

Employment of People with Disabilities in the Private Sector: Ethnographic Qualitative Study

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Abstract: Employment improves the quality of life; enhances self-confidence, sense of productivity, and social value; and is a source of income. This critical ethnographic qualitative study sought to explore the related attitudes, challenges, and concerns in employing people with disabilities in the private sector from their perspective and that of employers. The study sample included four employers in different sectors: a dairy company, a clothing company, and two companies selling food products. The sample also included five people with disabilities (from three disability categories), who were selected from among 3,706 disabled applicants for employment in the National Labor Portal. Results indicated that employers' attitude toward hiring people with disabilities is positive related to the latter's work abilities. Employers empower people with disabilities and give them confidence to perform their duties, specifically considering the types of disabilities and capabilities of the disabled. Equality between employees and employers exists without discrimination, with preference for specific groups of people with disabilities for employment wing to the nature of employment of some employers. However, employers have some concerns with hiring people with multiple disabilities, low productivity, poor health conditions, overprotective families, and who misuse modern technologies. Degrees of disparity exists among employers on the employment of women with disabilities owing to the work environment. Results likewise indicated that people with disabilities have limited satisfaction with the employment offered to them by the private sector. In particular, people with disabilities believe that there are discriminatory practices favoring non-disabled persons in terms of private sector employment, with moderation in wages between the two groups. Moreover, results showed that the private sector provides equal employment rights among employees in terms of employment empowerment, annual leave system, and health insurance. People with disabilities also believe that health status, work environments, concerns, and excessive protection from families have significant and influential roles in their employment in the private sector. Lastly, results demonstrated that people with disabilities do not have challenges using social media or accessing social networks that advertise employment in the private sector.

Keywords: Employment, Employers, People with Disabilities, Private Sector.

Introduction

On the bases of international regulations agreements on protecting and preserving the rights of persons with disabilities in all fields, many countries have formulated laws for people with special needs, including in the aspects of principle of justice, equality, and curbing discrimination in society. These regulations have resulted in many positive effects on the special education community in term of access to various services, such as education, health, or rehabilitation; and also in such areas as work and the right to employment for the disabled without discrimination. The Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is exerting effort to recruit the most number of people with special needs through the Tawafuq Program. Tawafuq aims to support and empower employees with disabilities to work in the private sector by applying the principles and foundations of Tawafuq, which stipulate rights, inclusion, skills, services, and appropriate environment [16]. However, employment of people with disabilities in the private sector is still considered unsatisfactory compared with the total number of people with disabilities in KSA. The General Authority for Statistics (GAS) in KSA (2017) estimated the number of people with disabilities (male and female, and those of working age from 20–59) at 669,874. GAS indicated that 4.8% of men and 8% of women who are at least 15 years have single disability and employed, while 6.1% of men and 5% of women are unemployed with single disability. Moreover, the multiple disabilities stemmed from males employed 14.7% and females 1.5% who are at least 15 years, while 7.4% of male and 3.1% of female are unemployed with multiple disabilities. However, GAS did not determine the workplace for people with disabilities, and whether the employment sector is in public or private [19]. HRDF explained that the number of people with disabilities employed in 2017 (i.e., 4,708) decreased by 21% compared with that in 2017-2018. Meanwhile, the numbers of employed in 2018 decreased (3,715). However, there is clear

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improvement in the employment of people with disabilities in 2020 [15]. Since the establishment of the Tawafuq program until September 2020, the total number of persons with disabilities employed through employment channels or supported through the HRDF programs has reached 68,596 [16]. HRDF listed the top 10 occupations of people with disabilities according to Tawafuq program statistics: administrative, receptionist, security guard, vendor, customer service, worker (e.g., production, installation, technician), data entry, specialist (e.g., radiologist, nutritionist, laboratory), clerk (e.g., general, administration, documentation), and representative (sales, purchasing, delivery). This remarkable development in the Tawafuq program substantially contributed to making people with disabilities apply for work in the private sector. With more free training and skills development for people with disabilities, work and employment will be available to many of them.

The issue of employment of persons with disabilities is a global issue and not limited to specific countries, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) has exerted considerable effort in conducting research and discussing topics on employment for the disabled. The ILO endeavors to assist all people with disabilities and provide researchers with advancements in the field of disability. The ILO also indicated that the number of persons with disabilities may reach 15% of the world's population (approximately 1 billion). In addition, estimates from eight regions globally indicate that 36% of working-age individuals with disabilities are employed compared with 60% of their non-disabled peers. Disabled women are less probable to be employed than their male counterparts. Individuals with multiple disabilities are less probable to be employed than those with only a single disability [18]. The ILO alluded that unemployment rate constitutes 14% among various disabilities compared with 7% of non-disabled in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries [17]. That is, many individuals with disabilities are outside the labor market and many of them depend on government aid, families, or charitable organizations. Undoubtedly, increasing unemployment affects persons with disabilities, and it requires standing with them to obtain work and be employed to assist them live with ultimate dignity, personal independence, and equal opportunity, as well as integrated with society and family.

Employment and People with Disabilities

Employment is a source of livelihood for people to enable them live and integrate with society, and it is a source of financial return that guarantees independence and lack of need for others. This idea is applicable for everyone, whether disabled or non-disabled. Accordingly, employing people with disabilities is no longer an issue of rights but a blessing for the private sector and the government. The numerous benefits of employing people with disabilities include increasing productivity by attracting employees with different skills and providing funds to governments by reducing expenses and supporting people with disabilities [22]. However, some studies have discussed important aspects related to the employment of people with disabilities, such as obstacles, challenges, incentives, and negative and positive attitudes faced by the disabled and private sector employers.

Mansour studied the attitudes and concerns of 27 employers toward employing people with disabilities. The researcher found that 63% of employers employ people with disabilities, and 40% of employers are unaware of the laws related to employment of the disabled in KSA. By contrast, 10 out of 27 employers show positive attitudes on hiring disabled people. Mansour indicated that there are some factors and reasons that affect employers in not hiring those with disabilities, such as the cost factor whether it is health or professional expenses through training the disabled person so that it is parallel to the non-disabled person. Meanwhile, social environmental factors involve the possibility of negative attitudes by clients who visit these properties or companies, given that they constitute concerns for employers in hiring disabled persons. Mansour stated that employers' concern with lack of productivity, quality, and skills needed at work cause them to refrain from hiring people with disabilities [28]. Peter et al. studied the experiences of women with disabilities who obtained employment in KSA and identified the obstacles they faced in accessing employment and the skills used to find work. They found obstacles to the employment of women with disabilities that should be addressed by legislators and service providers, such as discrimination, lack of policies that provide employment, restricting employment to certain occupations, difficulty in accessing social networks that provide information on the availability of employment, and lack of support services in addressing the needs of employing women with disabilities [10]. Al-Ajmi and Al-Battal studied the difficulties facing the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities from the perspective of 945 school workers in the city of Riyadh. They discovered many obstacles that result in difficulty within the recruitment committee for people with intellectual disabilities, such as lack of skills and training necessary to work as required and to utilize technologies, overrated protection of people with disabilities' families that make them shun employment, and the family's concern with the mistreatment in the workplace [24].

Perućica et al. studied the attitudes of employers on employing persons with disabilities in the private and public sectors. Their results showed a difference in attitudes between the two sectors in favor of the public sector, which is more positive than the private sector in employing the disabled. The experience of employers and direct with contact people with disabilities were considered among the main factors of employers' positive attitude and belief in their capabilities [32]. The private sector in the US indicated that lack of relevant experience and necessary skills and training

hinder the employment of disabled applicants [35]. Bruyère found that attitudes between co-workers and supervisors toward individuals with disabilities formed a lower percentage of the barrier to a lack of experience and skills for persons with disabilities [35]. By contrast, Milenković confirmed that negative attitudes and discrimination regarding disability constitute a major hindrance in employing individuals with disabilities [29]. Furthermore, the type and severity of disability are among the factors affecting employers in employing persons with disabilities, as given that individuals with mental or emotional disabilities are less accepting to work than individuals with physical disabilities; friction or prior experience with individuals with disabilities is another factor in employing them [8].

Almalky referred to the employment of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as achieving several affirmative effects, such as increased self-confidence, self-esteem, self-stability, and participation in improving the national economy through taxes. The low employment of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities represents affects the employment rates, income, and personal independence of these individuals [14]. The employment of individuals with disabilities by employers is part of contributions to social and economic development, along with promoting social inclusion [18]. In addition, Milenković noted that employing persons with disabilities contributes to their social participation, personal acceptance, a sense of social support, sharing with others as work colleagues, and independent life in society; these elements are considered a type of social integration [29].

Disability Policies and Legislation in the KSA

O'Reilly stated that international, regional, and national initiatives related to work, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), can enhance the opportunities for people with disabilities of working age to gain suitable employment, promote independence, and high status without discrimination and racism at work [1]. In 2008, KSA ratified CRPD, which includes the Kingdom's commitment to ensuring that individuals with disabilities enjoy human rights and promote their dignity equally, social justice, and equal opportunities with other citizens with disabilities in all fields (e.g., services, education,) within the Kingdom [6]. KSA has enacted laws to protect the disabled, such as the Disability Code in 2000. One of its articles stipulate the right of the disabled to employment, similar to other members of society, to give them opportunities to disclose their own abilities and obtain income sufficient for their independent lives. Article nine stipulates that researchers are urged to study the best means of training and rehabilitation for the disabled to prepare them for suitable professions consistent with their capabilities, degrees and types of disabilities, and labor market requirements. In 2016, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) announced Ministerial Resolution No. 3249 stipulating the employment and work of persons with disabilities in the private sector need the preparation of appropriate work and provision of requirements for spatial environment and services in accordance with the guidance of the executive regulations of the KSA labor system that commensurate with the degree and type of people with disabilities. In 2019, KSA's labor system stipulated the new version number 134 on employers with at least 25 workers and who have the appropriate nature of work for the disabled to occupy at least 4% of the total number of workers [25]. These policies and regulations receive immense support and implementation through Vision 2030 of the new and comprehensive kingdom on all levels.

2030 Education Framework in KSA

KSA is currently witnessing a comprehensive development in all fields by setting the Vision 2030 agenda for the economic, academic, and social development of the country. First Voluntary National Review explained that education in KSA takes a broad interest path in development and advancement, so that learning opportunities are available to everyone in appropriate environments. KSA also seeks to elevate the quality of educational products and increase efficiency in scientific research. The educational component of Vision 2030 addresses three main areas: curriculum development, higher education development, and building skills for the labor market. Moreover, KSA's vision was based on the attention of people with special needs and identified major goals that give them access to appropriate employment opportunities while accessing all other services to ensure independence and social inclusion as effective individuals in society. In addition, KSA's vision has set a national strategy for the rights of individuals with disabilities, with the aim of enhancing the quality of their life through supportive programs and services in the government, private sector, and charitable foundations [13].

Materials and Methods

Only a few studies in KSA have addressed issues related to the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector. Given the importance of this issue, there was a need to highlight the concerns of the disabled, their life affairs, and their right to work. The main purpose of this critical ethnographic qualitative study was to explore attitudes and challenges in employing individuals with disabilities in the private sector. In particular, the current study explored the attitude of employers toward employing individuals with disabilities and that of the latter toward the former. This research also explored employers' concerns with the employment of individuals with disabilities and the employment challenges they face. These objectives were based on four factors: (1) the researcher's experience with individuals with

disabilities and their capabilities, skills, and hindrance in employment and work; (2) the researcher's awareness of the private sector culture in KSA; (3) reading and briefing on issues on the local and global employment of the disabled; and (4) legislative laws and regulations linked to the local and international employment of the disabled. The ethnography approach has been identified as the most appropriate method because it is based on explaining the shared patterns of behavior and beliefs of culture-sharing groups [4]. Ethnography supplies perception on people's perspectives closely and generates a new analytical view of a set of interactions, differences, and group similarities [26]. The critical ethnography method is used to explore social issues related to "power, empowerment, inequality, inequity, domination, repression, hegemony, and victimization" (p. 94) [5]. Meanwhile, critical ethnography follows an approach in granting researcher empowerment, judgment, and voice to understand and build relationships with the community being studied [34]. Consequently, the current study is compatible with the culture-sharing groups of employers and individuals with disabilities regarding employment in the private sector. The reason is that the ethnography depicts the works of cultural groups and examines the beliefs, language, and behaviors that emerge from them [5].

Sample and Participants

The target population in the current study were private sector employers and individuals with disabilities. The study sample included four employers in different sectors (i.e., a dairy company, a clothing company, and two companies selling food products). In addition, five people with disabilities were selected from three disability categories. The sample consisted of three women and two men (i.e., female and male physical disability, female and male deaf, female blind). The ages of the participants ranged from 23 to 51. Members of these disability categories are considered the most searching for employment among other disabilities in KSA. Creswell stated that qualitative researchers deliberately select the individuals involved and sites to explore and comprehend the central phenomenon in the study [4]. Thus, the five people with disabilities were selected from among 3,706 disabled applicants for employment in the National Labor Portal. This number represents the total occupations seekers with disabilities registered in the National Labor Portal for 2020, according to the result of Tawafuq's electronic questionnaire; therefore, the data include potential and confirmed disabilities [16]. Table 1 summarizes the study samples of employers and people with disabilities.

Table 1: Brief Summary of the Study Sample

Study Participants					
Employers			Individuals with Disabilities		
Dairy Company	Clothing Company	Companies Selling Food Products	Females	Males	
One	One	Two	Three	Two	
			One Blind	Two Deaf	Two with Physical Disability

Interviews

This critical ethnographic qualitative study sought to explore the attitudes, challenges, and concerns in employing individuals with disabilities in the private sector from the perspective of employers and individuals with disabilities. The study sought to answer the following main research questions:

1. What is the attitude of employers toward employing individuals with disabilities?
2. What are employers' concerns with employing individuals with disabilities?
3. What is the attitude of individuals with disabilities toward employers regarding employment?
4. What are the challenges facing individuals with disabilities regarding employment?

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to explore and understand the perspectives of employers and individuals with disabilities on employment. Longhurst stated that semi-structured interviews take a dialogue approach and interaction between interviewer and interviewee [31]. Moreover, this method allows the participants to respond openly, as well as organizes and segments the conversation with the participants as a sort of self-consciousness. The interview included four main questions and a set of sub-questions for each main question. The participants were interviewed individually. Semi-structured interviews were conducted one person at a time [37]. Prior to the start of the interviews, the researcher met with the interviewees privately and individually at a suitable place identified by both parties. The researcher reviewed the study protocol and procedures and obtained written informed consent from the interviewees. The interview session lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. Semi-structured interviews followed a specific protocol, with one hour set as the maximum limit to avoid interviewee fatigue and boredom [37]. All sessions with interviewees were audio-recorded after consent was given, thereby enabling the researcher to focus and interact with the

interviewers rather than taking notes that may cause distraction and pressure when writing interview details. Longhurst proposed that directly transcribing interviews is better because it is easier to read and copy the interview details [31]. Accordingly, the interviews were immediately transcribed to analyze and encode the data on the main themes and sub-themes of the study.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the data section were divided into two components. The first section contained data of employers with two main themes: (1) attitude of employers toward employing people with disabilities and (2) concerns of employers with employing people with disabilities. The second section included data of people with disabilities with two main themes: (1) attitude of people with disabilities toward employers regarding employment and (2) challenges faced by people with disabilities on employment. Table 2 provides an overview of the main themes and subthemes reported by the participants.

Table 2: Main Themes and Subthemes of the Study

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Subthemes</i>
Attitude of employers toward employing people with disabilities	Capacity and training Empowerment, motivation, and commitment to work Equality
Concerns of employers with employing people with disabilities	Use of modern technologies Type and severity of disabilities Employing women with disabilities Behavior and mood swings Overprotection of the family
Attitude of people with disabilities toward employers regarding employment	Beliefs of people with disabilities on employment Discrimination in employment Employment rights
Challenges faced by people with disabilities on employment	Health and physical status of people with disabilities Social environment Fears and excessive protection from families Use of social media Lack of employment in the private sector

Initially, the data of the first section, which were extracted from interviews with employers on employing people with disabilities in the private sector, were reviewed.

Theme 1: Attitude of Employers toward Employing People with Disabilities

This theme is divided into three subthemes: capabilities and training of people with disabilities; empowerment, motivation, and commitment to work of people with disabilities; and equality between people with and without disabilities.

Subtheme 1: Capacity and Training

Employers felt that people with disabilities possess capabilities and potential to prepare them for obtaining and accessing employments available in the private sector. Experiences of employers with people with disabilities are numerous, thereby resulting in the former’s high-level perceptions of the latter. The results of the current study differ with those of Perućica et al. because the latter found that private sector employers are less positive toward employing people with disabilities owing to a lack of belief in their work abilities [32]. Smith et al. discussed that employers are not fully convinced of the abilities and performance of employees with disabilities [23]. By contrast, the current study is consistent with Perućica et al.’s findings that employers’ experiences with people with disabilities have an effective role in hiring them, changing attitudes, and biases against the work capabilities of the latter [32].

The ability of people with disabilities to work is good and combined with the creation of an appropriate environment. (Employer 2)

People with disabilities have impressive and high abilities at work. (Employer 3)

A concern was that people with disabilities would not continue in employment, which is not due to reduced abilities but to the nature of the employment.

Abilities of people with disabilities are ideal, but they do not continue to work because of the nature of the work for a month and two, and they eventually submit their resignation. (Employer 1)

According to Bruyère, the private sector in the US believes that people with disabilities lack the necessary skills and training to work, thereby resulting in their poor employment chances [35]. In the current study, the private sector trains all applicants with disabilities, with qualifying training for employment before starting the service to know aspects of employment performance, legal and administrative work, and duration of training, which varies among employers.

Training is for a period of three months and is inclusive of a salary for this period. During the training period, there will be field practice. (Employer 2)

Duration of the training programs is one month, and each job has a different qualification program to suit the nature of work. (Employer 1)

Some employers have individuals who are specialists and have certificates in dealing and training people with disabilities. Therefore, employers conduct specific and codified examinations after the completion of the applicants' training.

Training of persons with disabilities through specialists in this category. (Employer 4)

After the training, we conduct physical and mental tests, as well as a test on mental awareness and endurance. We also give applicants an opportunity for practical experience for a period determined by the coach to judge whether or not they can continue working. (Employer 3)

Subtheme 2: Empowerment, Motivation, and Commitment to Work

People with disabilities are enthusiastic, persevere at work, have considerable ability to learn from mistakes, and are deeply committed to the job. Freeze et al. found that people with disabilities are focused, reliable, and enthusiastic to work [30].

People with disabilities work hard because they realize that if they leave a job, they may experience difficulty obtaining another job, or they may have minimal chance of being accepted in jobs offered by suitable employers. (Employer 4)

They were enthusiastic and persistent at work and were willing to forgo social security benefits in exchange for continuing to work. (Employer 1)

They work and commit some make mistakes, but they learn from them. (Employer 2)

People with disabilities have provided outstanding experiences during their work periods that employers describe as exceeding the real reality of other employees within companies in terms of compliance and implementation of work rules.

We have an employee who comes on weekends to work, and another employee who did not take his leave for the entire year, did not miss a single day, and is committed to working continuously. (Employer 3)

People with disabilities are often better than non-disabled people by following the schedule and the company's instructions. (Employer 1)

Motivations of people with disabilities differ among themselves. The deaf are more enthusiastic and motivated to work than people with other disabilities (e.g., intellectual disabilities, blind). (Employer 4)

Some employers enable individuals with disabilities to assume responsibilities and be fully empowered in their job responsibilities. Others believe that empowerment depends on the types of disability and capabilities of the disabled. The main motive of empowering people with disabilities is to afford them opportunities to prove themselves and grant them incentives. This motivation is the result of employers' belief in assuming social responsibility in hiring people with disabilities and giving them equal opportunities they give to others [21].

We in the company do not hesitate to empower people with disabilities to manage or deal directly with customers. (Employer 3)

Empowerment depends on the types of disability. Some disabilities have an impact on persons. Therefore, giving them responsibilities that may affect the work process or impact other people, such as customers or other employees, is difficult. People with intellectual disabilities are less functionally empowered than others. (Employer 2)

Subthemes 3: Equality

Work wages were characterized by employers as being uniform between individuals with and without disabilities. Moreover, the benefits of work are equal among employees, whether in terms of working hours, health insurance, equal degrees of insurance, vacation system, and application of the salary scale. One of the employers provides additional services in salaries from a humanitarian motivation to the category of people with disabilities. This situation indicates that the private sector provides charitable initiatives, justice, and equality among employees. Supportive legislation in KSA may be proposed for the emergence of such an equality. Bambra and Pope explained that anti-discrimination legislation may not be an effective way to reduce obstacles to employing people with disabilities, as well as not effective to overcome inequality [3].

We pay an additional amounts to people with disabilities for enticement, humanitarian support, and social services. We do not consider this action discrimination but support for their lives; people with disabilities accept and are not against this payment. (Employer 2)

Some employers prefer to hire specific categories of people with disabilities, and they have justifications on why one category is chosen over another. Some employers believe that all people with disability have the right to be hired and that they work on equality among all applicants for employment within the scope of companies. Thus, the experiences of employers with people with disabilities have a major role in the reality of employment. Employers with prior experience with employees with disabilities express a positive reality about them and their employability [20].

We prefer specific categories for employment owing to the nature of work in our company. We have tasks that require physical effort and other tasks that entail communicating with the public and customers. Therefore, we prefer people who are deaf and with physical disabilities in our company. (Employer 1)

All disabilities can be employed in our company, and we have a diverse work nature and we put individuals in the right place for them. (Employer 3)

We prefer people who are deaf, but there is no objection to employing those with other disabilities if they have abilities commensurate with the declared employment. (Employer 4)

Theme 2: Employers' Concerns with Employing Individuals with Disabilities

Employers have expressed that they have no concerns with lack of productivity for people with disabilities. Some employers indicated that the productivity of people with disabilities, particularly the deaf and those with physical disabilities, is higher than that of individuals without disabilities.

Initially, there is lack of productivity, but it eventually increases as soon as they continue to work, gain experience, and have direct contact with peers; individuals without disabilities are more productive than others. (Employer 2)

Our experiences with hiring people with disabilities indicated their success. This result was evident when the company hires them, given that as they perform work and achieve the same as non-disabled people, and occasionally turn in better job production and work. (Employer 3)

Jones believed that productivity is subject to immeasurable gaps between disabled and non-disabled workers, thereby leading to abnormal wage differentials [27]. DeLeire noted the severity of bias associated with disability and work productivity, which contributes to the difficulty in separating health problems from the productivity of individuals [36]. In the current study, employers appear to understand that people with disabilities may have lack of productivity but does not impede the former from employing the latter. Thus, employing people with disabilities is significant to some employers in terms of humanitarian and social services. They contact government agencies for lists of people with disabilities to employ them and assume the burden from the government.

Employers expressed that people with disabilities use modern technologies in varying degrees, leading to fear among some employers because the nature of work in some companies requires knowledge of the use of electronic devices. Al-Ajmi and Al-Battal emphasized that one of the main challenges facing the employment of people with intellectual disabilities is their lack of skills in using technologies [24].

Our experiences with people with disabilities in using technology are weak. Hence, we train many of them to operate the system and use the company's programs. (Employer 1)

Through our experience, the deaf have infinite ability to use technology. (Employer 3)

Employers do not tend to employ people with multiple disabilities because of the difficulty in coping with their condition, the work environment may not suit them, and their employment may be a burden on production. Some workplaces depend mainly on attending exhibitions and working in the field. Thus, people with multiple disabilities

experience difficulty integrating and continuing to work.

We have significant concern with hiring people with multiple disabilities owing to the nature and difficulty of some of the company's jobs (Employer 4)

The types and severity of disabilities have a significant impact on the employability of people with disabilities. This situation has been confirmed by studies using US data from the National Health Interview Survey Disability Supplement, Canadian data, and an Australian study; these studies have indicated that people with chronic diseases, severe disabilities, or multiple disabilities have minimal probability of being employed compared with other disabled individuals [9] [33] [7]. Employers differ in employing women with disabilities. Some experience immense difficulty in providing employment to these women, similar to men with disabilities. Some employers commented on the nature of work that require them to employ women, such as selling women's clothing. Some tend to employ women in office and administrative positions only. According to Pettinicchio and Maroto, women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men. They are also more likely to work in lower or unsteady jobs. Such jobs may be suitable for the situation and conditions of women [12].

Women have opportunities for employment, and we do not differentiate or discriminate between genders. (Employer 1)

We have women working in some branches only and in specific jobs, such as office work and administrative communications. In general, the nature of work may be unsuitable for the nature of women. Therefore, men are more employable. (Employer 4)

Behavior and mood swings of individuals with disabilities toward co-workers or customers pose concerns for employers. Some individuals with disabilities show anger toward or difficulty in verbal communication with people, particularly when communicating directly with them. Employers have concerns with the instability of the health status of persons with disabilities. The health status constitutes a lower acceptance rate for employment with some employers. Link et al. stated that the public has fear in dealing and engaging with people with health problems; thus, these people will be negatively affected by others not accepting them [2]. Graffam et al. indicated that employers value the employment of persons with disabilities in various aspects, such as acceptance, interaction, and etiquette in the workplace, as well as behaviors related to the job and in work tasks [21].

We place individuals with disabilities under surveillance and do not make them meet the public at the beginning of their work until we are sure that they have controlled their anger, behaviors, and feelings toward others. (Employer 2)

Workflow continuity is a major concern for us, so hiring people with poor health status or requiring continuous absence from work has an impact on work and sales. (Employer 1)

Health status is important to us. If it is unstable, the employment rate is worse than when people in good health are working. (Employer 4)

Employers referred to the concerns of some families of individuals with disabilities with their youth, whether it was long working hours or excessive protection for them. Employers have expressed that they have specific times and that working hours are applied to all employees, in which the time must be maximized without interruption. Excessive protection by some families threatens the future career of the youth.

Some individuals with disabilities do not have a decision; families control the decision to work, thereby affecting their work continuity. (Employer 1)

Some family members, such as fathers and mothers, ask their youth to leave before the end of the working hours; this practice is against company regulations. (Employer 2)

Some families excessively protect for young people, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. (Employer 3)

Data of the second section, which were extracted from interviews of people with disabilities about their employment in the private sector, were reviewed.

Theme 1: Attitude of People with Disabilities on Employers Regarding Employment

This theme is divided into three subthemes: beliefs of people with disabilities in employment in the private sector, discrimination in employment, and rights in employment.

Subtheme 1: Beliefs of People with Disabilities in Employment in the Private Sector

Many people with disabilities believe that the private sector has become more oriented than before in employing people with disabilities. Regulations and laws in KSA have made the private sector employ people with disabilities owing to the advantages offered by the government in terms of reward points for employers. However, there are still numerous

unemployed people with disabilities compared with those without disabilities. Mansour found that 63% of employers employ people with disabilities, and 40% of employers are unaware of regulations related to employing people with disabilities [28].

They are employed according to their needs and hiring people with disabilities is beneficial for them to receive government support. (Female: physical disability)

There is a shortage of jobs by employers, and they do not offer multiple and suitable jobs. People with disabilities have disadvantages in searching for jobs, developing themselves, preparing themselves for work, and being content with searching for government jobs. (Female: Blind)

Some people with disabilities have a fear of working in the private sector because of low salaries and loss of government benefits. The rewards and support they receive from government agencies may be the reason that people with disabilities are not encouraged to find employment in the private sector.

I believe that rewards from social security and social affairs cause persons with disabilities not to seek employment in the private sector. (Man: physical disability)

Therefore, it may be better not to stop these rewards if individuals with disabilities are employed, and the proportion of people with disabilities in society is small and there is no harm in continuing the rewards. In another case, the case of people with disabilities from families may be considered. If families have no means, government support may continue without interruption in addition to the salary that those with disability receive.

Subtheme 2: Discrimination in Employment

Some people with disabilities indicated that there is discrimination in favor of people without disabilities, who receive more employment opportunities than the former. According to the perception of people with disabilities, discrimination tends to focus on performance effectiveness, material cost, and increased productivity, with no discrimination in wages.

There is discrimination by employers in favor of non-disabled person. (Female: deaf)

People with disabilities described that the private sector views people with disabilities in a limited view in terms of the effectiveness of the actual work. They mentioned that the private sector prefers the non-disabled owing to the low material cost and increased productivity. Meanwhile, some employers consider how to benefit from people with disabilities in the work system and away from their actual work performance. This finding converges with results showing that negative attitudes toward the actual performance of employees with disabilities continue to be a social and environmental burden for full participation in the workplace [20].

Employers do not have patience with persons with disability and their training or rehabilitation for work. Thus, the most important aspect is productivity as soon as possible, and employers are looking for people who are ready to work. (Female: Blind)

There is discrimination against people with disabilities. The possible reason is lack of knowledge of dealing with them or lack of trust in their capabilities. (Man: deaf)

People with disabilities commented that there was no discrimination in wages between them and people without disabilities. By contrast, Johnson and Lambrinos found wage discrimination against disabled workers [38]. In the current study, some people with disabilities indicated that low wages are not an obstacle in searching for employment. The beginnings of work in any job constantly include low wages, and proving individual capabilities at work makes employers become confident in them; this aspect is eventually accompanied by salary increases. However, wage discrimination reduces the incentives for people with disabilities to work and has a significant impact on labor force participation [38].

Low salaries in the private sector are not an obstacle to finding a job. Everyone is looking for a job. (Man: physical disability).

Subtheme 3: Rights in Employment

The private sector is committed to upholding the rights of people with disabilities, whether by full salaries, salary increases, employment empowerment, creation of work environments, annual leave system, or health insurance. Current work environments appear more prepared than in previous years and are suitable for some people with disabilities. The possible reason is that strict government laws related to the preparation of facilities to serve all people with disabilities without barriers. The private sector has witnessed deficiencies in the implementation of practical requirements for buildings in the past that were not widely applied and imposed, as is the case at present.

I have not been deprived of any right by the employer, so my rights are respected and upheld. (Man: deaf)

Work environments are suitable now and are more developed than before because they provide safe and suitable places to work for people with disabilities. There is a great interest from employers to create working environments. (Man: physical disability)

Theme 2: Challenges Faced by People with Disabilities Regarding Employment

This theme is divided into five subthemes: health and physical status of persons with disabilities, social environment, fears and excessive protection from families, use of social media, and lack of employment in the private sector.

Subtheme 1: Health and Physical Status of People with Disabilities

Health status is an obstacle for employers, and they prefer people who have no health problems and are physically healthy for work continuity and productivity. Given that the private sector is a profit-oriented entity, employers will naturally seek employees who will help increase company income. In this study, the majority of people with disabilities have excellent health conditions that do not impede their work performance. Madden found a distinction between people who are in good health and those who are not; thus, their ability to work may be affected by their health status [11].

There are no challenges related to health or physical weakness that prevent me from working, but some people with disabilities have severe health challenges that prevent employers from hiring them. (Female: Blind)

My health and physical condition do not allow me to work for long periods. I work for five to six hours, and my employer agrees with this condition. (Female: physical disability)

Subtheme 2: Social Environment

People with disabilities face some difficulties at work, such as the lack of fully equipped facilities and repetition of tasks, leading to a monotonous routine. Some places are uncomfortable to work because of the psychological and physical pressure and the difficulty of dealing with employers and customers. Perhaps the most prominent difficulties are the lack of trust of others in the capabilities of those with disabilities and the negative view of some employees, employers, and members of society toward their presence in sensitive jobs. Mansour indicated that the social environment is a factor that is a source of concern for people with disabilities regarding negative attitudes by clients, as well as for employers in employing persons with disabilities [28].

There is a negative perception of people with disabilities in the workplace, but it is not high. (Man: physical disability)

The lack of trust of others in the abilities of people with disabilities constitutes a difficult challenge for us to prove our capabilities. (Man: deaf)

However, people with disabilities reported some satisfaction with the assistance provided by non-disabled co-workers to overcome obstacles when face and communicate with the public. Communication with customers generates fear among some people with disabilities, particularly in understanding the former's requirements, causing the latter considerable embarrassment.

Cooperation of colleagues is delightful. We did not face a problem, and everyone is supportive. We work equally, our success is also their success, and the support was not based on pity or helplessness. (Female: physical disability)

Communication is difficult with customers and there is a fear of unwanted reactions because we do not hear and cannot communicate with others without sign language. (Female: deaf)

Some private sector employers completely trust people with disabilities in their work. People with disabilities indicated that their superiors trust their work and performance and give them leadership and management opportunities if they have proven their capabilities.

It relies on people with disabilities seeing themselves if they have high confidence and professional capabilities. My boss gives me the confidence to complete various tasks. (Female: Blind)

Therefore, people with disabilities need support in their employment to provide them with self-confidence, stability, and the chance to participate in improving the national economy, themselves, and the family income. Appropriate practical environments provide opportunities to succeed in life, as well as and participate in society and in the development and building of society. Bruyère explained that a cohesive work environment among co-workers, supervisors, and people with disabilities reduces the barriers of lack of experience and skills for individuals with disabilities [35].

Subtheme 3: Fears and Excessive Protection from Families

Families of people with disabilities in this study support them in terms of employment and try to provide all moral and economic assistance for their success. Their families have no fears of mistreatment from others, looks, or mockery of

their condition. People with disabilities indicated that their families raised them to face difficulties and challenges and to not care about the mistreatment of others. Families taught their young members to respect and deal with others in accordance with their personal beliefs and to ignore the response to abuse. These situations have affected the personality of people with disabilities.

My family encourages and supports me to find a job. (Man: deaf)

Although the majority of the participants are under 24 years, raising families had a significant impact on the success of young people. Participants alluded about some of the experiences of families of people with disabilities and how they influenced their young members to continue studying and working in the private sector. By contrast, the participants almost unanimously agreed that the family's fear for their young members and their lack of confidence in employers and clients was a major reason for their failure to succeed in their job. Participants commented that some families excessively protect their young members, fearing that they will not succeed and be exploited by others. Al-Ajmi and Al-Battal found that there are obstacles preventing people with disabilities from being employed, such as the excessive protection of their families, resulting in the formation of certain beliefs, and thinking that others will mistreat young people in the workplace [24].

My family encourages me to be independent and self-reliant. Some families provide excessive protection, thereby affecting young people's personality, preventing self-reliance, making them dependent on others, and waning interest in looking for jobs. (Female: deaf)

Some families excessively protect their young members without justification because they fear mistreatment from others or bad work environments. Consequently, these fears limit young people from searching for work in the private sector. (Female: physical disability)

Lack of awareness makes some families decide not to allow their young members to search for or gain employment. Out of fear, families consider and ensure the safety of work environments before deciding to allow young people from working. Mingling and going out with others and working are beneficial for people with disabilities from the psychological, health, and financial aspects. This is what families should do and avoid unjustified fear and excessive protection. There is no objection to natural and reasonable fear if it does not affect the future of young people. In the current study, participants have friends with disabilities who left work because of their families, and their fear and belief that society and employers do not appreciate their effort.

Subtheme 4: Use of Social Media

People with disabilities communicate with each other on companies that offer employment, and they have the means of communication to assist them reach out to employers. Employers utilize social media, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, related to their need for employees. People with disabilities are aware of it and follow the means of communication, similar to other members of society.

As persons with disabilities, we do not experience challenges in accessing social media, and we use social media to look for work. We prefer to go to the work environment and see it before applying for the job officially. (Female: deaf)

Thus, persons with disabilities do not have difficulties in social communication or accessing social media networks. Many people with disabilities follow job advertisements in companies and apply for jobs in the private sector online. They fill out a job application and send resumes to employers. However, their applications are disregarded and the reasons are not mentioned. Rall et al. stated that women with disabilities do not have the ability to access social networks indicating job vacancies [22].

Yes, I have already applied for many jobs, but I was not accepted. Their reasons for rejecting me were not mentioned. (Man: physical disability)

I have previously applied for many jobs in the private sector and was rejected without mentioning the reasons. (Man: deaf)

Subtheme 5: Lack of Employment in the Private Sector

For lack of employment for individuals with disabilities in the private sector, the participants commented that the private sector in the past was unaware of the issue of employing people with disabilities, the effort of whom was hardly mentioned. The government sector was the one that included people with disabilities, although the private sector has changed and now believes in the existence of people with disabilities. Moreover, employers have full awareness of the capabilities of people with disabilities at work. Employing people with disabilities allows employers to obtain benefits from the government, such as the bonus and facilities systems. Society has also become more aware and accepting of people with disabilities and has given them opportunities for social integration in blended education and employment in the private sector.

Previously, there was a lack of jobs, but now there are many suitable jobs due to a change in the thinking and awareness of the private sector. The private sector has begun to believe in the abilities of people with disabilities and their integration into society. (Female: Blind)

According to statistics, employment of people with disabilities is still not satisfactory in the private sector. The problem is not in the lack of employment, but the number of applicants from people with disabilities and non-disabilities are more than the available jobs in the private sector. Thus, low employment of people with disabilities contributes to the problem of lack of personal independence for these individuals [14]. Meanwhile, contributions to the employment of people with disabilities are a type of social participation and independent life in society, as well as a type of social integration for these individuals [18] [29].

I do not think there is a shortage of jobs, but job seekers are more than the jobs offered. (Female: physical disability)

Conclusion

Employers and people with disabilities were discussed, focusing on their attitudes, challenges, and concerns in the latter's employment in the private sector. This study found some factors affecting the employment of people with disabilities in the private sector, such as the type and severity of disability, health conditions, overprotective families, poor use of modern technologies, and discrimination. In addition, the perspective of the participants indicated that employment provides an economic source of independence for people with disabilities and is beneficial to society's economy. However, employment of people with disabilities in the private sector still needs to increase to improve income and quality of life, as stipulated in KSA's Vision 2030. Ultimately, decision makers in employment must raise the level of awareness of the employment of people with disabilities and conduct educational and marketing programs while showing the capabilities of these individuals. To succeed in increasing employment rates for people with disabilities, labor laws and legislation for people with disabilities must be clear and comprehended by employers. Employers should consider the incentives they receive for hiring people with disabilities to contribute to promoting employment. Moreover, future research requires to focus on the social problems and characteristics of people with disabilities that may hinder their employment in the private sector.

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Availability of data and material:

Data are available from the author upon request.

Code availability:

Not applicable for that section

Ethical approval:

This study was approved by the Committee of Research Ethics of the Deanship of Scientific Research at Qassim University. This study included a review of ethical criteria such as research data, research community, data collection methods, educational institutions, potential research benefits, potential research risks if applicable, privacy and

confidentiality of participants, and researcher insight into study procedures. It abided by the rules regulating research ethics included in the “Regulations and Ethics of Scientific Research of the Deanship of Scientific Research at Qassim University” and “Regulating Rules.”

Consent to participate:

Participants were informed of the purpose, methods, and procedures of this study. Consent to participate was obtained from employers and people with disabilities prior to the start of the study. Moreover, participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without explaining the cause.

Consent for publication:

Permission was obtained from the participants to publish the research. The participants were given the opportunity to read and review the manuscript before publication.

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