

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK



**EXPLORING ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYERS TOWARDS HIRING INDIVIDUALS
WITH DISABILITIES. A CASESTUDY OF RUWA INDUSTRIAL AREA.**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
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FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

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Supervisor's NameSignature.....Date.....

Chairperson of the Department of the board of examiners

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, this report meets the examination requirement and I therefore declare that Bindura University accept the dissertation for **GUENIA ANESU NYAMKUNGURU** entitled: **Exploring attitudes of employers towards hiring individuals with disabilities. A case study of Ruwa Industrial Area.**

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DECLARATION FORM

I, Guenia Anesu Nyamkunguru studying the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, I am aware that plagiarism is a serious academic offense and that falsifying information is a breach of social work research ethics, therefore, I truly declare that:

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2. The research have followed all ethics that are in the social work profession

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents Mr M and Mrs S Nyamkunguru, they have been my source of inspiration, love and motivation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to appreciate many people who helped me towards the success of my research project. My sincere gratitude goes to my project supervisor Ms Muregi who was helping and guiding me from the onset up until the end of the research. Great thanks to my family and friends for their unwavering support and all the respondents for their willingness to participate in my research project. Above all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank ALMIGHTY GOD who made the four year journey at Bindura University of Science Education a possible one.

ABSTACT

The attitudes of employers towards hiring individuals with disabilities. A case study of Ruwa Industrial Area; had the following objectives: to explore employer's attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities, to identify the barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from being hired and retained in the workplace and to develop recommendations for improving the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities. The study made use of a qualitative research design making use of in-depth interviews and semi structured interviews as data collection methods. The study findings suggest that some employers hold positive attitudes and some had negative attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities. There are still many barriers that prevent them from doing so and these include communication barrier, stigma and discrimination, infrastructure inaccessibility, no assistive technology and education qualification. The study then concluded that the attitudes of employers towards hiring persons with disabilities are complex, multifaceted and influenced by various factors. The results of the study indicated that some employers are open to inclusive hiring practices and others may hold misconceptions, lack of awareness about capabilities of persons with disabilities that why there is still high rate of unemployment of persons with disabilities The study recommends that the government should create incentives to promote inclusivity, encourage self-employment of persons with disabilities and create more inclusive and accessible workplace. These recommendations are intended to promote equal employment.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
EEA	Employment Equity Act
PEPUDA	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
PSTD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

CONTENTS

APPROVAL FORM	iii
DECLARATION FORM	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	viii
CONTENTS.....	ix
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH.....	3
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	3
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.7 ASSUMPTIONS.....	4
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	5
1.10 STUDY LIMITATIONS.....	5
1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	5
1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	5
1.12.1 Informed Consent	6
1.12.2 Confidentiality	6
1.13 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE.....	6
1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	7
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
2.2.1 Social Model of Disability.....	9
2.2.2 Medical Model	9
2.3 CAUSES OF DISABILITIES	10
2.3.1 Prenatal disability	11
2.3.2 Congenital disability	11

2.3.3 Acquired disability	11
2.3.4 Malnutrition	12
2.3.5 Hereditary factor	12
2.3.6 Infectious diseases	12
2.4 TYPES OF DISABILITIES	13
2.4.1 Developmental disabilities	13
2.4.2 Physical disabilities	13
2.4.3 Sensory impairments	14
2.4.4 Behavioral or Emotional disabilities	14
2.5 TRENDS IN DISABILITY IN SELECTED COUNTRIES	14
2.5.1 United Kingdom	15
2.5.2 South Africa.....	16
2.5.3 Zimbabwe	17
2.6 SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS REGARDING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.....	20
2.7 EMPLOYERS VIEWS ON EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	22
2.8 LITERATURE GAP	23
2.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER.....	25
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	26
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	26
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	26
3.3 POPULATION UNDER THE STUDY.....	27
3.4 SAMPLE SIZE.....	27
3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	27
3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	28
3.6.1 Key informants Interviews (Semi structured interview)	28
3.6.2 Participants Interviews (In-depth interviews).....	28
3.7 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS	29
3.7.1 Key informants Interview Guide (Semi-structured interview).....	29
3.7.2 Participants interview guide (In-depth interview)	29
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION	30
3.9 PILOT TESTING	30
3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	31
3.10.1 Informed Consent	31

3.10.2 Confidentiality	31
3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY	32
CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	33
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	33
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS	33
Table 4.2.1	33
4.3 EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES ON HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.	34
4.3.1 Positive attitudes of employers.....	34
4.3.2 Negative attitudes of employers	35
4.3.3 Benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.....	36
4.4 THE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BEING HIRED AND RETAINED IN THE WORKPLACE.	38
4.4.1 Absenteeism	38
4.4.2 Stigma and Discrimination.....	39
4.4.3 Infrastructure inaccessibility	40
4.4.4 Educational qualifications.....	42
4.4.5 Assistive technology	43
4.4.6 Communication barrier.....	44
4.4.7 Inaccessible transport	45
4.5 MEASURES FOR IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.	46
4.5.1 Flexible working hours	46
4.5.2 Infrastructure accessibility.....	47
4.5.3 Government incentives for inclusive hiring.....	48
4.5.4 Assistive technology	49
4.5.5 Raise awareness.....	50
4.5.6 Encourage self-employment	51
4.5.7 Collaborate with Educational institutions	52
4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY	52
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	54
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	54
5.2 SUMMARY	54
5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY	55
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	56

5.4.1 To employers:	57
5.4.2 To the government:	57
5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	58
5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY	59
REFERENCE	60
APPENDIX 1	68
APPENDIX 2	71
APPENDEX 3: LETTER OF APPROVAL	74

CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study by delving into the background of the subject, focusing on the attitudes of employers towards hiring individuals with disabilities in Ruwa Industrial Area. It explores the historical context of employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities both in Zimbabwe and globally. Additionally, it discusses the problem statement, highlighting the motivation behind the research, particularly the persistently high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities which has remained unaddressed. The researcher's interest in addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities motivated the choice of this topic. The chapter also outlines the study's objectives, research questions, significance, as well as its scope and limitations. Lastly, it touches on the ethical considerations involved in conducting the research.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The exclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce has been a topic of increasing importance and interest in recent years. Attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities can vary among employers due to range of factors such as cultural beliefs, misconceptions, lack of awareness, lack of disability inclusion initiatives and lack of resources. There are various laws that protect persons with disabilities, such as the Disabled People Act. The welfare and rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities are provided for by this Act. Discrimination against persons with disability in employment, education, and denying them access to public facilities, services and amenities is illegal. The legislation makes sure that any structural, physical, administrative or other

barriers that prevent persons with disability from accessing the facilities, services or amenities mentioned in subsection (1) are removed.

Around the globe, employers have negative and positive attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities. According to WHO (2011), around one billion people, which accounts for 15% of the world's population have some form of disability with higher prevalence in developing countries. Awareness of disability-inclusive development is growing globally. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 by the United Nations and ratified by 185 countries advocates for the integration of persons with disabilities into societies. However, there is significant variation among countries in their approaches to workplace inclusion and accessibility.

The Zimbabwean government acknowledges that disabilities can manifest in various forms, including physical, cognitive, mental, emotional, developmental and sensory. According to Kaserera (2012), Zimbabwe's overall unemployment rate is estimated to be around 80% with less than 7% of persons with disabilities employed contributing to their continued poverty. In Ruwa, there is a particularly high unemployment rate among persons with disabilities. To address this marginalization President Emmerson Mnangagwa introduced the National Disability Policy in 2021. It is estimated that 1.4 million individuals in Zimbabwe have some form of disability.

Regionally, in South Africa there has been a lot of progress which has some of the most progressive laws in the region when it comes to disability rights. For instance, the Employment Equity Act passed in 1998 mandates companies to take actions to encourage the employment of individuals with disabilities (World Bank, 2023). Nonetheless, challenges persist including a lack of awareness about the law and the rights of persons with disabilities as well as inadequate accessible

infrastructure. Many workplaces are not designed with accessibility in mind, which makes it challenging for persons with disabilities to access these workplaces.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The employment rate among individuals with disabilities remains alarmingly low indicating a significant issue concerning societal attitudes and practices towards their integration into the workforce. Despite legal protections and policies, there persists a noticeable gap in employment rates between individuals with disabilities and those without. It's crucial to acknowledge that individuals with disabilities possess the same capabilities and responsibilities as anyone else yet they often face discrimination. There is a lack of research into employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities, especially in the Ruwa Industrial area. Therefore, it's imperative to investigate this issue to identify barriers to employment, understand the factors influencing employers' attitudes and propose strategies to promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the local workforce.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of employers regarding the recruitment of individuals with disabilities in the Ruwa Industrial Area.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To explore employers' attitudes toward hiring persons with disabilities.
2. To identify the barriers preventing the hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.
3. To develop recommendations to enhance the employment prospects of persons with disabilities.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What attitudes do employers have toward hiring individuals with disabilities in the workplace?
2. What are the main obstacles to hiring and keeping individuals with disabilities employed?
3. What are the most effective ways to improve attitudes and practices related to hiring persons with disabilities?

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

Negative perceptions exist toward individuals with disabilities in the workplace. The respondents will provide accurate descriptions of their attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities. Employers in the Ruwa Industrial Area might lack the required knowledge or resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Persons with disabilities may encounter obstacles in accessing employment opportunities such as inadequate transportation and workplace accommodations. The researcher has sufficient time and funding to conduct and complete the study.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research will help pinpoint the shortcomings in workplace environments that hinder the full participation of individuals with disabilities. It will assist in finding ways to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, potentially leading to an improved quality of life and increased economic participation for them. Moreover, this study will guide policymakers in consistently integrating persons with disabilities into policy-making processes. Additionally, it will be valuable for employers to enhance the well-being of individuals with disabilities and raise awareness about their experiences, potentially reducing stigma and discrimination.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This speaks about the restrictions placed on the study. These are the factors that either make it easier for the researcher to conduct the study or make it more difficult. This study is delimited to employer's attitudes in Ruwa Industrial area excluding other sectors and this may limit the diversity of attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities.

1.10 STUDY LIMITATIONS

Limitations refer to the confounding factors beyond the control of the research. The study's techniques and findings are constrained by these factors. There are some obstacles and limitations to the research. The first limitation of the study it is limited to a particular place and the results may not be generalizable to other locations. The second limitation is that some employers may be hesitant or unwilling to openly discuss their attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities therefore people may not be fully accurate and honest in their responses.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Attitudes are described as long-lasting arrangements of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward socially significant objects, groups, events, or symbols (Fiske, 2010).

Employer is an individual or a group of individuals who has the legal right to hire and dismiss workers and to set the terms of their employment (Pencavel, 2011).

Disabilities are defined as a set of conditions that is culturally defined, not merely physically given, and that impacts the ways in which bodies are understood and lived (Davis, 2013)

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Silverman (2020), social work ethics encompass principles that define the rights and responsibilities of researchers and practitioners in social work. To ensure subjects are protected

from any physical discomfort resulting from the research, the researcher established clear boundaries. The research objectives were fully explained to the participants beforehand and informed consent and privacy were carefully considered. Additionally, the researcher respected each participant's right to privacy to avoid any infringement.

1.12.1 Informed Consent

The assumption underlying participant participation in a study is that participants are capable of voluntarily choosing to participate and of withdrawing at any time. In addition, consent should only be obtained once potential participants have received all necessary information (Plummer, 2010). This consent must be given freely, without pressure and must be based on an understanding of the potential risks and benefits of the activity. Informed consent helps to build trust between people.

1.12.2 Confidentiality

The participant has a right to confidentiality and the researcher has a responsibility to make sure that material is not disclosed in a way that would put participants at risk of damage of any kind (Plummer, 2010). It deals with how shared information is handled with the restriction that it won't be made public unless prior consent from all persons involved has been obtained. The dominant perspective on confidentiality served as the foundation for the study. Respecting the confidentiality agreement assisted the researcher to stay within the bounds of what is acceptable in terms of study and will improve the process' integrity.

1.13 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

The dissertation is structured into five chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction, the second chapter is a literature review, examining previous studies. The third chapter details the

methodology, while the fourth chapter presents the data findings. Finally, the last chapter includes a summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the study's findings.

1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter primarily introduces the study, outlining the research direction and briefly discussing the historical background of employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities. It also presents the objectives and aims of the study, crucial for understanding the study's focus and goals. Additionally, it reviews the motivations behind the research, as outlined in the statement of the problem. The chapter also briefly addresses the study's delimitations, limitations and ethical considerations. Finally, the dissertation outline is clearly outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A review of literature is an academic presentation that provides context and demonstrates understanding of scholarly literature on a specific topic. An examination of earlier studies on employers' views about hiring person with disabilities is provided in this chapter. Additionally, the chapter examined and presented facts regarding the rights of individuals with impairments. The information provided in this chapter mostly addressed the challenges that persons with impairments confront. Starting with a global overview, the researcher explained each objective in turn, then on to regional levels and ending with local levels.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework permits researchers to investigate how employers construct their opinions and decide whether or not to hire persons with disabilities. It also allows employers' attitudes regarding hiring persons with disabilities to be examined. Affirmation models, minority models, social models, medical models and charity models are some of the theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain why individuals perceive disabilities in the way that they do. The literature review focused on the social and medical models as its main themes. Disability is perceived under the medical paradigm as a private matter (Carson, 2019). If an impairment impairs a person's vision, movement or hearing, it is referred to as a handicap. Disability advocacy groups developed the social model in response to societal treatment as well as perceived unfair treatment and social isolation by health and welfare systems. These paradigms provide a framework for understanding disability from different social viewpoints ranging from individual experiences to societal perceptions of those with impairments.

2.2.1 Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability is a theoretical framework that views disability as the result of interactions between individuals with disabilities and the social, cultural and environmental barriers they encounter. According to Barton (2002), this model posits that individuals with disabilities are not inherently disabled rather they are disabled by a society that fails to accommodate their needs. The social model highlights how institutional policies, physical environments and societal attitudes contribute to the obstacles preventing individuals with disabilities from reaching their full potential. It recognizes that a person's disability is influenced by systemic discrimination, unequal access to resources and social structures that perpetuate marginalization and exclusion, as well as the individual's impairment. Oliver (2018) argues that the social model places responsibility squarely on society rather than diminishing it. It posits that personal limitations are not the problem rather society is at fault for its inadequate efforts to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are fully addressed in the social fabric of the community. In terms of employment, this may entail employers holding negative attitudes or misconceptions about individuals with disabilities, leading to discrimination in hiring practices. According to Oliver (1996), the social model suggests that the focus should be on addressing these attitudes and changing the systems that perpetuate them rather than on fixing or treating the individual with a disability.

2.2.2 Medical Model

The medical model of disability views a person's disability as a personal health problem or impairment that requires treatment, management or resolution through medical means. According to Delin (2018), the outdated "medical model" views disability as an affliction that affects a single person and puts the onus of managing the symptoms on that person. It shifts the responsibility for

providing an explanation from the person with the handicap to them. This explains why the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities are far from being resolved because of the way society perceives them, they are not treated with the same respect as people who are able-bodied and are instead held exclusively responsible for the illnesses they suffer from. According to Oliver (2009), medical model can be a problematic because it can lead to individuals being blamed for their disability rather than addressing the underlying causes. The medical model may maintain a paternalistic view of impairment and contribute to dependency among individuals with disabilities. It may also reinforce perceptions of helplessness because it frequently views individuals with disabilities as passive beneficiaries of medical procedures rather than active participants in directing their own lives, the medical model might minimize the significance of personal agency and self-determination for these individuals. According to Wendell (1996), medical model reinforces the idea of normal and abnormal bodies, which can lead to discrimination and prejudice. Under the medical model, people who do not fit the idea of normal body are seen as abnormal and may be treated differently. This can lead to feelings of shame and isolation, as well as limited access to resources and opportunities.

2.3 CAUSES OF DISABILITIES

The impairment might have a wide range of reasons. Birth abnormalities and impairment can be caused by a variety of situations or settings during pregnancy (Rieser, 2008). Barnes and Oliver (2019) assert that some degree of impairment has always been a part of the human experience. A variety of factors including accidents, genetic disorders, malnourishment, inadequate preventive healthcare, exposure to environmental toxins, war or landmines can cause a person to become crippled later in life or cause them to be disabled from birth. Disability is caused by a variety of circumstances, and while some people are born without it, it gradually develops as people age.

2.3.1 Prenatal disability

A prenatal condition that affects the mother's womb might be detrimental to the unborn child. This can include physical disabilities such as spina bifida and intellectual disability such as Down syndrome. According to Crane (2018), some prenatal disabilities are caused by genetic while others are caused by environmental factors such as exposure to toxins during pregnancy. Prenatal disabilities can be detected through prenatal testing such as chorionic villus sampling. However not all prenatal disabilities are detectable through testing. A nutritional deficiency of any kind experienced by the pregnant mother could have an impact on the fetus (Linton, 2017). As a result, the newborn can experience mental or physical difficulties.

2.3.2 Congenital disability

Congenital disability is a disability that is present at the time of birth (Ross, 2006). A lot of things can occasionally happen during delivery that negatively affects the infant. This can be both physical and cognitive disabilities. Disabilities at the time of birth include cerebral palsy, syndrome and spina bifida and can be caused by genetic factors, prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol or other environmental factors (Tremain, 2015). If delivery is challenging, the baby's brain may momentarily stop receiving oxygen. It damages the neurological system of the brain or spinal cord permanently. This could lead to the mental deficiency of the baby, causing the baby some physical impairments. When a newborn is delivered by a doctor using one of various instruments, such a forceps delivery, the "brain" or "nerve" of the baby may also be disturbed by the forceps thus leading to disability.

2.3.3 Acquired disability

Disability that occurs after birth is called acquired disability. This can happen as a result of an illness or injury such as stroke, traumatic brain injury and infection. Examples of acquired

disabilities include speech and language disorders, hearing loss, mobility impairments and vision impairments (Blum and Adachi, 2018). If the baby is not given the right care after delivery, they could have disabilities. In the event that a newborn's eyes are not cleansed with a 1% nitrate solution for example there is a risk of blindness.

2.3.4 Malnutrition

Malnutrition is also called under nutrition and is a major cause of disability that occurs when a person does not get the right amount of nutrients such as proteins, vitamins and minerals (Parish, 2007). Malnutrition may result from poverty, food insecurity and inadequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Insufficient nutrition can lead to permanent cognitive, physical and developmental impairments. When iodine is scarce, the hormone thyroxin is inadequate, impeding the body's growth. Insufficient calcium leads to bone distortion.

2.3.5 Hereditary factor

Hereditary factors are those that are passed down from parent to child through genes. According to (Crane, 2018), deficits or disabilities can be inherited by children from their parents. Hereditary diseases are caused by changes in an individual's DNA sequence. These changes can be inherited from one or both parents. Certain genetic disorders stem from a single gene mutation, while others result from multiple gene mutations or interactions between genes and the environment. Hereditary disabilities include Down syndrome and spinal muscular atrophy.

2.3.6 Infectious diseases

Infectious diseases can lead to various forms of disability impacting individuals physically, mentally and socially. According to Novak (2021), some diseases such as polio, measles and tuberculosis can weaken the immune system and make it easier for a person to develop other

infections that can lead to disability. Infectious diseases can result in physical disabilities such as limb deformities and sensory disabilities such as hearing loss or vision problems.

2.4 TYPES OF DISABILITIES

Disability is a broad and complex term that refers to any condition that limits a person's ability to perform daily activities. There are many different types of disabilities and they can be classified into four broad categories which are developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory disabilities and behavioral or emotional disabilities.

2.4.1 Developmental disabilities

It is a state when a person's capacity for comprehension and information processing is compromised to the point where it interferes with their performance. As per Turk (2021), persons with developmental disabilities experience challenges in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. While some individuals with intellectual disabilities may live independently, others may require additional support. Developmental disabilities encompass conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and intellectual disabilities.

2.4.2 Physical disabilities

It refers to conditions that affect a person's physical functioning, mobility and dexterity (Daniels, 2020). These disabilities can be present at birth or acquired due to illness, injury. Some examples of physical disabilities include amputation, spinal cord injury. Persons with physical disabilities may require assistive devices, mobility aids or accommodations to help them navigate daily life and participate fully in activities.

2.4.3 Sensory impairments

This term describes conditions that impact an individual's capacity to receive or interpret information from their senses (Nicholas, 2017). This can encompass visual impairment (blindness or low vision), hearing impairment (deafness or hard of hearing) and other sensory processing disorders. Individuals with sensory impairments may use assistive devices like hearing aids and cochlear implants.

2.4.4 Behavioral or Emotional disabilities

A behavioral or emotional disability is a condition that influences an individual's behavior or emotional health, often hindering their daily functioning (Baker, 2019). This encompasses conditions like depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, autism spectrum disorder and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These disabilities can greatly affect a person's social, academic and personal life and may necessitate support and accommodations to facilitate the individual's success.

2.5 TRENDS IN DISABILITY IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

The attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities have been extensively explored and debated in global literature. Employers exhibit both positive and negative attitudes toward employing individuals with disabilities. According to WHO (2011), approximately one billion people, accounting for 15% of the world's population experience some form of disability with a higher prevalence in developing countries. Efforts to enhance inclusivity offer education and training on disability awareness and establish supportive policies and practices are on the rise. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 and ratified by 185 countries (O'Mahony, 2018), advocates for the integration of persons with disabilities into societies. However, there are significant disparities among countries regarding their approach to

workplace inclusion and accessibility. As noted by Oliver (2012), a prevalent attitude toward hiring individuals with disabilities is the perception that they are less productive and capable compared to their non-disabled counterparts leading to discrimination and exclusion in the workplace. Consequently, individuals with disabilities remain among the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups globally.

2.5.1 United Kingdom

Attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities in the United Kingdom are complex and influenced by legal frameworks, employer perspectives and barriers. The UK's legislative framework plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward employing individuals with disabilities. The Equality Act of 2010 offers legal protection to individuals with disabilities in employment, education and other services. According to Oliver (2015), the Act requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate individuals with disabilities in the workplace and prohibits disability-based discrimination, harassment and victimization. Employers in the UK are increasingly recognizing the benefits of employing individuals with disabilities.

In terms of statistics, the Office for National Statistics (2018) reported that approximately one in five people in the UK had a disability, totaling around 13.9 million individuals. Furthermore, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities was approximately 7.9%, compared to the overall unemployment rate of around 3.9%. These figures indicate ongoing challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in the job market. As of 2022, the overall disability employment rate stood at 50.9%, a slight increase from previous years. The latest data from the Office for National Statistics (2021) showed that there were around 13.9 million individuals with disabilities in the UK in 2022, comprising around 22.9% of the population.

Despite the legal framework in the UK, studies have revealed persistent barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities suggesting that attitudes may not fully align with legal requirements. According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018), a report found that individuals with disabilities still encounter significant barriers to employment in the UK, including limited access to suitable jobs, lack of accommodations and workplace discrimination. Crawford, Gardiner and Tetlow (2022) noted that individuals with disabilities are more likely to be in the lowest income group and experience poverty compared to those without disabilities, due to lower education levels, discrimination and a pay gap. This highlights the significant disparity in employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and underscores the need for greater efforts to ensure equal opportunities.

2.5.2 South Africa

In South Africa, attitudes toward disability employment vary, and there are challenges that need to be overcome. Disability rights laws in South Africa are among the most progressive in the region, reflecting significant development in this area. Key statutory tools provided by the government include the South African Constitution of 1996, especially the Bill of Rights which prohibits unjust discrimination, promotes equality and offers remedies for historical imbalances.

According to Walker (2017), workplace disparities are addressed by several pieces of legislation, including the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (EEA) and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) which establish "Equity Courts" with broad applicability. Additionally, there are guidelines such as the Code of Good Practice and the Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities along with ongoing revisions to the 1986 National Building Rules. Remedial measures have been implemented to address disparities between persons with disabilities and their non-disabled peers

in the workplace and other social settings. Thomas (2013) notes the increasing acknowledgment of the importance of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

However, challenges persist, including lack of awareness about disability rights laws, inadequate infrastructure accessibility and workplace designs that are not inclusive. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), the employment rate for persons with disabilities in South Africa was 5.7%, compared to 21.5% for those without disabilities. Many workplaces lack accessibility features, making it difficult for persons with disabilities to access employment, contributing to their lower employment rates. The Disabled People's Organization Coalition (2012) identifies stigma and discrimination from employers as major barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. This underscores the need for increased attention and efforts to improve attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities in the country.

2.5.3 Zimbabwe

According to the Irish Refugee Documentation Center (2011), the World Health Organization estimates that about 10% of Zimbabwe's population, or 1.3 million individuals, live with disabilities. In Zimbabwe, there has been significant research and discussion on attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities. Employers' views on hiring disabled persons vary, with some seeing it positively and others negatively. Zimbabwe has made notable progress in disability rights legislation, boasting some of the most progressive laws globally. Zulu and Dube (2015) report that businesses generally support hiring individuals with disabilities, seeing them as valuable additions to the workforce. However, there is also a negative perception among some employers toward hiring individuals with impairments. Kaserera (2012) estimates that the overall unemployment rate in Zimbabwe is at least 80%, with less than 7% of persons with disabilities being employed which perpetuates their absolute poverty.

In Zimbabwe, significant progress has been made in enacting some of the most progressive laws in the region regarding disability rights. The legal and policy framework in Zimbabwe offers protection and support for individuals with disabilities, particularly in the context of employment. The Disabled Persons Act of 1992 is legislation in Zimbabwe aimed at promoting the well-being of individuals with disabilities. According to the Parliament of Zimbabwe (1992), Section 18 stipulates that employers cannot discriminate against someone based on their disability. The National Policy on Disability (2013-2022) reflects the recognition of the importance of inclusivity and non-discrimination in society. According to Zengenya (2016), this policy identifies six priority areas: early intervention and special education, social services, employment, accessibility, participation and legislation. It seeks to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in both the public and private sectors by improving access to vocational training and skills development, increasing job opportunities and raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Affirmative Action Policy in Zimbabwe, introduced in 1999, aims to promote equal opportunities and full participation of individuals with disabilities in society. According to Mutongwizo (2015), this policy ensures that individuals with disabilities have equal access to education, employment and other opportunities. Section 18 of the Affirmative Action Policy addresses the recruitment and hiring of persons with disabilities, requiring all public and private sector employers to adopt policies and procedures that ensure equal opportunity in recruitment. The policy mandates employers to take measures to eliminate any barriers that may prevent persons with disabilities from applying for or being considered for a job.

The Labour Act passed in 2006 serves as the principal legislation governing the rights of workers in the country including persons with disabilities. Section 7 of the Act prohibits employment discrimination based on various factors including disability. This section states that no individual

shall discriminate against another in employment on the grounds of disability or any other arbitrary reason (Mutongwizo, 2015). Furthermore, Section 13 of the Act prohibits discrimination in the recruitment and hiring of employees with disabilities, mandating that every employer take practical steps to ensure that qualified individuals are not discriminated against during recruitment due to disability.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe adopted in 2013 contains several key provisions for individuals with disabilities. Section 56 addresses the right to equality and non-discrimination. According to Ndlovu (2016), this section stipulates that every person has the right to be treated with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination on the basis of disability. This provision is crucial for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring their equal treatment.

Despite legal provisions aimed at safeguarding the rights of individuals with disabilities in the workplace, negative attitudes among employers and societal perceptions continue to pose significant barriers to employment. According to Chitiga-Mabugu (2017), a variety of challenges and obstacles exacerbate the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities seeking employment in Zimbabwe. These challenges include limited access to education and vocational training, inadequate support services, physical barriers in the environment and a lack of employer awareness about disability issues. Mutongwizo (2015) notes that many myths persist in Zimbabwe regarding the causes of disabilities, such as the belief that they are linked to witchcraft or maternal promiscuity. Muzenda (2016), highlights factors influencing employers' attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities including the perception that they are less productive and a belief that they are a burden in the workplace. In Zimbabwean culture, disability is still often viewed as a curse, and communities may not fully accept persons with disabilities as equal members of society.

2.6 SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS REGARDING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

In various societies, there tends to be a negative perception of persons with disabilities. Attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities in both African and Western countries are shaped by social factors. These societal perceptions greatly impact the experiences of individuals with disabilities. According to Thomas (2015), views of persons with disabilities in society can vary widely due to a lack of understanding about what it means to have a disability. People may believe that all individuals with disabilities are the same. They may also have negative stereotypes about the capabilities of person with disabilities. According to Davis (2012), stigmatization and misconceptions about disability persist in African countries societies, impacts how person with disabilities are viewed and valued. According to Ayodo (2014), in Kenya, there is wide spread belief that persons with albinism have magical powers. This belief has led to discrimination and violence against persons with albinism. In Ghana, persons with disabilities are often seen as useless and burdens. Social factors also play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions of persons with disabilities in Western countries. In Canada, individuals with disabilities are often perceived as a burden on society rather than as valuable members of the community. This perception can result in limited opportunities and exclusion. According to Oliver (2012), in the UK, persons with disabilities are frequently regarded as incompetent or inferior to others. These societal attitudes can impact employer behavior and decision-making processes regarding the hiring of individuals with disabilities.

Positive societal perceptions of persons with disabilities can have a profound effect on changing employer attitudes. Kafer (2013) suggests that when a society views a person with disabilities as valuable contributors, it can create a ripple effect, leading to more employers being willing to hire individuals with disabilities. This sets off a positive cycle, where more persons with disabilities

are employed, resulting in improved societal attitudes, which in turn leads to even more persons with disabilities being hired. According to Chatikobo (2016), the majority of the people had a positive view of individuals with disabilities. People generally saw them as friendly, honest and capable of being a part of the society. In Zimbabwe, some people believe that those with disabilities are special and have been chosen by God for a specific purpose. Cultural beliefs influence attitudes towards persons with disabilities. One belief is “mwana mutsvairo” which means “a child of destiny”. This belief says that persons with disabilities have been chosen by God for a special purpose. Another belief is that persons with disabilities have special spiritual powers and can perform miracles. In Tanzania, individuals with disabilities are often seen as having special spiritual abilities. They are seen as being resourceful and resilient than others. Persons with disabilities are described as “Tunaweza” which means we are able. Western countries view of disability is the emphasis on ability rather than disability (Oliver, 2015). This means that persons with disabilities are seen as having skills and strengths rather being defined by their disability. In Sweden, the government introduced a program known as the "ability bonus," which offers financial incentives to encourage employers to hire individuals with disabilities. This initiative has led to a shift in employers' attitudes towards employing individuals with disabilities.

Despite the increasing acknowledgment of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, negative societal attitudes towards individuals with disabilities persist in both African and Western countries. According to Oliver (2015), in certain African societies, persons with disabilities are seen as burdens within their families and communities. This perception can result in social isolation and exclusion. In some cases, persons with disabilities may be denied access to opportunities because of these negative attitudes. One study found that persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe are often seen as being unable to care for themselves and are therefore dependent on

others. Makete and De Lange (2015), persons with disabilities are often seen as less productive and less competent. This can lead to employers having negative attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities. There are many cultural and religious beliefs that influence the way people view disability (McRuer, 2014). In some parts of Africa such as Zimbabwe and Ghana, individuals with disabilities are seen as a result of witchcraft and this leads to discrimination and exclusion in the society. Some countries such as Kenya and Uganda, Christians believe that disability is as a result of sin or punishment from God. Negative societal perceptions can create additional obstacles for individuals with disabilities in securing employment and can fuel employers' negative attitudes.

2.7 EMPLOYERS VIEWS ON EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Employers' perspectives on hiring persons with disabilities can vary greatly, influenced by factors like organizational culture, awareness of disability issues, legal obligations, and personal beliefs. Bruyere and Klotz (2016) suggest that employers frequently hold negative views about the work abilities of individuals with disabilities, affecting their decisions throughout the hiring process. Managers have reported rarely seeing workers with disabilities in their applicant pools, leading to underestimations of the actual number of qualified individuals with disabilities applying for job openings. Despite the prevalence of disabilities in the working-age population, many disabilities are invisible or easily concealable during interviews, contributing to this underestimation. Employers may question whether applicants with disabilities have the necessary qualifications for the job, resulting in biases and assumptions about their capabilities that could hinder their chances during the selection process (Rynes, 2004). Managers may be uncertain about how hiring individuals with disabilities will affect existing employees within the organization. Concerns about social integration, teamwork dynamics and potential conflicts may arise, impacting all workplace

cohesion. According to Torres (2016), employers may express skepticism regarding the performance and safety behaviors of workers with disabilities. Misconceptions about productivity levels, safety accommodations needed and overall job performance can influence evaluations and potentially lead to premature termination decisions.

In countries where disability rights are firmly established, employers may have a more positive outlook on hiring individuals with disabilities. They may view it as a means to enhance diversity, fulfill corporate social responsibility objectives, and access a talented workforce. According to Bruyere (2014), employers may also view employing individuals with disabilities as a legal obligation. In numerous nations, there are laws and regulations that forbid discrimination based on disability and may oblige employers to offer reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities. Some employers might adhere to these legal mandates to prevent repercussions or damage to their reputation. In Germany, the Equal treatment for Disabled Persons Act requires employers to take measures to promote equal employment such as offering training and adapting workplaces. In Kenya, the Persons with Disabilities Act require employers to reserve at least 5% of their positions for persons with disabilities. Employers generally have favorable attitudes toward hiring individuals with disabilities, but they are more inclined to hire those with physical disabilities that require minimal accommodations compared to those with more complex disabilities that necessitate more significant adjustments. According to Parish (2012), employers are less inclined to hire individuals with disabilities they perceive as requiring extensive accommodations or adjustments.

2.8 LITERATURE GAP

There is a significant gap in the existing literature regarding the attitudes of employers in the Ruwa Industrial Area towards hiring individuals with disabilities. Research on employer's attitudes

towards hiring individuals with disabilities in Zimbabwe has been conducted by several researchers, notably in specific communities like Chitungwiza. A qualitative study by Nyoni (2010) a case study of Chitungwiza, Mapuranga and Mutswanga (2014) a case study of Harare Central Business District, Chikowore (2010) a case study of Harare and Ndlovu and Moyo (2015) a case study of Harare City Council. Some of these gaps include:

1. Much of the existing research on employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities focuses on large towns. There is limited research on this topic specific to the Ruwa Industrial Area or similar regions in Zimbabwe.
2. There is a lack of literature that investigates the effectiveness of existing policies and initiatives aimed at promoting the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce in Ruwa Industrial Area. Understanding the perspectives of employers and identifying potential areas for improvement can help inform the development of targeted interventions to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in this region.
3. There is a lack of research that explores the specific challenges and barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities in Ruwa Industrial Area.
4. There is need for more research that specifically addresses the attitudes of employers in the Ruwa Industrial Area towards hiring individuals with disabilities, in order to inform policy and practice aimed at promoting greater inclusivity and diversity in the workforce

By addressing these literature gaps through empirical research, qualitative interviews, surveys or observational studies tailored to the context of Ruwa Industrial Area, scholars can contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge on disability employment and foster evidence-based strategies for promoting equal opportunities in the labor market.

2.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter examined the literature supporting the study, utilizing the study's objectives as a framework. The review of literature revealed diverse beliefs about disability prevalent in African and Western societies, including the notion that disability is a divine punishment and the belief in the spiritual powers of individuals with disabilities, affecting the lives of others. However, efforts by the government aim to challenge these beliefs and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. Additionally, this chapter outlined the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures employed by the researcher to gather data, detailing how the study was conducted to fulfill its objectives. It covered aspects such as the target population, sampling techniques, data collection tools, methods of data collection, data presentation, data analysis, pilot testing and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design, as defined by Khothari (2009), is a comprehensive plan that outlines how the study will be conducted, including the selection of relevant sources for hypothesis testing and result analysis. This study employed a qualitative research methodology, specifically utilizing the case study research design. A case study is characterized as an examination of a case across time using detailed data gathered from multiple information sources. According to Silverman (2020), case study help provide an inductive response to the study's exploratory goals, through investigation of the subject from every viewpoint. As a result, using a case study makes it easier to fully comprehend the research problem. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state that the design places the study in close proximity to the subjects and the subject matter. The researcher was able to understand every facet of impairment that was related to it thanks to the case study investigation. Another noteworthy advantage of the case study procedures was their utilization of diverse sources and techniques for gathering data. The researcher had specified what evidence to gather and what techniques of data analysis to use on the data to answer the study questions. This increased the research process's effectiveness. The researcher thoroughly grasped employers' genuine views on employing individuals with disabilities.

3.3 POPULATION UNDER THE STUDY

The group from which the researcher hopes to draw conclusions is referred to as the target population (Philipps & Mrowczynski, 2021). Punch (2011) defines a population as the theoretically defined collection of research elements, whereas a target population is the collection of elements from which a sample is drawn. Therefore, individuals who can supply the crucial data required for the study may be regarded as members of the target group. The targeted populations for this study are employers within Ruwa Industrial area and individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

A fraction of the population investigated on behalf of the group being tested is referred to as a sample, (Whitaker, 2017). Consequently, the researcher chose only people from a predefined population in strict agreement with a sample of the population. It is impractical to collect data from the complete study population, which is why a sample was selected. Thus, the sample selected by the researcher reflects the public's opinions quite clearly. The sample size of this study consisted of 5 employers which are the key informants and 10 individuals with disabilities which are the participants. This small sample size was chosen due to the small size of the population, as well as the convenience and feasibility of using a small sample. This sample size allowed for a good understanding of the attitudes and experiences of the population.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

To gather data on employers' attitudes in Ruwa Industrial, the researcher utilized purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on their suitability and willingness to participate, as well as their availability and level of education (Newing, 2020). This method allows the researcher to focus on participants who can provide the

most relevant information for the study. Additionally, simple random sampling was employed, where participants were randomly selected from the population, ensuring that each member had an equal chance of being chosen (Silverman, 2020). This approach ensures unbiased and efficient data collection, as participants are selected without any bias or preference.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The researcher used interviews and observations to obtain detailed information for this study. "Data collection" refers to the process of gathering and analyzing results so that researchers can answer research questions, draw conclusions and develop recommendations for future research.

3.6.1 Key informants Interviews (Semi structured interview)

Semi-structured interviews were utilized to get information from the research key informants. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer prepares a predefined list of questions in advance. As per Edwards and Hollard (2013), the researcher may employ this technique to interpret non-verbal cues and extract additional information in order to attain a comprehensive comprehension of the pertinent themes. Open-ended research questions were created by the interviewer in this instance; the researcher formulates each question in light of the study's objectives and the justification for the methodical analysis. Interviews with the participants were used to collect information. Semi-structured interviews enable the interviewer to follow up on intriguing points raised by the interviewee and enable a deeper exploration of themes.

3.6.2 Participants Interviews (In-depth interviews)

In-depth interviews were utilized to get in-depth information from the research participants and these interviews are usually conducted one-on-one. In-depth interviews are a qualitative research technique where researchers engage in detailed, open-ended conversations with participants to

delve into their viewpoints, experiences and beliefs (Rubin and Rubin, 2017). This method was chosen because it enables researchers to collect comprehensive, detailed information about the participants' experiences and perspectives. In-depth interviews foster rapport between the interviewer and the participant, resulting in open responses as participants feel at ease sharing their experiences.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Instruments used to collect data from research subjects are called data collecting tools. An interview guide was employed in the study to facilitate the most efficient collection and retrieval of information from semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews. The study's results provided insight into the common attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities in the Ruwa Industrial area, contributing to the broader understanding of disability inclusion in Zimbabwe.

3.7.1 Key informants Interview Guide (Semi-structured interview)

This study utilized semi-structured interview guide for key informants. A semi-structured interview guide was designed to gather in-depth insights from individuals who possess specialized knowledge and experience regarding the topic under investigation in this case, attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities (Taylor, 2002). This guide provides a framework for the interviewer, outlining key topics and questions that ensure consistency across interviews while allowing flexibility for the conversation to adapt based on the informant's responses.

3.7.2 Participants interview guide (In-depth interview)

The study utilized in-depth interview guide for participants. These interviews involve one-on-one engagement with participants either in-person or remotely and allow for flexible and adaptable conversations that can explore topics in depth. According to Rubin and Rubin (2017), in-depth

interviews require more planning and resources due to their more intensive nature. One of the primary benefits of in-depth interview guide is their ability to provide valuable insights into users' thoughts and feelings. Face-to-face interactions allowed the researcher to interpret body language, analyze changes in tone of voice and observe nuances that are not possible through other feedback channels.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Qualitative data in this study underwent thematic analysis to ensure the study's validity. Thematic analysis, as described by Clarke (2012), involves analyzing qualitative data, often applied to sets of texts like interview transcripts. Donvos (2002) in Kiteley and Stogdon (2014) defines data analysis as the process of organizing, structuring and giving meaning to a large amount of data. According to Bryman (2012), data analysis aims to describe, discuss and explain the content of research-produced data. Thematic analysis was employed by the researcher as it is crucial for analyzing and understanding gathered data. The thematic analysis process involved familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and labeling themes and writing up the analysis.

3.9 PILOT TESTING

This type of research is preliminary in nature, intended to test the validity of procedures and methods before a larger-scale study is conducted (Blakie, 2010). In this case, the study evaluated the attitudes and practices currently in place regarding hiring persons with disabilities in the industrial area. Misconceptions and concerns regarding hiring individuals with disabilities included potential costs associated with accommodations, as well as concerns about employers' ignorance of disability issues. Some companies indicated that they would be willing to hire persons with disabilities, citing benefits like inclusion and a positive impact on company culture.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Social work ethics, outlined by Silverman (2020), dictate the rights and responsibilities of researchers and practitioners in the social work field. The researcher set appropriate boundaries to prevent any physical discomfort for the subjects resulting from the research activity. Prior to the study, respondents were thoroughly briefed on the study's purpose. Informed consent and privacy were carefully taken into account, with the researcher respecting each respondent's right to privacy to avoid any infringement upon it.

3.10.1 Informed Consent

Researchers should ensure that all subjects whose information is collected have consented to participate in the study (British Psychological Society, 2010). Participant volition is the underlying presumption of study participation. The choice to take part in the study or not is left up to each individual. Furthermore, consent should only be acquired once prospective participants have been provided with all relevant information. As stated by Akaranga and Makau (2016), an individual gives their informed consent when they knowingly, deliberately, thoughtfully and conspicuously consent to participate.

3.10.2 Confidentiality

According to Bryman (2016), confidentiality is the idea that a person's personal information should not be shared with third parties without that person's permission. Confidentiality is both an obligation and a right. The researcher must ensure that no material is published in a way that could expose participants to harm of any type. The client has a right to confidentiality. It addresses the handling of shared information with the caveat that it cannot be disclosed to the public without first obtaining the approval of all parties concerned. The study was built upon the prevalent

viewpoint on secrecy. Upholding the confidentiality agreement will enhance the process' integrity and helped the researcher keep within the parameters of what is appropriate for the study.

3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the research design, target population, sampling methods, data collection techniques, instruments used for data collection, data processing and presentation. Additionally, it addressed the study's relevance and the researcher's ethical conduct during data collection.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the presentation and analysis of data gathered from interviews with employers in the Ruwa Industrial area. The purpose of these interviews was to comprehend the attitudes of employers regarding the hiring of individuals with disabilities. The findings from the study were presented and analyzed to address the project objectives, which were to explore employer attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities, identify barriers preventing the hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities in the workplace and develop recommendations for improving the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities in Ruwa.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

	Intended number	Actual number	Female	Male
Key informants Interviews (semi-structured interview)	5	5	2	3
Participant Interviews (in-depth interview)	10	13	6	7

Table 4.2.1

The table above shows that the study aimed to explore the attitudes of employers towards hiring individuals with disabilities and successfully interviewed 5 key informants matching with intended number. The findings based on the perspectives of 5 employers, provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to improve their disability inclusion and create more inclusive work environment. The table also shows the number of participants of the study, the researcher aimed

to interview 10 participants to gather insights on the employer's attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities. However during the data collection process, the researcher encountered a higher response rate than anticipated with 13 participants willing to participate in the study, enriching the data and offering more comprehensive understanding of employer's attitudes and perspectives.

4.3 EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES ON HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Employer's attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities in Ruwa Industrial Area reflect a mix of positive inclinations alongside concerns and challenges.

4.3.1 Positive attitudes of employers

The positive attitudes of employers demonstrate a shift in societal views on inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. Employers indicated they would be open to hiring a person with a disability if the candidate met the required qualifications and skills for the position. In terms of experience, employers reported having previously hired an individual with disability stating that persons with disabilities performed well in their role. One of the key informants expressed this by saying:

"I have found that employees with disabilities often perform very well in their roles. They are often very reliable and hardworking. They really bring value to the company."

Another key informant added:

"I truly believe that every person deserves the opportunity to work and earn a living regardless of their abilities. If I had resources and support to make the necessary accommodations for individuals with disabilities, I would do so without hesitation. However, as a small business owner, I simply don't have the financial means to make those

changes. It's not that I don't want to support individuals with disabilities, it's just not currently within my means"

A participant added:

"I have a physical disability, but that has never stopped me from being a valued employee. I work for a company that is so supportive of individuals with disabilities. My employer has tried to make the necessary changes. I have worked for more than 5 years and I have equal opportunities in the workplace with those without disabilities."

The responses indicate that employers hold a favorable perception of the work capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Based on this, the researcher inferred that employers are increasingly inclined to hire individuals with disabilities. The perspective shared by the key informant and participants reflects a broader trend among employers, potentially signaling a changing attitude towards individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

4.3.2 Negative attitudes of employers

Although there is a notable presence of positive attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities, the study also uncovered negative perceptions and beliefs among employers. Persons with physical disabilities are less likely to be invited for interviews and ultimately hired compared to those without disabilities. Some employers have had negative past experiences with hiring individuals with disabilities, while others simply believe that they are not capable. One of the key informants expressed this sentiment as follows:

"We have reservations about hiring persons with disabilities due to concerns about their ability to perform the job tasks effectively and efficiently. I had a negative experience in the past when I employed persons with physical disabilities, they have a bad attitude

towards co-workers for example refusing to do their share of work and being uncooperative.”

Another participant added:

“I have applied for several jobs in the past and I always get to the interview stage but I am rarely offered the job. Employers assume that I am not capable of doing the job just because of my disability. They don’t even give me a chance to show what I can do. It’s frustrating and unfair and it makes me feel like I am not good enough.”

The responses from key informants and participants indicate that employers hold negative perceptions about the work performance of individuals with disabilities, influenced by their past experiences and personal misconceptions. Employers may lack awareness of the capabilities and potential contributions of individuals with disabilities, leading them to undervalue their worth as employees. These findings align with those of Perry (2015), which suggested that individuals with disabilities are often perceived as less capable, less valuable and less deserving of opportunities. This suggests that employers may be less inclined to hire individuals with disabilities in the future. Negative stereotypes about disability can result in unconscious bias and discriminatory practices, limiting the employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Lack of awareness contributes to negative attitudes, leading to a reluctance to hire individuals with disabilities even when they possess the necessary skills and qualifications for the job.

4.3.3 Benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities

Employers mentioned that individuals with disabilities provide unique perspectives and insights, which can improve creativity, innovation, and problem-solving at work. Their diverse experiences can lead to a more inclusive and dynamic workplace. This view was shared by a key informant:

“Persons with disabilities often bring unique skills and perspectives to the workplace. Employees with disabilities are creative problem-solvers and can bring a fresh perspective to the workplace.”

Another key informant also confirmed the above statement by saying:

“I have found that employees with disabilities often have unique ideas and perspectives that can be used to improve our products or services. They can see things from a different angle, which can lead to fresh, innovative ideas.”

Another key informant mentioned that:

“Hiring persons with disabilities can be good for a company’s image. It shows that the company is inclusive and values diversity and can make the company more attractive to potential employees and customers.”

The above responses shows that companies who hire persons with disabilities often see positive results and these results benefits can lead to improved business performance a competitive advantage in the marketplace. In the study by O’Hara (2012) he stated that employees with disabilities are an underutilized resource that can benefit employers in several ways. They can contribute to the organization’s productivity, creativity and dedication and their loyalty to the employer often profound and long-lasting. Embracing diversity and inclusivity by hiring persons with disabilities can boost employee morale and create a more positive work environment. It demonstrates a commitment to equality and respect for individuals with disabilities.

4.4 THE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM BEING HIRED AND RETAINED IN THE WORKPLACE.

The data analysis revealed several challenges faced by employers in the Ruwa Industrial Area when considering hiring individuals with disabilities. These challenges included absenteeism, stigma and discrimination, communication, infrastructure inaccessibility, qualifications and no assistive technology in the workplace.

4.4.1 Absenteeism

For individuals with disabilities, absenteeism can be a barrier to being hired and retained in the workplace. Persons with disabilities may experience health issues or conditions that require them to take time off work for medical appointments, treatments or recovery. Some disabilities may have symptoms that worsen over time and some require monitoring by health care providers. This can lead to absenteeism which can be perceived negatively by employers as it can impact productivity and disrupt workflow. A participant expressed this by saying:

“As someone with visual impairments, I sometimes experience health related issues that may require me to take time off for medical appointments. Managing my visual impairments can be challenging at times and there are instances when I need to prioritize my health to ensure that I can continue to perform my duties in the workplace. This may result occasionally result in absences that are necessary to address my health.”

Another key informant confirmed the above statement by saying:

“I once hired someone with visual impairments, and while I was initially optimistic about their ability to perform the job, I found that their frequent absences were disruptive to the

team. I understand that their disability may have contributed to their absences but it was ultimately not right fit for our team.”

The responses indicate that absenteeism is a significant barrier for persons with disabilities in terms of both being hired and retained in the workplace. Persons with disabilities often miss work due to their medical conditions, leading to negative impacts on productivity and morale in the workplace. This aligns with the medical model of disability, which suggests that disability can be treated through medical interventions such as surgery and medication (Delin, 2003). In Beasley's study (2007), employees with health-related disabilities may be absent from work for various reasons, including medical appointments, treatment and recovery from surgery. Thus, it can be inferred that persons with disabilities may be absent from work in an effort to seek treatment.

4.4.2 Stigma and Discrimination

Individuals with disabilities may face discrimination during the hiring process based on misconceptions and stereotypes about their abilities. Employers may have biases that prevent them from considering individuals with disabilities as possible candidates for employment. One participant expressed this by saying:

“I once applied for a job in 2015 and I was denied an interview, even though I was perfectly qualified. When I asked why I was not being considered, the employer told me that they did not want someone with a disability working for them. I was really hurt.” (Physical disability participant in a wheelchair)

Another participant also added that:

“When I first started my job, I was treated differently from my coworkers. I was often excluded from activities and I felt isolated and alone. It was difficult to work in an environment where I was treated like I did not belong there.” (Participant with Albinism)

The responses indicate that stigma and discrimination are significant barriers for persons with disabilities in terms of both being hired and retained in the workplace. Job applicants or employees with disabilities face less favorable treatment compared to others without disabilities, simply because of their disability, leading to unequal opportunities. This aligns with the social model of disability, which suggests that individuals with disabilities may encounter stigma and discrimination in the workplace due to societal attitudes and assumptions about their abilities. Van Cleve and Coggins (2012) state that the stigma associated with disability is created and perpetuated by society. Stigma and discrimination experienced by individuals with disabilities have serious effects on their employment opportunities. Persons with disabilities often face higher rates of unemployment, underemployment and economic disadvantage, which can result in financial instability and reliance on social welfare programs.

4.4.3 Infrastructure inaccessibility

Infrastructure inaccessibility is another factor contributing to the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from being hired and retained in the workplace. This can include things like buildings that are not wheelchair accessible, sidewalks that do not have curb cuts, elevators and unsupportive restrooms. A person with disability cannot access the workplace, they may not be able to apply for a job or keeping a job. A participant expressed this by saying:

“I applied for a job at a local company, but when I arrived for my interview I found out the building did not have an elevator. All the offices were on the second floor and I use a

wheelchair. I was told I would not be able to do the job if I could not access the office space. I felt like I was being excluded from the workplace because of my disability.”

Another participant cited that:

“I am a person with a disability and I have had a lot of trouble using the toilets at work. I even had to ask my co-workers to help me get in and out”

One of the key informants confirmed this by saying:

“Our current workplace is not accessible to persons with disabilities and this can limit our ability to hire a diverse workplace. We are aware of the importance of inclusion but we are not able to make changes to our infrastructure at this time due to cost and time constraints.”

The above responses show that for persons with disabilities infrastructure inaccessibility is a barrier of being hired and retained in the workplace. The participant responses shows that infrastructure inaccessibility prevent persons with disabilities from being able access work even if they are able to get a job, if the workplace is not accessible it can make it difficult for them to perform their job duties and may lead to them being fired or quitting. The key informant response shows that they acknowledge the needs of persons with disabilities and expresses regret that changes cannot be made at this time due to cost and time. In the study by Jean-Joseph (2020), most of the physical disabled persons experienced barriers to accessing the workplace relating to the physical environment and also employers take into consideration an individual’s needs for accommodation before hiring. The researcher concluded that, when individuals with disabilities encounter physical barriers in the workplace, it can have negative impact on their morale and job satisfaction leading to feelings of isolation, frustration and decreased productivity.

4.4.4 Educational qualifications

A lack of educational qualifications prevents individuals with disabilities from being hired and retained in the workplace. This barrier can stem from various factors, such as limited financial resources and restricted access to suitable education. Persons with disabilities encounter difficulties in obtaining the necessary qualifications due to a lack of available accommodations or accommodations not being provided. Employers often demand a specific level of education and training for a position, even if it is not essential for the job duties. For example, employers may require a degree for a position that could be performed adequately by someone with a diploma. As one participant stated:

“I applied for a job that I was qualified for based on my skills and experience but I was told that I was not eligible for the position because I did not have a degree but a diploma. I was denied the opportunity to be interviewed for the position. I feel like I was being unfairly judged based on my education level and also discrimination.”

The responses indicate that education qualifications pose a significant barrier to the employment and retention of persons with disabilities. Lack of education is often used as a reason for not hiring individuals, even when they possess the necessary skills and experience for the job. Their abilities are undervalued, and they are judged solely based on their level of education. Persons with disabilities encounter challenges in obtaining the required qualifications due to the unavailability of accommodations and limited financial resources. Educational institutions may not always offer inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, some employers discriminate against individuals with disabilities based on their educational background, assuming they may lack the necessary qualifications or skills for a job. This aligns with the social model of disability, where individuals with disabilities may face

discrimination due to societal attitudes. The researcher concluded that employers and educational institutions may lack awareness about the importance of inclusive education and the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.

4.4.5 Assistive technology

Absence of assistive technology hinders the employment and retention of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Assistive technology encompasses various tools like screen readers, hearing aids, and voice recognition software. However, many of these devices are costly making them inaccessible for both employers and persons with disabilities. This lack of affordability can disadvantage them in the job market, hindering their ability to secure and maintain employment. A participant expressed this by saying

“Assistive technology could help me in my job but the cost of these technologies may be too expensive so I cannot afford them.”

Key informant also confirmed by saying:

“It is our responsibility to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to the assistive technology they need to do their job. The cost of assistive technology such as voice recognition software and screen reading software can be a barrier because there are too expensive so we end up not hiring persons with major disabilities”

The responses above indicate that assistive technology presents a barrier for individuals with disabilities in terms of being hired and retained in the workplace. Some individuals with disabilities are not hired because they lack necessary assistive devices, which they are unable to afford. Not all employers may be willing or able to cover the costs of providing these devices. Some employers may lack the financial resources or access to funding programs that support the provision of

assistive technology for employees with disabilities. The researcher concluded that the expense of assistive technology can influence employers' decisions during the recruitment process, leading to disparities in access to employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

4.4.6 Communication barrier

Communication barriers present a challenge for individuals with disabilities in the workplace. These barriers create a cycle where individuals with disabilities are not hired or retained due to ineffective communication, which then prevents them from gaining the skills and experience necessary to be competitive in the job market. Deaf individuals, for example, encounter difficulties communicating with employers who do not know sign language, leading to misunderstandings or miscommunication. A participant expressed this by saying:

“I applied for a job that I was qualified for, but I was not offered an interview due to a misunderstanding regarding my use of sign language. The employer was not aware of the best way to communicate with me and there was no interpreter available to assist.”

The above findings suggest that communication barriers hinder the employment and retention of individuals with disabilities. These barriers often result in misunderstandings and miscommunication. Deaf individuals, for example, may require sign language interpreters to facilitate communication in the workplace. However, the cost of hiring qualified interpreters can be significant. This situation aligns with the social model of disability, as the barriers to communication are primarily social rather than inherent to the disability itself. Some employers may worry about how communication barriers could affect productivity in the workplace. The researcher concluded that communication barriers can lead to unemployment, negatively impacting an individual's financial stability and well-being. Moreover, they can contribute to feelings of exclusion and isolation, making career advancement difficult.

4.4.7 Inaccessible transport

Inaccessible transportation is a barrier that prevents individuals with disabilities from getting hired and staying employed. In Ruwa, the public transportation system is not fully accessible, which restricts the ability of persons with disabilities to travel to and from work. This difficulty in transportation can lead to challenges in arriving at work punctually. Moreover, the lack of accessible transport also limits the options for individuals with disabilities to explore new job opportunities. A participant with physical disability expressed this by saying:

“I have a physical disability and lack of accessible transport in Ruwa makes it very difficult for me to find a job. I cannot get to Ruwa Industrial area without transport because it’s too far and there is no accessible transport. This limits my ability to travel to job interviews and I am not able to access the same opportunities as other people.”

A key informant confirmed this by saying:

“The lack of accessible transport is an issue that affects not only employees with disabilities but also our employers who cannot get to the workplace on time and this affect company’s productivity.”

The responses above indicate that the lack of accessible transportation poses a significant barrier to employment for individuals with disabilities. It underscores the difficulties these individuals face in securing employment and accessing various opportunities. Limited access to transportation options that are suitable for individuals with disabilities can impact their attendance and punctuality at work. The researcher concluded that this issue extends beyond individual challenges and reflects broader societal issues. According to the social model of disability, it is the environment and societal structures that need to change. Employers may view the cost of

accommodating transportation needs for individuals with disabilities as a financial burden that outweighs the potential benefits of hiring diverse talent. This perception can lead to reluctance in considering candidates with disabilities, regardless of their qualifications and skills.

4.5 MEASURES FOR IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Individuals with disabilities encounter various challenges in the workplace, including discrimination, communication barriers, infrastructure inaccessibility, educational qualifications, lack of accessible transportation and the absence of assistive devices. These hurdles can hinder their ability to secure and retain employment. However, several strategies can be implemented to enhance the employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

4.5.1 Flexible working hours

When questioned about how to enhance employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, most participants suggested that employers should accommodate employees' needs by implementing flexible work schedules. Flexible hours enable individuals with disabilities to attend medical appointments and therapy sessions as needed. One participant expressed this sentiment:

“As a person with disability, I feel that employers should offer flexible working hours so that I can receive the medical care I need without having to worry about losing my job.”

The research findings indicate that flexible working hours can bring about substantial advantages for both employees and employers. These benefits include a reduction in the necessity for sick leave and an increase in productivity. Moreover, flexible working hours contribute to the establishment of a more diverse and inclusive workplace, where employees from various backgrounds and abilities feel esteemed and respected. This demonstrates the commitment of

employers to supporting employees with diverse needs and abilities, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive work environment. The researchers conclude that the implementation of flexible working hours is essential for enhancing employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, as it aids in reducing absenteeism. Furthermore, providing flexible working hours as a reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities aligns with legal requirements under laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

4.5.2 Infrastructure accessibility

When asked how to create a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment for individuals with disabilities, most respondents suggested that employers should provide reasonable accommodations. This includes making the workspace accessible, such as ensuring buildings have wheelchair ramps, sidewalks have curb cuts and there are elevators and accessible restrooms. One participant expressed this idea by saying:

“I think it’s important for employers to create an accessible infrastructure in the workplace such as accessible door handles, automatic door openers. These type of accommodation make it easier for persons with physical disabilities to navigate the workplace and perform their job.”

Key informant added that

“The government should ensure that all new buildings or structures be approved only if they have facilities to accommodate persons with disabilities.”

Based on the above findings, providing these reasonable accommodations ensures that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities. According to participants with disabilities, creating an accessible infrastructure demonstrates the employer's dedication to fostering an inclusive and

accessible workplace. Employers and government authorities should ensure that workplace infrastructure meets relevant accessibility standards and regulations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. By adhering to these legal requirements, employers and government entities showcase their commitment to providing equal opportunities and preventing discrimination based on disability. Employers can integrate inclusive design principles into the planning and development of their workplace infrastructure to ensure that all employees can fully participate and contribute in the workplace.

4.5.3 Government incentives for inclusive hiring

One method the government can encourage employers to hire individuals with disabilities is by providing tax incentives. This could involve offering tax credits to employers who accommodate individuals with disabilities or who employ a specified percentage of persons with disabilities. One participant expressed this idea:

“The government need to encourage companies to hire persons with disabilities through incentives such as grants because many companies are still reluctant to hire us with disabilities.

The key informant expressed this:

“The government should place tax incentives for companies that hire persons with disabilities making it possible for companies to do the right thing.

Another key informant added that:

‘The National budget should have an allocation for incentives to companies that accommodate individuals with disabilities.’

Another key informant added that:

“Parliament should promulgate law that require organizations to have at least one disabled employee in its ranks”

Based on the findings, the government should introduce incentives for businesses to employ persons with disabilities, as this can help overcome barriers and generate more opportunities. These incentives may include tax credits, grants and subsidies for companies hiring individuals with disabilities. Such financial support can cover costs related to accommodation, assistive technologies and infrastructure improvements. The researcher suggested that government incentives can promote adherence to disability nondiscrimination laws and regulations.

4.5.4 Assistive technology

Individuals with disabilities also recommended that employers and the government should offer assistive technology to foster an inclusive and supportive workplace environment. This involves providing tools like voice recognition software and screen reading software. With assistive technology, individuals with disabilities can access a broader range of job opportunities and enhance their job performance. As one participant put it:

“Many individuals with disabilities rely on assistive technology to access the internet. This technology can be expensive and not everyone can afford it. I believe that companies should provide assistive technology to employees who need it, as it can make a huge difference in their ability to perform their jobs effectively. The companies should also make an effort to help individuals with disabilities purchase the assistive technology they need and this could be done through grants, discounts or other financial assistance.” (Visual impairment participant)

A key informant added:

“Technology sector is growing rapidly and it’s important that we do not leave anyone behind. The government should allocate funds to support the purchase and use of assistive technology so that everyone has access to the tools they need to participate fully in society.”

Based on the findings, it's evident that assistive technology plays a crucial role in making the world more accessible for everyone. The government should support individuals with disabilities and businesses in acquiring and utilizing assistive technology. The researcher concluded that assistive technology can enhance the productivity of individuals in the workforce. It enables employees with disabilities to perform tasks independently, reducing their reliance on others for assistance. In the end, this benefits everyone.

4.5.5 Raise awareness

When most individuals with disabilities were asked about creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment, they emphasized the importance of raising awareness. Participants suggested that the government should educate the public and increase awareness about disability issues to change public perceptions of individuals with disabilities. One participant conveyed this idea by stating:

"Educating the public about disability issues is also important to break down stereotypes and negative perceptions. It can lead to more opportunities for us with disabilities"

The findings suggest that educating the public helps foster a more inclusive and understanding society, as many people still hold negative stereotypes and misconceptions about disabilities, which can lead to discrimination in the workplace. The researcher concluded that the government

should educate both employers and individuals with disabilities. Employers need to be aware of the rights of persons with disabilities outlined in the National Policy on Disability (2013-2022) and the Disabled Persons Act, while individuals with disabilities should also be aware of their rights. Increasing awareness about the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities can lead to more positive attitudes towards hiring them. This can help reduce stigma, stereotypes and biases that may hinder opportunities for persons with disabilities in the workplace.

4.5.6 Encourage self-employment

Promoting self-employment can significantly enhance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Supporting entrepreneurship among individuals with disabilities involves providing resources and training to help them establish their own businesses. The government should facilitate access to start-up capital for persons with disabilities through initiatives like microloans or grants. One participant highlighted this by saying:

“The government should play a role in encouraging self-employment for us with disabilities. The government could do this by creating a special tax deduction for individuals with disabilities who are self-employed and help us access small business loans to start our own businesses.”

From the above findings, self-employment gives individuals with disabilities the ability to set their own hours, work from home if necessary and choose projects that are best suited to their abilities. Self-employment can be beneficial for individuals with disabilities who may face barriers such as transportation. Self-employment can offer individuals with disabilities a source of income that is not dependent on the social welfare programs. Starting their own businesses can generate income and establish a sustainable source of livelihood that aligns with their interests and abilities. The researcher concluded that self-employment can lead to higher earnings reducing the

unemployment rate of individuals with disabilities as it helps to create employment for others with disabilities.

4.5.7 Collaborate with Educational institutions

The government should collaborate with educational institutions to create more opportunities for individuals with disabilities to gain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the workplace. This could be by providing scholarships or financial assistance for individuals with disabilities to attend educational institutions and making sure that the institutions have necessary resources to support these students. One participant expressed this by saying:

“I think the government should partner with educational institutions to make sure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunities. Providing things like scholarships and financial assistance and making sure that educational institutions have the resources they need to support us with disabilities so that we would be able continue learning and developing skills. This also improves their chances of finding better jobs in the future.”

The findings indicate that providing opportunities for persons with disabilities to gain education and skills can enhance their employability. The researcher concluded that fostering inclusivity in educational institutions demonstrates that individuals with disabilities are equally capable and valuable. This shift in perspective could encourage more employers to hire individuals with disabilities.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter focused on presenting the data and its findings. It addressed questions related to the objectives of exploring employer attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities,

identifying barriers to their employment and developing strategies to improve their employment outcomes.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations for future research and practice. It begins with an overview of the study, which comprised five chapters. The following section summarizes the conclusions drawn from the findings, encompassing both positive and negative employer attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities. The chapter concludes with recommendations for government, policymakers and areas for further study.

5.2 SUMMARY

The study took place in the Ruwa Industrial Area, Zimbabwe and was comprised of five chapters. Chapter one served as an introduction, outlining the problem statement and objectives of the study. These objectives aimed to investigate employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities and to propose methods for enhancing employment outcomes for this demographic in the Ruwa Industrial Area. Chapter two involved a review of existing literature on the subject, encompassing studies on employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities, the availability of accessible workplaces and the impact of government policies on the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. Chapter three detailed the research methodology, which employed a descriptive and qualitative approach. Data was gathered through in-depth and semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The research design and tools were developed based on the findings of the literature review with ethical considerations being consistently taken into account throughout the study. Chapter four presented the study's findings, including employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities, the barriers hindering the employment and retention of individuals with disabilities in the workplace and

strategies for enhancing the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. Finally, in the fifth chapter, the study's conclusions were drawn and recommendations were formulated based on the findings.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The study's conclusions highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities, which are influenced by various factors. The findings revealed that employers who have had positive experiences hiring individuals with disabilities tend to advocate for inclusive hiring. These employers often report that employees with disabilities are highly dedicated, loyal and productive, which reinforces their positive attitudes. Employers recognize the value that individuals with disabilities bring to the workplace. They appreciate the unique perspectives and problem-solving skills that these individuals can contribute, which can enhance creativity and innovation.

The researcher concluded that an inclusive workplace fosters a positive work environment where all employees feel valued and respected. This can lead to higher employee morale, increased job satisfaction and better retention rates. Companies known for inclusive hiring often enjoy a better public image and stronger brand reputation. This can attract more customers and clients who value social responsibility, as well as top talent seeking inclusive workplaces.

Despite some positive shifts in attitudes, the study concluded that there are still challenges impeding the employment of individuals with disabilities. A significant barrier identified was the lack of awareness and persistent misconceptions among some employers. Many employers were not fully informed about the abilities of individuals with disabilities and the relatively low cost of making necessary accommodations. This lack of knowledge contributed to reluctance in hiring

and integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce. Educational programs and workshops aimed at dispelling myths and providing factual information about disabilities could be instrumental in changing these attitudes.

Another factor contributing to negative attitudes is the perception that accommodating employees with disabilities is financially burdensome. Many employers overestimate the financial impact of providing accommodations for employees with disabilities. They may believe that modifications, such as installing ramps, adjusting workstations or acquiring specialized equipment, will be prohibitively expensive. Small businesses, in particular, may feel more constrained by budgetary limits and may perceive accommodation costs as a greater hurdle compared to larger corporations with more financial flexibility.

The researcher concluded that there is a tendency among some employers to avoid perceived risks, such as concerns about higher absenteeism or increased healthcare costs. These employers might prioritize maintaining a status quo over exploring inclusive hiring practices, driven by a fear of the unknown.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The attitudes of employers in Ruwa Industrial Area towards hiring persons with disabilities vary. Some employers are open to the idea and actively seek out persons with disabilities to diversity workplace while others may have concerns about the potential impact on productivity and workplace dynamics. To address varying attitudes and promote more inclusive hiring practices, the following recommendations can be considered:

5.4.1 To employers:

1. **Education and awareness:** Educating employers about the advantages of hiring individuals with disabilities and providing resources for accommodating and supporting them in the workplace can shift attitudes and promote inclusivity. This can involve workshops, seminars, and informative materials emphasizing the contributions of persons with disabilities.
2. **Review hiring practices:** Ensure that job postings and application processes are accessible to all potential candidates including those with disabilities.
3. **Reasonable accommodation:** Make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. This may include providing accessible workstations, modifying job duties and offering flexible hours. Employers can work with individuals to identify and implement accommodations that enable them to perform their job duties effectively.
4. **Supportive workplace culture:** Foster a supportive and inclusive work environment by promoting diversity and actively addressing any instances of discrimination or bias.

5.4.2 To the government:

1. **Anti- Discrimination legislation:** Come up with substantive policy and legislative frameworks meant to support individuals with disabilities to be accepted in the workplace.
2. **Incensitives for inclusive hiring:** Introduce financial incensitives or tax credits foe companies that actively hire persons with disabilities. These incentives can encourage employers to prioritize diversity and inclusivity in their hiring practices.
3. **Collaboration with employers:** Work closely with companies in Ruwa Industrial area to develop partnerships and initiatives that promote inclusive hiring practices. This can

include providing resources and guidance to help employers create welcoming and supportive environment individuals with disabilities.

4. **Data collection and reporting:** Require companies to report on their efforts to hire persons with disabilities. This can help track progress, identify areas of improvement and hold employers accountable for their commitment to diversity and inclusion.
5. **Accessible infrastructure:** Create and enforce building codes and accessibility standards to ensure that work places are physically accessible to individuals with disabilities. This can include requirements for ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms and other accommodations.
6. **Vocational training:** Establish vocational programs specifically designed to prepare individuals with disabilities for employment.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In order to explore deeper into the attitudes of employers towards hiring individuals with disabilities in the Ruwa Industrial area, there are several recommendations for further study that can offer a more comprehensive understanding of this subject:

1. Perform a quantitative study that can offer valuable insights into employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities.
2. Conduct a comparative assessment of employers' attitudes in the Ruwa Industrial area with those in other industrial areas.
3. Exploring the role of the government policies and programs in supporting the hiring of individuals with disabilities.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter summarized the findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding employers' attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities. It emphasized the need for further research on this topic and the development of more policies to support individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

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APPENDIX 1

CONSENT FORM FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Hello, my name is Guenia Anesu Nyamkunguru. I am a Social Work student at Bindura University of Science Education. As part of the requirements for my degree program, I am conducting a study entitled, **“Exploring attitudes of employers towards hiring individuals with disabilities. A case study of Ruwa Industrial Area.”** Your expertise and insights as a key informant will greatly contribute to the understanding of these issues. Participation in the research is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any individual question or all the questions. Feel free to withdraw at any time and withdrawal from the research will not be held against you. If you agree to take part your identity will remain anonymous and your signature will illuminate your willingness to take part. This research is purely academic and no personal details will be captured and information will be treated as confidential. The interview will last approximately 20 minutes.

Please tick where applicable

Will you participate in the study? YES NO

Would you allow me to record your voice through the audio recorder? (This is strictly confidential and anonymity is guaranteed). YES NO

If yes then sign the consent form and proceed if no stop.

Is there anything you want to know before we start?

I have read the above and I understand the nature of the study. I am willing to participate and give my consent.

Participant’s Signature.....

Researcher’s Signature.....

KEY INFORMANTS SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Gender.....

Position

How long have you been involved in the hiring process within your organization?.....

Section A: Employer's attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities.

1. What are your general attitudes or beliefs towards hiring individuals with disabilities?
2. Have you ever hired an individual with disability before? If so, what was your experience like?
3. Describe the current hiring practices of your company in relation to persons with disabilities?
4. What are your perceptions of capabilities and potential contributions of persons with disabilities in the workforce?
5. What do you perceive as the potential benefits and challenges of hiring individuals with disabilities?

Section B: The barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from being hired and retained in the workplace.

6. What are the main barriers or challenges you perceive in hiring individuals with disabilities?
7. Are there any misconceptions or stereotypes about individuals with disabilities that affect your decision to hire them?

8. How does your company accommodate and support employees with disabilities in the workforce?

Section C: Measures for improving the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities.

9. What strategies or initiatives do you think could be implemented to promote greater inclusivity in the workforce in relation to persons with disabilities?
10. What do you see as potential areas for improvement in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for persons with disabilities within your organization?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add on this topic or any other insights you would like to share?

APPENDIX 2

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Hello, my name is Guenia Anesu Nyamkunguru. I am a Social Work student at Bindura University of Science Education. As part of the requirements for my degree program, I am conducting a study entitled, **“Exploring attitudes of employers towards hiring individuals with disabilities. A case study of Ruwa Industrial Area.”** Your expertise and insights as a key informant will greatly contribute to the understanding of these issues. Participation in the research is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any individual question or all the questions. Feel free to withdraw at any time and withdrawal from the research will not be held against you. If you agree to take part your identity will remain anonymous and your signature will illuminate your willingness to take part. This research is purely academic and no personal details will be captured and information will be treated as confidential. The interview will last approximately 20 minutes.

Please tick where applicable

Will you participate in the study? YES NO

Would you allow me to record your voice through the audio recorder? (This is strictly confidential and anonymity is guaranteed). YES NO

If yes then sign the consent form and proceed if no stop.

Is there anything you want to know before we start?

I have read the above and I understand the nature of the study. I am willing to participate and give my consent.

Participant's Signature.....

Researcher's Signature.....

PARTICIANTS IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Personal information

Gender.....

Type of disability.....

Employed Yes No

Section A: Employer's attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities.

1. Have you ever tried to look for work in the past? If so, how was your experience?
2. Do you feel like you have equal opportunities in the workplace with those without disabilities?
3. In your opinion, what are some common misconceptions or attitudes that employers may have towards hiring persons with disabilities?
4. Do you feel there is enough awareness and understanding of disability in the workplace?

Section B: The barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from being hired and retained in the workplace.

5. What challenges have you faced in the job hunting process as a person with disability?
6. Do you feel that the physical environment is accessible in most workplaces for individuals with disabilities?
7. Do you feel that individuals with disabilities face barriers related to communication? (sign language)
8. Do you feel that individuals with disabilities have access to assistive technology in the workplace? (screen readers, voice recognition software, alternative keyboard)

Section C: Measures for improving the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

9. What recommendations do you have for employers to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for persons with disabilities in the workplace?
10. Do you think the government is doing anything to promote inclusivity in the workplace?
11. What can the government do to help improve the situation for persons with disabilities in the workplace?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF APPROVAL

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

P. Bag 1020
BINDURA, Zimbabwe

Tel: 263 - 71 - 7531-6, 7621-4

Fax: 263 - 71 - 7534



BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Date: 22/11/2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, NJAMKUNGURU GUENIA ANESU, Student Registration Number B200641B, who is a BSc SOCIAL WORK student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in your area/institution.

May you please assist the student to access data relevant to the study, and where possible, conduct interviews as part of a data collection process.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'L.C. Nyamaka'.

MR L.C Nyamaka
Acting Chairperson - Social Work

