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Quantifying Employment Barriers for People with Disabilities: A Statistical Investigation into Inclusivity Challenges

[1]Jessica M. Dela Cruz, [1]Glaize Yvette A. Encinares, [1]Faye Anne D. Garces, [1]Crisanto S. Ramirez*
Corresponding Author: * ramirezcrisanto1@gmail.com
[1] Camarines Norte State College, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the types and frequency of employment barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities in Daet, Camarines Norte. Data were collected using a survey questionnaire employing a 4-point Likert scale, employing a descriptive and mixed-method approach. Statistical analysis included percentage technique, weighted mean, and multiple response analysis. The study involved fifty (50) employed and unemployed individuals with disabilities, selected through purposive and quota sampling. Findings indicated several prevalent employment barriers, including insufficient technological support, social exclusion due to physical impairments, inadequate facility modifications for accessibility, relegation to menial tasks, lack of employer awareness regarding disability employment laws, and managerial awareness of equal opportunity concepts without corresponding motivation for action.

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Introduction

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2006, acknowledged the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights, affirming the entitlement of all individuals to rights and freedoms without discrimination. It underscores the necessity of equalizing opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and integrating disability issues into sustainable development strategies. The Convention aims to promote, protect, and guarantee the comprehensive and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for PWDs, while also fostering respect for their inherent dignity [1].

In the article "Disability Barriers to Inclusion" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) identifies barriers to individuals with disabilities as encompassing more than just physical obstacles. These barriers, as described by WHO, extend to environmental factors that either limit functioning or create disability through their presence or absence. Such factors include an inaccessible physical environment, insufficient assistive technology, negative societal attitudes toward disability, and a lack of supportive services, systems, and policies. Moreover, the presence of multiple barriers often renders it exceptionally challenging, if not impossible, for people with disabilities to engage fully. Common types of barriers cited include attitudinal, communication, physical, policy, programmatic, social, and transportation barriers [2]. The government of the Philippines has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which provides rights and protections for individuals with disabilities, including their right to employment and equal treatment in the workplace. Republic Act 7277, also known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, serves as the primary statute governing employment for people with disabilities in the country. This law mandates the creation of job opportunities, promotion of employment for PWDs, and provision of suitable workplace accommodations [3].

Furthermore, in alignment with the objectives of this act, Republic Act 10524 requires employers to reserve at least 1% of their workforce for individuals with disabilities. However, despite the government's extensive efforts to facilitate full and productive employment for PWDs, it remains evident that employment opportunities for this segment of the population remain limited. PWDs often face significant barriers to employment, including discrimination and prejudicial attitudes during the hiring process, resulting in a disproportionately high rate of unemployment. According to Ref. [4], the labor situation for Filipino PWDs worsened during the pandemic, with their labor force participation declining from 22% in January 2019 to 18% in January 2022. Simultaneously, unemployment among PWDs increased from 4.5% to 7% over the same period, as highlighted in the same study. The implementation of laws during the pandemic exacerbated various issues, with a significant proportion of PWDs either remaining

unemployed or being employed in the informal economy. This precarious financial situation further burdens this vulnerable population group.

On July 15, 2014, in response to the Provincial Council on Disability Affairs' call, led by Dr. Rex Bernardo, a person with a disability and advocate, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Camarines Norte enacted Provincial Ordinance No. 20-2014. Titled "An Ordinance Organizing and Establishing the Camarines Norte Provincial Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (CN-PDAO) by Provisions of Republic Act No. 7277, or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities as Amended by Republic Act No. 10070 and Appropriating Funds Therefore," this ordinance marked the creation of the first Provincial-level Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO) in the Philippines. Notably, Camarines Norte, classified as a second-class province based on its income, achieved this milestone. The establishment and institutionalization of the PDAO catalyzed disability-inclusive development in the province, leading efforts to develop a comprehensive provincial plan of action for persons with disabilities [5].

Despite all levels policy making in both government and private sectors for PWDs to gather new opportunities and individual growth, Dr. Rex Bernardo, the same PWD advocate in Camarines Norte, stated during the World Economic Forum in East Asia (WEF-EA) held in Manila last May 2014 that only 10 percent of "employable" PWDs find decent jobs. The rest who are lucky enough to sign a contract or begin a business often end up doing menial work. He also claims that many PWDs have undergraduate or graduate degrees, but these seem to be not enough. The primary reason for this is that employers' preferences vary in hiring PWDs. In Camarines Norte, during the distribution of prosthetics for PWDs in August 2023, Dr. Rex Bernardo recently said in an interview with the researchers that society needs to consider PWDs in building infrastructures such as business establishments, companies, hotels, and other possible workplace for them."*Aside from Human Rights Approach, may tinatawag din tayong Social Model of Disability kung saan ibinibigay yung responsibilidad o yung burden ng integration hindi sa may kapansanan, dapat sa lipunan. Kagaya ko, hindi mo ako aasahan na pumunta sa mga lugar na may hagdan, eh PWD ako eh, dapat pag may hagdan mayroon ding ramp para sa amin*", he further added.

In pursuit of this goal, this study endeavors to contribute to the equitable inclusion of PWDs in workplaces, businesses, and communities. It seeks to create avenues for their advancement and to match their skills and competencies with suitable employment opportunities. Moreover, it aims to advocate for inclusivity in policies and practices, thereby mitigating the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities and ultimately increasing their employment rates. Specifically, the study aims to identify the types and frequency of employment barriers encountered by people with disabilities in Daet, Camarines Norte, and to

explore the factors contributing to these barriers. Additionally, it will assess the impact of these barriers on employment rates and job satisfaction among individuals with disabilities in the municipality. Lastly, the study will propose an action plan and present empirical data and statistical insights to inform policymakers, advocacy groups, and employers about strategies to enhance inclusivity and reduce employment barriers for individuals with disabilities in Daet, Camarines Norte. The researchers firmly believe that concerted efforts are necessary to ensure that policy implementation aligns with laws guaranteeing the rights of PWDs to employment.

The theoretical framework presented below forms the foundation of the researchers' study. The researchers presented a theory related to the current study, providing data that can be used to verify the study. It allowed the researchers to overcome the experiments designed to test them and see how the theoretical framework aided them in interpreting the study findings. Furthermore, the study is rooted in the theory of "Social Model of Disability," pioneered by Mike Oliver in 1983 [6]. This model posits that disability is a social construct, originating from societal organization itself. Society's structure caters primarily to non-disabled individuals, categorizing those who do not conform as disabled. The model highlights that complete societal engagement is not determined by the abilities of individuals with disabilities but by societal constructs hindering their inclusion.

Moreover, the social model perceives 'disability' as arising from the interaction between individuals living with impairments and an environment replete with physical, attitudinal, communication, and social barriers. Consequently, it implies that changes must occur in the physical, attitudinal, communication, and social milieu to facilitate the participation of individuals with impairments on equal footing with others. This perspective is crucial in identifying inequality, as it attributes disability to communities, services, and spaces that lack accessibility or inclusivity.

The theory of the Social Model of Disability supports the current study by offering a holistic understanding of disabilities, emphasizing societal factors rather than individual deficits, as implied by the researchers. It posits that disability primarily arises not from an individual's impairment or medical condition but from the societal, cultural, and environmental obstacles preventing full participation and inclusion—central themes addressed in the present study. The theory underscores the significance of examining societal factors hindering integration and equitable opportunities for individuals with disabilities. By recognizing that disability is not solely an individual's issue but a consequence of societal attitudes, norms, and inadequate infrastructure, the present study aims to elucidate the barriers constraining the complete potential and participation of people with disabilities across various life domains.

Furthermore, by applying the social model of disability, the study will receive theoretical support in examining the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in various domains such as education, employment, transportation, healthcare, social interactions, and accessibility. By embracing the social model of disability, the researchers aim not only to gain a deeper understanding of these barriers but also to foster the creation of tailored interventions and policies aimed at mitigating these challenges. Ultimately, the adoption of the social model of disability in the study will contribute to enhancing inclusivity and reducing employment barriers for individuals with disabilities.



Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework serves as a theoretical basis for the study. The dependent variable, the proposed action plan aiming to enhance employment rates and job satisfaction for individuals with disabilities, is influenced by several independent variables. These include understanding the demographic profile of the respondents, identifying employment barriers faced by people with disabilities, investigating factors contributing to these barriers, and proposing interventions to enhance inclusivity and reduce employment barriers in Daet, Camarines Norte.

The researchers designed a paradigm resembling a wheelchair, a prominent assistive device symbolizing mobility and improved quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The wheelchair represents accessibility, enabling users to pursue education, employment, social engagements, and access healthcare services. It signifies societal acceptance of individuals with disabilities and their embrace of challenges. Additionally, the researchers developed a color-coded wheel to represent various types of disabilities. Each independent variable, denoted by a specific color, serves as a tool to guide the study toward its objectives. Gold represents neurodivergence like autism, blue signifies psychiatric disabilities, green represents sensory disabilities, and red symbolizes physical disabilities. The central position of the dependent

variable, marked with violet, signifies the overarching goal of empowering the community of PWDs. These design elements were carefully crafted with the needs of individuals with disabilities in mind by the researchers.

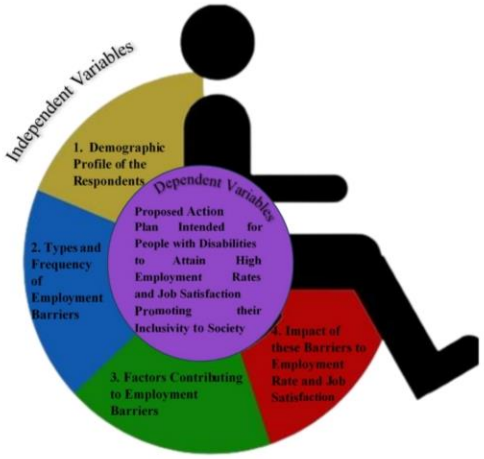


Fig. 2. Conceptual Framework

The general objective of this study is to systematically investigate and quantify the employment barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities in Daet, Camarines Norte, to provide valuable insights to inform policies and practices that promote inclusivity and reduce such barriers in the region. Specifically, it sought answers to the following objectives: (1) know the demographic profile of respondents in terms of (1.1) Age, (1.2) Gender, (1.3) Educational Background, (1.4) Type of Disability, (1.5) Employment Status, (1.6) Job Title, and (1.7) Monthly Income. (2) identify the types and frequency of employment barriers faced by people with disabilities in Daet, Camarines Norte in terms of (2.1) Lack of Accessibility, (2.2) Discrimination or Stigma, (2.3) Lack of Necessary Accommodations, (2.4) Limited Job Opportunities, (2.5) Lack of Support from Employers. (3) investigate the factors contributing to these employment barriers, including but not limited to (3.1) Societal Attitudes, (3.2) Workplace Policies, and (3.3) Accessibility Issues. (4) identify the barriers to the employment rate and job satisfaction among individuals with disabilities, and (5) propose an action plan and provide empirical data and statistical insights that can inform policymakers, advocacy groups, and employers on strategies to enhance inclusivity and reduce employment barriers for individuals with disabilities in Daet, Camarines Norte.

Material and Methods

A. Setting

The study is set in Daet, Camarines Norte, a dynamic urban center in the Bicol Region of the Philippines, characterized by diverse economic activities and a mix of residential,

commercial, and industrial areas. Despite the presence of modern amenities, individuals with disabilities encounter significant barriers to employment and societal participation, reflecting broader challenges in accessibility and inclusivity. Against this backdrop, the study aims to investigate and quantify the employment barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in Daet, informing local policies and practices to promote inclusivity and reduce discrimination. Through targeted interventions and empirical data, the study seeks to contribute to enhancing opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the region.

B. Respondents of the Study

The study included fifty (50) individuals with disabilities, encompassing both employed and unemployed participants, from Daet, Camarines Norte. A rigorous selection process was employed by the researchers to ensure the inclusion of respondents possessing qualifications and characteristics deemed pertinent to the study's objectives and research inquiries using purposive and quota sampling.

C. Instrumentation

The researchers utilized a survey questionnaire comprising four (4) sections. Part I consisted of a checklist about the demographic profile of the respondents, encompassing variables such as age, gender, educational background, type of disability, employment status, job title, and monthly income. Part II employed a Likert Scale format, presenting a list of barriers encountered by PWDs, prompting respondents to rate their experiences regarding these barriers, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Part III was subdivided into three (3) sections, also utilizing a Likert Scale. The first section gauged respondents' levels of awareness and acceptance towards individuals with disabilities, allowing them to express their opinions on a scale ranging from "very low" to "very high." The second section assessed workplace policies supporting individuals with disabilities, with response options ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Additionally, the third section addressed accessibility issues, prompting respondents to rate the accessibility of these issues based on their experiences, ranging from "very inaccessible" to "very accessible." Lastly, Part IV of the questionnaire comprised a checklist wherein respondents were provided with a list of barriers encountered by PWDs, prompting them to indicate the barriers affecting their employment rate and job satisfaction.

D. Data Collection

This study utilized both primary and secondary sources for data collection. Primary data were gathered through a survey questionnaire administered to individuals with disabilities in Daet, Camarines Norte, covering employment experiences, perceived barriers, and demographics. Additionally, primary sources included arranged interviews with employers,

HR professionals, disability service providers, and community surveys. Ethical standards were strictly upheld throughout these interactions. Secondary sources comprised published and unpublished articles, studies, and literature from libraries and the internet. The researchers aided respondents in understanding and completing the questionnaire and subsequently analyzed the collected data.

E. Data Analysis Techniques

In analyzing the data, the researchers employed statistical methods. Data were organized using tables to present a comprehensive overview. The following techniques were utilized for thorough analysis: Percentage technique was applied to ascertain the demographic profile of respondents, encompassing age, gender, educational background, type of disability, employment status, job title, and monthly income; Weighted mean analysis was employed to determine the type and frequency of employment barriers, including lack of accessibility, discrimination or stigma, lack of necessary accommodations, limited job opportunities, and lack of support from employers, as well as to investigate societal attitudes, workplace policies, and accessibility issues in Daet, Camarines Norte; Multiple Response Analysis was utilized to identify employment barriers impacting employment rate and job satisfaction.

Results and Discussion

A. Demographic profile of the respondents.

The age range of the respondents ranged from 18 to 65 or older. Twelve respondents, or 24%, fell within the 45-54 years old category; eleven respondents, or 22%, were between 25-34 and 35-44 years old; nine respondents, or 18%, were aged 55-64 years old; four respondents, or 8%, were between 18- 24 years old; and three respondents, or 6%, were 65 or older.

In terms of the gender profile, the majority of the respondents were female, accounting for a frequency of 26, or 52%. Following this, 22 respondents, or 44%, identified as male. The smallest group comprised individuals who preferred not to disclose their gender, with a frequency of 2, or 4%. In terms of educational background, the majority of the respondents had attained a College/University level of education, accounting for a frequency of 36, or 72%. Following this, 9 respondents, or 18%, had attained a Secondary Level of education. In third place, 4 respondents, or 8%, had attained education up to the Primary School level. The least common educational attainment among respondents was Vocational/Technical School, with 1 response, or 2%.

Regarding the type of disability among the respondents, physical disability was the most prevalent with 28 responses, accounting for 54% of the survey. In second place, 9 respondents, or 18%, reported having a Visual Disability. Thirdly, 8 respondents, or 16%, identified as having Psychosocial Disability. Fourthly, 3 respondents, or 6%, reported having

an Intellectual Disability. Fifthly, 2 respondents, or 5%, reported being Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Lastly, mental disability had the lowest frequency in the survey, with only 1 response, representing 2% of the total respondents.

In terms of employment status, unemployed people with disabilities got the highest frequency in the survey with 28 responses or 56%, while employed respondents got the lowest frequency of 22 or 44%. In terms of job titles, the majority of respondents held positions as Job Orders, with a frequency of 5, accounting for 23% of the total. Following this, 3 respondents, or 13.63%, were identified as Administrative Aides. In third place, 2 respondents each, or 9.09%, held positions as Barangay PWD President, Project Development Officer, Administrative Officer, and Encoder. Conversely, the least common job titles among respondents included casual workers, clerks, Local Revenue Collection Officer, Regional Competitiveness Committee, Administrative Assistant, and Stenographers, each with a frequency of 1, representing 4.54% of the total responses with information serving as barriers to accessing and utilizing assistive technologies for people with disabilities. Additionally, constraints such as inadequate funding, workforce shortages, the absence of barrier-free infrastructure, and limited awareness about new technologies contribute to the challenges faced in utilizing assistive technology.

Regarding monthly income, the majority of respondents reported having incomes below 5,000, with a frequency of 28 or 56%. Following this, 10 respondents, or 20%, reported incomes ranging from 5,001 to 10,000. In third place, 4 respondents, or 8%, reported incomes between 10,001 and 15,000. Additionally, 3 respondents, or 6%, reported incomes between 15,001 and 20,000. Furthermore, 2 respondents, or 4%, reported incomes of 30,000 and above. Conversely, the least common income brackets among respondents included incomes ranging from 20,000 to 25,000, 25,001 to 30,000, and 30,001 to 35,000, each with a frequency of 1, or 2%.

B. Employment barriers encountered by people with disabilities.

1. Accessibility

This study revealed that a majority of the respondents faced challenges in accessing technological support, particularly those who were unemployed and had lower levels of education. These individuals lacked knowledge in utilizing appropriate technologies to assist them with their disabilities. Examples of such technologies include assistive devices such as screen readers, mobility aids, hearing aids, and advanced wheelchairs.

Table 1. Accessibility

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Absence of wheelchair ramps, elevators, and sidewalks for PWDs	2.86	A
Narrow/crowded office structures	2.92	A
Unorganized placements of office machines and equipment	2.88	A
Lack of technological support	2.94	A
Lack of accessible transportation	2.54	A
Average Weighted Mean	2.82	A

Legend:3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 1.76-2.50 Disagree (D); 2.51-3.25 Agree (A); 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree (SD)

According to Ref. [7], while assistive technology holds significant potential to assist individuals with disabilities, it can inadvertently create barriers for some users. Factors such as affordability, availability, and lack of Discrimination or Stigma. Based on the survey findings, a significant number of individuals with disabilities reported experiencing social exclusion due to their physical impairments, leading to instances of discrimination. Moreover, respondents indicated that this social exclusion negatively impacts their self-esteem, particularly in their pursuit of securing decent employment opportunities. Many respondents expressed concerns that potential employers may not hire them or provide necessary support due to their disabilities. Despite the presence of protective legislation such as RA 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, discriminatory attitudes persist in the workplace, posing barriers to the employment prospects of people with disabilities within the community.

2. Discrimination or Stigma

Based on the survey findings, a significant number of individuals with disabilities reported experiencing social exclusion due to their physical impairments, leading to instances of discrimination. Moreover, respondents indicated that this social exclusion negatively impacts their self-esteem, particularly in their pursuit of securing decent employment opportunities. Many respondents expressed concerns that potential employers may not hire them or provide necessary support due to their disabilities. Despite the presence of protective legislation such as RA 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, discriminatory attitudes persist in the workplace, posing barriers to the employment prospects of people with disabilities within the community.

According to Ref. [8] work and employment hold a pivotal role in individuals' lives, contributing significantly to social inclusion and overall well-being. The study highlighted that societal negative attitudes, leading to discrimination in the workplace, along with inadequate infrastructure, pose significant obstacles to the employment of people with disabilities. Furthermore, misconceptions regarding the capabilities of individuals with

disabilities to work are key factors contributing to their ongoing unemployment. Additionally, for those who are employed, these misconceptions often result in their exclusion from higher-prestige job opportunities.

Table 2. Discrimination or Stigma

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Negative attitudes of employers	2.90	A
Being bullied in the workplace	2.92	A
Repeated rejection and neglect capabilities	2.84	A
Being an outcast due to physical impairments	3.00	A
Presumed to be helpless and incapable	2.90	A
Average Weighted Mean	2.91	A

Legend: 3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 1.76-2.50 Disagree (D); 2.51-3.25 Agree (A); 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree (SD)

3. Necessary Accommodations.

The survey findings highlight a prevalent issue of inadequate modifications to existing facilities, hindering accessibility and usability for employees with disabilities. The study reveals that many workplaces in the area lack the necessary adjustments to provide a spacious and comfortable working environment for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, there is a notable lack of awareness among employers regarding the development and modification of facilities and policies to accommodate the employment needs of individuals with disabilities. Consequently, people with disabilities in the community encounter physical barriers when accessing establishments that do not have ramps, elevators, or appropriately designed comfort rooms.

Ref. [9] explored the intricate challenges confronting individuals with disabilities in the Philippines regarding occupational rehabilitation and work integration. The study illuminated the multifaceted nature of these challenges, which encompassed the socio-political system, labor infrastructure, and legislative frameworks. Within the socio-political context, societal perceptions and attitudes towards disabilities significantly influenced employment opportunities and social inclusion. Moreover, the inadequate labor infrastructure, including inaccessible workplaces and transportation, exacerbated barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. Despite legislative efforts such as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 7277) aimed at promoting equal opportunities, challenges persisted in the implementation and monitoring of these laws, leading to inconsistencies and gaps in their application. Consequently, many individuals with disabilities continued to face discrimination and obstacles to accessing employment opportunities. Addressing these challenges required a holistic approach that encompassed legislative reforms, changes in societal attitudes, infrastructure improvements, and enhanced support mechanisms to

facilitate the full participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce and promote economic independence.

Table 3. Necessary Accommodations

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Lack of access to training and seminars.	2.78	A
Absence of providing assistive technology or devices.	2.88	A
Inadequate modifications to existing facilities to make them readily accessible and usable by employees with disabilities.	2.90	A
Not modifying work policies or workplace rules specifically for individuals with disabilities.	2.84	A
Lack of restrooms designed for people with disabilities.	2.84	A
Average Weighted Mean	2.84	A

Legend:3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 1.76-2.50 Disagree (D); 2.51-3.25 Agree (A); 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree (SD)

4. Job Opportunities

According to the survey, individuals with disabilities were often offered menial work. Many unemployed individuals with impairments undertook jobs requiring minimal effort, such as dishwashing, cleaning, tailoring, and other tasks, solely to generate income. Respondents expressed that such work was necessary for survival, with limited options available due to their disabilities. Among the employed respondents, a majority held job orders with low incomes. Additionally, respondents noted a lack of employer awareness regarding laws about the employment of people with disabilities. They observed a preference among employers to hire individuals without impairments, overlooking the skills and potential of those with disabilities. This indicates a perceived laxity in government enforcement of employment laws for people with disabilities, as reported by respondents. These findings underscore the urgent need for enhanced awareness and stricter enforcement of legislation to ensure equal employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Furthermore, Ref. [10] revealed that PWD mostly faced the following problems: difficulties in obtaining employment, lack of recognition of their potential, prejudice on behalf of employers regarding their skills and capacities, early abandonment of education, and physical barriers. A certain number of PWD faced limitations primarily related to low levels of motivation to engage in employment, actively seek employment, engage in professional rehabilitation programs, advance in education, or become self-employed. However, a majority of PWD wished to engage in some form of employment, in areas adapted to their capacities, and with modified working hours.

5. Support from Employers

According to the survey, managers were aware of the concept of equal opportunity for PWDs but were not motivated to take action. The respondents stated that most workplaces in their area disregarded the law concerning individuals with disabilities employment

because they believed it required too much effort to cater to their needs. Additionally, the government did not provide employers with sufficient motivation to comply with these laws and regulations for equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Respondents believed that a thorough understanding of their needs and nature was vital for a well-implemented law to protect their rights to employment.

Table 4. Job Opportunities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Often offered to do menial work.	2.90	A
Unable to meet the job description.	2.82	A
Awareness of employers towards the law on employing PWDs.	2.89	A
Knowledge in locating suitable jobs.	2.88	A
Lack of career development opportunities such as being passed over for promotion and higher duties, lack of job rotation, etc.	2.86	A
Average Weighted Mean	2.87	A

Legend:3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 1.76-2.50 Disagree (D); 2.51-3.25 Agree (A); 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree (SD)

The study by Ref. [11] indicated that the persistent above-average unemployment rate among people with disabilities (PWD) and the government's ineffective measures underscore the importance of companies taking action on this issue. A comprehensive understanding of the impacts and implications of employing PWD and vocational rehabilitation is necessary for strategic corporate management to actively promote the integration of PWD into the labor market.

Table 5. Support from Employers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Unequal benefits and incentives.	2.62	A
Lack of provided training and seminars for skills development.	2.64	A
Managers are aware of the concept of equal opportunity for PWDs but are not motivated to take action.	2.82	A
Employers were worried about additional costs in providing training, supervision, and accommodation if PWDs were employed.	2.80	A
Lack of awareness and understanding about disability-related needs and accommodations by employers.	2.80	A
Average Weighted Mean	2.73	A

Legend:3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 1.76-2.50 Disagree (D); 2.51-3.25 Agree (A); 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree (SD)

C. Factors contributing to employment barriers.

1. Societal Attitudes

According to the survey, the majority of respondents indicated that people in their environment were moderately aware of and accepting of individuals with disabilities as part of society. This suggests that acceptance from society remains selective, with some only

accepting and respecting individuals with disabilities whom they typically interact with, rather than extending inclusivity to all. Consequently, society's promotion of inclusivity and equality towards individuals with disabilities lacks consistency. Respondents noted instances where they were perceived as incapable of performing normal tasks, particularly when applying for jobs. Despite efforts to raise awareness and enforce the rights of individuals with disabilities in the workplace, they still encounter employers who are reluctant to hire them.

Ref. [12] highlights that historically, individuals with disabilities have been integral members of society, yet they were not always afforded the acceptance and care they receive today. Prevailing social constructs and attitudes have shaped societal perceptions and consequently influenced how individuals with disabilities are treated. Fostering greater compassion, awareness, and understanding can significantly impact the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Table 6. Societal Attitudes

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Societal Inclusion: People with disabilities are part of the society.	3.38	M
Rights and Privileges: People with disabilities have the rights and privileges to actively participate in society.	2.92	M
Challenges Encountered: Individuals with disabilities face challenges that society needs to consider.	3	M
Employment Opportunities: People with disabilities are capable of employment despite their impairments.	3.08	M
Skills and Capabilities: Individuals with disabilities have their skills and capabilities to consider.	3.06	M
Average Weighted Mean	3.08	M

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Very High (VH); 1.81-2.69 Low (L); 3.41-4.20 High (H); 1.00-1.80 Very Low (VL); 2.61-3.40 Moderate (M)

2. Workplace Policies

The majority of the respondents concurred that both employers and employees are cognizant of the rights and privileges accorded to employees with disabilities, yet adherence to these rights in the workplace lacks consistency. Respondents noted that due to the time and effort required to accommodate their needs, some organizations tend to overlook them. However, employed respondents expressed gratitude for their current harmonious work environments, having experienced various prejudices in previous roles. Furthermore, respondents reported receiving equal benefits and incentives, thanks to the implementation of laws safeguarding the rights of individuals with disabilities. Nonetheless, while workplaces may have existing policies to support individuals with disabilities, the modification and enhancement of these policies are deemed necessary for true effectiveness, as indicated by the survey results.

According to Ref. [13], an inclusive workplace extends a warm welcome and provides support to individuals with differences, not limited to those with disabilities. It emphasizes equal opportunities for all to thrive. Numerous workplaces allocate resources towards fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. A significant aspect of disability inclusion involves encouraging employees to seek assistance when needed.

Table 7. Workplace Policies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Local workplaces consider people with disabilities in policymaking to support diversity and anti-discrimination.	3.04	A
Employers and employees are aware of the rights and privileges of employees with disabilities.	3.09	A
Workplaces have an accessible environment for employees with disabilities to perform their jobs effectively.	3	A
Employers provide people with disabilities accommodations once employed such as innovative assistive devices, and flexible work arrangements.	2.6	A
Employers create an inclusive and supportive working environment for people with disabilities through retention and promotion.	2.87	A
Average Weighted Mean	2.92	A

Legend:3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 1.76-2.50 Disagree (D); 2.51-3.25 Agree (A); 1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree (SD)

3. Accessibility Issues

Most respondents concurred that they encountered attitudinal barriers, including negative attitudes or stereotypes from employers or coworkers regarding the capabilities of individuals with disabilities. They noted a lack of awareness and understanding about disability-related needs and accommodations in the workplace. Some respondents reported experiencing bullying and being excluded when attempting to engage with their coworkers due to their disabilities.

Table 8. Accessibility Issues

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Physical Accessibility	1.90	I
Communication Barriers	1.86	I
Information Accessibility	1.86	I
Transportation Challenges	1.88	I
Attitudinal Barriers	1.94	I
Inaccessible Workspaces	1.93	I
Inadequate Training and Awareness	1.92	I
Employment Discrimination	1.86	I
Mental Health Support	1.84	I
Transportation to Work	1.84	I
Average Weighted Mean	1.88	I

Legend:3.26-4.00 Very Accessible (VA); 1.76-2.50 Inaccessible (I); 2.51-3.25 Accessible (A); 1.00-1.75 Very Inaccessible (VI)

Their skills were often underestimated, and they were perceived as unproductive, exacerbating the challenges they faced in the workplace. As per Ref. [14], negative or restrictive stereotypes of individuals with disabilities, pervasive in societal attitudes and

various media representations, play a role in fostering social isolation and exclusion within this demographic. The notably lower rates of employment among people with disabilities further exacerbate issues such as poverty, financial instability, and mental health concerns.

D. Barriers to employment rate and job satisfaction

1. Barriers to Employment Rate

Discrimination or stigma emerges as the primary barrier impacting the employment rate, according to respondents. This highlights the pervasive discrimination faced by individuals with disabilities, both within the workplace and society at large. Some respondents noted experiencing negative attitudes from others due to their disabilities, leading to a loss of confidence in job applications and ultimately contributing to lower employment rates among PWDs.

According to Ref. [15], workplace discrimination often manifests subtly, yet individuals with disabilities have voiced that negative attitudes towards disability significantly influence their employment success. A study involving mock job applications revealed that disclosing a disability resulted in 26% fewer expressions of employer interest compared to non-disclosure. People with disabilities perceive stigmatizing attitudes to impede their career progression, leading to challenges in securing employment, obtaining promotions, facing extended probationary periods, or experiencing differential treatment compared to colleagues without disabilities. Negative biases in the workplace, such as feeling underestimated, insulted, excluded, or observing discomfort among coworkers due to their disability, further exacerbate these challenges.

Table 9. Barriers to Employment Rate

Category	*Frequency	Percent of responses (%)
Lack of Accessibility	21	15
Discrimination or Stigma	39	28
Lack of Necessary Accommodations	28	20
Limited Job Opportunities	33	24
Lack of Support from Employers	18	13
Total	139	100

*Multiple Response

2. Barriers to Job Satisfaction

The majority of respondents concurred that Discrimination or Stigma significantly affects their job satisfaction. They noted that experiencing discrimination in the workplace diminishes their commitment to their duties. Furthermore, individuals with disabilities assigned lower positions or menial tasks often express dissatisfaction with their roles in the workplace. According to Ref. [16], people with disabilities encounter common patterns of discrimination. They contend with high unemployment rates, encounter prejudices

regarding their productivity, and are frequently excluded from the labor market. Additionally, they often face discrimination during the hiring process.

Furthermore, despite legal protections against discrimination, individuals with disabilities still encounter systemic barriers to accessing employment opportunities. Addressing these issues requires concerted efforts from both policymakers and employers to create inclusive workplaces and promote equal opportunities for all.

Table 10. Barriers to Job Satisfaction

Category	*Frequency	Percent of responses (%)
Lack of Accessibility	18	24
Discrimination or Stigma	20	27
Lack of Necessary Accommodations	15	20
Limited Job Opportunities	10	13
Lack of Support from Employers	12	16
Total	75	100

*Multiple Response

3. The suggested action plan on the barriers to employment rate of people with disabilities.

First, Discrimination or Stigma will be addressed through the Disability Sensitivity Awareness Seminar for Employers. In this activity, employers will gain a better understanding of policies regarding the hiring process of people with disabilities and will create a barrier-free working place for them. According to Ref. [17], HR will also need to create spaces within the organization where managers and employees can learn informally and build capacity around creating inclusive workplaces. By the end of this activity, employers will have enhanced awareness of how to deal with people with disabilities and will provide more employment opportunities for them, leading to higher employment rates.

Limited Job Opportunities are also identified as a barrier affecting the employment rate of people with disabilities. Therefore, organizing job fairs exclusively for individuals with disabilities presents a valuable opportunity for them to connect with potential employers and improve their prospects of securing employment tailored to the program that caters specifically to their needs, participants can expect to explore a wider range of job opportunities and enhance their chances of finding suitable employment, ultimately leading to increased employment rates. According to Ref. {18], job fairs play a crucial role in supporting the employment of people with disabilities by providing access to job vacancies, facilitating direct communication with employers, and offering a platform to explore various employment options within a single event. Finally, the Lack of Necessary Accommodations can be tackled by promoting the engagement of people with disabilities in Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. Through these programs, individuals with

disabilities can access employment opportunities by availing themselves of assessment services, counseling, vocational training, job search assistance, placement support, and job coaching. In the article of Ref. [19], vocational rehabilitation offers a multitude of benefits to individuals with disabilities, including enhancements to the overall quality of life, fostering independence, and promoting self-sufficiency. By participating in Vocational Rehabilitation, individuals can acquire the essential skills and resources needed to thrive in the workforce, thereby facilitating their journey toward greater self-sufficiency.

Table 11. Barriers to Employment Rate

Barriers to Employment Rate	Actions/ Activities	Objectives	Person(s) Involved	Expected Outcome
Discrimination or Stigma	Disability Sensitivity Awareness Seminar for Employers	Employers will have a better understanding of policies regarding the hiring of people with disabilities and create a barrier-free working place for them.	Employers, Human Resource Professionals, Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO), and CNSC Office Administration Faculty	Employers are aware of policies and establish a barrier-free working environment for people with disabilities.
Limited Job Opportunities	Job Fairs exclusive for people with disabilities	People with disabilities will have the chance to meet with potential employers and increase their chances of being employed as the program is intended for them.	Employers, Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO), and CNSC Office Administration Faculty	More opportunities for people with disabilities will arise which will lead to higher employment rates for them.
Necessary Accommodations	Encourage people with disabilities to engage in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for skills development and employment guidance.	To help people with disabilities obtain employment through assessment services, counseling and guidance, vocational training, job search, job placement, and job coaching.	Employers, Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), CNSC Office Administration Faculty	People with disabilities will have developed skills and will be fully integrated into the workplace.

4. The suggested action plan on the barriers to job satisfaction of people with disabilities

Firstly, Discrimination or Stigma can be addressed through employee training sessions focused on discrimination issues and fostering inclusive behavior. Through this initiative, all employees will receive comprehensive information about the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, fostering the creation of an inclusive working environment. Upon completion of this activity, employees with disabilities will be able to contribute to a harmonious and prejudice-free workplace, thereby enhancing overall satisfaction. As emphasized by Ref. [20], disability training has the potential to raise awareness of unconscious bias, challenge stereotypes, educate individuals on disabilities, and promote understanding of the challenges faced by people with disabilities. It can effectively dismantle barriers to working with individuals with disabilities and provide insights into

positive solutions for fostering thriving workplaces. Addressing the Lack of Accessibility involves modifying existing workplace facilities and renovating establishments to ensure they comply with the requirements outlined in the IRR of RA 10524, or the Act Expanding the Government Positions Reserved for Persons with Disabilities [21].

Table 12. Proposed Action Plan to Increase Job Satisfaction

Barriers to Employment Rate	Actions/ Activities	Objectives	Person(s) Involved	Expected Outcome
Discrimination or Stigma	Disability Training on employees, discrimination issues, and inclusive Behavior	To inform all employees about the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities to create an inclusive working environment.	Employers and all employees in workplaces in Daet, Camarines Norte, Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO), and CNSC Office Administration Faculty	Employees with disability can work in a harmonious and prejudice-free workplace.
Accessibility	Modify existing facilities in workplaces and renovate establish ents that do not have ramps, lifts, parking spaces, and comfort rooms for the use of people with disabilities in accordance to IRR of RA 10524 or An Act Expanding the Government Positions Reserved for Persons with Disabilities.	To have more accessible workplaces and lessen the physical barriers encountered by people with disabilities in their environment.	Employers, Local Government Unit of Daet, Camarines Norte (LGU Daet), Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO), and CNSC Office Administration Faculty	Employees with disabilities will have a convenient workplace for them to do their jobs without any hindrance.
Necessary Accommodations	Provide new and innovative Assistive devices for employees with disabilities in accordance to NCDA Board Resolution No. 4	For people with disabilities to perform their jobs effectively.	Employers, Local Government Unit of Daet, Camarines Norte (LGU Daet), Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office (PDAO), and CNSC Office Administration Faculty	People with disabilities are motivated to undertake their jobs effectively.

This entails installing ramps, lifts, parking spaces, and accessible comfort rooms to accommodate individuals with disabilities. According to the legislation, reasonable accommodation should be provided to ensure equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for persons with disabilities, without imposing undue burden. By enhancing accessibility in workplaces, physical barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities can be reduced. Ultimately, this initiative will result in employees with disabilities having a more convenient and satisfying work environment, conducive to their productivity and well-being. Furthermore, addressing the barrier of Lack of Necessary Accommodations can be achieved by providing innovative assistive devices for employees with disabilities, as outlined in NCDA Board Resolution No. 4 S/2021, "Guidelines for the Provision of Assistive Devices and Technology Services in the Philippines." These devices enable individuals with disabilities to perform their jobs effectively by assisting them with their impairments. Examples include advanced wheelchairs, screen readers, hearing aids, speech-generating

devices, mobility scooters, and prosthetics [22]. By implementing this initiative, individuals with disabilities will be empowered to fulfill their job responsibilities effectively, leading to greater career satisfaction.

Conclusion

The majority of people with disabilities fell between the ages of 45 and 54, as their disabilities developed in adulthood due to unfortunate occurrences or illness, rather than being genetic. Additionally, the majority of respondents were female. In terms of educational background, most respondents had attained a college or university level of education. Furthermore, a significant portion of the respondents suffered from physical disabilities, with a high rate of unemployment observed among this group. Among the employed respondents, the majority held job order positions. Regarding monthly income, most fell below 5,000, reflecting the challenges associated with unemployment and entry-level job positions.

The study revealed that people with disabilities encounter various employment barriers, including a lack of technological support, social exclusion due to physical impairments, inadequate modifications to workplace facilities for accessibility, limited job opportunities resulting in menial work assignments, employers' lack of awareness of laws regarding the employment of people with disabilities, and managers' awareness of equal opportunity concepts without corresponding motivation to take action. Based on the data obtained, the respondents indicated that there is a moderate level of awareness regarding the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in society. However, there is inconsistency among employers and employees in practicing the rights and privileges of employees with disabilities in the workplace. Attitudinal barriers and inaccessible workspaces were identified as contributing factors to the employment barriers faced by respondents in Daet, Camarines Norte. Based on the gathered data, discrimination or stigma emerged as the primary barrier affecting both the employment rate and job satisfaction of people with disabilities. To address this issue and improve employment rates, it is recommended that both individuals with disabilities and employers participate in seminars, job fairs, and rehabilitation programs. For enhancing job satisfaction, it is advised that individuals with disabilities, employers, and employees engage in training sessions, modify existing facilities and establishments, and provide new and innovative assistive devices tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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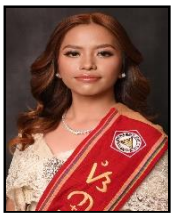
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Authors



Jessica M. Dela Cruz holds a Bachelor of Science in Office Administration from Camarines Norte State College in Daet, Camarines Norte. She is an active member of the Philippine Association of Students in Office Administration – CNSC Chapter (email: jessicamontondelacruz2201@gmail.com).



Glaize Yvette A. Encinares holds a Bachelor of Science in Office Administration from Camarines Norte State College in Daet, Camarines Norte. She is an active member of the Philippine Association of Students in Office Administration – CNSC Chapter (email: glaizeencinares@gmail.com).



Faye Anne D. Garces holds a Bachelor of Science in Office Administration from Camarines Norte State College in Daet, Camarines Norte. She is an active member of the Philippine Association of Students in Office Administration – CNSC Chapter (email: garcesfayeanne@gmail.com).



Crisanto S. Ramirez completed his undergraduate degree at Camarines Norte State College – Main Campus in 2013, Philippines. Subsequently, he gained experience as a Marketing Officer at a shopping mall, a Marketing Manager at a Quick-Service Restaurant, and also held a position at a bank. Currently, he is a college instructor at Camarines Norte State College, specifically within the College of Business and Public Administration. Additionally, he is an active member of the national organization known as the Philippine Association of Administrative Professionals and Educators in Office Administration, Inc. (PAAPEOA). (email: ramirezcrisanto1@gmail.com).