, 2013).

Other variables to be considered are the know-how and the openness of the recruiter, which means the extent by which the employer is willing to consider hiring PWDs, because of his/her openness and understanding of the subject. The more recruiters are educated, knowledgeable and cultivated, the more likely they would consider PWDs inclusion in their job openings. This is shown by the ratio of persons who are aware about the Law 220/2000 and who are actually implementing its clauses. In addition, this can be studied by the percentage of recruiters who are

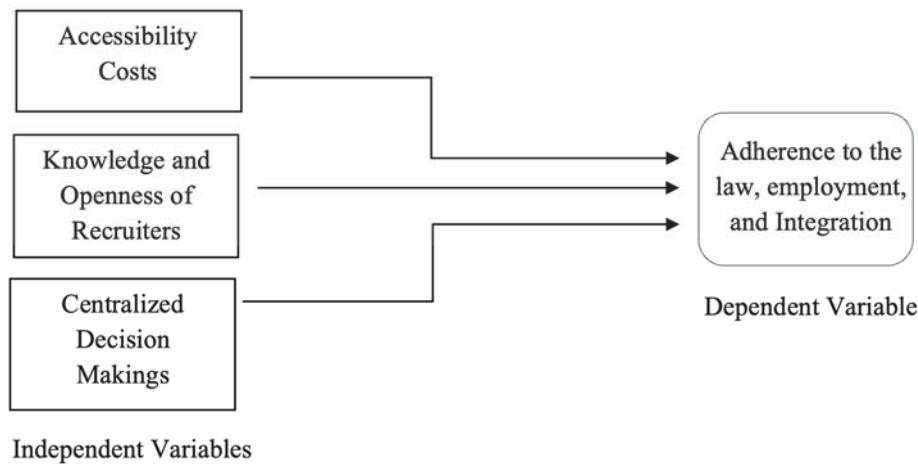
willing to consider PWDs in their recruitment processes and for diverse job positions. Not to mention that, in addition to the educational background, an additional important idea can be related to this variable, which is the way recruiters perceive the abilities of PWDs to perform the job versus how they perceive other candidates in the market. That means, the attributes that make a person excel in his/her job in general.

In addition, the types of businesses in Lebanon are crucial. According to the article: “Lebanon SME Strategy: A Roadmap to 2020” issued by the UNDP, Lebanese companies range from family orientation to heredities by origin. Decisions are often centralized, and owners have a restricted control over all decisions, which affects finance, design, strategy, and obviously recruitment processes as well. For instance, whenever the recruiter is aware and open to the topic, s/he will make inclusion smoother. However, recruiters are not always decision makers and they do not always have the final say, when it comes to that kind of decisions, as Lebanon has a lot of MSMEs (Micro, Small to Medium Enterprise) and family businesses. This will also be tackled in the research study.

2.2.9.2. Conceptual Model

The research framework is illustrated as follows:

Figure 3 Research Framework (1)



Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

2.3. Conclusion

To conclude, throughout the Literature Review chapter, several studies and theories were shared, whereby all of them showed that there is some kind of discrimination against PWDs in several fields, such as access to information, social rights, educational areas, among many others.

To add, this is noticeable in different countries out there, no matter how developed they were, including the US. In addition to the shared studies, another initiative was and still being implemented by the United Nations, to target multiple humanitarian and global topics, that also includes inequalities, education, and employment rights of PWDs. These initiatives will be tackled till 2030 all over the globe, hoping for better inclusion and CSR results. The above also showed that in Lebanon, although an intensive and detailed Law was drafted and published in the Official Gazette back in 2000, one can still notice, and after more than 20 years, tremendous amounts of discrepancies in its implementation and application, throughout the fields, including the public and the private sectors, which raises several red flags, and should be understood. Studies also proved that lack of statistics regarding this topic was noticed in Lebanon, hence the importance of this study. Finally, and to better understand the position of PWDs when it comes to the Lebanese employment area in specific, which is the main topic of this research, this study will be developed

*Table SEQ Table * ARABIC 1 Independent vs Dependent Variables (1)*

and tackled thoroughly in the coming sections, whereby the methodology and the results will be showcased.

Chapter 3: Procedures and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Following the proven discrepancies in the Law implementations and all the discriminations against PWDs specifically in Lebanon, shared in the section above, this study will be deeply developed, to further understand the position of the various types of companies, from different sizes, operating in Lebanon, either following international or local standards, when it comes to employing and considering PWDs. This research will target the private sector and the civil society, with no access to the public sector. The research methodology will be constituted of several components discussed thoroughly in the coming sections, including hypotheses and variables, philosophical framework, population, and research tools, which will help better understand the Lebanese market.

Three hypotheses related to the premises accessibility, the knowledge of recruiters, and to the centralized decision making were developed, linked to the dependent variable, and aimed to be either being accepted or failed to be accepted following the research and its findings. In addition, and following the data gathering, the researcher chose to work in a deductive reasoning type (further explained below), whereby all the results will be shared objectively and the research will

be fully scientific, based on the findings, without including any subjective opinion related to the topic. Finally, two separate surveys will be prepared and distributed for two different populations, targeting companies and specialized institutions (NGOs, schools, etc.), aiming to receive one hundred responses per questionnaire, to be able to study the Lebanese market and to understand the different aspects, perceptions, and treatments of PWDs employment.

3.2. Hypotheses

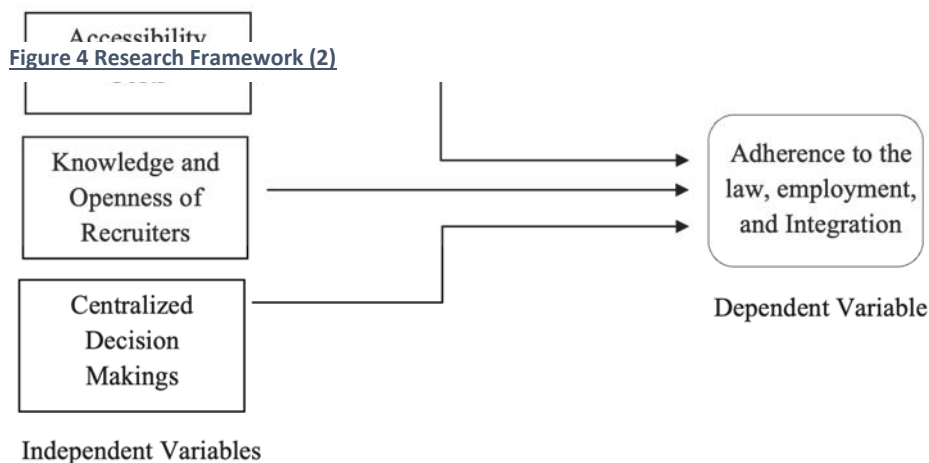
As introduced, this research is based on several hypotheses that might be affecting the dependent variable, which is the actual adherence to the Law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that actually reflect on the previous shared researches and initiatives, aimed to help come up with accurate results and explanations related to PWDs employment in Lebanon, listed and explained below:

H1: High costs associated with building accessibility and technological assets needed for business operations and day to day activities have a negative impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

H2: Recruiters’ open-mindedness and knowledge has a positive impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

H3: The centralization of decisions issued in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has a positive impact on the recruitment process of Persons with Disabilities.

3.3. Variables



The below scheme represents the dependent and independent variables that will be tackled to conduct the study.

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

3.4. Methodology Used

Research studies can be conducted in diverse ways, using different techniques, preferences, and methods, based on the researcher's decision. With that in mind, some research-related terminologies will be explained and illustrated below, leading to a structured and well determined research design, which by its turn includes the epistemology, the reasoning type, the research analysis, the research strategy, the research participants, and the instrumentations. Each term will be defined below, and respectively, each component will be chosen. Worth noting that, choosing between the research approaches heavily depends on the topic itself and on the preference of the author, as there are no rights or wrongs here.

3.4.1. Epistemology: Positivism Introduction and Usage

Concisely, epistemology is the actual interpretation of the subject, and it includes two different components that can be used in any research. One can differentiate between constructivism and positivism philosophies in research. To further elaborate, the constructivism approach is a subjective way of interpretation, and it illustrates reality based on the author's mindset, without real interference of finding and of scientific result orientation. On the contrary, while adopting a positivism approach, the researcher depends on scientific data and interprets them objectively, by identifying findings, primary and secondary data points, to come up with a result oriented and a justified research result. Certainly, both approaches can be adopted and followed here, however, the author determined that this research will be focusing on the positivist approach solely, since all conclusions and results will be given through in-depth objective research and will be deduced from scientific data gathered by either primary resources (tailored surveys) and/or by secondary sources (previous studies conducted and related to the same topic).

3.4.2. Reasoning Type: Deductive Reasoning

The type of reasoning is the way the researcher uses to analyze the given data and observations, it consists of several approaches, such as inductive, abductive, and deductive. To begin with, the inductive method starts with the specific and then moves to the general and is most of the time not logical. As for the abductive method, it entitles an incomplete set of observations and then continues to the most liked explanation of the hypothesis. Finally, the deductive type is basically the opposite of the inductive method, and it starts with defining the general conclusions and then starts by studying the specific to come up with results. In this study, deductive reasoning

will be adopted. As its name shows, the whole research will be based on deduction of several outcomes, defined at the beginning of the research. Following the formulation of these hypotheses, shown in the section above, this research will be testing them thoroughly, by conducting a thorough research, hence, to check if they can be rejected or failed to be rejected.

3.4.3. Research Analysis: Quantitative Approach

Research analysis includes the quantitative analysis solely. The approach is well-known in different fields and refers to the extracts chosen and the analysis that will be conducted to complete the research. To start, quantitative data analysis entitled the researcher to use scientific numbers and extracts to produce a conclusion. Whereby the qualitative approach depends on previous research studies completed, extracts, on books, etc. Each study can be done in a different way and using multiple research analysis types. However, for this specific study, the author chose to use the quantitative analysis to complete the data. In addition, some descriptive statistics will be showcased. Data will be mainly gathered, evaluated, and mixed from both the internet and the library, working on mixed methods research will be conducted. More specifically, credible articles and books related to the topic will be explored in-depth to come up with the right deductions. As for the quantitative section, questionnaires will be used to collect numerical and measurable data regarding the topic, including statistics and figures.

3.4.4. Research Strategy and Methods: Samples, Surveys and Questionnaires Results

As the research would entitle primary data gathering, the strategy will include surveys and questionnaires, which by its turn, will list a certain number of questions, aimed to use their results to come up with a conclusion. The research strategy will focus on surveys, as it will include questionnaires, targeting two different stakeholders. The research will be targeting and studying the Lebanese market in two different audiences and perspectives: the typical industry and company one, and the second related to professionals and specialists working with PWDs closely, such as NGOs and other institutions. Questionnaires will include general closed-ended questions and distributed to professionals in the HR field, Entrepreneurs/Business Owners, as well Specialists in the inclusion field. The aim is to distribute as many questionnaires as possible, to be able to gather at least two hundred responses combined, so that the research will have accurate and enough results to be analyzed. The first questionnaire will be treated as quantitative and the second one will be used as a benchmark, only.

3.4.5. Research Participants

3.4.5.1. Population Description:

As mentioned above, questionnaires will be distributed to specialized people working to improve the livelihood of Persons with Disabilities, for instance: NGOs, specialized schools, and other related fields. In addition, another format will be distributed to HR Professionals, Entrepreneurs and Business Owners. The aim of the questionnaires is to study the need of this vulnerable community and its integration in the workplace, in addition to understanding the discrepancies in perceiving the capabilities when it comes to the rights of PWDs, if any.

Both subjects do not have any specific demographics (age, gender, location, and religion). However, as most of the population would be a workforce, assumption of targeting an age range of 21+ is available. Nevertheless, several types and sizes of private sector companies and institutions will be targeted to better understand the implemented in diverse cultures, some of them would operate following international standards and others would be regular local companies.

For the companies: The focus will be on recruiters and CEOs (responsible for the hiring of the company), so that one can understand the actual hiring perception in different companies.

For the institutions: Preferably, those who are directly working for the improvement of PWDs, without any preference for the job title/profession. Some of them would be working in specialized schools, while others can be working in NGOs to increase the awareness related to that topic.

3.4.5.2. Sampling Technique:

For both target audiences, the researcher will directly communicate with the targeted subjects and will ask for their permission, before sending out the questionnaire to be filled out. In addition, the researcher will include in the questionnaire the approved IRB consent form to show credibility, hence the participant will be approving on the terms and on the confidentiality before sharing any information. A minimum of three hundred questionnaires will be distributed to several participants, aiming to receive a minimum of 200 responses by the end of the research. For the companies, as the researcher works in the recruitment and the business development field, specifically in NGOs, startups, and Social-Enterprise ecosystem, where a wide network of connections is available. That being said, various sizes of companies will be recruited to support the implementation of this study and will be directly targeted via the available close connections. In case the above was not sufficient, and the desired number of responses was reached, a wider

research will be conducted via LinkedIn or other professional social media platforms to target specific recruiters and CEOs. For the NGOs, schools, and institutions, the researcher will also count on personal connections that are available due to the previous experience in the field and will conduct online research targeting NGOs and other Inclusion Ambassadors that support PWDs inclusion. Nevertheless, if that number did not guarantee the needed number of responses, the researcher will conduct in-depth research to target more NGOs and relevant people in the Civil Society.

3.4.6. Instrumentation

The responses and the results will be gathered, visualized, and analyzed using Google Form and Microsoft Form and SPSS software, when and if needed; whereby quantitative outcomes will result in a concrete study. No other tools will be used at this stage, since these two tools would be sufficient and are able to secure a good data visualization and analysis needed for this study. In addition to the desired tools listed above, the results will be highlighted in an in-depth way via a descriptive summary that will be shared by the researcher in later stages of the study. As this research aims to study different correlations between two variables, the correlation and regression statistical tests will be used to analyze the company's outputs. The institutions' questionnaire will be used as a benchmark and a comparative tool solely.

3.4.7. Data Collection Tool

As clearly stated above, the data will be collected using Google Form and Microsoft Form, by sharing a link with the participants that redirects them to the relevant survey to be filled out. The estimated time of data gathering should not exceed 5 minutes. Following this collection, Google Form and Microsoft Form can directly provide a detailed report exported to SPSS software, for the sake of this study. The choice of Google Form and Microsoft Form was also related to its simplicity and to the data that can be visualized in an easy, clear, and subtle way, so that the readers can directly understand the outcomes of the research conducted, when the results are shared in later stages.

3.4.8. Procedure

All participants from both audiences will be targeted from personal connections or LinkedIn search. As for the Google Form / Microsoft Form questionnaires, they are to be distributed online through emails or other informal communication channels (ex. WhatsApp). In addition, regular check-ups on the response rate will be monitored and frequent follow-ups for the

ones that still did not fill out the requirements. An important note to be taken into consideration is that the data will be treated with high confidentiality and will be used for the sole purpose of this research.

In case of misbehavior, the researcher has the right to terminate the subject's participation in case the participant:

- Is not part of the target audience, i.e. recruiters, CEOs, or specialists.
- Does not understand the purpose of this study.
- Does not understand that the information added is confidential.
- Does not understand that the participation is voluntary.
- Does not understand that s/he has the freedom to withdraw from this study at any time, with no penalties.
- Is suspected to give fraudulent information.

3.5. Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, and briefly, this research that includes both dependent and independent variables, which are directly related to the inclusion of PWDs in the Lebanese job market, will be constituted of several research methods and approaches. To begin with, the positivism research philosophy will be used, whereby the results will be strictly objective and based on scientific findings, keeping the subjectivity and the feelings of the author behind. Moreover, the deductive reasoning type will be adopted, whereby the author chose to deduce the results based on general hypotheses developed at the beginning of the study, instead of following the opposite procedure. In addition, the researcher did use the internet and the library to access information related to the topic and will be distributing questionnaires for several participants to gather more primary data. As for the data gathered from the sample of 200+ persons, targeted from personal connections and using various online tools and distributed for more than 300 individuals, it will be analyzed, studied, and visualized using Google Form, Microsoft Form, and SPSS software, due to the simplicity of their illustrations. Results will also be shared in later stages of this study, so that one can have clear access to information gathered. Finally, the researcher will make sure to include a statement in the questionnaire, making sure that the participants are aware of the type of this academic research and by sharing the IRB consent requirements, before gathering any information. Worth noting that all the gathered data will be treated with a high level of confidentiality and will be used for the sole purpose of this study. Results will be illustrated in

the section that follows, to highlight the findings of this research and to come up with the needed outcomes.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1. Introduction

Throughout this section, and as the name of this chapter indicates, a description of the research conducted and its results will be provided in detail and objectively, in addition to an analysis that will be deduced. As mentioned in the sections above, this research was mainly targeting decision makers (CEOs) and HR specialists in the companies, to have a clearer and accurate understanding of the companies' strategies, decisions, and actions when hiring or considering a Person with Disabilities for a job position. In addition, another survey was distributed to specialists, working directly with Persons with Disabilities, that was to better understand their expectations and their opinions about the inclusion topic, hence coming up with a conclusion that will help understanding the discrepancies in perspectives, if any. With both audiences, the researcher was mainly counting on the personal connections and had spread the word among the available network, which led to successful results. In order to reach the desired number of responses, which is 200, around 300 questionnaires were distributed across different people, holding various positions, while targeting different companies' sizes, locations, fields, etc. As for the institutions, mainly local ones were targeted, those who are in direct contact with PWDs, promoting inclusion over the country. The coming section will showcase that in Lebanon, and as per the sample that was studied, if the companies are aware of the Law 220/2000, if they are hiring PWDs, and if they believe that this is due to a specific reason. Finally, more information and interesting figures will be shared in the following section, be it from the companies' side or from the institutions' side.

Research Framework

As described in the sections above, this research was designed to understand the Lebanese job market when it comes to employing PWDs and to adhering to the Law 220/2000. As a general structure and for that to be achieved and understood, three main hypotheses were developed as a starting point, each targeting a different area and a different cause, that by their turn can be a reason behind the employment gap of PWDs. These hypotheses were then followed by three independent variables, which are there and are not directly correlated to one another, but they might affect the dependent variable, as described below and as developed by the researcher.

To begin with, hypotheses were defined to include costs associated with building accessibility and are supposed to negatively affect the employment rate, the open mindedness of recruiters and are supposed to affect the employment rate either positively or negatively based on the recruiter's personality and knowledge, and finally, the centralized decisions making, which might also cause some kind of preferences, hence affecting positively the power of the actual recruiter and the employment rate. By their turn, these hypotheses turned out to become the independent variables, as they are not affected by other risk factors directly related to the same topic, while the inclusion and the successful hiring of Persons with Disabilities is the dependent one, and is expected to be affected by all these attributes, be it in a positive way or in a negative way.

A first questionnaire was distributed to HR specialists, Business Owners, CEOs, aiming to understand their positioning, their adherence to the Law, and their opinion related to that subject, while a second questionnaire was distributed to practitioners working in the inclusion field, having a direct relationship with Persons with Disabilities aiming to come up with conclusions from a different point of views. One of the questionnaires will be used as a benchmark for the other. For the companies, the main communication channel used with the targeted audience was WhatsApp application, as the researcher is well connected to that type of audience. A descriptive summary of the project with the questionnaire link was shared with the desired person. Questionnaires clearly stated the IRB consent requirements and were filled out using Microsoft Form, which gave the author a detailed overview of the results and on the progress of the campaign. Some extensive follow-ups were also completed, to make sure that the desired response rate was accomplished in time, to produce the needed outcomes and to analyze their results. As for the institutions, which were more challenging to the researcher than the companies, the same procedure was followed, using Google Form instead. The main difference is that some mutual connections were able to spread the word with their own communities, hence supporting the cause of this study. As the main target was to collect 200 filled questionnaires, the study could successfully secure 222 responses in total for both audiences combined. For the sole purpose of this research, both designed questionnaires are attached respectively in appendix 1 and 2.

The first questionnaire, targeting mainly the private sector with a slight interference of the NGO sector, in particular HR specialists, Business Owners, and CEOs, was designed to understand the several aspects of the actual hire of PWDs, the adherence to the Law, and the willingness to hire PWDs. The researcher was targeting companies all over Lebanon, from different sizes and

with business operations in Lebanon solely and internationally. The first questionnaire was divided into two major parts, studying the general company profile at first and then the internal practices and behaviors within each firm. The list of questions included some direct questions that answered the research's purposes and some indirect ones that needed more analysis, to avoid misrepresentation or unfaithful responses. In addition, most of the questions were close ended, focusing on the multiple-choice and Likert-Scale type, however, some others were open ended and required a descriptive output with a subjective answer. The main questions that were tackled included topics related to:

- Size of the company and decision making.
- Current building accessibility status.
- Knowledge of laws and their implementation within the company.
- Actual employment of PWDs.

These questions were part of the first part of the questionnaire and aimed to understand the profile of responsive companies.

- Current number or percentage of PWDs employed at the company.
- Current awareness of building accessibility costs.
- Final says in the decision making and hiring processes.
- Awareness related to Law 220/2000.
- Beliefs related to the capabilities of the person in general and to the PWD in particular.

These questions were part of the of the questionnaire and aimed to understand the actual implementation of the Law and the standing of each company when it comes to employing and retaining PWDs. Results will be showcased in the coming section and in detail, however, briefly speaking the research could gather a diversity of companies. The study could prove that there is limited implementation in Lebanon to the Law 220/2000 and good awareness about the topic. This questionnaire was then studied, using a Correlation and Reliability statistical tests, as they were the best statistical tools to be used.

As for the second questionnaire, targeting the inclusion institutions, in particular practitioners having a direct relationship with Persons with Disabilities, was developed to understand their point of view and if there are any differences between what is presented in the findings of companies and their beliefs. The targeted audience was mostly operating locally with direct interference to the livelihood of PWDs, be it on an academic and educational level, or even

on a professional and a work integration level. It was divided into two major parts, aimed to understand first the work activity of each institution and the professional position of each person responding and the type of work s/he is undertaking, and then, with the second part, general questions about the same topic were raised. The questionnaire did list the IRB consent requirements, making the audience aware of the type of research that was undertaken. The main questions that were tackled are:

- Areas of work targeting PWDs
- Job title / profession and the name of the organization

These were developed to acquire a general feeling about the knowledge, expertise, and the type of work completed by the targeted practitioners, hence building a sense of trust with their understanding.

- If PWDs are equally accessing job opportunities
- If there is a specific factor that is decreasing the chances of PWDs employment
- If the costs associated with building accessibilities are high
- If PWDs are equally treated in the society
- If the Law 220/2000 is well implemented in Lebanon
- If any HR function needs to be improved, for it to increase the PWDs work integration chances.

These questions were part of the second part of the questionnaire and aimed to understand the actual implementation of the Law and the opinions of each institution or person directly dealing with and empowering PWDs, hence creating a general idea related to the discrepancies of visions between companies and institutions, if any. As these answers do not affect the hypotheses understanding, results will be highlighted in the coming section, in detail, and will be used as a benchmark for the other main questionnaire distributed. Briefly speaking the research could gather a diversity of institutions, schools, and NGOs, all having direct connections with Persons with Disabilities. The study could also prove, and from another point of view, that there is limited implementation in Lebanon to the Law 220/2000, in addition to the vast need of training existing personnel in the companies, which will facilitate the overall inclusion.

As mentioned previously, to be able to come up with the needed answers, the questionnaires were distributed to more than 300 individuals in total, distributed to around 150 specialists in the inclusion field, and around 150 others were distributed to HR specialists, Business Owners, and CEOs. Questionnaires were mainly shared via WhatsApp and were disseminated

across multiple shared community groups aiming to reach as many people as possible. After following up with the relevant persons and with the continuous monitoring of responses, the campaign distribution came back with 112 answers from people working in the civil and the private sector, be it NGOs or regular firms, and 110 answers from people working in inclusion institutions, be it educational or professional.

4.2. Main Results

4.2.1. Output and Analysis A: Companies Survey

4.2.1.1. Cronbach's Alpha Study

As the questionnaire was designed and created from scratch by the author, Cronbach's alpha study was needed to ensure that the study is reliable. In brief, the test is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely a set of items is related as a group. It is considered a measure of the reliability of the scale. Cronbach's alpha tests are used to see if multiple-item Likert-Scale surveys are reliable.

Alpha provides a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale; it is expressed by a number between 0 and 1. Internal consistency describes the extent to which all test items measure the same concept or construct and therefore relates to the interdependence of test items. Internal consistency must be determined before a test can be used for research or examination to ensure validity. Additionally, reliability estimates show the amount of measurement error in a test. If the elements of a test are correlated to each other, the value of alpha is increased. However, a high alpha coefficient does not always mean a high degree of internal consistency. Indeed, the alpha is also affected by the duration of the test. If the test duration is too short, the alpha value is reduced. Thus, to increase the alpha, more related items testing the same concept should be added to the test. It is also important to note that alpha is a property of the test scores of a specific sample of test takers. Therefore, researchers should not rely on published alpha estimates and should measure alpha each time the test is administered. To be more specific, a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or greater is considered "acceptable" in most social science research situations. Now moving towards the questionnaire designed, Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale Employment is shown in the below Table.

Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha Test (1)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.848	5

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Alpha coefficient for the five Employment items is 0.848 (>0.7), suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

- a) Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale Open mindedness and knowledge is shown in the below Table.

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha Test (2) - Open Mindedness and Knowledge

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.865	9

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Alpha coefficient for the nine Open Mindedness and Knowledge items is 0.865 (>0.7), suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

- b) Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale Accessibility Costs is shown in the below Table.

Table 3 Cronbach's Alpha Test (3) - Accessibility Costs

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.775	8

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Alpha coefficient for the eight Accessibility Costs items is 0.775 (>0.7), suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

- c) Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale Centralized Decision is shown in the below Table.

Table 4 Cronbach's Alpha Test (4) - Centralized Decision Making

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.877	8

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Alpha coefficient for the eight Centralized Decision items is 0.877 (>0.7), suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

4.2.1.2. Output and Analysis

To begin with, and with the aim to better assess the type of companies and the profiles of people involved in this study, an important part of this research was to understand who responded to the questionnaires, for that, responses and figures are listed below. The questionnaire was also designed with an intention to better understand the demographics, the companies' operations, and the job titles of the sample studied. Out of the 112 responses, and based outputs of the study conducted, one can notice that the study tackled several areas which is one of the main aims of the study. In addition, the author chose to use the Correlation and Regression tests were adopted. A correlation analysis tests the relationship between two continuous variables in terms of:

- the strength of the relationship, and
- in which direction the relationship is going.

The strength of the relationship is given as a Pearson's coefficient (or simply the r) which can be anything between -1 and 1.

To know if the relationship is strong or weak, we must follow the following rule:

Table 5 Pearson Coefficient

Negative	Positive	Force of the relation
-1	1	Perfect
-0.9 a -0.7	0.7 a 0.9	Strong
-0.6 a -0.4	0.4 a 0.6	Moderate

-0.3 a -0.1	0.1 to 0.3	Weak
0	0	Zero

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Thus, the coefficient can be negative or positive. These terms, “negative” and “positive” reflect the direction of the relationship. Negative: If the values of variable 1 increase, the values of variable 2 decrease. Positive: If the values of variable 1 increase, the values of variable 2 increase.

In our study, we will use correlation analysis to determine the following:

- If there is a correlation between Employment and Open mindedness and Knowledge
- If there is a correlation between Employment and Accessibility Costs
- If there is a correlation between Employment and Centralization of Decision

The following table represents the results of the correlation tests of the elements mentioned above.

Table 6 Correlation Analysis (1)

Correlations					
		Employment	Open_Minded_Knowledge	Accessibility_Costs	Centralized_Decision_Making
Employment	Pearson Correlation	1	.859**	.140	.858**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.142	.000
	N	112	112	112	112
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

The correlation and regression analysis related to each variable will be displayed in detail under each hypothesis listed below.

4.2.2. Output and Analysis B: Institutions’ Survey

To better assess the portfolio of the 110 people who responded to the survey, responses figures are listed below:

Table 7 What is the name of your organization?

What is the name of your organization?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
ProAbled	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Al Younbouh	13	11.8	11.8	16.3
Sesobel	15	13.6	13.6	29.9
Arcenciel	20	18.1	18.1	48
EPES	10	9	9	57
Al Kafaat	6	5.4	5.4	62.4
AIS	4	3.6	3.6	66
Classe Orange	4	3.6	3.6	69.6
Teach for Lebanon	5	4.5	4.5	74.1
Al Zawrak	10	9	9	83.1
Anta Akhi	15	13.6	13.6	96.7
DOT Lebanon	3	2.7	2.7	99.4
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

The responses show that the participants were part of several well-known local institutions and NGOs in Lebanon, including: ProAbled, Al Younbouh, Anta Akhi, EPES, DOT Lebanon, Arcenciel, among others.

Table 8 On which areas targeting PWDs do you usually work?

On which areas targeting PWDs do you usually work?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Recruitment / Job placement	30	27.2	27.2	27.2
Training	32	29.1	29.1	56.3
Education	32	29.1	29.1	85.4
Speech and language	2	1.8	1.8	87.2
Mental health	4	3.6	3.6	90.8
Entertainment	3	2.7	2.7	93.5
Wellbeing	2	1.8	1.8	95.3
Counseling	5	4.5	4.5	99.8
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

The responses show that most of the sample works on the recruitment, training, and education side of the PWDs' readiness and empowerment. The other respondents work closely with them, but in different fields, such as mental health and counseling.

Table 9 What is your job title profession?

What is your job title profession?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Special Education Teacher	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Psychologist	5	4.5	4.5	9
Counselor	1	1	1	10
Chief of Accounting	1	1	1	11
Human Right Activist	1	1	1	12
HR Inclusion Officer	25	22.7	22.7	34.7
CEO	30	27.2	27.2	61.9
Speech Therapist	2	1.8	1.8	63.7
Member of Youth Committee	15	13.6	13.6	77.3
Social Worker	25	22.7	22.7	100
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Most of the participants work closely with PWDs. Percentage are broken down as follows: 27.2% being a CEO of a special institution, 22.7% being an HR workforce inclusion worker, and the others either being social workers or even volunteers among many other job titles.

Table 10 Do you closely work with PWDs?

Do you closely work with PWDs?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	96	87.2	87.2	87.2

No	14	12.7	12.7	99.9
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

As per the answers gathered from the sample, the vast majority works closely with PWDs, which is equal to 87.2% and the remaining 12.7% work in special institutions, but they do not collaborate closely with them. Some of the answers included placing PWDs in job opportunities, social working and entertaining them, and being a psychologist at the school.

Table 11 Do you believe that PWDs are equally treated in the society?

Do you believe that PWDs are equally treated in the society?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	10	9	9	9
No	100	90	90	99
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

90% of the participants believe that PWDs are not treated equally in the society, while only 9% of them believe that they are receiving equal opportunities overall.

Table 12 Do you believe that PWDs are receiving job opportunities?

Do you believe that PWDs are receiving job opportunities?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	10	9	9	9

No	100	90	90	99
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

Like the answer above, 90% of the participants believe that PWDs are not receiving decent job opportunities as equally in the society while only 9% of them believe that they are being offered decent job opportunities.

Table 13 In your opinion, what are the factors that decrease the chances of a Person with Disabilities to get employed?

In your opinion, what are the factors that decrease the chances of a Person with Disabilities to get employed?			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Education and Knowledge	60	54.5	54.5
Previous experience and skills	50	45.4	45.4
Building accessibility	55	50	50
Communication difficulties	65	59	59
Company's culture	75	68.1	68.1
Stigmatization	1	1	1
Total	110		

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

68.1% of the participants believe that company's culture is one of the factors that decrease PWDs chance to employment opportunities, whereas 50% of them think that it is due to building accessibility, 59% due to the communication difficulties, 54.5% education & knowledge, and an

additional 45.4% mentioned that this was also due to the needed previous experience and skills. Worth mentioning that the cumulative percentage will not add up here, because some participants had several answers to this question.

Table 14 In your opinion, is the Law 220/2000 on the rights of Persons with Disabilities well implemented?

In your opinion, is the Law 220/2000 on the rights of Persons with Disabilities well implemented?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	10	9	9	9
No	100	90	90	99
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

90% of institutions believe that Law 220/2000 is not well implemented in Lebanon, and the remaining 9% think the opposite, which might be the cause of discrimination in the country.

Table 15 Do you believe that the costs associated with renovating workplaces buildings for accessibility are high?

Do you believe that the costs associated with renovating workplaces buildings for accessibility are high?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	25	22.7	22.7	22.7
No	63	57.2	57.2	79.9
I do not know	22	20	20	99.0

Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0
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Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

The majority (57.2%) of the institutions claimed that renovating buildings might not cost humongous amount of money, while 22.7% think that it is expensive and the remaining 20% are not exposed and knowledgeable about this area.

Table 16 Which HR function is missing in companies that needs to be improved to get PWDs employed?

Which HR function is missing in companies that needs to be improved to get PWDs employed?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Training and Development (for existing employees)	65	59	59	59
Compensation and Benefits	3	2.7	2.7	61.7
Employee Relations	20	18.1	18.1	79.8
Staffing and Recruitment	18	16.3	16.3	96.1
Safety and Health	4	3.6	3.6	99.7
Total	110	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

59% of participants consider that the Training and Development for existing employees is needed to increase the employability of PWDs, whereas 16.3% responded that Staffing & Recruitment is the right area to be tackled, and the remaining 18.1% think that Employee Relations is the right HR function to be adjusted. The remaining minorities believe that it is preferable to adjust the Safety and Health or Compensation and Benefits HR functions.

As three main hypotheses were developed throughout this study, inferential statistics were implemented to determine whether one can accept or fail to accept them, to be exact, the author chose to use the Correlation and Regression statistical tests to complete the study. The main questionnaire used was the one distributed to companies, as all three hypotheses were directly targeting companies. As for the institutions' questionnaire, the researcher chose to use it as a benchmark and comparative tool, only.

4.3. Discussion if the Hypotheses

H1: High costs associated with building accessibility and technological assets needed for business operations and day to day activities have a negative impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

To be able to complete this study, the researcher used Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27, and Q28 of the questionnaire to complete the tests. In addition, the below null and alternative hypothesis were developed:

- H₁: there is no correlation between Employment and Accessibility Costs (Pearson coefficient $r < 0.6$)
- H₂: there is a correlation between Employment and Accessibility Costs (Pearson coefficient $r > 0.6$)

Referring to the Table 6 Correlation Analysis (1), the correlation coefficient between Employment and Accessibility Costs is $r = 0.140$ (weak correlation).

In this and referring to the Table 6 Correlation Analysis (1), $\text{sig} = 0.142 > p = 0.01$. That being said, the correlation is not significant. Hence, hypothesis H₁ is validated and we can conclude that there is no correlation between Employment and Accessibility Costs.

H2: Recruiters' open-mindedness and knowledge has a positive impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

a) Correlation Analysis

To better study this hypothesis, the researcher used Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, and Q20 of the questionnaire to complete the tests. In addition, the null and alternative hypothesis were developed:

- H₁: there is no correlation between Employment and Open Mindedness and Knowledge (Pearson coefficient $r < 0.6$)

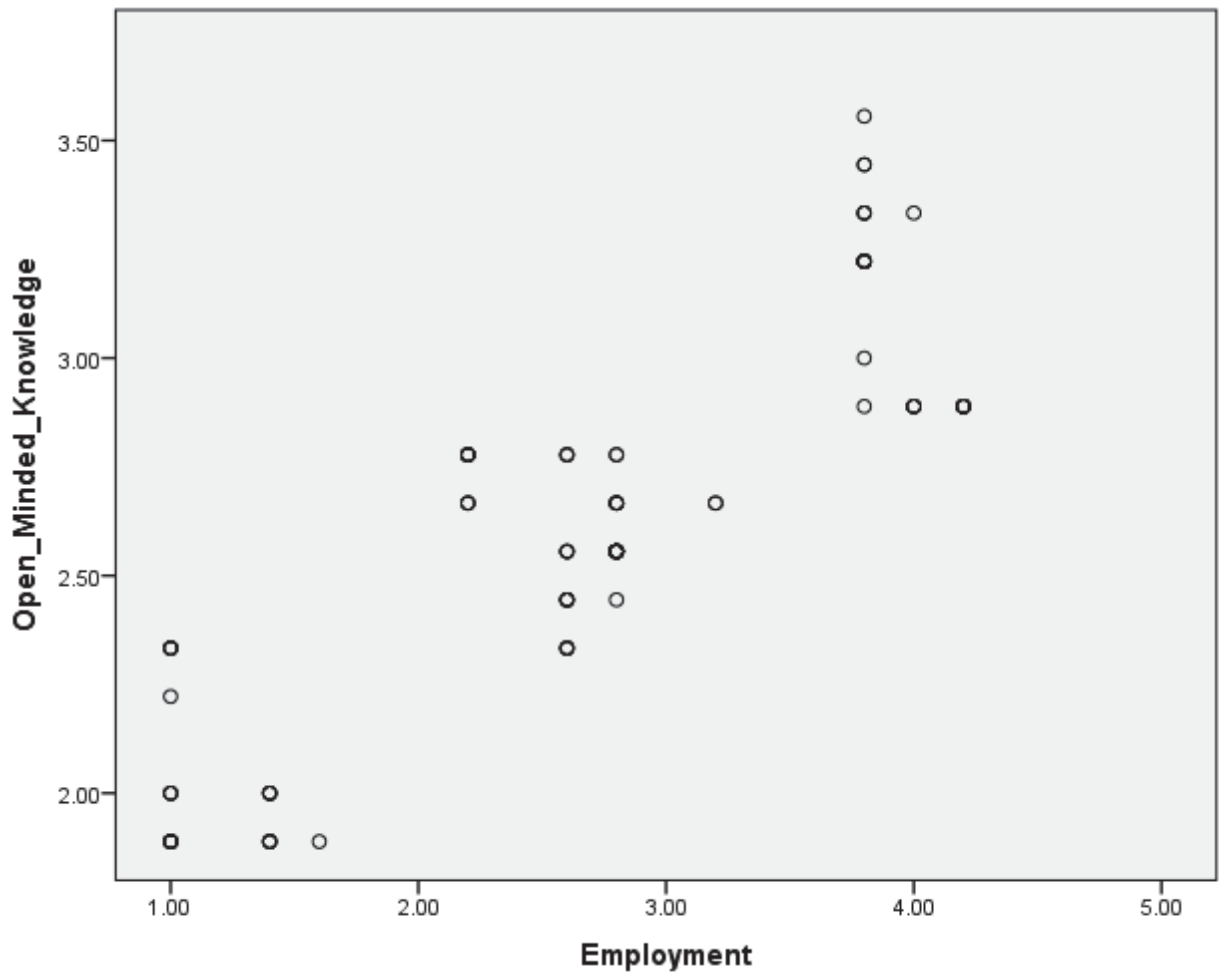
- H₂: there is a correlation between Employment and Open Mindedness and Knowledge (Pearson coefficient $r > 0.6$)

Referring to the Table 6 Correlation Analysis (1), the correlation coefficient between Employment and Open Mindedness and Knowledge is $r = 0.859$ (strong correlation). The significance value indicated in the correlation tables, is a value that shows whether the correlation is significant or not. The significance value is compared to a p-value. A p-value is the probability that the results of the sample data occurred by chance. P-values range from 0% to 100%. They are usually written in decimal form. For example, a p-value of 5% is 0.05. Low p-values are good; they indicate that the data was not produced by chance. For example, a p-value of 0.01 means that there is only a 1% chance that the results of an experiment occurred by chance. In most cases, a p-value of 0.01 (1%) is accepted to mean the data is valid. If the significance value is less than the p-value, then the correlation is significant.

In this case, and referring to Table 6 Correlation Analysis (1), $\text{sig} = 0.000 < p = 0.01$. Hence, the correlation is significant. That being said, hypothesis H₁ is validated. We can conclude that there is a strong correlation between Employment and Open Mindedness and Knowledge.

The positive correlation indicates that when Open Mindedness and Knowledge variable increases, Employment variable also increases, whereas this relationship can be displayed in the below scatter plot.

Figure 5 Scatter Plot (1) - Open Mindedness and Knowledge



Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

b) Regression Analysis

To better understand the previous relationships, linear regression is conducted. Worth noting that the Regression Analysis is implemented only after having the Correlation Analysis positive.

For the Employment and Open-mindedness, the results of the regression show a relationship according to the following model: $Y=2.080 x +2.766$ where Y is the dependent variable (employment) and x is independent variable (Open-mindedness and knowledge). Thus, for an open mindedness score of zero ($x=0$), the employment score is predicted to be 2.766. It can also be said that for every increase in the open mindedness score by 1, the employment score is going to increase from 2.766 by a value of 2.080.

Table 17 Regression Analysis (1) - Open Mindedness and Knowledge

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.766	.310		8.934	.000
	Open_Minded_Knowledge	2.080	.118	.859	17.578	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employment

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

H3: The centralization of decisions issued in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has a positive impact on the recruitment process of Persons with Disabilities.

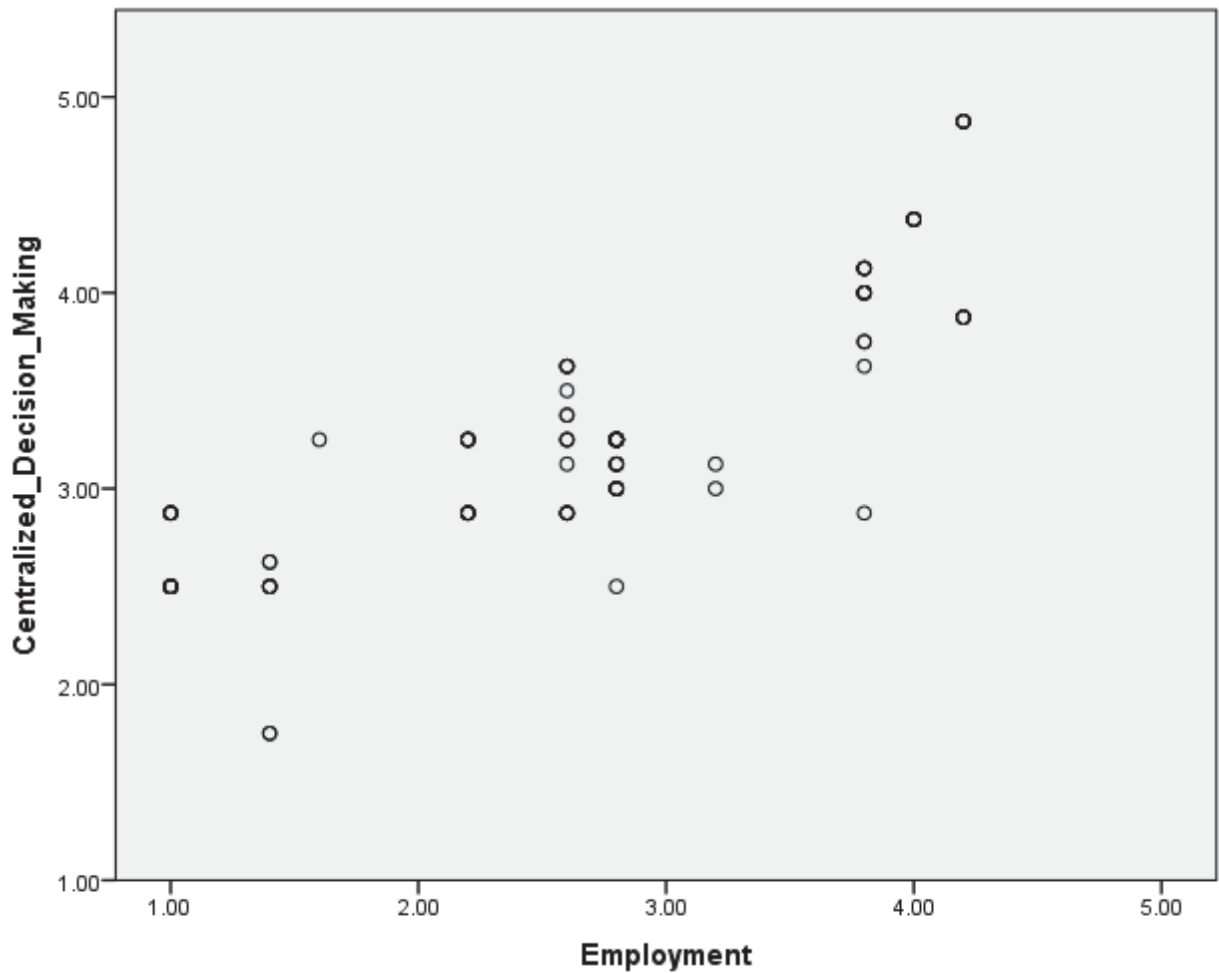
a) Correlation Analysis

To better study this hypothesis, the researcher used Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q34, Q35, and Q36 of the questionnaire to complete the correlation and regression tests. The below null and alternative hypothesis were developed:

- H₁: there is no correlation between Employment and Centralized Decision (Pearson coefficient $r < 0.6$)
- H₂: there is a correlation between Employment and Centralized Decision (Pearson coefficient $r > 0.6$)

Referring to the Table 6 Correlation Analysis (1), the correlation coefficient between Employment and Centralized Decision is $r = 0.858$ (strong correlation). In this case and according to Table 6 Correlation Analysis (1), $\text{sig} = 0.000 < p = 0.01$. So, the correlation is significant. That being said, Hypothesis H₂ is validated. We can conclude that there is a strong correlation between Employment and Centralized Decision. The positive correlation indicates that when Centralized Decision variable increases, Employment variable also increases. This relationship can be displayed in a scatter plot, as shown below.

Figure 6 Scatter Plot (2) - Centralized Decision Making



Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

b) Regression Analysis

For the relationship between Employment and Centralized Decision, the results of the regression show a relationship according to the following model: $Y=1.362 x + 1.826$ where Y is the dependent variable (employment) and x is independent variable (Centralized Decision). Thus, for a Centralized Decision score of zero ($x=0$), the Employment score is predicted to be 1.826. It can also be said that for every increase in the centralized decision score by 1, the employment score is going to increase from 1.826 by a value of 1.362.

Table 18 Regression Analysis (2) - Centralized Decision Making

Coefficients ^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.826	.258		7.072	.000
	Centralized_Decision_Making	1.362	.078	.858	17.493	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employment

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

c) Multiple Regression Analysis

In the Model Summary, r square says that our model explains 83.1% of the variance in the dependent variable (R square >0.3 is considered a good fit).

Table 19 Model Summary (Multiple Regression)

Model Summary ^c				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.859 ^a	.737	.735	.522
2	.912 ^b	.831	.828	.420
a) Predictors: (Constant), Open_Minded_Knowledge				
b) Predictors: (Constant), Open_Minded_Knowledge, Centralized_Decision_Making				
c) Dependent Variable: Employment				

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

In the coefficients table below, the standardized coefficients Beta standardizes the contributions of the two variables Open mindedness and Centralized Decision Making to the Dependent Variable Employment.

The results (0.487 for Open mindedness and 0.482 for Centralized Decision) indicate that the contribution of both independent variables to employment is significant and nearly the same.

Table 20 Unstandardized Coefficients & Standardized Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	2.766	.310		8.934	.000
	Open_Minded_Knowledge	2.080	.118	.859	17.578	.000
2	(Constant)	2.928	.250		11.696	.000
	Open_Minded_Knowledge	1.179	.150	.487	7.851	.000
	Centralized_Decision_Making	.765	.098	.482	7.774	.000

Source: Own Author Elaboration, 2022

4.4. Discussion of the Findings

This research shows that PWDs are not treated equally in the society and are facing discrimination in the Lebanese job market. In fact, 55.4% of the companies disagreed and 7.1% strongly disagreed on having internal policies protecting the rights of PWDs which is a huge red flag. In addition to this alarming number, another 100% of participating companies are neutral regarding their knowledge and awareness of Law 220/2000. 55.4% of the companies mentioned that they strongly agreed with the fact they rejected a PWD based on his/her disability. On the other hand, 71.4% of the participating institutions voted strongly agree when it comes to positive atmosphere for understanding and accommodating the needs and abilities of PWDs in Lebanon. Finally, 51.8% disagreed on the question that aimed to understand whether the employers in Lebanon get sufficient knowledge in recruiting PWDs and organizing the work.

Moving towards the specific hypotheses, and during this phase, as mentioned previously, the researcher was trying to prove three hypotheses mentioned in the whole context and to be able to study these hypotheses, the main survey used was the one distributed to companies, while the researcher used the institutions' questionnaire as a benchmark and comparison.

To begin with, the above numbers show that the responses come from a variety of people handling different functions and working for different companies, local and international, with a variety of sizes and building accessibility. In addition to these companies, another interesting number of specialists, from different institutions, were able to participate in this research. Almost all of the respondents are in direct contact with PWDs, and do support them in their apprentice, daily lives, education, and even employment.

H1: High costs associated with building accessibility and technological assets needed for business operations and day to day activities have a negative impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

The research could not prove that building accessibility plays a crucial role in employment and is one of the factors that decreases the chances of PWDs integration, as the Correlation test conducted above indicates. Another major finding generated from this study, related to the building accessibility, which is the lack of awareness related to this topic. As shown in the responses, around 34% of the respondents were neutral or strongly disagree if their premises are accessible for Persons with Disabilities. In addition, 85.7% of companies disagreed on their awareness of the costs required to render the company's facilities and services accessible for PWDs. Furthermore, 85.7% of the companies agreed on the difficulty of issues of dealing with high costs of accessibility for PWDs. These show that existing employees themselves need to be better trained and aware about this topic in specific. In addition, institutions claimed that costs of renovating buildings to make them accessibility might be extremely high, especially for local companies, given the current situation in Lebanon. One of the respondents even mentioned that: "In my opinion, the cost of renovating buildings to become accessible is expensive since most buildings and streets in Lebanon are designed in inaccessible ways in the first place. Some offices need to be destroyed and rebuilt again to become properly accessible for PWDs."

It is true that some architectural or design material hide a big cost behind them, however, some others would not incur any huge amounts on the company. For instance, for a person with a hearing disability, a simple light can replace the doorbell when ringing on the door, in that way the employee would notice that someone is waiting outside, without needing any support from other colleagues. Another example would include people with growth disorder or with upper mobility disabilities who can simply work without any huge effort put into renovating the building.

H2: Recruiters' open-mindedness and knowledge has a positive impact on employment of Persons with Disabilities.

This research could prove that employees and recruiters lack the awareness about this topic, which affects the PWDs employability rates. This was proved using the Correlation and Regression tests mentioned previously in the study. In addition, 61.6% of the participants disagreed on the fact that they are getting adequate training on how to organize the work and duties of a PWD, and another

86.7% is neutral about the awareness of the strategies and plans that consider the needs of PWDs. The study was able to deduce that in order to understand the importance of PWDs recruitment and their added value, existing employees and recruiters should be trained on this topic. One of the respondents did mention the following: “Training employees on different levels can get them to improve their rational thinking thus accepting new things”. Another one said: “People usually tend to judge others based on appearance, employees should be trained so they can be able to communicate and behave around people with disabilities”. Finally, one declared: “Current employees need to be trained to accept PWDs as they accept any other colleague and focus on their abilities instead of disabilities.”

All these quotations prove that current employees and recruiters are not trained enough or open enough to hire PWDs and bridge that employment gap. In addition, and as for the institutions, 68% of them believe that employment is all about companies’ cultures, which is translated by the open mindedness and the knowledge of the recruiter.

H3: The centralization of decisions issued in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has a positive impact on the recruitment process of Persons with Disabilities.

Briefly speaking, this study shows that this hypothesis can be accepted, as shown in the Correlation and Regression test above. The study came back with 43.8% of respondents that strongly disagreed on the fact that they have the final say in the recruitment of PWDs, which was the majority. Another alarming number was that 62.5% of the participants who disagreed that the centralized decision can be helpful while recruiting PWDs. 52.7% of the participants disagreed on the reduction of recruiters’ concerns while adopting centralization of decision making of PWDs’ hiring. All these figures are considered to be great examples that can support us better understanding the relationship between employment and the centralization of decision making when it comes to the job placement within organizations.

4.5. Conclusions

To conclude, following the formulation of the three hypotheses, this research aimed to support understanding the implementation of Law 220/2000 in the companies in Lebanon, in addition to understanding which HR functions needed to be altered or improved to increase the chances of PWDs inclusion within the workplace. In general, this study could prove that PWDs employment rates are low, which itself is a breach to the Article 74 of the law related to the need to recruit

Persons with Disabilities within the companies, in addition to the other proved breach, which is related to the accessibility of the private buildings, thoroughly discussed within the Article 34 of the law. Additionally, this study could conclude that the main HR function that is in huge need of improvement and implementation is the training and development part, where existing employees can develop their skills and improve their attitudes, making them ready to welcome PWDs colleagues in the future. As for the second questionnaire, it was answered by most people directly interacting and working with PWDs, either by being a social worker, a CEO, or even an HR inclusion officer, who was supporting PWDs accessing and locking job opportunities. The responses show that these individuals were part of several local institutions and NGOs, including: ProAble (NGO that supports People with Physical Disabilities accessing job opportunities), Al Younbouh (specialized school for People with Intellectual Disabilities), Anta Akhi (specialized institution and house for People with Intellectual or Physical Disabilities), EPES (specialized school for People with Intellectual Disabilities), and Arcenciel (NGO that supports PWDs accessing and acquiring basic and medical needs, such as wheelchair or medications).

While compiling both questionnaires' responses and comparing the end results, many challenges in the hiring processes and the integration, while some similarities in opinions coming from companies and institutions, could be concluded, and will be highlighted in-depth in the coming extract.

To begin with, almost all the participants reported that PWDs can excel in their work and can accomplish the required tasks, however, one can still notice a very low employment rate within the companies which raises a question mark here since the employment of PWDs in all targeted companies is low, while the Law obliges company to have a minimum number of employed PWDs within their workforces. Nevertheless, the responses coming from institutions, whereby more than 90% of them believed that huge inequalities against Persons with Disabilities were available, was actually approved and confirmed, as within the sample of the study, most of the companies do not hire PWDs, and according to one of the participants: "PWD can be included in most domains of work, and HRs should know that PWD can also have advanced skills in specific domains".

On another hand, a second challenge was retrieved, by which, as mentioned previously, all the companies were neutral about the awareness of Law 220/2000 which is an alarming figure as this Law should be well acquainted by all companies operating in Lebanon, because this is part of their legal obligations towards the nation and towards Lebanese PWDs. Institutions confirmed that Law 220/2000 was not very well implemented in Lebanon, whereby 90% of them believed that.

We can add here that the government is also underperforming in this area of work and there is a lack of awareness and accountability, as by Law, companies are obliged to employ at least 3% of their total workforce from the PWDs community. Although a remarkably interesting Law was drafted back in 2000, covering enormously many important areas that would secure an inclusive environment in Lebanon, if well implemented, it is still till date barely applied within the private sector. In fact, the concerned parties, i.e. the government, should monitor and supervise the companies and their implementation of this law and hold accountable those who are not abiding by the clauses of Law 220/2000.

The third challenge is related to the buildings' accessibility. A fair chunk, 66.1%, of the responses coming from companies reported a positive answer, by stating that their premises are accessible for PWDs, however, the research could not tackle the standards that were followed or the actual awareness of participants, while speaking about accessibility. Meaning that did the people who answered agree and strongly agree, really know the need of PWDs and took into consideration all the facilities. It did tackle the budget allocated and the managerial input on this field, but could not prove the standards. Since accessibility also includes the availability of a 24/7 elevator that has the required size, an appropriate restroom, a required size of all the doors inside the office, and many others. In addition, another interesting number, 22.3%, was the companies who answered neutral whether their premises are accessible to welcome PWDs, which raises question marks related to the awareness. Finally, 11.6% of the responses came with negative results, stating that their premises are not accessible for PWDs, which is another breach for the Law 220/2000, as it requires the private sector to have accessible premises, and as per one of the participants: "PWDs need to be supported by the Law 220/2000 (it must be well implemented)".

The fourth challenge is related to the reasons behind the low employment rate of PWDs, although the study showed that two reasons may be the training of the current employees and the centralization of decision making, as stated above, it failed to prove that this might be also due to some other factors, including culture and communication difficulties that they might face during the day-to-day operations. In addition to the studies shared before, institutions also confirmed that existing employees within companies should be trained to be able to welcome PWDs as their colleagues, which should entitle communication and other important topics.

A fifth challenge was also highlighted, which was related to the internal policies within the companies. According to 62.5% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed about their companies having internal policies that protect the rights of PWDs. In addition, 61.6% according to the respondents their companies do not reserve job openings for PWDs. This was proved by their answers which was disagree.

To further elaborate on the formulated hypotheses, and according the analysis completed in the section above, this research could:

- Prove that Law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is not well implemented or monitored in Lebanon, at least when it comes to the successful employment of that tapped population.
- Prove that a lack of internal policies development was available in the companies, which is an important procedure to be followed and developed, to support the inclusion of PWDs and their rights within the private sector and makes companies well prepared to welcome PWDs while protecting their professional placement and advancement.
- Not prove that the high costs associated with building accessibility and technological assets needed for business operations and day to day activities affect employment success in a negative way, which is why recruiters do not consider hiring Persons with Disabilities.
- Prove that the more recruiters are open minded and knowledgeable, the better they understand the importance of recruiting PWDs, since most of the companies' responses came up with the training implication, in addition to the lack of awareness related to that specific topic.
- Prove that the centralization of decisions issued in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) affects the recruitment process of Persons with Disabilities, since the final say is relatively highly affected by business owners or upper management, keeping limited room for other employees to interfere in the decision making process.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

All through this shared research study, a few previous studies and hypotheses were shared towards the start of the exploration, connected with the worldwide and the local strategies, where rules and regulations were executed, to protect the rights of PWDs and to diminish the discrimination ratios. With all these implemented initiatives and laws, meant to help the

consideration of PWDs, discrimination was all the while emerging immensely in different fields, including schooling, cultural freedoms, and most importantly, work. The above top to bottom dissertation and examination likewise showed that in Lebanon, a specific Law was drafted, while one can in any case see enormous measures of disparities in its execution and application, all through many fields and organisations, due to the lack of monitoring, follow up, and serious sanctions, against the breaches conducted in companies.

5.2. Main Findings

For that to be additionally explained, this examination that included both independent and dependent factors at the beginning, which are straightforwardly connected with the consideration of PWDs in the Lebanese work market, concentrated in the primary data collection and quantitative information gathering tools, by which the author utilized the reliable resources, such as the web and the university library, to get to data connected with the point and disseminated questionnaires for a few members to accumulate more essential information, hence to come up with the needed results. With respect to the information assembled from the example of 300 people, focused on from unique interactions and utilizing different web-based instruments and circulated for more than 222 people, it was examined, contemplated, and pictured utilizing Google Form and SPSS programming, because of the ease of their representations and their usage, in addition to the high level of accuracy. Significant to mention that every accumulated information was treated with an elevated degree of privacy and was utilized for the sole reason for this review.

As expected, the research produced various conclusions and results. It could prove that Law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is not well applicable and monitored in Lebanon, especially in the private sector, whereby limited internal rules and procedures were implemented to protect their rights, in addition to the low employment rates within the organisations, although the Law obliges them to have at least 3% of their workforce being from the PWDs community. The research could also prove that the recruiters should be more aware and cultivated about this topic, so they can themselves work on their integrations, although the type of companies in Lebanon is challenging, as decisions are centralized and issued by founders and top-level managers. Finally, the research could also tackle the needed HR function to be improved in the companies, which is related to the training and development of existing employees, that need to be more aware of the communication tools, the non-discrimination procedure, and the acceptance, for them to be able to welcome PWDs as their future colleagues, if any.

5.3. Limitations

Similar to any other research, several limitations were arising during this research study design phase and implementation, that were challenges at first, but have led to successful results after all, including:

- **Issues with the sample of the study:**

Although a sizable number of people responded to the questionnaires shared previously, and the target eventually was met, a bigger number of participants could have been secured, and that is to further understand the Lebanese job market and the opinions of specialists working in the inclusion field. Nonetheless, the researcher faced some limitations when it comes to the responses, as many follow-ups were needed to secure the desirable number of results. However, following multiple efforts and multiple connections, the needed number of filled questionnaires was secured, hence the author was able to come up with multiple conclusions.

- **Issues with the time management:**

As the researcher holds a full-time position in a startup that requires a lot of physical effort and attendance, some topics were taking a bit more time than expected, which delayed the result, due to the huge number of tasks held for the full-time job and to the lack of time management skills that the author was facing. Nevertheless, the author could secure time and lock some time slots in the calendar to make things happen.

- **Shortage of studies on the topic:**

Although this topic is widely discussed internationally and has many previous studies undertaken and many initiatives implemented worldwide, within the civil society and within the international countries, while tackling the Lebanese market specifically, the researcher found some difficulties to find updated statistics and research studies previously completed on that topic. Regardless, extensive research was made to find some research studies done and were shared, even if a bit outdated.

5.4. Managerial Implications

In reference to the shared results and to the above studies, as PWDs are facing multiple kinds of discriminations across many levels everywhere in the world, and in Lebanon as well, to be precise, the following suggestions and potential implications are to be followed, according to the researcher:

- Intensively following up with private sector companies and monitoring their conformities with the Law 220/2000. However, given the current situation in Lebanon, and due to the lack of governmental capabilities and check-ups, this solution might be a bit optimistic. It is highly advised to appoint whistleblowers and to undertake market research, who might be able to report any breaches in the Law. Worth noting that it is preferable to have them appointed based on qualifications and expertise, for instance, having an expert architect monitoring the building accessibilities, a lawyer following-up on the total number of employees and the PWDs ratio, etc.
- Coming up with a national marketing campaign, using the roads' billboards, to spread awareness related to the inclusion topic. This can include general articles retrieved from the Law 220/2000 or some ideas reflective on the benefits of PWDs hiring. This campaign can be assigned to a private marketing firm, rather than the public and governmental institutions.
- Referring to the responses that mentioned a huge need for the companies' training regarding this topic, it is crucial to make sure that training activities are being implemented by specialists in the field. That is also to spread awareness about the topic and to prepare existing employees welcoming new joiners from the PWD community in Lebanon.
- Providing for PWDs themselves adequate training related to their soft skills improvement and their job readiness attitudes, which will support them better portraying their capabilities during the recruitment process and on-the-job later, when admitted.
- Working on helping the private and the public sectors financially to improve and adjust the building accessibility, by either securing funds from international donors, by providing services out of charity initiatives, or by targeting the Lebanese diaspora to provide adequate amounts of money.
- Providing a financial incentive program to encourage companies to hire their first Person with Disability, keeping in mind the importance of finding a very suitable candidate for the opening. That way, firms will be exposed to the level of commitment, skills, and motivation when it comes to hiring PWDs.
- Working with International NGOs (INGOs) to nurture unemployed PWDs with an unemployment incentive, if that was proven that they are seeking employment opportunities, extensively. That would support PWDs living a decent and independent life, without being heavily relying on their families to provide them with basic needs.

- Working hand in hand with special institutions and schools that are in a direct connection with PWDs and are supporting their inclusion, accessing job opportunities in the market, which will allow them to refer the suitable candidates based on the required skills and on the personal evaluation of everyone.
- Tailoring the curriculum within schools and universities to include topics related to inclusion and acceptance, as these graduates will be the future leaders and it is important to tackle this topic early on.

5.5. Recommendations

With all the above being discussed one can conclude that some of the Lebanese companies are partially ready while others are not ready at all to recruit PWDs. Nevertheless, we can safely say that none are prepared and have all the needed facilities to welcome PWDs on board, taking into consideration the economic, social, and cultural limitations, in addition to the building accessibilities. With that in mind, it is true that Lebanon is currently facing a bad financial and economic situation, however, with access to the international market and with an expansion of services, companies can sustain and survive the crisis, hence working harder on their operations, which will allow for team expansion rather than downsizing. It is crucial to target hiring companies, having access to international clients, and make them aware of PWDs looking for job opportunities, but are unfortunate enough for them not to be considered in the openings. In addition, and with regards to the current trend, remote and flexible work is a very suitable solution for the PWDs in the Lebanese market, which will also increase their chances to access the job market. This is especially crucial for the ones that have physical disabilities, as they might face some difficulties to reach their offices, which will also create a win-win situation for the employer, who might not be obliged to implement any needed modification for the premises and would be reducing the cost associated with accessibility. In addition, it is very hard for people with physical disabilities to be able to move from one place to another, independently, due to several reasons. Some of them would include the inexistence of public transportation that suits them and the bad infrastructure of the Lebanese public roads / places. People with visual impairment might also face tremendous amounts of difficulties while moving across the country. Furthermore, with the rise of CSR, and as stated at the very beginning of this research, companies and employees are becoming more aware and interested to apply CSR initiatives, especially with the U.N. convention of SDG goals, which will support companies better implement such actions. Maybe one of the future perspectives would be a simple push for companies, as they might take it from there, without

needing to really intensify the follow-up with them. Moreover, when it comes to the person him/herself, writing a good CV and portraying self-presentation during the application phases are essential if the PWD is looking for a job, which is learnt from schools / universities, by experience or by self-improvement. This area should also be tackled in the future, which will allow for better representation.

Finally, after carefully going through the topic, some final recommendations, developed by the researcher, for future studies will be showcased in this final extract, which are:

- What effects has remote working on the successful placement of Persons with Disabilities in the Lebanese job market?
- Are the 17 SDG Goals, drafted and recommended by the United Nations, affecting the lives of PWDs in Lebanon?
- With the rise of tech and digital job market trends, and on a global scale, are PWDs being encouraged to pick up in such a direction, as such jobs usually can be performed remotely?
- Are other types of minorities, such as LGBTQ, facing the same level of discrimination in the job market, globally and locally, as PWDs?
- Are PWDs accessing decent job opportunities related to their educational background or are they offered and filling only blue-collar vacancies?
- Will the current economic crisis faced in Lebanon affect the recruitment processes of local companies and their abilities to work on accessibility modifications?
- To what extent is the cultural and the family background of PWDs affecting their educational, thus professional progress and growth?

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Companies Survey | Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities | 2022 Research

This is a consent form to participate in a study related to the professional Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Lebanon.

Purpose: This research aims to understand how Persons with Disabilities are treated in the workplace as well as what are the factors that contribute to their inclusion. Time required: Completing this survey will take 5-10 minutes of your time.

Kindly complete the survey ONLY if you agree with the following statements:

- I understand the purpose of this study.
- I understand that the information I add is confidential.
- I understand that I can refuse to take part in this study and that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that I have the freedom to withdraw from this study at any time, with no penalties.
- I understand that if I have any questions regarding the research, I can ask the researcher using the contact information listed below.

Contact information: Name: Léa El-Hachem

Email Address: lihachem@ndu.edu.lb / leaelhcm@gmail.com

* Required

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.

1. What best describes your profession?

*

- CEO/Founder/Co-Founder
- HR/Recruitment Specialist
- Other

2. Do you work with a local or international company?

*

- Option 1
- Option 2

3. What is the size of your company?

*

- 0-10 employees
- 11-50 employees
- 51-100 employees
- 101-500 employees
- 501-1,000 employees
- More than 1,000 employees

4. In your opinion, what makes a person excel in his/her job?

*

- Drive and Motivation
- Knowledge and Experience
- Salary and Compensation
- Career Advancement
- All of the above

5. The premises of your company are highly accessible to persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. Your company highly employs persons with disabilities *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. Your company believes that persons with disabilities deserve to be employed. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. Your company reserves specific job positions for persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. Your company has internal policies that protect the rights of persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. Employers in Lebanon get sufficient knowledge in recruiting persons with disabilities and organizing his work. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. Employers in Lebanon get adequate training on how to organize the work and duties of a person with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. I believe that Lebanon carries out an effective policy that allows for the full integration of persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. If the answer to the previous question was 'Yes', please provide information on how your country Lebanon is considering the rights of persons with disabilities in their policies *

14. In my opinion, Lebanon fosters a positive atmosphere for understanding and accommodating the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. If the answer to the previous question was "Yes", please specify the number/percentage. Otherwise, please type NA *

16. I am aware of the strategies and plans that consider the needs of women and men with disabilities in the workplace. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17. I believe that the participation of persons with disabilities ensures the development of our company. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

18. I seek consultation for the employment of persons with disabilities in my company. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. I am aware and knowledgeable about law 220/2000 on the rights of persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. I have never rejected a person qualified for his position, because of his/her disability. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. I believe that the costs associated with renovating workplace buildings for accessibility of persons with disabilities are high. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. I am aware of the costs required to render my company's facilities and services accessible to persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. I regularly initiate projects to make facilities accessible for persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. My company regularly dedicates extra budgets to make its physical and virtual workplaces accessible for persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. My company considers methods of estimating disability-related accessibility costs for different purposes. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. My company considers increasing spending on the purchase of disability-specific devices and services. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. I believe that higher transportation costs due to inaccessibility could be a hindering factor in employing persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. Dealing with the high costs of accessibility for people with disabilities is a difficult issue. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. I have a final say in the recruitment of persons with disabilities in my company. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. Decision making powers have a positive effect on the persons with disabilities recruitment process. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. I believe that centralized controls can have downsides on the recruitment of persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

32. I believe that centralization of decisions can be helpful while recruiting persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

33. I believe that centralization of decisions reduces recruiters concerns while recruiting persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

34. I believe that centralization of decisions help avoid pessimistic views about the work- related abilities of persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



35. I believe that the centralized recruitment of persons with disabilities leads to improved and standardized hiring quality. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

36. I believe that centralized decisions offer better flexibility in the recruitment of persons with disabilities. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

37. Which HR function would better be used/improved to help you employ Persons with Disabilities? *

- Training and Development (for existing employees)
- Compensation and Benefits
- Employee Relations
- Staffing and Recruitment
- Safety and Health

38. Can you elaborate on the previous answer? * *

39. Do you like to add any additional thoughts? *

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