



**Arab American University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**Towards an Inclusive Strategy to Enhance the
Accessibility of People with Physical Disabilities to the
Palestinian Labor Market**

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APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE

**Towards an Inclusive Strategy to Enhance the Accessibility of People
with Physical Disabilities to the Palestinian Labor Market**

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DECLARATION

This work was not previously sent or submitted to any institution or university for any academic degree.

I am hereby declaring that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information that have been used in the thesis.

Layaly Merie: _____

June 2021

Signature:

DEDICATION

I would like to express, the deepest appreciation to my committee chair Dr Ahmad Sadaqa, who has continually and convincingly conveyed a spirit of perseverance in regard to research, and an excitement in regard to teaching. Without his guidance and persistent help, this thesis would not have been possible.

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Additional honest thanks are dedicated to my family, especially my great parents who never defined limits for success, my brother the shade of safe, my husband and my daughter Carmel; the bundle of joy and happiness. Also, I'm grateful for my great colleagues at Defense for Children International – Palestine.

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the barriers to employment facing people with disabilities (PwDs), mainly with physical impairments, in the West Bank. It aims at revealing the relationship between high unemployment rates and disability and how this relation is perceived by the PwDs themselves. It also links the unemployment rates among PwDs, with other factors, to clarify whether or not these factors affect the access of PwDs to the labor market.

Depending on the data and analysis, this detailed work comes to an end with some major observations; mainly the absence of active national strategies, as the official referent bodies do not have any future outlooks or statistical studies on the current situation of PwDs and how to improve it; the spread of the charitable approach rather than the rights-based approach by PwDs themselves, while the level of accessibility implementation is focused on the mobility adaptation only.

On the other hand, this research presents some recommendations as well as strategic goals and objectives that aim at enhancing and fostering the access of PwDs to the labor market.

KEY WORDS: People with disabilities (PwDs), people, with physical disabilities (PwPDs), employment, job opportunities, vocational training, rehabilitation, physical accessibility.

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LIST OF ABBTRVIATIONS

Table 1: List of Appreciations:

CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CwDs	Children with Disabilities
DPOs	Disabled Persons Organizations
GUPD	General Union for Persons with Disabilities
HI	Humanity & Inclusion
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PwDs	People with Disabilities
PwPDs	People with Physical Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
WwDs	Women with Disabilities
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) defines Disability as “an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions”. An impairment is a problem in body function to perform a specific activity; an activity restriction is a struggle encountered by an individual in performing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations (World Health Organisation, 2020).

However, the world countries did not have a unified definition, concerning the PwDs. Each country adapted a practical definition, based on their own policies available and the data they have collected, concerning PwDs (United Nation, Department of Economic and Social affairs, 2018).

More than one billion persons, all over the world, suffer at least of one type of disability, which means that 15% of the world’s populations are people with disabilities. Between 110 million (2.2%) and 190 million (3.8%) people 15 years and older have significant difficulties in functioning. The most common type of disability is the mobility impairments which refers to the persons inability to use one or more of his/her extremities. The use of a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker may be utilized to aid in mobility. (World Health Organisation, 2020)

According to the International Labor Organization, around 386 million of the world’s working-age people have some kind of disability. The unemployment among the persons with disabilities in some countries is as high as 80 per cent .According to the United Nations, the rate of unemployment among PwDs, in the developing countries swings between 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age, whereas in

industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70% (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019)

Despite the world attention towards human rights, in general, and disability rights, in particular, that has started since 1950s; the disability remained a social protection and welfare issue. Many declarations were issued focusing on shifting PwDs from welfare recipients to rights holders, starting from the first Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1971, until we have reached the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December 2006, and opened for signature on 30 March 2007 (United Nation, Department of Economic and Social affairs, 2018)

However, poverty rates are noticeably higher for individuals with disabilities on a world-wide level. The issue of disability and employment has a global concern, since it reflects different areas of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in which the confrontation of extreme poverty in its many manifestations is the number one goal (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016). In case of offering jobs for PwDs, they are often relegated to low-level, low-paid jobs with little social and legal security, or separated from the mainstream labor market. This affects their self-confidence. Many become discouraged and drop out, which increase the dependency on welfare and charitable programs. Yet experience shows that when they find jobs suited to their skills, abilities and interests, they can make significant contributions in the workplace (World Labour Organization, 2007).

PwDs are more likely to be unemployed and earn less income, even if employed. It is generally harder for PwDs to benefit from the development initiatives,

due to the same socio-economic consequences of disability, as imposed by their communities; namely, discrimination, limited accessibility and lack of access to resources that would enable self-employment and livelihood activities (World Health Organization & the World Bank, 2011).

At the Palestinian level, the latest data of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2017, showed that 225,228 Palestinian persons suffered from at least one difficulty which constitute 5.8% of the total population of Palestine; 127,266 in the West Bank constituting 5.1% of the total population of West Bank, and 127,962 in Gaza Strip constituting 6.8% of the total population of Gaza Strip. 2.9% of people with disabilities in Palestine are people with physical disabilities which represents the highest rate and most common type of disability (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). 24,000 persons with disabilities receive financial assistance from the Ministry of Social Development. 3.1% of young people in Palestine aged between (15 -29) are people with different disabilities (18,300 in the West Bank, while 22,242 in Gaza Strip) (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). This indicates the absence of the financial independence of PwDs in Palestine, which leads us to investigate; from where do PwDs secure their source of income or source financial assistance.

On the other hand, and in accordance to the ICF model, as human rights-based approach, an extensive attention should be given to the surrounding context, when talking about the disability. The oPt has been experiencing a continued military occupation, since 1967, which increase the human rights violations and the vulnerability of PwDs. Also, the continued conflict, economic stagnation and restricted trade and access to resources, coupled with high unemployment and poverty rates, among PwDs,

which continue to pose serious challenges to the achievement of the SDGs; mainly, zero hunger, food security and improved nutrition.

In 1999, the Palestinian Legislative Council, approved the Law no.4, concerning the rights of PwDs. The Palestinian Government assured that this law was developed using the bottom-up approach, involving social interaction from different social sectors and stakeholders, in addition to the extensive presence of lobbying and advocacy efforts. However, The General Union for Persons with Disabilities (GUPD), reported that they were excluded at a later stage from the working committee that was responsible for drafting this law. The formulation committee consists from GUPD, MOSD, MOE, civil society and governmental organizations was assigned to write the Law. As a result, the GUPD considered this law to be not representative of PwDs rights or ambitions but hope was shifted towards working on an executive order that would embody these rights (Ladadwa & Abdul Samad , 2021).

Another executive order was issued in 2004, by the Palestinian Authorities, concerning the rights of PwDs. Yet, PwDs perceived this order as rephrasing of the law no. 4, and lacked to the implementation techniques except for establishing the disability card which cover some services that is entitled by the MoSD, including; health, professional, educational, social integration services based on the type and degree of disability. However, the disabled card has not been issued due to the lack of sufficient budgets to grant the various rights and services covered by the executive order and the 1999 law. It should be noted that since 2019, the Palestinian Authority as announced on drafting a new law, for the rights of PwD, yet this remains a draft and will not defend the legal framework, until it enters the execution (Badawi A. A., 2013).

According to the UNCRPD, article 27; member states should promote for PwDs participation and enrollment in the labor market on equal biases with other people who do not suffer any type of disabilities. As per this article, the enrollment of PwDs in the labor market includes; exercising of labor and trade union rights, assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment, opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and start-ups, employment in both private and public sectors, in addition to the appropriate policies and measures (United Nations, 2018) .

It is noted that the convention on the rights of PwDs (UNCRPD) does not specify any percentage as a baseline for the enrollment of PwDs in the labor market. On the contrary, the convention stated “On an equal basis with others”, which indicates the importance of giving those marginalized groups the same level of opportunities as other people without disabilities. Thus, the 5 percent defined by the Palestinian law No. 4 is not fair as it does not give all the people with disabilities the same level of equality to be employed as other people. The situation in a neighbor country like Lebanon is not better; the Lebanese law 220 concerning PwDs rights demands that 3% of the institution's employees must be persons with disabilities (قانون 220، 2000)

In Jordan the operatory percentage by law is only 4% (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2017). This 4% will be considered law in line with the fact that 11% of the population in Jordan are PwDs (Department of Statistics, Jordan).

In the United Kingdom, the situation is a bit different; the unemployment rate amongst PwDs was 6.7% until July – September 2019 (Powell, 2020).

All the above facts, indicate the high percentage of unemployment between people with disabilities, in addition to the shortage of the supporting related service;

like, internships, fit to work and career guidance, law enforcement, employment counselling programs and many more services.

1.1 CONTEXUAL ANALYSIS IN THE OPT:

More than 70 years of occupation over the oPt by Israel have resulted in affecting the quality of Palestinian people life and well-being. The Israeli practices include restriction on movements, home demolitions and evictions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while more than 12 years of blockade over Gaza strip. These practices affect the quality of Palestinian people life on all levels.

As a result, the humanitarian needs in the oPt continue to be driven by a protracted protection crisis that leaves many Palestinians are struggling to live a life with dignity, lack of respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, internal Palestinian political divisions, and recurrent escalations of hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups.

Thus, we can illustrate that the humanitarian and protection situation in the oPt is challenging, given the fact that over two million Palestinians – around 40 per cent of the population, are experiencing, or at risk of, conflict and violence, displacement, and denial of access to livelihoods, among other threats; entrenched levels of food insecurity, brought on by high levels of poverty and unemployment especially among the refugee population; inadequate access to essential services for the most vulnerable households; and limited or declining ability of vulnerable households to cope with the prolonged nature of the humanitarian crisis (OCHA, 2020).

Such uncertain circumstances, mainly at the political level, increase the risks among Palestinian people. Being under occupation with all its consequences like military

attacks, detention and other illegal practices, increase the potential for Palestinians to gain a type of disability due to injuries. This can also explain the high rates of disability in the oPt.

Such political conditions also lead to uncertainty at other different levels, including the socioeconomic aspect, since there are different powers controlling over the oPt. As a result, the priority of the Palestinian Government will be to focus on securing the minimum economic security, instead of looking after the PwDs right to livelihood.

The political and socio-economic hardships became more challenging for the most marginalized groups, including PwDs, who face multi-layered discrimination and deprivation of their fundamental rights. This is even more obvious when we figure out the weaknesses in the capacity of service providers, particularly in terms of scarcity of services and programs targeting PwDs, including women survivors of violence, as well as the lack of specific policy and procedures for service delivery to this particular group, poor staff qualification and training, and the lack of basic access requirements, such as the required adaptations and accessibility of public facilities and points of service delivery, which hinders PwDs' access to the needed service.

Accordingly, it could be illustrated that PwDs are among the most deprived groups, inside the Palestinian society, lacking to enjoy equal rights with other people.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE, SCOPE & DEFINITIONS:

Given the fact that the State of Palestine has ratified several International conventions, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), in addition to the existence of a supportive legal frame, in addition to all the humanitarian movements led by International and local humanitarian organizations,

still, the rate of unemployed PwDs has grown from 24% (15.7% in West Bank and 41.2% in Gaza Strip) among the persons 15 years and above with disabilities in the labor force in 2007 to reach 37% (18.8% in West Bank and 53.7% in Gaza Strip) in 2017. However, 2.6% of Palestinian People are persons with or mobility impairments which is the highest percentage among other types of disabilities. (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

On the other hand, laws and policies in Palestine calling and promoting for the access of persons with disabilities to employment opportunities. According to the Palestinian Basic Law for the Year 2003, article 22 addresses the care for persons with disabilities as a duty regulated by law. “The National Authority shall guarantee their access to education, health and social insurance services”. (2003 Amended Basic Law, 2003). Also, articles No. 27 & 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities distinguish the rights of PwDs to work equally and gain living either in their own businesses; self-employment, or by being recruited in a job opportunity; wage employment. This would lead to PwDs access to equal living standards, including; access to food and other life fundamentals. The full access of persons with disabilities to labor market is still unachieved.

This leads to highlight some questions, in order to investigate the reasons behind this high rate of unemployment, amongst PwDs, mainly people with physical disabilities. It is important to shed the lights on the causes and the barriers that hinder the access of PwDs to the job opportunities.

The barriers that will be identified through this paper will provide the key actors in the disability sector and the relevant stakeholders with a rich material to draw their interventions with high level of efficiency. Also, the findings of such paper would

provide a thorough analysis for the actual socio-economic and legal situation of the employment and employability context for PwDs. This would support in developing efficient programs and interventions that respond to the real needs of PwDs, shifting the interventions from charitable and dependency approaches into rights-based and PwDs-centered approaches. This would increase the opportunities to mobilize funds, in order to fill in the defined gaps.

It should be noted that the economic empowerment of PwDs would lead the community to a new step of prosperity and growth, where people of disabilities can be independent and productive.

Thus, there is a need to dig more on what are the main obstacles that constrain an inclusive community, where people with disabilities; mainly physical disabilities, enjoy their access to livelihood resources and employment opportunities; whether wage employment or Self-employment. What are the main key strategies that should be considered and addressed by the community in general, and the rights holders, in particular, in order to assist PwDs to be fully mainstreamed in inclusive community that respects equality and opens decent job opportunities for everyone despite their race, religion, or disability, in line with the sustainable development goals, mainly; no poverty, zero hunger, decent work and economic growth, and reduced inequalities.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT:

According to the initial research findings, it was obvious that the Palestinian context lacks to the minimal and fundamental pillars that enhance to support the access of PwDs, to their rights. This includes the outdated laws, inapplicability, law social acceptance as well as the lack of knowledge concerning the rights of PwDs in general,

and the livelihood rights in particular. Henceforth, it was obvious that there is a problem that needs to be identified and investigated, in order to identify the gaps and draw potential strategies and solutions.

Based on the previous findings, presented above in the context of the paper topic, the researcher has defined the following problem statement:

Limited opportunities for PwDs to access the Palestinian labor market; weather self-employment or wage employment, in line with the limited legal supportive environment, physical accessibility and fair social practices.

This problem indicates that the general contest is inconsiderate for the rights of PwDs as independent and productive citizens who can seek and approach livelihood resources and live with limited needs of support. The problem itself reveals other aspects of limitations, including the lack of physical accessibility for PwDs, mainly with physical disabilities, which increase the needs of PwDs to rely on other people assistance, in their daily lives' activities and movements. Another issue that is included within this main problem is the lack of awareness and support for PwDs to be socially empowered and accepted to practice a normal life activity. Thus, it is very common and expected to find that PwDs themselves do not seek to develop their skills and seek jobs, since they don't find the needed physical, social and emotional support they would need.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The Main Objective of this proposed research is to shed the light on the key barriers facing people with Physical impairments access to employment and

employability in the Palestinian labor market, and define key strategic goals to overcome those obstacles.

This paper aims to serve as a reference for the relevant stakeholders, including the governmental authorities, local and international NGOs, that support the disability sector, especially those entities that adopt the SDGs and have further strategies to enhance the principles of equity, justice and non-discrimination. PwDs access to livelihood is part of achieving those ultimate goals, while also the disability sector has further areas than can be discovered and developed. Accordingly, this paper will also open further opportunities of development and support the concerned stakeholders to develop interventions' plans, weather in the form of applicable national strategies, or fund hunting applications.

However, this paper will not only investigate and dig into the root causes that affect the PwDs accessibility to the labor market, but also, it will draw key strategic goals that may serve as a basement for several further interventions, in line with the Palestinian context.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Accordingly, through this research, the researcher will attempt to answer main question of the research, as follows:

1. What are the key barriers facing people with physical impairments access to employment and employability in the Palestinian labor market?

Additionally, the researcher has identified some sub questions, in order to have a better vision of the context, and provide well-defined strategies that respond to the

The Fourth Hypothesis:

H4: For people with physical disabilities, the multiple official references for the disability and employment file; does not increase the access of PwD to the labor market, or enhance their opportunities.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Through this source-rich chapter, historical and theoretical contexts, literary books and previous studies on disability and employment relationships are presented. The theoretical framework is explored in the first section. The second section shall review the literature. It is divided into four main dependent themes:

- **First Theme:** Disability & Employment
- **Second Theme:** Legal Framework
- **Third Theme:** Pre-employment Rehabilitation Programs
- **Fourth Theme:** Gender & Disability

During the preparation phase of this study, it was obvious the lack of national studies concerning the employment rights of PwDs in Palestine, people with physical disabilities, in particular. Thus, a review for similar international studies was done.

Some recent studies that were conducted on this topic in Palestine level, including a research led by Humanity and Inclusion, formerly known as handicap International, lately in 2018. This research classified the barriers face by PwDs access to labor market into main four groups as the following:

- Low level of empowerment among females with disabilities that could contribute to their limited employment opportunities;
- Legal limitations due the lack of enforcement of the disability law;
- Lack of physical accessibility, including; access to the employment offices; location, building, and facilities;
- Lack of skills and experiences of PwDs due to their limited opportunities to access to education, trainings and social services.

Discussions and interviews done over HI research showed that the challenges facing job seekers, employees and former employees with disabilities are multilayered; during recruitment, before and after. Also, the study recommends a twin track approach to overcome the challenges and obstacles face by PwDs who are looking for job opportunities. This approach focuses on empowering people with disabilities in line with capacitating employers and authorities (public and private sectors) in order to remove barriers and create enabling environments for work (Humanity and Inclusion, 2018).

2.2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK:

At the beginning of the research, it was important to review the main concepts and key words of the research topic, in order to understand the casual effect relationships among the main factors and domains of the research.

One of these concepts is the rehabilitation. In accordance to the WHO concept note (2011), the Rehabilitation is defined as “a set of measures that assist individuals, who experience or are likely to experience disability, to achieve and maintain optimum functioning in interaction with their environment” The rehabilitation is an instrument that enables PwDs to function and remain independent, within their own communities, and participate in civic life, education and labor market. (World Health Organisation, 2012)

At some countries the rehabilitation at the employment level for PwDs, is linked to the vocational training and education programs. This is done through the programs adapted by Ministries of Gender, Education, Labor and Social Development established vocational rehabilitation and resettlement centers to serve the employment and skills

needs of PwDs (Nyombi & Kibandama, 2015). According to the UNESCO, Technical and vocational education and training' (TVET) is understood as “comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods”.

TVET includes a wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts, especially for people with disabilities with low opportunities to access regular education. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET (UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training., 2015).

Badawi (2013) noted that UNESCO and International Labor Organization unanimously defined TVET as: “A comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life” (Badawi A. A., 2013).

Another concept that is totally linked to the access of PwDs to the labor market, and any other facilities is the physical accessibility. According to the WHO (2013) this term refers to the availability of the services with a reasonable access to reach for all types of people no matter of their needs, to obtain the services upon their needs. This includes economic, information and another services, such as education, marketing, health, livelihood, ...etc. (Evans, Hsu, & Boerma, 2013)

Accessibility, as per the UN ESCAP (2019) consists of multiple inter-connected dimensions that together contribute to building a fully accessible and inclusive world,

all of which should be considered when looking to invest in accessibility. One of these dimensions is the environment both private and public spheres; It encompasses elements such as ramps, lifts and tactile paths on pavements, floor materials, offices, hospitals, courts, banks, shops, and other related facilities. Another dimension is the information and communication, which has been increasingly important as technologies developed and improved. This includes, television and radio as traditional media examples of these dimensions, while mobile phones, computers and tablets represent some newer iterations.

The other dimension is services, which incorporates elements from each of the other dimensions, but is focused on human interaction and the ability to undertake daily tasks and errands and access opportunities for personal growth and development. (Pacific, 2019).

2.2.1 THE NAGI DISABLEMENT MODEL:

The Nagi model indicates the concept of disability as “a physical or mental limitation in a social context”. This model presents this concept by emphasizing the gap between the PwD’s own abilities and the demands that should be provided by the social and physical environment. As per this model the physical and mobility limitations would not lead to disability itself, nevertheless, the disability is resulted by the interaction of both the individuals’ factors and the environment, as well.

Petrotte, Vina, Todde, Piras, Pistus & Masala (2017) built on Nagi’s model and defined five dimensions of disability grown from this line of scientific inquiry. These dimensions include; basic activities such as basic personal care; instrumental activities including preparing meals, housework, managing finances, using the telephone, and

shopping; paid and unpaid role activities include occupation, parenting, grandparenting, and student roles; social activities include attending church and other group activities and socializing with friends and relatives; and leisure activities include sport and physical recreation, reading, distinct trips, etc. (Petretto, et al., 2017)

2.2.2 ICF FRAMEWORK:

According to the ICF (Jette & Keysor, 2003), the definition of the body functions and structures; refers to the “*physiological function of the body system*”, while the activities’ participation refers to the execution of tasks and physical actions.

The participation restrictions are linked to problems that might be related either to the individual person or the surrounded environment. Especially that the involvement of PwDs in the life different activities would enhance their skills and knowledge, including general abilities, communication, self-care, confidence, ..etc. These definitions are important as the ICF model considers two main pillars, the first in the functions and disability and the second is the contextual factors, as explained above.

According to the ICF model, there is an integrated relationship among the individual performance and the environment. However, the gap between the capacity and the performance of the PwDs, reflects the difference between the impacts of current and unchanging environments as well as the personal factors. The environmental factors as per this model, are defined in the “*framework as the physical, social, and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives*”. Personal factors are the particular background of an individual’s life and living, and are composed of features of

the individual that are not part of a health condition or health states (Keysor & Jette, 2003).

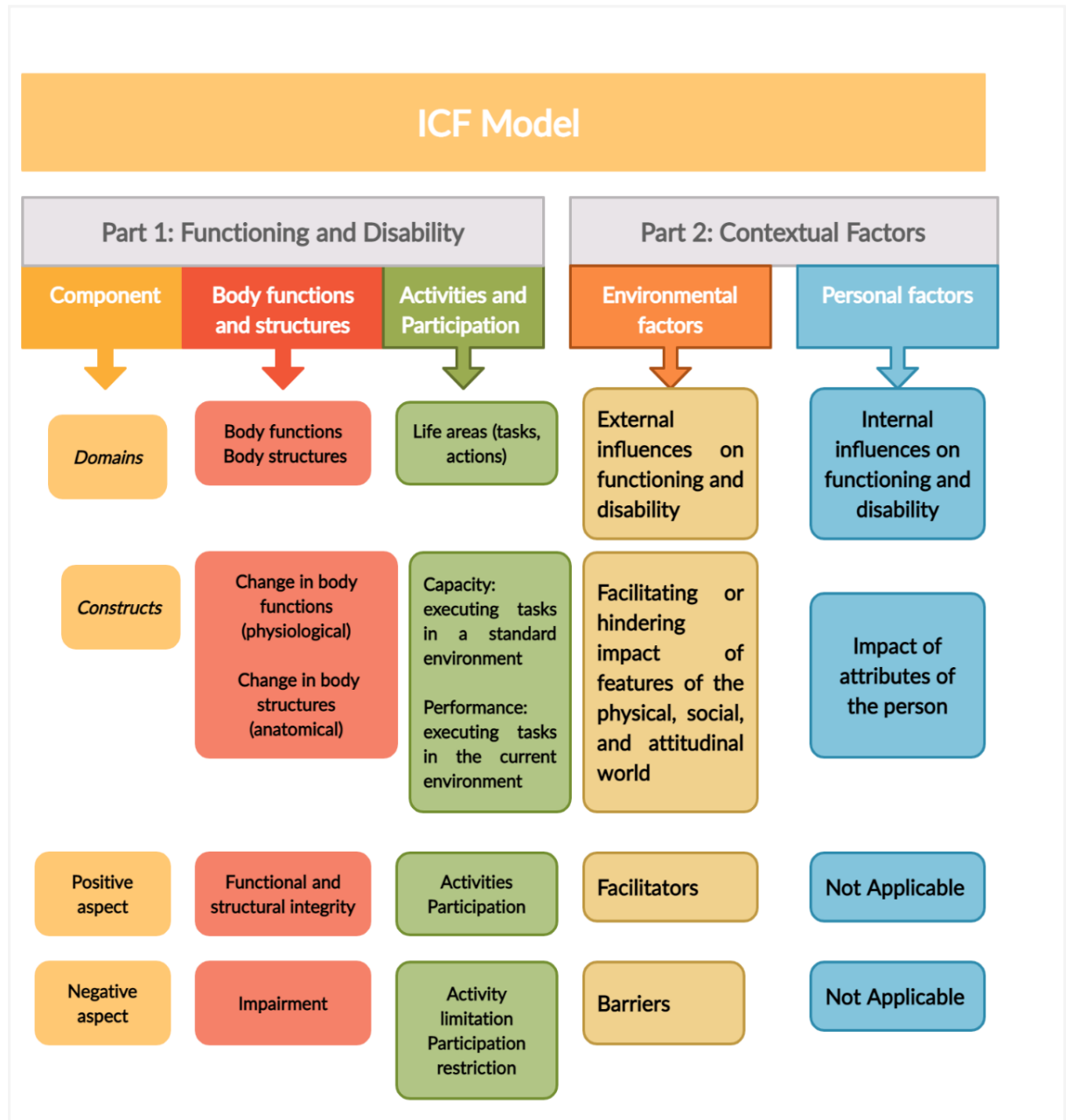


Figure 1: ICF - International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. Adapted from ICF Introduction, An Overview of ICF

2.3. EMPIRICAL REVIEW:

2.3.1 DISABILITY & EMPLOYMENT:

Some recent studies that were conducted concerning the barriers facing PwDs at the Palestinian level, including a research led by Humanity and Inclusion, formerly known as handicap International, lately in 2018. This research classified the barriers face by PwDs access to labor market into main four groups as the following:

Low level of empowerment among females with disabilities that could contribute to their limited employment opportunities;

Legal limitations due the lack of enforcement of the disability law;

Lack of physical accessibility, including; access to the employment offices; location, building, and facilities;

Lack of skills and experiences of PwDs due to their limited opportunities to access to education, trainings and social services.

Discussions and interviews done over HI research showed that the challenges facing job seekers, employees and former employees with disabilities are multilayered; during recruitment, before and after. Also, the study recommends a twin track approach to overcome the challenges and obstacles face by PwDs who are looking for job opportunities. This approach focuses on empowering people with disabilities in line with capacitating employers and authorities (public and private sectors) in order to remove barriers and create enabling environments for work (Humanity and Inclusion, 2018).

According to the International Labor organization (2019), some protective measures should be considered to enhance the inclusion of People with disabilities to

the labor market, work related-programs in addition to involve them in the process of developing the services sectors; especially in rural and marginalized areas. Also, it was emphasized that the government should consult employers' and workers' organizations as well as representative organizations of and for disabled persons to develop policies in this matter, in order to guarantee the promotion of equitable employment opportunities, including the making of reasonable adaptations to workplaces, job design, tools, machinery and work organization. (Fundación ONCE and the ILO Global Business and Disability Network, 2019)

Further research by Bonaccio, Connelly, Gellaty, Jetha & Ginis (2020), emphasized that each organization or institute should expand its own recruitment policies and establish partnerships with vocational agencies and CBOS, that are active to serve PwDs and PwPDs, and enhance their access to employment. Such agencies play a dominant and key role in facilitation and a successful employment relationship between PwDs and employers, by matching the job vacancies needs with the applicants' skills and experiences. Yet, PwDs are remain the most unfortunate to gain jobs due to the lack of rehabilitation programs that may raise their skills and qualify the employers on how to deal and perceive applicants with disabilities.

In the same study the researchers presented guidelines for the employers, to develop and adapt hiring policies that are receptive for applicants with disabilities, in order to ensure that they are welcomed and included in the recruitment process. However, such processes need, in parallel, more accessible features for PwDs; for instance, many electronic jobs' platforms and companies' websites may have poor or any accessible features for people with different physical disabilities. As a result, PwDs would feel unwelcomed or would seek external assistance for applying which

contradicts the concept of inclusion. Accordingly, a pre-step is required, concerning the accessibility and the adaptation of both physical and virtual facilities of the employer, before adopting an inclusive hiring policy. Adopting inclusive approached begins before the hiring stage and recruitment practices should be revised to ensure the mainstreaming measures for applicants with disabilities. Also, the advertising language should be friendly and inclusive with statements and motivate applicants from PwDs. (Bonaccio, Connelly, Gellatly, Jetha, & Ginis, 2020)

Geng-Qing Chi Qu (2010), believed that the high rates of unemployment among PwDs, lies in the assumption that the employers are reluctant and unwilling to hire PwDs. Employers attitude is a major barrier to the inclusive employment opportunities for PwDs.

A pile of varied barriers, in accordance to the same study, are the main reason behind hindering people with disabilities from employment and participation, including; the social stereotyping and stigmatization about the role and kind of work PwDs can lead and take over; lack of management training concerning the special needs of PwDs inside the workforce ; an assumption by employers that identifying, hiring, training, and accommodating employees with disabilities is too complicated and costing to undertake; and PwDs tend to be less educated, due to previous similar barriers in their access to education and training programs, and therefore, to be less qualified to compete, in the recruitment battel. Additional major barrier that was discussed in the same research paper is the negative attitude of supervisors and co-workers, towards accepting a colleague with disability (Chi & Qu, 2003).

From their preceptive; Vornholts, Uitdewilligen & Nihuis (2013), agreed that the lack of acceptance by other non-disabled co-workers, is a reason that affect the access

of PwDs to jobs opportunities; as this affects their self-esteem and personal perception of themselves. Nevertheless, work is important for PwDs improvement, like other else people, not only to earn living, but also to fulfil the basic needs of life; like time structure, social contact and integration within the surrounding environment. These factors altogether help to sustain the well-being of PwDs as well as their mental health. Thus, work might be more important for PwDs as it would assist them to be more socially active and reduce isolation.

Within the same research, the authoress emphasized that the access of PwDs to job opportunities may expose them to further stigma as they may suffer the lack of acceptance by their colleagues, especially if the employer paid special attention to the needs of disabled employees as an attempt to enhance their integration, within the entity. Yet, many employers have negative attitude towards hiring employees with physical disabilities, since they have concerns about the costs of accommodations. Thus, not all the employers will have the willing to accommodate their entities to be more hospitable and accessible for PwDs, in terms of the physical accessibility (Vornholt, Uitdewilligen, & Nijhuis, 2013).

Referring to Minich (2016), the studies that cove disabilities related issues should be methanolized for the sake of teaching and researching. It must be a methodology enacted in and through a commitment to accessibility. It is emphasized that there is a high connection between disabilities and high rate of unemployment. Job programs focus on making jobs accessible and building prospective employees' human capital, but tend to overlook roots of unemployment deep-rooted in the use of relationships networks to match employees with jobs requirements. Social capital in the form of social networks is important for the sake of empowering people without

disabilities, and probably crucial for PwDs. The effect of social capital on employment chances, along with the prospect that persons with specific types of disability may have less effective social networks, may account for some portion of the unemployment rate among persons with a disability (Enabling Whom? Critical Disability Studies Now, 2016)

Since the 2000s, the direct and indirect donor aid to the disability sector in Palestine has passed through several temporal stages of peaks and fallings. DeVoir and Tartir (2009) found that donors' aid to this sector grew and reached its peak in 2003 at 6.74% of the total amount of aid due to the wake of the violence during the Intifada and remained steady at around 5% until 2008 (De Voir & Tartir, 2009).

However, Abusrour (2017) illustrated that advocacy movements on the local level should increase the possibility of enhancing the governance of PwDs. Bottom-up based approach facilitates the citizens' involvements in shaping policies that affect them. Abusrour came up to find that there is There is a solid alignment between the social construction framework and the public policies that address the rights and issues of persons with disabilities. The policies are representational tools that lack to consider the abilities that PwDs might have for employment apart of their disability. Furthermore, employment policies still need to be enriched with underpinning instruments and procedures necessary for activation. Yet, the available polices lack to anti-discriminations articles that aim at eliminating exclusion and discrimination on the basis of disability, type of disability, and gradation of disability (Abusrour, 2017).

Grills, Singh, Pant, Varghese, Murthy, Hoq and Marella (2017) illustrated that the most important barriers that hinder the access of PwDs to different services including job opportunities, were mainly focused on the difficulty getting to services

from home and transport, physical inaccessibility, and the absence of reasonable accommodation. Furthermore, the access to information was highlighted in this study as a main tool to enhance PwDs accessibility to services. However, the most domain in which barriers to access were reported at the highest levels, was the work, followed by health, community consultations and rehabilitation services.

Within the same paper, a light was shed on the relationship between disability and poverty, the researchers assured that the unmet needs for those with disabilities are typically greater than the needs of people without disabilities. This counter an oft-cited reason for failing to prioritize PwDs issues and needs services. Accordingly, people with disabilities are four times more likely to have their needs being unmet and experience more barriers, such as lack of access to information about health services, physical inaccessibility, high costs to fulfil their needs, negative attitudes and difficulty getting services at home (Grills, et al., 2017).

Michael Palmer (2011) attributed the economic deprivation of PwDs and excluding them from the chasing on job opportunities to three main reasons; the first, is the low earning capacity that is related to the type of impairment. The second, is the expenses attributable to disabling create an extra drain on resources, while the third reason is the assistance and caring by their family members which can detract from the available household labor.

On the other hand, Palmer continued to analyses the environment that might be surrounding PwDs, especially the discriminatory perspectives by the society, which can affect PwDs capabilities to appear in public or compete for jobs. The presence of PwDs in a specific society also influenced by other factors like the availability of social

security, assistive devices, free and quality health service, in addition to accessible facilities and means of transportation (Palmer, 2011).

2.3.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK:

The article 27 of the UNCRPD, obligates the member states “to recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labor market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities”. This action requires the elimination of all types of discrimination, in relevance to the employment process; enhancing PwDs ability to access to the labor market and offering support in finding suitable jobs; ensuring physical accessibility and the development of policies that enhance PwDs accessibility to job opportunities, in private and public sectors, as well as self-employment opportunities (United Nations, 2018)

Lechner & Alvarez (2004) think that if the legal framework and available policies within the general context are considering for PwDs participation in the labor market, then there should be no significant difference in labor market outcomes between disable and non-disable individuals. Employer should also adjust legislation & policies which protect the disable against discrimination in recruitment, employment, and unfair dismissal, as well as setting down fines for those who fail to fulfil their quotas, alongside a variety of generous subsidies to facilitate employers to adjust to such policies and practices (Lechner & Alvarez, 2004).

According to Kadhim & Hussien (2019), the principles of equality and non-discrimination are included in the basic law of the majority of countries. Such principles

are clear when the basic law considers the right of PwDs to obtain jobs. This means that the right to work is a basic and fundamental article of the different laws.

Legal means have been developed, in order to guarantee offering suitable jobs for PwDs, like home-based jobs and work from distance, employing the new technology approaches. Also, these legal measures consider protecting PwDs, in the work environment from any harmful effects or practices, due to the lack of accessibility or discrimination.

Kadhim & Hussien, gave special attention to rule of law in supporting the principles of equality and non-discrimination. As per the law, these principles guarantee the open opportunities for PwDs to access to labor and enjoy their full rights to employment. The study also illustrated that the right to work for PwDs could not be practices, unless the government and the community take responsibility, including the improvement of laws and policies, concerning the right of PwDs, to employment and develop new customized jobs that suits the physical abilities of PwDs.

Lastly, Kadhim & Hussien recommended to create optimal conditions for educating and rehabilitating PwDs and work on the psychological, educational and economic rehabilitation, to facilitate the integration of PwDs in the community and in employment opportunities, as well (Kadhim & Hussien, 2019).

2.3.3 PRE-EMPLOYMENT REHABILITATION PROGRAMS:

Rehabilitation can contribute to reducing poverty through the improvement of PwDs' functioning and enhance their level of participation. Yet, as per the WHO, member states who ratified the UNCRPD are still requiring more guidance on how to

develop and strengthen rehabilitation services and facilities (World Health Organisation, 2011).

The professional and vocational training and rehabilitation programs, for PwDs, as per Hassanein (2021), is one of the most important types of rehabilitation, since it aims to assist PwDs, regardless the degree of impairments, or the level of academic education, in order to overcome the obstacles of employment and being more involved in their communities, and more self-dependent.

Hassanein mentioned that the employment of PwDs and rehabilitating them professionally, in an ultimate goal towards achieving their engagement in the labor market, after educating and training PwDs. Those programs aim at capacitating PwDs to live independently and rely on themselves. However, the author also perceived that it is not easy for PwDs, to find jobs, unless they have been trained and gained some technical skills through specialized programs (Hassanein, 2021).

According to Nasser (2013), the reason behind the willing of PwDs to obtain jobs, on equal biases with other community members, is the need to fulfill their requirements and gain self-respect. Gaining jobs also helps PwDs to develop the personal identity and mental health. Furthermore, the employment opportunities offer PwDs to benefit from the on-job training programs that might be provided by their employers (Nasser, 2013).

Dean, Pepper, Schmidt & Steven Stern (2018), present the vocational training as an alternative solution to decrease the government commitment in offering welfare and insurance expenses for PwDs, since the vocational rehabilitation would enhance the ability of PwDs to obtain jobs and secure their financial needs and improve labor market outcomes. Thus, it is important to conduct evaluation studies for the available

rehabilitation programs and the impact of the vocational trainings on PwDs. Such studies would present recommendations to enhance and improve the available services, to fulfil the gaps and address PwDs needs (Dean, Schmidt, Pepper, & Stern, 2018).

A master thesis, by Khalil (2017), concerning the situation of professional and vocational rehabilitation of PwDs, in the oPt, illustrated that the highest levels of unemployment among PwDs, in Palestine, has caused a response by many local and international entities, to exert efforts, in this field, towards initiating rehabilitation services for PwD, focusing on the vocational and professional rehabilitation programs. The MoSD, as a reference for PwDs issues has been the main and official service provider of rehabilitation services for PwDs. Additional programs were launched by the UNRWA & civil societies organizations like YMCA and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

Through Khalil (2017) study, an evaluation was conducted to rehabilitation centers of the MoSD, as the main and official service provider. It was obvious, that the MoSD centers have a variety of specialties that match the beneficiaries needs and preferences, including carpentry, beauty and hair dressing, as well as other maintenance specialties. Yet, these programs do not consider to adapt the new technological advancements in the developmental stage of each program. Furthermore, it was noticed the low level of satisfaction by the employees working within these programs, as they do not receive any capacity development trainings or support, in addition to the weak infrastructures of the centers themselves. Lastly, Khalil mentioned that only two vocational training centers, that are affiliated by the MoSD are not enough to cover the needs of all PwDs, who need the services.

However, Khalil (2017) assures that through the vocational rehabilitation of PwDs, they can develop the capabilities, in order to be prepared for work and production, while also help them to family and community integration, which leads to improving the opportunities for PwDs, in general and the work opportunities in particular. This would change the negative trends, in the community, into positive (Khalil, 2017).

2.3.4 GENDER & DISABILITY:

Women are historically exposed to gender-based discrimination, yet the combination of gender and disability creates a multi-layered vulnerability and discrimination. Women with disabilities might be less fortunate to join the labor market, in accordance to Manzoni (2017), this is due to their lower image by the society and their limited access to education, compared with other females without disabilities, and compared also to males with disabilities, within the same community.

The analysis of multiple discrimination factors, in relation to access to employment, indicates that the focus is more on how gender and disability interact together to create further complicated barriers and restrictions to enhance access of women and girls with disabilities to resources and labor market opportunities. Manzoni emphasized that the impact of the combined gender and disability, is different that the impacts of each factor separately. The negative effects of vulnerability of females, in the labor market, are further exacerbated when adding the disability parameter (Manzoni, 2017).

The UNCRPD has given special attention to the gender among disability, through which the State Parties are ought to recognize the multilayered barriers and

restrictions faced by girls and women with disabilities, and take responsive measures, in order to ensure equal employment opportunities.

However, the gaps in the gender area, remain high and the priority is for achieving equality and access of females to the fundamental rights, as well as protection against types of gender-based violence, while less attention is being paid for the female rights to livelihood and employment.

Chandra (2020), ensured that the established and well-known perception, globally that women with disabilities cannot live independently, due to the biological, psychological, physical and social restrictions. Also, women with disabilities are not able to participate and contribute to their communities, or to be part of the social activities (Chandra, 2020).

Quinn, Hunter, Ray, Quadir, Sen & Cumming (2016), considered that the commitments included in the laws and international treaties are not enough to enhance the situation of women with disabilities, since there is a doubled burden facing women with disabilities. First are the gender related issues itself and how women are perceived by the surrounding community, which can mark a preconceived life track, including early marriage, limited access to education and exclusion from the work force.

On the second level, women with disabilities are more likely to suffer violence during her lifetime than a woman without disability. This double burden is underpinned by fundamentalist ideas regarding traditional gender roles and poverty, therefore compounding unequal power relationships and exclusion mechanisms reflected within disability specific health inequalities globally. Thus, women with disabilities can be deprived of opportunities regarding their marriage, childbearing, community inclusion

and any kind of work, which complexes the state of isolation among them (Quinn, et al., 2016).

Sujathamalini & Guanasekaran (2017) agreed that the limited opportunities to access education and training programs, for women with disabilities, in particular affect the ability to of women with disability to show their needs on equal biases with men with disabilities. It is somehow more accepted that men must have access to work, even if we are talking about men with disabilities, but there is no such consensus about women with disabilities, who tend to be steered towards a passive existence. In case women with disabilities gained the opportunity to be employed, they are more likely to be employed in low-status, lower-paid jobs with poorer working circumstances. Lack of self-esteem and education further complicates the matter.

The recommendation of the same study focused on the roles of policy makers to support and establish entrepreneurship opportunities, initiatives and coalitions that support the diversity, as a long-term option that would enhance the accessibility of women with disabilities to self-employment opportunities. “In designing and implementing women with disability entrepreneurial support initiatives, policy-makers face a trade-off between providing generic advice to a large number of recipients, with widely varying impairments and circumstances that risks failure to engage, encourage and properly support would-be disabled entrepreneurs and measures to provide intensive, tailored support to a highly targeted subgroups of disabled entrepreneurs”. The available researches on policy change for PwDs entrepreneurs is limited, in addition to having the problem of financing such program, especially in the poorest and developing countries (Dr. K. Gunasekaran, & Dr. J. Sujathamalin &, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION.

The research procedures in this chapter are covered in detail, including research design, society and sample, research model, data collection tools, a statistical treatment used, reliability and validity of the study tool.

3.2. METHODOLOGY:

The proposed study is a descriptive analysis research, through which the researcher is providing the basic data about the situation of PwDs, mainly with physical disabilities, in the oPt, in terms of their access to the labor market and the barriers they face. This includes different types of barriers, varying between the legal framework, rehabilitation programs, social acceptance in addition to the physical accessibility which enables the PwDs to reach the labor market physically without additional assistance.

This research will adopt different tools, in order to approach its objectives and obtain comprehensive knowledge that will ensure proposing the strategies towards the inclusion of PwDs, in the Palestinian labor market. This will include the use of a questionnaire targeting a sample of PwDs, in addition to conducting semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders, in order to gather data which after being analyzed will contribute to draw a better image of the context of PwDs opportunities in the labor market, challenges and potential opportunities that should be invested.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This paper is following a mixed method approach that involves combining qualitative and quantitative data research. It includes quantitative data collection and analysis, through main questionnaire is designed to be filled by a representing sample of

PwDs, from the West Bank, as well as qualitative data collection and analysis that will be done through the interviews with the relevant stakeholders to discuss the available resources and efforts, in addition to discussing the initial results of the questionnaire, to investigate the short comes and achievements.

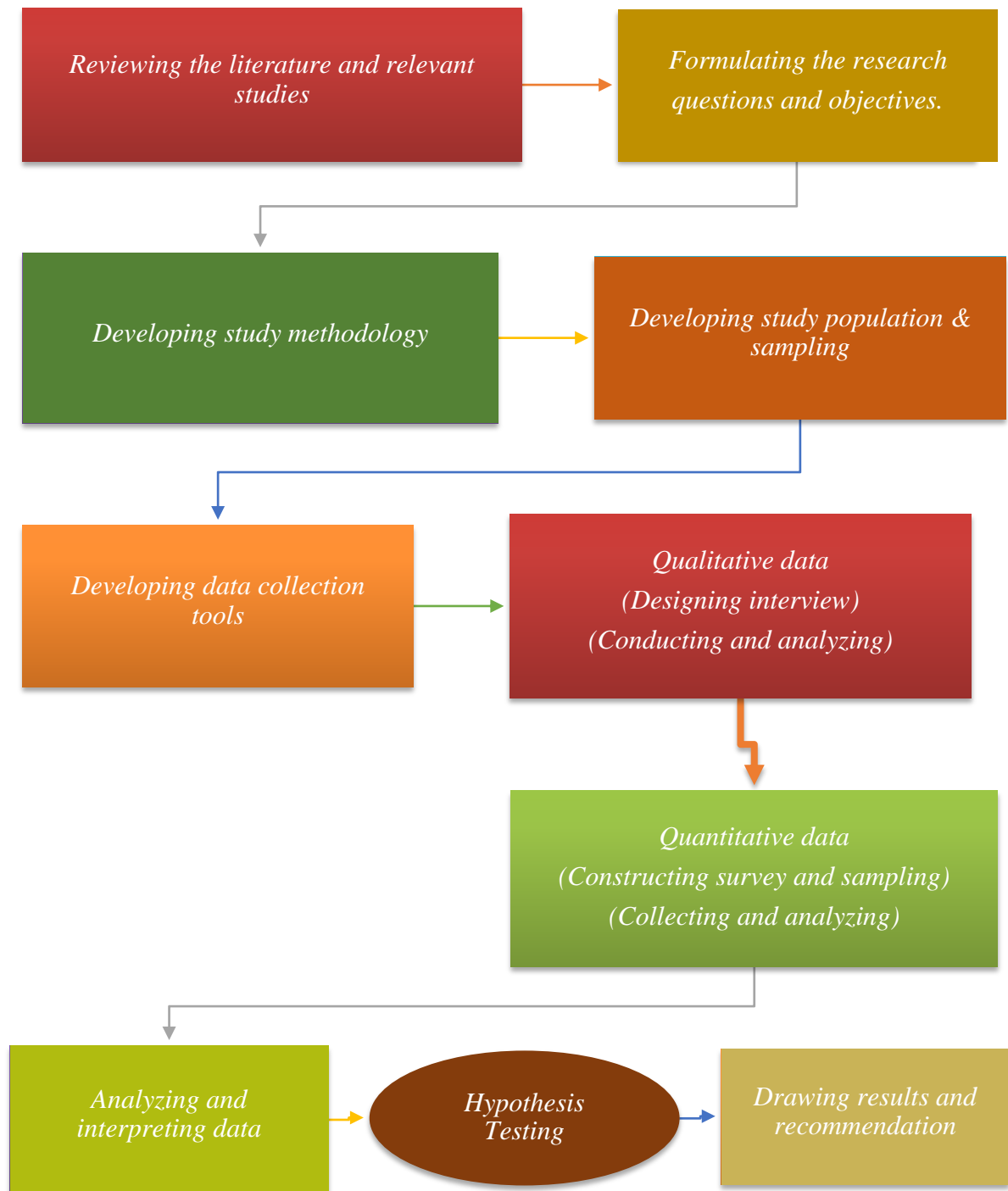


Table 2 1: Research Methodology Flow Chart

3.4. RESEARCH MODEL

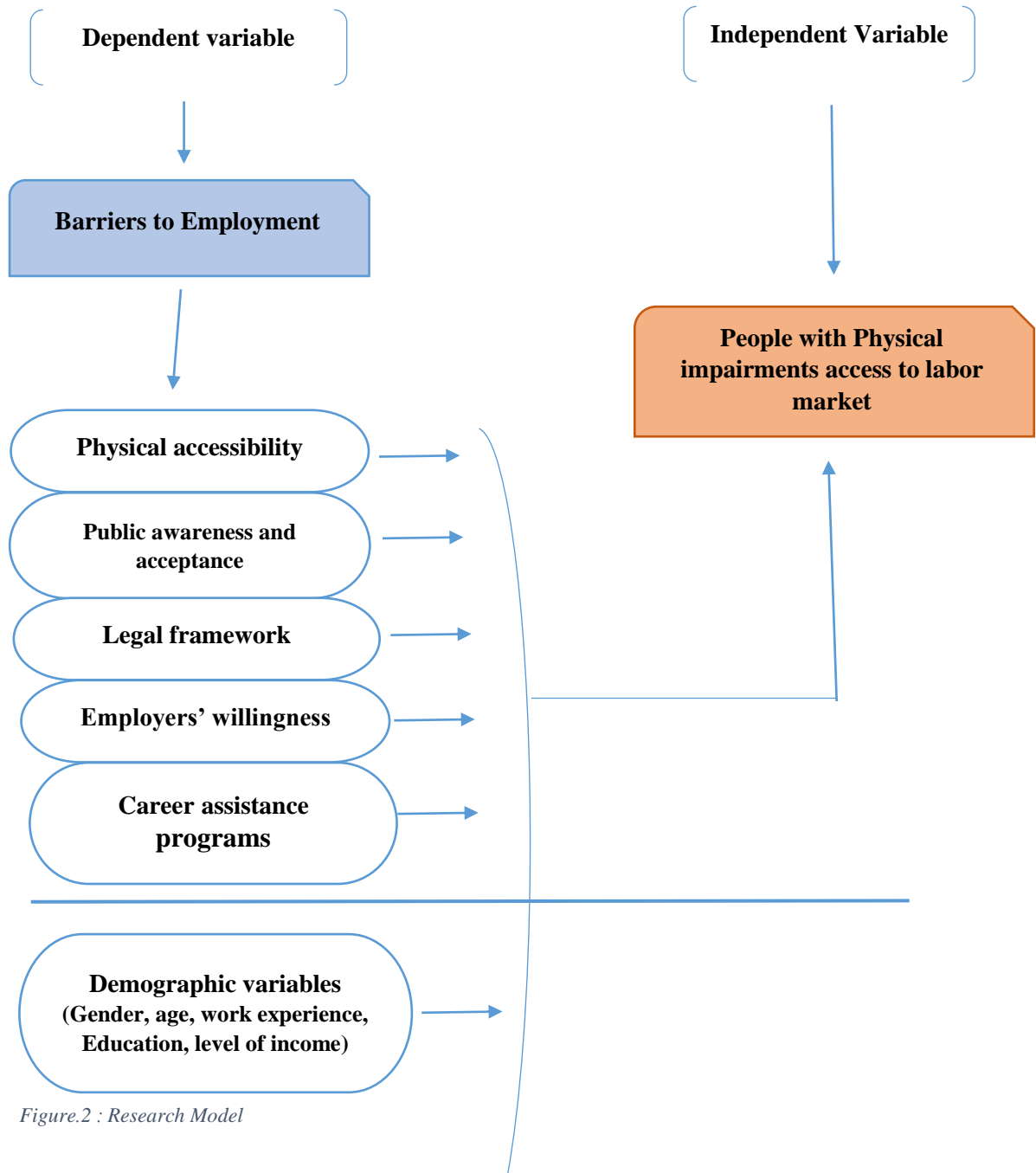


Figure.2 : Research Model

3.5. POPULATION & SAMPLE OF RESEARCH

As Previously stated, the researcher will use a scaled questionnaire, in addition to semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire will be distributed over a simple random sample of PwDs in the West Bank, while the interviews will be conducted with focal persons at the relevant ministries and institutions.

The questionnaire will be limited to the people with physical disabilities, considering that the total number of PwDs in the West Bank is 127,266. Of those people 2.9% are people with physical disabilities (hearing, visual and mobility impairments) which is equal to 3690 persons. Considering a margin of inaccuracy of those statistics, we will consider the total number of people with physical disabilities around 3000.

The questionnaire was built by google surveys and filled by the targeted sample through direct phone calls and shared links (self-response).

The researcher distributed the questionnaire considering geographic balance and gender sensitivity.

For the semi-structured interviews, the researcher met with representatives of the relevant stakeholders, mainly focal persons in relevance to the research topics.

3.6. The QUESTIONNAIR SAMPLE:

The total number of PwDs in the West Bank is 127,266, 2.9% are people with physical disabilities which is equal to 3690 persons. Considering a margin of inaccuracy of those statistics, we will consider the total number of people with physical disabilities around 3000.

The researcher decided that the study sample to be determined according to the Robert Mason Formula. = to calculate the sample size (n) given the population size (N)

and ($S = \text{standard error} = 1.96/0.05$, $p=0.5$ the percentage of existence, $q= 1-p=0.5$), the sample size equals (341) computed by the following formula:

$$n = N / [(S^2 \times (N - 1)) \div pq] + 1$$

(341) respondents approached through the General Union of People with Disabilities and the Community Based Rehabilitation Programs (CBR) in the middle, southern and northern parts of the West Bank.

Table 2: The sample distributed by frequencies and percentages according to demographic variables

Variable	Values	Frequency	Percentage%
Gender	Male	187	55%
	Female	154	45%
Age Range	Between 18-25 years	80	23%
	Between 26-35 years	139	41%
	Between 36-45 years	87	26%
	Between 46 and above	35	10%
Level of Education	No degree	36	11%
	Elementary school	109	32%
	Secondary school	90	26%
	Diploma degree	52	15%
	BA degree	47	14%
	Masters' degree	7	2%
Marital Status	Married	113	33%
	Single	207	61%
	Divorced	13	4%
	Widowed	8	2%
Employment Status	Full time Employed	29	9%
	Unemployed	156	46%
	Never been employed due to disability	42	12%
	Part time employed	33	10%

	Self-employed	17	5%
	Home-based business	56	16%
	Retired	7	2%
Place of residence	Village	236	69%
	Refugee camp	28	8%
	City	77	23%
Level of income	Less than 420 USD	280	82%
	Between 421-1000 USD	45	13%
	Between 1000-1500 USD	7	2%
	1501 USD and above	9	3%
Type of disability	Mobility	250	73%
	Visual	28	8%
	Hearing	28	8%
	Hearing and mobility	26	8%
	Visual and hearing	9	3%
Reason for disability	By birth	196	57%
	Natural disaster/ accidents	121	36%
	During war or military attack	11	3%
	During detention	13	4%

Table (3.1) shows the demographic data of all individuals who participated in the study. 55% of the participants are males, 41% of the participants are in the age range of 26 -35, between 18-35 years 23%.

32% of the respondents have finished elementary school, 61% are single, 46% are unemployed, the place of residence of 69% is village, 82% of respondents got less than 420 USD, 73% has disability of mobility, the reason for disability of 57% existed by birth.

3.7. INSTRUMENTS:

The researcher will combine two type of instruments in this study, in order to support generating the qualitative and quantities data as required. A questioner will be disseminated among the sample of PwDs is appropriate, which is suitable to the exploratory nature of the research. The questionnaire will target a simple random sample of people with physical disabilities over the West Bank.

The structured questionnaire consisting of two sections. The first section will analyse the demographic profile of the respondent, including gender, age, marital status, education level, residency, and income level, type of disability, reason of disability. The second section of the questionnaire includes 32 scaled questions that are rated on a 1–5 Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree). In addition to few open questions at the end of the questionnaire concerning further challenges faced by PwDs access to labor market and gender related issues.

Also, direct semi-structured interviews will be conducted with relevant actors and stakeholders; mainly, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Social Development, and people with disabilities organizations (DPOs). Additionally, some interviews will be conducted with municipalities and local councils, to evaluate the measurements and actions they take to facilitate the mobility and accessibility of PwDs to different facilities.

3.8. SURVEY VALIDITY:

The content validity dealt with how the representative and comprehensive items were in creating the scale. It was assessed by examining the process, by which the scale items were generated. The content validity in this study should be relatively acceptable,

since the various parts of the questionnaire were all based on the literature review and on the opinions of several experts who examine the items.

To make sure of the questionnaire validity internal consistency is used, we calculate a correlation between every item and the dimension, if the value of the calculated correlation is more than 0.40, the related to the dimension, table (3.2) shows the result:

Table 3: the correlation between statements and dimensions

Item	Correlation	Item	Correlation
Physical accessibility		Work force	
Item1	0.93	Item1	0.85
Item 2	0.77	Item 2	0.84
Item 3	0.89	Item 3	0.84
Item4	0.94	Item4	0.83
Item5	0.92	Item5	0.72
Public awareness and acceptance		Item6	0.64
Item1	0.80	Item7	0.77
Item 2	0.89	Career Assistance Programs for PwDs	
Item 3	0.92	Item1	0.88
Item4	0.93	Item 2	0.89
Item5	0.92	Item 3	0.80
Item6	0.93	Item4	0.91
Legal framework		Item5	0.87
Item 1	0.79		
Item 2	0.79		
Item 3	0.78		
Item4	0.85		
Item5	0.87		
Item6	0.86		
Item7	0.80		
Item 8	0.87		
Item9	0.73		
Item10	0.89		

It is clear from table (3.2) the correlation between all items and dimensions are greater than 0.40, which is significantly acceptable which means that every item related to the dimension (greater than 0.70 per cent).

3.9. RELIABILITY:

To find out the reliability degree of the questionnaire, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) is calculated as an indicator of the homogeneity to the level of the instrument. An accepted level would be more than (0.70).

Table 4: The reliability of the questionnaire domains:

Key Barriers to Employment & Employability		Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Physical accessibility	5	0.93	Accepted
Public awareness and acceptance	6	0.95	Accepted
Legal framework	10	0.94	Accepted
Work force	7	0.88	Accepted
Career Assistance Programs for PwDs	5	0.92	Accepted
Average	33	0.98	Accepted

It is clear from above table (3.4) that Cronbach's Alpha for all barriers to employment & employability and the whole instrument are more than 0.70, the range of reliability for all barriers to employment & employability located between (0.88) as work force and (0.95) as public awareness and acceptance. The reliability for the whole instrument equals 0.98. All Cronbach's Alpha values are high and statistically accepted for the purposes of this research.

3.10. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

The Statistical Package of Social Sciences program (SPSS Version 25) was used for the data entry and analysis. The descriptive statistical analysis was used, to

summarize the frequency distributions and percentages for categorical variables, also the means with standard deviations for continuous variables. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) is calculated, Pearson correlation test is used to find the significant correlation, A p-value of less than or equal 0.05 was deemed to be a statistically significant.

3.11. PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY:

The researcher used the following procedures during the application of this study:

- ✚ First, establishing the validity and reliability of the instrument by the experts in the field, who were approve the utility of the instrument for carrying out the study, the researcher will adopt these observations and suggestions proposed and insert the modifications.
- ✚ Second, permission was taken from the administration of Arab American University to get the needed information and to distribute the questionnaires among participants.
- ✚ Third, the questionnaire will be built by google surveys and filled by the targeted sample through direct phone calls and shared links (self-response).
- ✚ Fourth, collecting all the tests results. Then, the data was entered to the (SPSS25) program, and statistically treated.
- ✚ The interviews will be conducted with focal persons at the relevant ministries and institutions, the interviews will be analyzed through the classification of the data collected, into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.

4.1 OVERVIEW:

This chapter details all the results the study, both results developed and derived from analyzing the collected qualitative and quantitative data. The first section demonstrates the results and discussions from the analysis of the quantitative data, as extracted from the questionnaires, while the second section will underline the qualitative data extracted from the semi-structured interviews by thematic analysis approach.

4.2 SURVEY ANALYSIS:

This study aims to measure the barriers to employment & employability facing persons with disabilities in the Palestinian labor market; also to examine the significant relationship between the barriers facing people with physical impairments and their ability to access to employment opportunities in the labor market, the significant relationship between the legal framework and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities, the significant relationship between the level of empowerment and capacity for PwDs and their access to job opportunities.

What are the key barriers facing people with physical impairments access to employment and employability in the Palestinian labor market?

To answer this question table (4.1) shows the means and standard deviations distributed according to the key barriers facing people with physical impairments access to employment and employability in the Palestinian labor market and the whole instrument.

We will use the following scale to consider the level mean scores degree, this scale depends on interval length=range/number of intervals, interval length= $(5-1)/5=0.80$. (Likert, 1932)

The following scale represents the result:

Less than 1.80 very low

1.80- less than 2.60 low

2.60- less than 3.40 medium

3.40-less than 4.20 high

4.20-5 very high

Table 5: means scores and standard deviations distributed by the key barriers facing people with physical impairments access to employment and employability

No	Key barriersto employment employability	Mean	Standard deviation	effect
1	Physical accessibility	2.41	0.25	Low
2	Public awareness and acceptance	2.34	0.66	Low
3	Legal framework	2.35	0.85	Low
4	Work force	2.60	0.89	Medium
5	Career Assistance Programs for PwDs	2.35	0.92	Low
Total average		2.41	0.86	Low

It appears from table (4.1) that the degree effect of the total average of the key barriers facing people with physical impairments access to employment and employability in the Palestinian labor market is low with the total average (2.41) and standard deviation (0.86), the highest mean equals (2.60) related to the “Work force” with standard deviation equals (0.89) and a medium degree effect, followed by the mean (2.41) related to the “Physical accessibility” and standard deviation equals (0.25) with a low degree effect, the lowest mean equals (2.34) related to “Public awareness and acceptance” with a low degree effect and standard deviation equals (0.66).

The results above indicate that PwDs face challenges and barriers in their access to the labor market. These barriers are faced the most in the physical accessibility. It should be noted that the accessibility is the main key for integrating PwDs in the local community in general and in the physical accessibility in particular. The physical accessibility is essential for PwDs to feel capable and independent in their movements without any further assistance, accordingly feeling more empowered.

On the other hand, the results showed other challenges related to the social acceptance and awareness, which means that a lot of work is still needed to be done among the local culture, aiming at reducing stigma and discrimination towards PwDs. This step is another key that helps empowering PwDs, since they will feel the equality to other people. Furthermore, the focus of PwDs will be towards job seeking instead of seeking the equality and defend themselves against the discriminatory practices.

The weak and outdated legal framework is another challenge, as shown in the results. However, it is important to update the laws and put logical target that can be achieved. This way PwDs will trust duty bearers and contribute to the implications of the laws, as well as the employers themselves.

However, we cannot ignore the absence of career assistance and rehabilitation programs that should be dedicated for PwDs, under the ultimate goals of enhancing their abilities and skills to compete in the labor market. Getting to know that PwDs are the least fortunate to obtain full education, due to the lack of accessibility, mainly physical accessibility.

Lastly, efforts are also needed at the level endorsing a disability friendly workforce. This will be an obtained result if we were able to achieve the previous areas of achievements.

What is the level of physical accessibility available for people with disabilities in Palestine, to facilitate their engagement in job competing?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations are calculated for all items to know the level of physical accessibility available for people with disabilities in Palestine, to facilitate their engagement in job competing. Table (4.2) shows the results.

Table 6: means and standard deviations of the level of physical accessibility available for people with disabilities in Palestine

Item	Standard deviation	Mean	Effect
As a person with disability, I do not suffer to move from one place to another as all the facilities are accessible	0.17	2.36	Low
As a person with disability, I am provided with the facilities needed for free (wheel chair, assistive devices, Crutches, Artificial limbs, prosthetic ..etc)	0.27	2.57	Low
As a person with disability, I always find accessible transportation to use in my movements as a person with physical disability	0.20	2.45	Low
As a person with disability, I do always find facilities, in my town, village, area of residency...etc, that is physically accessible (ramps, braille, signs language signs	0.13	2.35	Low
As a PwDs, I found that the municipality or the village council where I live, follows the adaptation guidelines concerning PwDs accessibility to buildings	0.14	2.33	Low
Total average	0.25	2.41	Low

It appears from table (4.2) that the level of physical accessibility available for people with disabilities in Palestine, to facilitate their engagement in job competing is low, the mean equals (2.41) the variation among respondents equals (0.25), the highest mean equals (2.57) related to " as a person with disability, I am provided with the facilities needed for free (wheel chair, assistive devices, Crutches, Artificial limbs, prosthetic ..etc)" with a low level effect, followed by "as a person with disability, I always find accessible transportation to use in my movements as a person with physical disability" with mean equals (2.45) and a low level effect, the lowest mean related to "as a PwDs, I found that the municipality or the village council where I live, follows the adaptation guidelines concerning PwDs accessibility to buildings" with mean equals (2.33) and a low level effect.

The results showed the limited attention provided to enhance the accessibility of PwDs to the daily life activities, within their limited community. This makes it even harder to enhance their access to the labor market since they suffer the lack of physically friendly environment that considers their abilities. The constant needs for accommodations enhance the low self-esteem for PwDs, who will always need to seek help in their daily life activities. As a result, they will choose to stay at home and reduce the level of their ambitions due to the limited and restricted surrounding environment.

How are people with physical disabilities being perceived in their communities in terms of accepting them? Are they exposed to stigma and stereotyping?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations are calculated for all items to know if people of physical disabilities being perceived in their communities in terms of accepting them. Table (4.3) shows the results.

Table 7: means and standard deviations of public awareness and acceptance for people with disabilities in Palestine.

Item	Standard deviation	Mean	Effect
As a person with disability, I do not feel that I am perceived as less privileged in the community	0.08	2.28	Low
As a person with disability, I feel that Public are aware of PwDs rights	0.28	2.29	Low
As a person with disability, I feel that my image is not stigmatized and discriminated in the local community	0.17	2.2	Low
As a Peron with disability, I do not suffer from the community unacceptance	0.54	2.55	Low
As a Peron with disability, I feel that community members treat me on equal biases with other community members	0.25	2.38	Low
As a PwDs, I feel that people in my local community are aware of my accessibility needs, including, ramps, braille, signs	0.23	2.33	Low
Total average	0.66	2.34	Low

It appears from table (4.3) that the level of public awareness and acceptance for people with disabilities in Palestine is low, the mean equals (2.34) the variation among respondents equals (0.66), the highest mean equals (2.55) related to " as a person with disability, I do not suffer from the community unacceptance" with a low level effect, followed by "as a person with disability, I feel that community members treat me on equal biases with other community members" with mean equals (2.38) and a low level effect, the lowest mean related to "As a person with disability, I feel that my image is

not stigmatized and discriminated in the local community” with mean equals (2.20) and a low level effect.

This point should be considered as a main challenge facing PwDs, in the Palestinian local community. When the local community is not giving the feeling of acceptance for PwDs, they will keep feeling that they are different and this will reduce the belonging to this community. Also, it will reduce the level of self-esteem. As a result, PwDs will be more likely to escape practicing and recommending their minimum and fundamental rights, including the right to life, education, work...etc. The community’s awareness is the first step towards enhancing the inclusiveness of PwDs into their community and life. From the awareness itself the steps start towards considering the other needs of PwDs.

How can the legal environment in Palestine support people with physical impairments to access to the labor market on an equal basis with other people without disabilities?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations are calculated for all items to know if the legal environment in Palestine can support people with physical impairments to access to the labor market on an equal basis with other people without disabilities. Table (8) shows the results.

Table 8: means and standard deviations of the legal framework for people with disabilities in Palestine

Item	Standard deviation	Mean	Effect
As a Person with disability, I enjoy access to job opportunities in accordance to the law that indicates a percentage of PwDs employees not less than 5% of staff in each organization	0.4	2.13	Low
As a Person with Physical disability, I am enrolled in rehabilitation and vocational trainings to the various applicable laws and bylaws on the basis of equal opportunity	0.65	2.14	Low
As a PwDs, I find the disability law is fully implemented at the public governmental sector	0.75	2.37	Low
As a PwDs, I find that the private sector employers are the most welcoming to hire PwDs within their entities.	0.92	2.22	Low
As a PwDs, I find than NGOs are the most welcoming to hire PwDs within their staff more than other entities.	0.94	2.35	Low
As a PwDs, I find that the banking sector is the most welcoming to hire PwDs	0.97	2.42	Low
As a person with physical disability, I feel that employers are aware of legal rights concerning PwDs access to employment	0.96	2.29	Low
As a Person with Physical disability, I am aware of my legal rights to obtain a decent and sustained job opportunity	0.92	2.34	Low
As a PwDs, I find that all the organizations consider the adaptation guidelines concerning PwDs accessibility.	0.41	2.98	Low
As a PwDs, I find that the local	0.91	2.26	Low

municipalities and/ or villages councils are adhering to the buildings system No. 5 for the year 2011, which obligates the physical adaptation of all types of buildings so as to be accessible for PwDs.			
Total average	0.85	2.35	Low

It appears from table (4.4) that the level of the legal framework for people with disabilities in Palestine is low, the mean equals (2.35) the variation among respondents equals (0.85), the highest mean equals (2.98) related to "as a PwDs, I find that all the organizations consider the adaptation guidelines concerning PwDs accessibility" with a low level effect, followed by "as a PwDs, I find that the banking sector is the most welcoming to hire PwDs" with mean equals (2.42) and a low level effect, the lowest mean related to "as a person with disability, I enjoy access to job opportunities in accordance to the law that indicates a percentage of PwDs employees not less than 5% of staff in each organization" with mean equals (2.13) and a low level effect.

However, it is important to notice that the legal framework, concerning the PwDs rights in the oPt are outdated and not suitable at the first place. Secondly, there are no actions that enhance the implementation of the laws, mainly among employers. Here we can connect with the other factors, mainly the lack of physical accessibility that is usually the main excuse of the employers to answers why they do not prefer to hire PwDs. Accordingly, the laws should consider the accessibility first when licensing any institute, whether it is a private company, NGO, governmental or whatever. This will facilitate the implication of the law that obligates the employers to include PwDs among their teams.

Which are the most accessible work forces/ entities for people with disabilities in Palestine?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations are calculated for all items to know the most accessible work forces/ entities for people with disabilities in Palestine. Table (9) shows the results.

Table 9: means and standard deviations of the work force entities for people with disabilities in Palestine

Item	Standard deviation	Mean	Effect
As a person with disability, I do not face physical barriers in governmental entities (in terms of the physical accessibility)	0.7	2.28	Low
As a PwDs, I do not face physical barriers in private sector companies (physical accessibility)	0.65	2.32	Low
As a PwDs, I do not face physical barriers in NGOs (physical accessibility)	0.45	2.32	Low
I feel that employees of governmental and non-governmental organizations are trained on how to deal with their colleagues of physical disabilities.	0.85	2.33	Low
I feel that Part-time jobs are most suitable for people with physical disabilities	0.87	3.57	High
I feel that home-based jobs are most suitable for PwDs.	0.95	3.31	Medium
I feel that all organizations are physically accessible for people with disabilities (ramps, braille, sound systems, signs...)	0.97	2.09	Low
Total average	0.89	2.60	Medium

It appears from table (4.5) that the level of the work force entities for people with disabilities in Palestine is medium, the mean equals (2.60) the variation among

respondents equals (0.89), the highest mean equals (3.57) related to “I feel that Part-time jobs are most suitable for people with physical disabilities” with a high level effect, followed by “I feel that Home-based jobs are most suitable for PwDs” with mean equals (3.31) and a medium level effect, the lowest mean related to “I feel that all organizations are physically accessible for people with disabilities (ramps, braille, sound systems, signs...)” with mean equals (2.09) and a low level effect.

As shown in the results, the most accepted types of jobs for PwDs are home-based and part time jobs. Such results enthused asking further question to know why PwDs prefer such jobs. From the researcher’s observations, it is obvious that this also connected with other factors like the physical accessibility, according to which PwDs prefer to stay at home and avoid the difficult mobility circumstances as most of the public facilities lack to accessibility. On the other hand, this should be also linked to the social acceptance that was reported law, as per the previous results. Accordingly, PwDs prefer to avoid interacting with publics and prefer types of jobs like home-based. For the part time jobs, this can be linked to the fact that PwDs underestimate their abilities, due to the same reason of the law acceptance of other people. Thus, they tend to prefer fewer requiring jobs.

Do people with physical disabilities have a decent level of empowerment and skills that qualifies them to join the labor market?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations are calculated to know the decent level of empowerment and skills that qualifies people with disabilities in Palestine to join the labor market. Table (10) shows the results.

Table 10: means and standard deviations of the career assistance programs for people with disabilities in Palestine

Item	Standard deviation	Mean	Effect
As a person with physical disability, I have been enrolled in internships and trainings offered free by the government	0.62	2.31	Low
As a person with physical impairment, I have access to career programs that help me to find a suitable job that matches my experience and needs	0.75	2.41	Low
There are special financial products offered by banks and micro-finance institutes for people with physical disabilities to establish their own businesses	0.95	2.3	Low
As a PwDs, I was enrolled in vocational trainings to build a technical experience that matches my abilities.	0.78	2.41	Low
Employment agencies customized special programs for job seekers of people with physical disabilities	0.96	2.32	Low
Total average	0.92	2.35	Low

It appears from table (4.6) that the decent level of empowerment and skills that qualifies people with disabilities in Palestine to join the labor market is low, the mean equals (2.35) the variation among respondents equals (0.92), the highest mean equals (2.41) related to “as a person with physical impairment, I have access to career programs that help me to find a suitable job that matches my experience and needs ” and “as a PwDs, I was enrolled in vocational trainings to build a technical experience that matches my abilities” with a low level effect, the lowest mean related to “There are special financial products offered by banks and micro-finance institutes for people with physical disabilities to establish their own businesses” with mean equals (2.30) and a low level effect.

The absence of training and rehabilitation programs, indicate that low and limited attention given to PwDs, by duty bearers themselves. This also assures that there is a low attention towards implementing the current laws or modify them.

Is there a significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the barriers facing people with physical impairments and their ability to access to employment opportunities in the labor market?

To answer this question, we need to test the following null hypothesis.

Null hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the barriers facing people with physical impairments and their ability to access to employment opportunities in the labor market.

To test this hypothesis, we use Pearson correlation coefficient. Table (11) shows the result.

Table 11: Pearson correlation coefficient between the barriers facing people with physical impairments and their ability to access to employment opportunities

Dimension	Pearson correlation	P value
Barriers facing people with physical impairments	0.74	0.00
The ability to access to employment opportunities in the labor market		

Through the results from table (4.7), **we reject the null hypothesis** which means, there is a statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the barriers facing people with physical impairments and their ability to access to employment opportunities in the labor market, the Pearson correlation coefficient equals (0.74) which is a high correlation.

Is there a significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the legal framework and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities?

To answer this question, we need to test the following null hypothesis.

Null hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the legal framework and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities.

To test this hypothesis, we use Pearson correlation coefficient. Table (12) shows the result.

Table 12: Pearson correlation coefficient between the legal framework and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities

Dimension	Pearson correlation	P value
The legal framework	0.84	0.00
The accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities		

Through the results from table (4.8), **we reject the null hypothesis** which means, there is a statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the legal framework and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities, the Pearson correlation coefficient equals (0.84) which is a very high correlation.

Is there a significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the empowerment and capacity and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities?

To answer this question, we need to test the following null hypothesis.

Null hypothesis 3: There is no statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the empowerment and capacity and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities.

To test this hypothesis, we use Pearson correlation coefficient. Table (13) shows the result.

Table 13: Pearson correlation coefficient between the empowerment and capacity and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities

Dimension	Pearson correlation	P value
the empowerment and capacity	0.75	0.00
the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities		

Through the results from table (4.9), we **reject the null hypothesis** which means, there is a statistically significant relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the empowerment and capacity and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities, the Pearson correlation coefficient equals (0.75) which is a high correlation.

4.3 OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ANALYSIS:

Additional Barriers:

At the of the questionnaire, the researcher has added open questions, in order to give the respondents more space to add any potential details, concerning their situation as persons with disabilities.

Concerning any additional barriers, PwDs may face while trying to obtain a job; 22% of the respondents mentioned the stigma and discrimination as a major barrier. They also mentioned the exploitation by the employers to pay them less that other people, as well as the pathetic look by the society and the lack of trust in their abilities as PwDs. 14% of

the respondents said that the lack of rehabilitation and training programs is the major reason behind the limited access to job opportunities. Since they are less fortunate to finish their academic tenure. 22% of the respondents mentioned the lack of physical accessibility whether to transportations, building, organizations, as the main barrier that hinder their chances to obtain jobs. The answers also included mentioning that there is no attention by the government to adapt the public facilities for PwDs needs, as the available adaptations only take the mobility impairments into account while the other types of physical impairments like hearing and visual disabilities are not considered. 27% of the respondents mentioned the lack of attention by the government and specialized organizations to support PwDs living in villages and marginalized areas. 15% of the respondents did not answer this question.

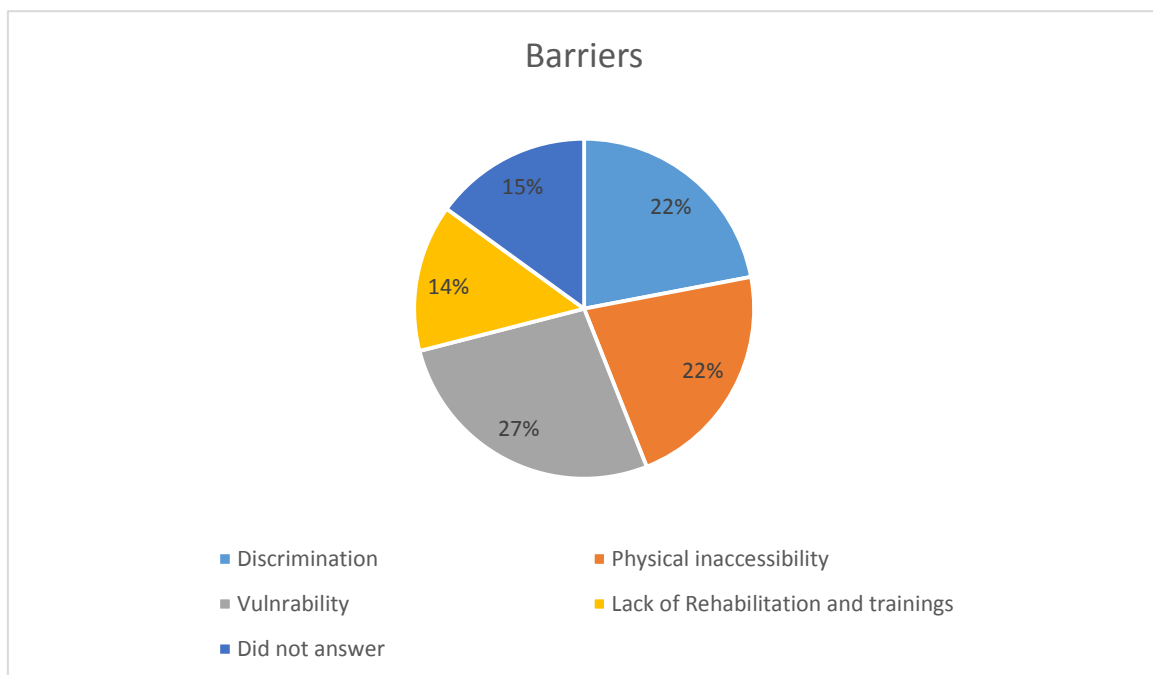


Figure 4.3 1: Additional barriers that hinder the access of PwDs to the labor market

Recommendations by Respondents:

Regarding the suggested solutions and recommendations, as given by the respondents to overcome the above-mentioned barriers; 19% of the respondents demanded that the government should work on enhancing the implementation of the laws and regulations that considers PwDs rights to livelihood. They used terms like monitoring the implementation of the law and spread the knowledge, as well as raising awareness concerning PwDs rights to employment. Also, 15% has mentioned the physical adaptation as a high priority to support PwDs to gain jobs, this included braille machines and sign language methods that should be considered by the employers. 27% required rehabilitation and trainings' programs to be provided for PwDs, 29% of the respondent have asked for physical and financial support to help the initiate their own businesses, this also included the provision of assistive devices for PwDs, while 22% of them did not have any demands or recommendations.

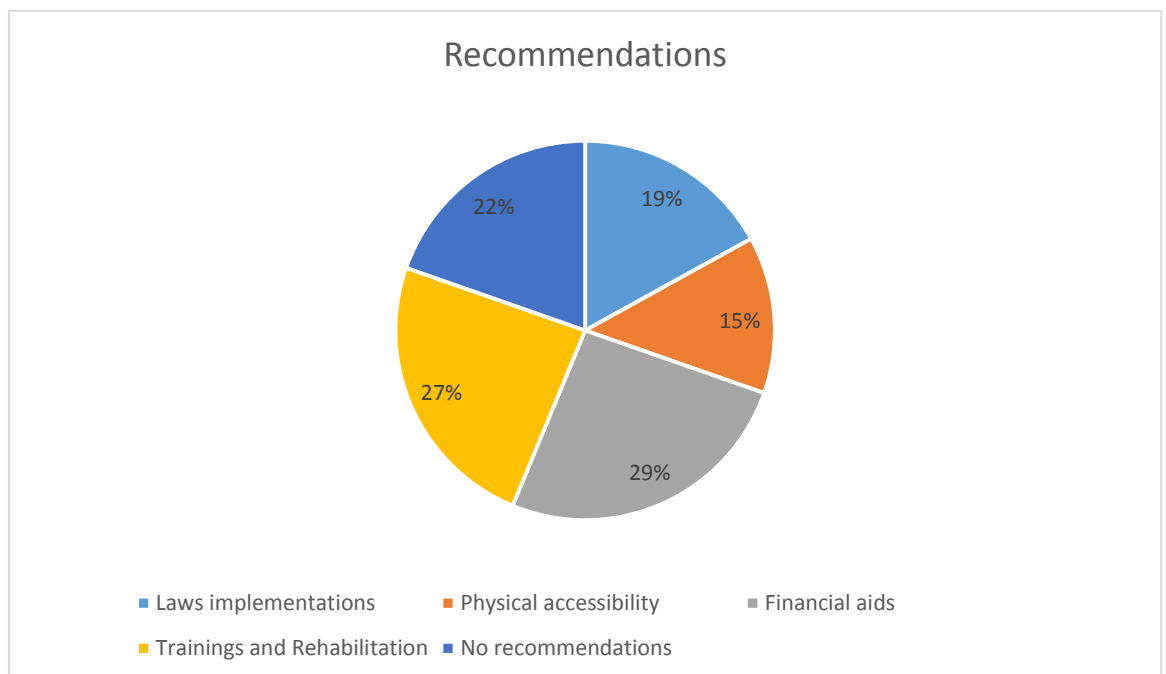


Figure 4.3 2: Recommendation by PwDs for the barriers

Gender Related Issues:

45% of the research sample were females with disabilities. The researcher has specialized two questions for this sample in order to see what are the special issues or barriers that might be faced specifically by females with disabilities while they attempt to access the labor market. 53% of those female respondents mentioned that the main problem they face is the intersectional discrimination for being both females and PwDs at the same time, especially those who live in villages and suffer the under estimation of their own community at the first place, 32% of this sample said that the most affecting barrier is the physical accessibility, 7% said the absence of rehabilitation programs that target women with disabilities, while 8% did not answer this question.

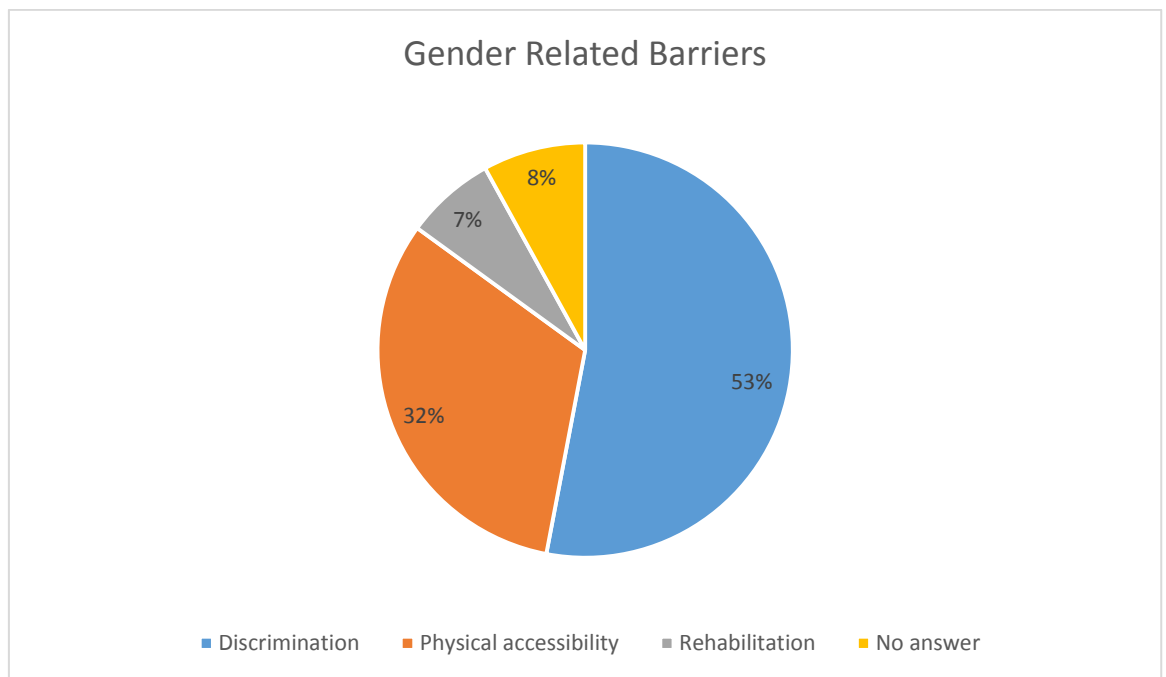


Figure 3: Gender related barriers

Recommendations by Respondents:

It was essential for the researcher to see what kind of recommendations would be provided by the females with disabilities to overcome the previously mentioned barriers and to analyze how they perceive themselves. However, 30% of the respondents

said that they do not have any recommendations or solutions, 45% recommended to work on the public awareness within their communities, 19% requested for financial and medical aids, while 6% demanded to activate specialized rehabilitation programs for women with disabilities, to enable them gaining skills and enter the labor market.

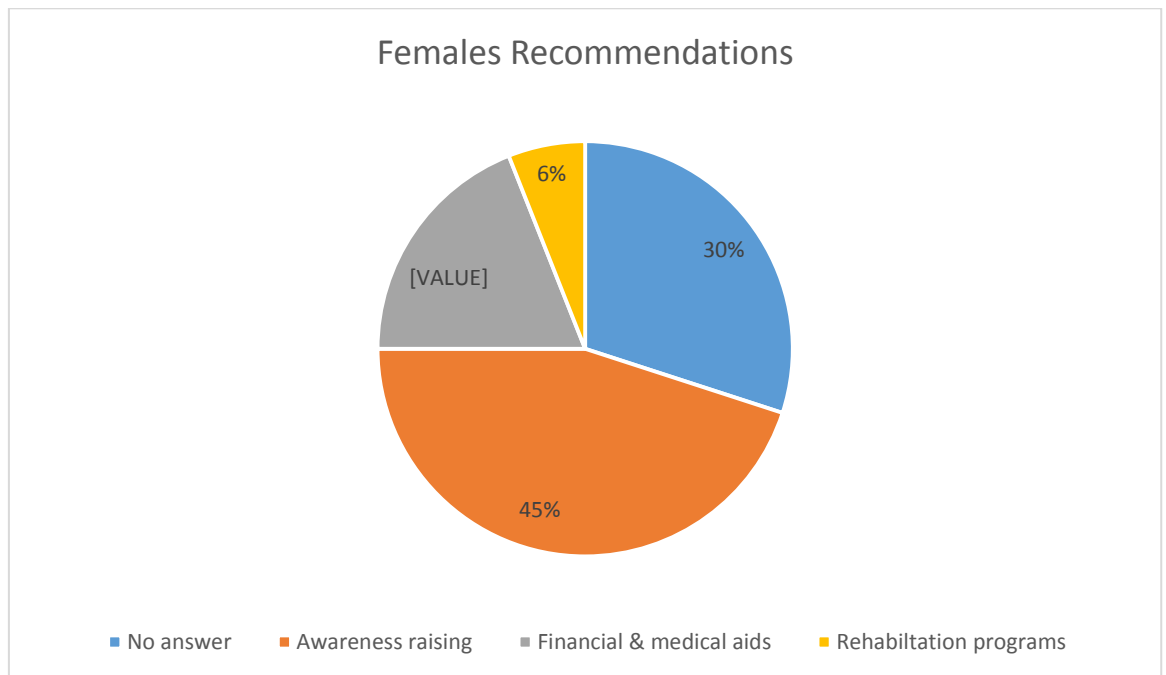


Figure 4: Recommendations drawn by females with disabilities for the gender related barriers

4.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS:

In order to reflect on the survey analysis, it was important to approach relevant stakeholders and duty bearers, provide them with the results and ask about their roles, in line with the multiple references for the disability case. The interviewees were as follows:

1. MoL representative: Rami Mehdawi – Director of Employment
2. MoSD representative: Ajaj Ajaj- Director of PwDs
3. Ramallah Municipality: Mohammad Shafie – Manager of Disability
4. Hebron Municipality: Engineer (refused to use his name)

5. Idna Municipality: Engineer (refused to use his name)

Physical Accessibility:

In order to evaluate the level of physical accessibility available for PwDs, in the public and private spheres, it was crucial to visit the specialized departments at different municipalities to see what kind of procedures they have and whether they consider the physical needs and adaptations for PwDs.

At Ramallah Municipality, the responsible for the disability profile assured that the municipality includes the disability mainstreaming at different levels of its strategy. Accordingly, the municipality ensures physical accessibility of all the new buildings and roads, under its responsibility of licensing. Any license would not be issued and approved unless the facility is accessible for PwDs. This also applies to the private building, not only the commercial and public ones. However, it was noticed that this condition is mandatory concerning the mobility accessibility, yet there aren't any kind of accessibility condition that are mandatory to facilitate the accessibility of people with hearing and visual impairments, in particular. Still, Ramallah city was noticed through this research as the most aware municipality of the possible physical accessibility adaptation.

Comparing Ramallah with Hebron city, it was noticed that the level of the municipality role is not the same concerning the accessibility measures. At the private level the municipality declared that they cannot force people to adapt their buildings or houses, yet they can assure the specs of the public and commercial buildings. However, it should be mentioned that still there are many commercial and public buildings that are not accessible.

At the villages level, the story is totally different, as per an interview with one of the engineers at Idna municipality (a village in southern area of Hebron district), it was clear that the municipality does not have any role in the adaptation of the other buildings. The only role that the municipality can do is to adapt the entrance of a specific house that belong to a family of a person with mobility impairment. The house entrance is adapted as per their request, if possible, after receiving funds for the process. It should be mentioned, that all the municipalities and villages councils have a community-based rehabilitation worker that belongs to one of the CBR programs. Those workers help to evaluate the situation of PwDs in their areas, in order to list their needs and secure assistive devices when possible through their partnerships with INGOs, and other related health sector entities. Yet, the CBR programs at the south, north and the middle of West Bank, they all agreed that there is a shortage to secure the needs of PwDs, especially in the villages and marginalized areas, especially that there is a huge gap between the demand and the availability of aids.

Rehabilitation Programs:

As previously mentioned, the MoSD is entitled as the reference official body for PwDs in the oPt. The role of MoSD is linked to the provision of PwDs with the needed services, including; health, professional, educational, social integration services based on the type and degree of disability and other relevant services.

An interview was conducted with the General Director for PwDs issues at the ministry with the presence of the supervisor of the vocational training centers affiliated to the ministry.

During the interview it was mentioned that the MoSD has 2 vocational training centers in the West Bank which are “Al-shikha Fatima Center for Vocational Rehabilitation” which is located in Hebron governorate, and “Alshaikh Zayed Center for Vocational Rehabilitation” At Nablus governorate.

It should be noted that those centers are not specialized for persons with disabilities, yet they open the opportunities for PwDs who are willing to be enrolled, but as mentioned by the PwDs general director at the ministry, the numbers of PwDs are the lowest, between these centers’ students. This facet makes it even harder to have inclusive training programs, as it is easier for the centers to design the trainings for people without disabilities.

Also, it is noticed that a very few numbers of PwDs who involved in these centers can persevere later on with a sustainable job, based on the knowledge and skills they have gained, getting to know that the total number of PwDs who have been enrolled in Alshaikh Zayed center since its establishment, does not exceed 50 PwDs.

In 2020, the MoSD initiated a project to fund small businesses, targeting PwDs, yet this initiative was not accomplished due to the emergency situation, as a result to the spread of COVID-19. Also, the rehabilitation and support initiatives, during 2020 was very limited to the provision of assistive devices for a very limited number of PwDs, including around 20 hearing devices and 15-wheel chairs, which is a very low level compared to the fact that the annual budget of disability as set by the Palestinian government, around 18 million USD.

Law enforcement:

According to the Director of Employment at the MoL, the law article that obligates a minimum 5% representation of PwDs, with the institutions’ workforce, is totally

implemented at the governmental bodies. Mr, Rami Mehdawi the Director of Employment mentioned that coordination efforts have been exerted with the Government Employees Office, in order to select the vacancies that suit PwDs, to be offered for them through a transparent recruitment office.

Concerning the role of the MoL to monitor and ensure the implementation of the disability laws, it was mentioned the MoL has initiated the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, in order to offer new self-employment projects with facilities for PwDs like low or zero interest rates. 90 projects were dedicated for PwDs or family members' of PwDs, over the past 2 years.

Furthermore, it was mentioned that the MoL has supported the establishment of the Palestinian Alliance for Persons with Disabilities, which has defined a job matching efforts between the private sector and job seeker of PwDs, yet there are no numbers about the accomplishments.

Yet, for the law itself the MoL is part of a committee that has been reviewing the current disability law and relevant articles on the right to employment for PwDs to be studied further and amended if needed.

Lastly, the MoL representative has recommended to unify the efforts of the civil society sector through an official representing body to avoid double efforts and wasting of resources through unplanned and random initiatives, concerning support the right to employment for PwDs.

4.1. TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS RESULTS:

In this study, research hypotheses have been tested to determine the relationship between the accessibility of PwDs to the labor market and other factors

including the physical accessibility, legal framework and the level of empowerment and capacity for PwDs.

The results have shown that « there was a statistically significant relationship between accessibility of PwDs to the labor market and the mentioned factors, as follows:

Table 14: Summary of the results of the derived hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Status
H1: There is no significant relationship between the barriers facing people with physical impairments and their ability to access to employment opportunities in the labor market.	Rejected
H2: There is no significant relationship between the legal framework and the accessibility of PwDs to employment opportunities.	Rejected
H3: There is no significant relationship between the level of empowerment and capacity for PwDs and their access to job opportunities.	Rejected

Regarding the H4 hypothesis and through analyzing the interviews thematically, the hypothesis was accepted. As explained above, each of the MoL and the MoSD represent themselves as the official body responsible for the disability and employment issue, though none of them proven through the interviews that they are working to present solutions for the high rates of unemployment among PwDs. This also applies on the municipalities that refer back to the ministry of local governance. The municipalities should ensure the accommodation needed for PwDs, as required by the buildings law. Yet, this is not always the case and the CBR worker at each municipality or local council barely finds funds to support PwDs, in his/her area.

Accordingly, the multiple official stakeholders are not functioning well to fulfil their role towards enhancing the inclusiveness of PwDs.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is reviewing the conclusions and outcomes of the study, as mentioned in the previous chapters. As well as presenting strategic goals and objectives for future actions that might be taken by the relevant stakeholders, and topics for further studies and research.

5.2. SUMMARY OF RESULT

1. As per the results, we cannot ignore the high unemployment rates among PwDs, mainly with physical disabilities. 46% of the respondents are un employed, getting to know that the majority of this sample is in a suitable age for employment; 41% are aged between 26-35 and 23% are between 18-35.
2. Concerning the level of education, the results showed that 32% of the sample have stopped schools after the elementary schools, while 26% after the secondary schools. These results should draw the attention of the decision makers, in the education sector, to investigate the level of inclusiveness and preparedness of this sector to enhance the opportunities for students with disabilities to be enrolled in a free and holistic education system, on equal biases with other non-disabled students.
3. The results revealed that 61% of the respondents are single, this might be due to the nature of disability, as some disabilities would not allow the physical activities needed in marriage. Also, it could be a sign for low level of social acceptance for PwDs. However, this increase the economic dependency of these people getting to know the previously mentioned high rates of unemployment among them
4. 69% of the respondents are villages residents and this indicates the high rates of disabilities in the vulnerable and marginalized areas. This also raise a new question

about the governmental initiatives to serve PwDs away from the centers of the main cities. If we get back to the interviews with the 3 municipalities we can figure the different procedures taken by each municipality; as it was noticeable that the procedures taken in Ramallah governorate are much more inclusive and considerable for PwDs, especially for the accessibility measures.

5. Concerning the physical accessibility; the results showed that PwDs face challenges in terms of this factor, including movements, provision of assistive devices, the availability of accessible transportation, facilities and adaptation. The accessibility as mentioned by the respondents include braille materials and sign language facilitations, not only the ramps and movements adaptations.
6. According to the previous studies, when it comes to the physical accessibility, employers have concerns to hire PwDs, as they are unwilling to take extra expenses to adapt their places to be accessible and friendly for PwDs.
7. For the public awareness and acceptance, the results showed that PwDs still face challenges and suffer low levels of community acceptance and awareness of their rights. PwDs indicated that their image is stigmatized and discriminated by the surrounding community.
8. The results showed that the legal framework in the oPt is still challenging and does not guarantee equal access for PwDs to the labor market. Another issue indicated in the results is the low level of applicability of the laws. This also decrease the level of satisfaction of PwDs, and increase their tendencies to be more dependent and reliable, on charitable aids, instead of seeking empowerment.
9. For the work- force field, the results showed that PwDs would prefer home-based and part times jobs. This indicates that they would prefer to decrease their

interaction with the community. This type of adaptation with the available circumstances instead of enhancing the inclusiveness, would increase the gap for PwDs and their ability to gain sustainable and decent jobs.

10. The results showed that there is a low level of empowerment for PwDs, regarding enhancing their preparedness for the labor market, whether through vocational and on job trainings, or by offering them special credits and micro-financing programs with zero or low interest rates, to support them initiate their own businesses. This fact contradicts what was mentioned by the MoL representative, or indicate that the programs offered by the ministry are beyond the minimum level of beneficial for PwDs.

5.3. CONCLUSION:

The disability context in Palestine is very challenging and full of obstacles. It is a long history of social, economic and political constraints that limit the inclusion of people with disabilities, within their local communities. Thus, the process of d

The particular focus on the mainstreaming of PwDs, including PwPDs into the labor market, is an important step that would increase the independence of people with disabilities and empower them to face other life challenges and obstacles. The inclusion of PwPDs into the labor market is a huge process that represents one piece of the whole image of inclusion. In order to obtain equal access for PwDs to labor market and livelihood resources, there is a need to follow a bottom-up approach that tackles multisectoral interventions, starting from securing and endorsing a supporting legal framework that is valid, applicable and flexible for potential modifications based on the experience and relevancy. Also, the educational system should build policies that

facilitate the mainstreaming of students with disabilities, on equal basis with their peers. The educational system includes the academic and the vocational divisions as both are important to build some kind of knowledge and technical experiences needed for people with disabilities before entering the labor market.

On the other hand, it is important to mobilize social support and raise the public awareness regarding PwDs rights to livelihood and employment opportunities. Advocacy is a major tool that would be needed to change the stereotype of how PwDs are perceived within their communities. This is also vital when addressing gender specific challenges face by women with physical disabilities, in particular, as this group is being experienced double folded challenges and discrimination.

Furthermore, building and physically accessible community will remove the tangible barriers that affect the possibility for PwDs to approach schools, facilities and job locations. Also, this step would give PwDs the feeling of their ability of movements without assistance which would feed in their self-esteem and confidence.

Obviously, the journey toward achieving the inclusive local community is still a bit long, but each step will make the road one day shorter. Thus, the recommendations and actions set within the frame of this research are essential to open the door for further chances of improvements and developments concerning the employability rights for PwPDs.

5.4 RECOMOENDATION:

5.4.1 STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Activate and Enhance the Legal Environment that are Aimed at Fostering the Inclusion and Mainstreaming of PwDs at the Palestinian Labor Market:**

The existence of a supportive legal framework is a crucial step to ease PwPDs access to the labor market. However, the available national law and International treaties need to be endorsed more for applicability to ensure a fair environment that would actually enhance the access of PwDs, in general to the labor market. Thus, some steps need to be taken forward to enhance the available laws applicability in accordance with the surrounding atmosphere.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Review and refute the Palestinian Law No. Number 4 for the Year 1999 Concerning the employment right of Persons with Disabilities, for more adaptations that meet the actual situation of PwDs in Palestine.
- 1.2 Advocate to increase the percentage of PwPDs representation amongst work forces to reach 4% of each organization human resources, as the percentage set by law (5%) is not fully implemented, according to this research results.
- 1.3 Oversee the law enforcement concerning PwDs rights to employment, in order to fill the gaps.
- 1.4 Give more focus and attention within the framework of the National Employment Strategy 2020, for improving PwDs opportunities at the labor market.
- 1.5 Endorse the implementation of the UNCRPD.

2. Empower PwDs to Participate into a Sustainable Socio-economic Growth

Aiming at Reducing Poverty at the National Economy Level:

According to the available statistics and data concerning PwDs, it was obvious that there is a need to identify methods that focus on building the technical capacities of the

unskilled PwPDs. The lack of experiences amongst PwDs is usually caused by the limited access they have to trainings and internships. Thus, it is important to design specialized programs that provide PwPDs with practical opportunities at the local market including permanent and temporary job creation programs, in addition to self-employment and business development.

2.1 Increase PwPDs access to job opportunities at the Palestinian authorities, non-profit organizations and private sector entities.

2.2 Plan for adjusted 40 job-creation programs that respond to the different needs of PwPDs.

2.3 Design specialized business development programs aiming at supporting PwPDs in creating new entrepreneurial income generating activities.

2.4 Increase the access of PwPDs to self-employment business development services including financing, developing business capabilities or developing existing projects.

2.5 Improve the performance of Palestinian institutions offering self-employment and employability opportunities for non-graduated and graduated PwPDs.

3. Build an Advocacy and Lobbying System that Supports the Access of PwPDs in the Labor Market:

The social mobilizing movements is a necessary supporting system for PwDs in general to be included within their local community, in particular, to have access to fair and equal job opportunities. Thus, it is important when planning for the enhancement of PwDs access to the labor market or any other social or economic facilities, to consider the community-based approach as a main element of each drawn action. Mobilizing the

public and increase their involvement and knowledge in any topic is one of the most effective tools of creating support and awareness. Hence, this plan considers to raise the local community awareness concerning PwPDs rights to employment aiming at facilitating their inclusion and supporting them to overcome the social and physical challenges they face.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Raise the local community awareness and knowledge concerning the education and employment rights of PwPDs.
- 3.2 Advocate for gender sensitivity programs that ensures equal representation for females with physical disability at the labor market, at least 50%.
- 3.3 Formulate supporting groups to submit policy papers and petitions with constant recommendations concerning PwPDs employment rights to policy makers

4. Develop an Incentive Educational Environment that is Friendly for PwDs:

There is a high chance for CwDs to skip education or drop out from schools due to many reasons; including, the physical accessibility. One important point that may affect the enrollment of PwDs at schools, is the absence of experiences by the educational staff who should be responsible of providing support to students with disabilities, through an inclusive education system. Private schools who accept to receive a child with disability within their environment, usually ask for a shade teacher to accompany this student every day from the moment he/she reaches the school until the parents come to pick their child. This process is not affordable in marginalized areas, especially that the salary of this assisting teacher should be paid by the family of the CwDs. Thus, some steps need to be taken to enhance the supportive education system at private and

public schools as well. Students with disabilities should be supported by the school educational staff without a need to hire an extra companion. Also, this step would somehow tag the student with disability, amongst his/her peers. This strategic plan is proposing approaches that may help in increasing the possibility for students with disabilities to be enrolled in an inclusive education system, through adaptation of physical facilities and building the capacities of educational staff on how to facilitate the educational involvement of students with disabilities.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Improve knowledge and experiences of teachers and educational staff at public and private schools on inclusive methodologies and concepts.
- 4.2 Increase the level of coordination and identifying synergies between governmental actors to move disability more onto sector mainstream agenda.
- 4.3 Develop disaggregated data on access to early education, primary secondary and tertiary levels for students with disabilities.
- 4.4 Build a supporting education system in each governorate with possible access to schools in need.
- 4.5 Reduce the stigma and discrimination of students with disabilities amongst their peers at schools.
- 4.6 Enhance the opportunities of students with disabilities access to TVET systems.
- 4.7 Increase the enrolment of students with physical disabilities to colleges and universities 40%, with 50% gender sensitivity.

5. Facilitate the Physical Mobility of PwDs:

It is very common that PwDs, including people with physical disabilities are less fortunate to reach facilities within their communities due to the absence of physical accessibility of transportations and locations. Thus, this plan is proposing actions that aims at enhancing the physical accessibility of PwPDs to facilities, with special focus on access to employment.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Improve the physical accessibility of transportation network.
- 5.2 Address the key physical barriers the hinder the ability of PwPDs accessibility to the labor market and other related spaces.
- 5.3 Adopt mitigation and adaptation measures concerning the physical accessibility of institutions, companies, educational institutes and other services.

6. Increase the Percentage of Women with Disabilities at the Labor Market by 50%:

Females with disabilities are exposed to intersectional discrimination within the general context of the Palestinian community. This plan is addressing the interference between gender and disability in order to shed the light on the challenges faced by women with physical disabilities, especially in marginalized areas, in addition to combat prejudice and exclusion. This could be done through the creation of specialized initiatives targeting improving the access of women with physical disabilities to the labor market and empower them on the economic level towards increasing the independency and reducing the patriarchal system among them.

Objectives:

6.1 Create 400 business development program targeting women with physical disabilities annually.

6.2 Increase the capacity of 50 small women's rights organizations (CBOs) to lead job creations programs.

6.3 Increase and build technical experiences for unskilled women with 10,000 unskilled women with physical disabilities, each year.

7. Specify a percentage of the general budget of the Palestinian Government to support employers to enhance the physical accessibility

As previously stated in this research, especially the previous studies part, sometimes the employers might be reluctant to recruit PwDs, as they are unwilling to hold extra expenses to adapt their places to be physically accessible for PwDs, or afford any kind of trainings and capacity building programs for their staff to enhance their abilities on how to deal with PwDs. Thus, it is crucial that the government will consider to support the employers of different sectors financially, to adapt their places to be more accessible and hospitable for PwDs, especially that some buildings are old and it might need high cost to adapt them.

Objectives:

7.1 Offer extra privileges like tax exemption for the employers who increase the percentage of PwDs among their staff.

7.2 Adapt 30 employment place on annual biases for the different types of disability by the government

3.7 Enhance the capacities of employers and their staff at different sectors, through capacity building programs on disabled people rights and the importance of inclusiveness.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A:

الملخص

تبحث هذه الورقة في العوائق التي تحول دون توظيف الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، وخاصة ذوي الإعاقات الجسدية ، في الضفة الغربية. كما وتهدف إلى الكشف عن العلاقة بين معدلات البطالة المرتفعة والإعاقة وكيف ينظر ذوي الإعاقة أنفسهم إلى هذه العلاقة. كما يربط البحث معدلات البطالة بين الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة ، بعوامل أخرى ، لتوضيح ما إذا كانت هذه العوامل تؤثر على وصول الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة إلى سوق العمل أم لا.

اعتمادًا على البيانات والتحليل ، ينتهي هذا العمل التفصيلي ببعض الملاحظات الرئيسية، أهمها؛ عدم وجود إستراتيجيات وطنية فاعلة بشكل أساسي ، حيث أن الهيئات المرجعية الرسمية ليس لديها أي أفق مستقبلية أو دراسات إحصائية حول الوضع الحالي للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة وكيفية تحسينه ؛ انتشار النهج الخيري بدلاً من النهج القائم على الحقوق من قبل الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة أنفسهم ، بينما يركز مستوى تنفيذ إمكانية الوصول والموائمة على التكيف مع التنقل لذوي الإعاقة الحركية فقط.

من ناحية أخرى ، يقدم هذا البحث بعض التوصيات بالإضافة إلى الأهداف والغايات الإستراتيجية التي تهدف إلى تعزيز وصول الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة إلى سوق العمل

Appendix B:

Questionnaire

Barriers to Employment & Employability Facing Persons with Disabilities in the Palestinian Labor Market

Targeted Respondents: to be conducted by people with disabilities seeking jobs and employment opportunities at the Palestinian local market.

Purpose: The information gathered through this questionnaire will be used as a part of empirical research that aims at determining the employability barriers faced by PwDs attempts to access to the Palestinian local market.

This questionnaire is part of a research conducted under a master university paper.

Confidentiality: please note that the responses you provide are completely anonymous and confidential.

I. Demographic Profile:

1) Gender:

- a. Male
- b. Female

2) Age Range:

- a. 18 – 25
- b. 26 – 35
- c. 36 – 45
- d. 46 and above

3) Level of Education:

- a. Elementary School
- b. Secondary School
- c. Diploma Degree
- d. BA Degree
- e. Masters' Degree
- f. No Degree

4) Marital Status:

- a. Married
- b. Single
- c. Divorced
- d. Widowed

5) Employment Status:

- a. Full time Employed
- b. Unemployed
- c. Self-employed
- d. Home-based business
- e. Retired
- f. Part time employed
- g. Never been employed due to disability

6) Level of Income:

- a. Less than 420 USD
Between 421 – 1000 USD
- b. Between 1000 – 1500 USD
c. Between 1501 USD and above

7) Place of Residency:

- a. Village
b. Refugee camp
- c. City
d. Bedouin Community

8) Type of Disability:

- a. Mobility
c. Visual
- b. Hearing

9) Reason of Disability:

- d. By birth
e. Accident
- f. Natural disaster
g. During war or military attack
h. During detention

II. Physical Accessibility:

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) As a person with disability, I do not suffer to move from one place to another as all the facilities are accessible					
2) As a person with disability, I am provided with the facilities needed for free (wheel chair, assistive devices, Crutches, Artificial limbs, prosthetic ..etc)					
3) As a person with disability, I always find accessible transportation to use in my movements as a person with physical disability					
4) As a person with disability, I do always find facilities, in my town, village, area of residency...etc, that is physically accessible (ramps, braille, signs language signs					
5) As a PwDs, I found that the municipality or the village council where I live, follows the adaptation guidelines concerning PwDs accessibility to buildings					

III. Public Awareness and Acceptance:

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) As a person with disability, I do not feel that I am perceived as less privileged in the community					
2) As a person with disability, I feel that Public are aware of PwDs rights					
3) As a person with disability, I feel that my image is not stigmatized and discriminated in the local community					
4) As a Person with disability, I do not suffer from the community unacceptance					
5) As a Person with disability, I feel that community members treat me on equal biases with other community members					
6) As a PwDs, I feel that people in my local community are aware of my accessibility needs, including, ramps, braille, signs ...					

IV. Legal Framework:

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) As a Person with disability, I enjoy access to job opportunities in accordance to the law that indicates a percentage of PwDs employees not less than 5% of staff in each organization					
2) As a Person with Physical disability, I am enrolled in rehabilitation and vocational trainings to the various applicable laws and bylaws on the basis of equal opportunity					
3) As a PwDs, I find the disability law is fully implemented at the public governmental sector					
4) As a PwDs, I find that the private sector employers are the most welcoming to hire PwDs within their entities.					
5) As a PwDs, I find than NGOs are the most welcoming to hire PwDs					

within their staff more than other entities.					
6) As a PwDs, I find that the banking sector is the most welcoming to hire PwDs					
7) As a person with physical disability, I feel that employers are aware of legal rights concerning PwDs access to employment					
8) As a Person with Physical disability, I am aware of my legal rights to obtain a decent and sustained job opportunity					
9) As a PwDs, I find that all the organizations consider the adaptation guidelines concerning PwDs accessibility.					
10) As a PwDs, I find that the local municipalities and/ or villages councils are adhering to the buildings system No. 5 for the year 2011, which obligates the physical adaptation of all types of buildings so as to be accessible for PwDs.					

V. Work Force:

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) As a person with disability, I do not face physical barriers in governmental entities (in terms of the physical accessibility)					
2) As a PwDs, I do not face physical barriers in private sector companies (physical accessibility)					
3) As a PwDs, I do not face physical barriers in NGOs (physical accessibility)					
4) I feel that Employees of governmental and non-governmental organizations are trained on how to deal with their colleagues of physical disabilities.					
5) I feel that Part-time jobs are most suitable for people with physical disabilities					
6) I feel that Home-based jobs are most suitable for PwDs.					
7) I feel that all organizations are physically accessible for people with disabilities (ramps, braille, sound systems, signs...)					

VI. Career Assistance Programs for PwDs:

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) As a person with physical disability, I have been enrolled in internships and trainings offered free by the government					
2) As a person with physical impairment, I have access to career programs that help me to find a suitable job that matches my experience and needs					
3) There are special financial products offered by banks and micro-finance institutes to for people with physical disabilities to establish their own businesses					
4) As a PwDs, I was enrolled in vocational trainings to build a technical experience that matches my abilities.					
5) Employment agencies customized special programs for job seekers of people with physical disabilities					

- I. What are the barriers I face as a person with physical disability in the access to the labor market? Please put them in a ranking order?
- II. What are the suggested solutions for the mentioned barriers that I face as a PwDs in the access to the labor market? Please put them in a ranking order?
- III. As a Women with physical disability, what are the gender specific barriers I face in the access to the labor market?
- IV. What are the suggested solutions for the mentioned barriers that I face as Women with physical disability in the access to the labor market? Please put them in ranking order?