



DIFFERENTLY ABLED EMPLOYEES WORKING AMONG GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN TARLAC

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Abstract: Recognizing the significant impact of Differently Abled individuals in the workforce, especially within Government Agencies where legal protections are in place, this study delves into their experiences and insights. The research focuses on their rights, contributions, and suggestions for better recognition. The study outlines participant demographics including age, gender, education, job title, socio-economic status, nature of work, position, income, and service length. Participants' specific disabilities, challenges, interventions, and anticipated outcomes are also examined. Conducted in Tarlac Province, the research employs a case study approach with in-depth interviews using a purposive sampling design. Data is analyzed through frequency, percentage, and case exhibits. Findings highlight orthopedic disabilities as prevalent among Differently Abled individuals in Tarlac's government agencies. Challenges include physical barriers like inaccessible workspaces and inadequate specialized training. Recommendations include enforcing Magna Carta building protocols, creating dedicated workspaces, and providing training platforms for skill development and public engagement.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Inanimate objects possess potential despite their state. A broken pencil can still write, retaining its purpose. Similarly, bodies with disabilities can perform tasks comparable to unimpaired ones. However, society treats disabled people as objects, disregarding their potential due to societal norms. Despite laws promoting inclusion, discrimination against disabled individuals persists in various sectors. Certain industries, like service, BPO, and government agencies, employ disabled individuals who consistently exhibit satisfactory performance, leading to cost-efficient and manageable operations. Government policies emphasize rehabilitation, independence, and societal integration for disabled individuals. The government has introduced initiatives to enhance disabled individuals' job prospects, including training programs and incentives for private companies. According to the 2013 Census, around 1.23% of the Philippines' population is disabled (PSA, 2023), with visual impairment being the most common condition. Mental illness, mental retardation, and dual impairments are also prevalent.

Due to the current economic state in the Philippines, suitable job opportunities for individuals with disabilities are extremely scarce. Differently abled members of the community face numerous challenges including economic hardship, limited access to quality education, and various obstacles. Despite government awareness, effective solutions have been slow to emerge, leaving little hope for permanent employment opportunities for Differently Abled. Achieving equal opportunities remains elusive and frustrating, hindering progress for Differently Abled who are committed to change. Accurate social statistics are hard to obtain in the Philippines due to inadequate information infrastructure, despite the country's economic difficulties and its many islands. Despite these challenges, many individuals with disabilities can lead successful lives.

The researcher's motivation to do this research about differently abled in governmental positions is firmly grounded in the researcher's dedication to advancing principles of social justice and inclusion. By analyzing the obstacles encountered, identifying latent capabilities, and promoting enhanced workplace provisions, aims to make a meaningful contribution towards fostering an inclusive government workforce that embraces diversity and encourages all personnel to flourish. Recognizing and valuing distinct capabilities of persons with disabilities is not just a matter of ethical responsibility, but also a means to foster a society that is more egalitarian and conducive to innovation for all members. Hence, this study was conducted using a case study method and utilized interview guide in collecting data from the participants. Twenty (20) participants were purposively selected. All were employed in a government agency within the province. The study reveals that most Differently Abled individuals employed in Tarlac's government agencies have orthopedic disabilities. They face challenges due to physical barriers in their workplaces and a lack of specialized training tailored to their needs. The research suggests enforcing Magna Carta-compliant building protocols and creating a dedicated workspace for their community to enhance effectiveness. The findings recommend establishing a specialized area for Differently Abled staff, enabling them to refine their skills and promote their work to a wider audience alongside the conducted training programs.

1.2 Statement of the Objectives

This study will aim to determine the experiences of Differently Abled working among government agencies.

Specifically, it aims to the following objectives:

1. To describe the Differently Abled in terms of:
 - 1.1 Demographic Profile,
 - 1.2 Socio-Economic Status,
 - 1.2.1 Nature of Work;
 - 1.2.2 Position Status;
 - 1.2.3 Household Income; and
 - 1.2.4 Length of Service;
 - 1.3 Type of Disabilities.
2. To narrate the experiences of the Differently Abled pre-employment until the present employment working in the government.
3. To determine the programs or policies initiated by the Local Government for working Differently Abled.
4. To determine the problems encountered by each of the cases.
5. To propose intervention measures based on the identified problems of the Differently Abled.
6. To determine the implications of the study to Public Administration.

1.3 Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study focused on the experiences of Differently Abled working in different agencies of the government in the Province of Tarlac. The study is delimited to individuals who suffer long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, upon interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

This study covers the following types of disability which was mentioned in RA No. 7277: (1) Psychosocial disability, (2) disability due to chronic illness, (4) mental disability, (5) visual disability, and (06) orthopedic disability. For psychosocial disability, learning, and mental disability which are deemed unobservable, participants will be part of the study considering they are clinically diagnosed and/or PWD ID holders. Data gathering will occur within the academic year of 2023.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study and the most appropriate method based on the data to be collected. Specifically, this chapter contains detailed information on how the study was conducted, how was the data collected, the research context, the research tools that was used, the sampling procedure, and the statistical treatment used in this study.

2.1 Research Locale and Participants of the Study

The researcher conducted the study on different government agencies in the Province of Tarlac where they currently work as government employees' weather in the local or national government. Twenty (20) participants were purposively selected regardless of their status of appointment (job order, casual, contract of service, and permanent). All are from the Tarlac Province supported by the statement of Nikolopoulou (2022) that the elements that make up a population should be identical, either by living together or having a common nationality. The participants were chosen purposively.

2.2 Data Gathering Instruments

The researcher used the Direct Method or Interview to come up with accurate, complete, and reliable data. Attentive listening and treating the participants with respect and showing a genuine interest to the participants' shared experiences is essential for the researcher to improve the accuracy and authenticity of the data. The interview guide which will consist of open-ended questions will greatly help the researcher gather accurate, detailed, and information from the participants. It will be in a narrative form which required personal or physical observations and to validate the answers from the participants. Other data can also be collected from secondary sources. The secondary sources may include textbooks, journals, magazines, internet, and any other documents that can be further shared by the different agencies involved.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The Critical Disability Theory asserts that disabilities have political and social dimensions, aiming to promote social change for equitable inclusion of individuals with disabilities in their communities. Rooted in Max Horkheimer's critical theory, it focuses on human autonomy and eliminating societal subjugation based on factors like socioeconomic status or ethnicity. The theory recognizes disability as socially constructed, emphasizing that disadvantages arise from the gap between societal norms and diverse human needs. This approach seeks balance among impairment, individual reactions, and societal barriers.

Effective strategies include preventive measures, medical care, and rehabilitation for biological aspects, while addressing social exclusion through policy changes when therapies alone fall short. The tension between the medical model aiming to eradicate impairments and the societal model advocating integration poses a dialectical conflict. Critical disability theory explores issues of self-determination, dependency, normalcy, dignity, and the intersections of disabilities with class, gender, race, and more societal categories.

2.4 Statistical tools and econometric models

This section elaborates the proper statistical/econometric/financial models which are being used to forward the study from data towards inferences. The detail of methodology is given as follows.

2.4.1 Informed Consent

Researchers primarily created and provided informed consent forms that indicate that research can be conducted on tapped agency premises with the consent of participants prior to interviews and data collection.

2.4.2 Direct Method or Interview

Direct or Personal Interview is a method of collecting primary data through which the interviewer directly approaches the participant to collect data by conducting on-the-spot query. Conducted through face-to-face interview. This method provides the interviewer with an opportunity to explain the study and answer the queries of the respondents prior to the interview. The interviewer can also ask the respondent to expand the answers that are particularly essential for the interview. Besides, the visual reactions of the respondents can also provide supplementary information to the interviewer (Jainvan, 2023). As such, personal interview is a good way to get information about the respondent that may be useful to the study Interview guides are used to explain improvements as they require narrative responses rather than specific and accurate occurrences of the participant's experience. After that, interview guide will be created in advance, and it might lead us to change the procedure of the interview depending on the need of the moment. After the consent was approved, an interview was conducted on areas that requires more empirical and narrative response.

2.4.3 Thematic Content Analysis.

Was used to analyze the data gathered from the interviews. Thematic content analysis is qualitative analytic method for “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail.” (Braun and Clarke, 2016). The following steps will be used for the thematic content analysis: (1) the transcriptions of the stories about the participants’ fan experiences are read and analyzed. (2) Significant statements will be drawn out from the narrations. (3) The significant statements will be formulated into a meaningful framework. (4) The meanings will be clustered into themes by using regression.

2.4.4 Data Analysis

To prepare, analyze, and interpret the collected data, it must first be categorized into tables and graphs. Afterwards, it undergoes appropriate statistical processing.

2.4.4.1 Frequency Count

This was used to recorded and tallied responses about participant’s profiles and the prevalent type of disability supported by providing quantitative data through case presentations.

2.4.4.2 Percentage

It presents data in an easily understandable way, allowing for comparison of response rates and analysis of question distribution among respondents.

2.4.4.3 Exhibit of Cases

This part contains the experiences of the participants from their family backgrounds, personal and professional experiences through case reports.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results of the Demographic Profile of the Participants

The demographic profile entails that, most of the age group interviewed were 41-50, mostly are males, college graduates, holding an Administrative Aide II position. Around 80% of the 785 million people with disabilities (Differently Abled) fall within the working age range, as per the Census and Housing Population data from 2013. Various factors contribute to this, including accidents, illnesses, and work-related issues. Occupational injuries are prevalent across different industries, both formal and informal, such as transportation-related roles, as observed in a study by Lu in 2021. The Department of Health (DOH) has reported 100,155 individuals classified under Mental Disability as of August 2023. A survey titled "Mental Health at the Workplace," conducted by Calm Collective Asia in 2023, discovered that 47% of Filipino respondents experienced anxiety and 45% faced burnout. This was largely attributed to factors like heavy workloads, long hours, and performance-related concerns.

As stated by the Civil Service Commission (2018), there are 239 males and 145 females working in the government in region 3. Thus, it only explains the numbers of male participants in the study. Relatively to the study conducted by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2013), it was found that when it comes to educational background, the number of females being not able to finish their studies are higher than men which makes their probability for career advancement or employable percentage limited. One probable cause as well as stated on the same study was women with disabilities tend to focus more as house makers than to work and enter the professional field while men with disabilities, focuses on their work and professional development. Hence, programs and/or projects must be gender sensitive as well, providing opportunities to all genders allowing each to flourish in their chosen careers.

3.2 Results of the Socio-Economic Profile of the Participants

Table 3.2: Socio-Economic of the Participants Based on their Household Monthly Income

Household Monthly Income	f	%	R

10,000-20,000	15	75%	1
21,000-30,000	2	10%	2
31,000-40,000	3	15%	3
Total	20	100%	

The table shows the household monthly income of the participants. The biggest percentage is seventy-five (75%) of the 15 participants and the income range is 10,000-20,000 PHP. Second is the range 31,000-40,000 PHP with 2 frequency and percentage of fifteen (15%) and lastly, 21,000-30,000 PHP with the frequency of 2 and percentage of ten.

Since most of the participants holds the position Administrative Assistant II which has salary grade 8 in the Civil Service Commission pertaining to the Executive Order No. 201 s 2016 in the Second Tranche Salary Standardization Law (SSL) as of 2017, salary grade 8 has an equivalent of Php15, 818- Php16,903. It might be a positive impression that the participants are mostly in a permanent position but one negative experience they shared was being stagnant on the same level for quite a long period of time. Most of them shared the slow career progression in government service. Since the government is an institution that operates under strict regulations and follows established procedures. The duration required to attain objectives or instigate transformation in some positions may be significantly lengthier compared to that in the private sector. The presence of bureaucratic processes within government employment has the potential to impact the level of job fulfillment experienced by employees in which they included the reasons such as political influence, seniority as a priority, and too many layers of hiring and promotion processes (Indeed, 2022).

3.3 Type of Disability

Table 3.2: Type of Disability of the Participants

Type of Disability	f	%	R
Disability due to chronic illness	4	20%	2
Psychosocial	2	10%	3.5
Psychological	2	10%	3.5
Orthopedics	10	50%	1
Visual	2	10%	3.5
Total	20	100%	

The table shows participant disability data: Orthopedics is the most common, constituting 50%, followed by Psychosocial, Psychological, and Visual disabilities at 10% each. Disabilities due to chronic illness, essential tremor, Bell's Palsy, and sickness are at 5% each with 1 occurrence.

The Department of Health's (DOH) August 2023 data highlights physical disabilities (461,044 cases) and psychosocial disabilities (169,403) as prevalent, often resulting from diseases, accidents during working age, with stroke being a major cause. Congenital diseases, causing birth defects, are also significant, affecting millions yearly, especially in the Philippines.

Despite reluctance in hiring individuals with disabilities due to misunderstanding and managerial concerns, education can address these challenges. Truelogic, a Philippine digital marketing company, promotes inclusivity by hiring PWDs. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) IRR offers incentives for PWD employment: deducting 25% of PWD salaries from income and 25% of profits for enhancing PWD facilities. This improves the company reputation and diversity.

Hiring disabled individuals also enhances the skill pool, increasing loyalty and reducing turnover costs, ultimately boosting productivity.

3.4 Programs Initiated by the Government

The lack of tailored training for individuals with disabilities hinders their professional and personal growth. Standard education might not meet their specific needs. The proposed intervention focuses on localized courses and workshops for disabled individuals to enhance employability and skills. Objectives include equitable access, skill enhancement, and empowerment. The human resource department is responsible for implementation, collaborating with stakeholders for customized training. This promotes inclusivity, job satisfaction, and diversity.

The National Building Code ensures safety for disabled people. Compliance is essential to accessibility. Inspections, enforcement, and inclusive designs by the government and stakeholders ensure safety. Collaboration with disability activists enhances local structures. Enforcing the code guarantees safe exploration for disabled individuals and encourages private entities to follow suit.

Supporting disabled employees is crucial. A needs analysis helps understand their requirements. Providing allowances for medical, therapy, and transportation costs shows commitment to inclusivity. Standardized performance reviews and promotion timelines ensure fair advancement. Retirement plans provide financial security. These measures improve morale and contribute to a diverse and productive workforce.

Mental health support is essential for productivity. Establishing broad-based systems, including mental health groups and rehabilitation programs, is proactive. Medical institutions should offer mental health services. A professional-led mental health group can provide counseling and awareness campaigns, reducing stigma. Proper mental health assistance enhances well-being and productivity, setting an example for other companies. Overall, these initiatives prioritize inclusivity, promote well-being, and contribute to a diverse and successful workplace.

3.5 Proposed Intervention Measures

Proposed intervention measures are enhancing local trainings, regular inspection, and strict implementation of National Building Code, conducting of needs analysis as basis for benefits, standardized review of performance and tenure, and build broad-based support structures.

3.6 Implication of the Study

Employing individuals with disabilities in the government sector has profound implications for Public Administration. It showcases the government's commitment to inclusivity and diversity, fostering a positive work environment and a more inclusive society. Disabled government employees act as role models, empowering others to pursue public service careers, enhancing representation. They provide insights for better policymaking, leading to tailored, effective, and inclusive programs. Government staff benefits from increased sensitivity and awareness, while infrastructure becomes more accessible. Inclusion enhances the government's public image and challenges stereotypes, reducing stigma. Utilizing disabled talent enriches public administration and innovation. Legal compliance and cost benefits are also evident. Overall, embracing disabled employees in government roles leads to a more inclusive, effective, and empathetic governance system.

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