EMPLOYMENT POLICY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN SAUDI ARABIA

Dr.Daliah Sayied Fathi Alkhouli

ملخص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة قضايا السياسات المرتبطة بتوظيف الأشخاص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية خاصة، وفي البلدان العربية والإسلامية الأخرى بصفة عامة، واعتمدت الدراسة على استبانات تم تحليلها كمياً، بالإضافة للمقابلات الشخصية لدراسة المشاركين من خلال ٥٠ منظمة محددة من مختلف القطاعات في المملكة العربية السعودية.

وقد تم فحص عينة الدراسة في ثلاث مراحل:

• المرحلة الأولى: توزيع الاستبانات على ٥٠ عامل من المنظمات المحددة.

• المرحلة الثانية: توزيع الاستبانات على الموظفين ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة من ١٦ منظمة مختلفة تسمح بتوظيف الأشخاص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة.

• المرحلة الثالثة: عمل ٦ مقابلات مع الأشخاص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، ومع اثنين من أرباب العمل.

وتشير الدراسة إلى أن بيئة العمل وسمات المجتمع تسهم كثيرا في عدم الكفاءة والبطالة بين الأشخاص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن أرباب العمل في القطاع الخاص والقطاع العام، على حد سواء، تفتقر إلى الاهتمام باحتياجات العاملين ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة. وفي الوقت نفسه، نجد أن الافتقار إلى الخبرة في التعامل مع هؤلاء الأفراد يسهم بقدر كبير في انخفاض العمالة ومستويات الإنتاج لهؤلاء الأشخاص.

وتشير الدراسة أيضاً إلى أن الموظفين ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة يميلون إلى المشاركة في فرص عمل ليسوا مؤهلين لها، بمعنى أن مهاراتهم مستغلة بشكل سيء وقدراتهم غير معترف بها. وهذا يؤدي إلى إدامة تصور لهؤلاء العمال بأنهم أقل شأنا، وغير مرغوب فيهم. وإذا تم تكييف بيئات العمل بالمملكة لتفي بإمكانيات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة، سيزداد إدراج هؤلاء الأشخاص في قوة العمل. كما تقدم الدراسة مساهمة في المعرفة حول الأشخاص ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية وتقديم رؤى منهجية في بحث اجتماعي قام به نساء باحثات سعوديات.

Abstract

This study examines policy issues associated with the employment of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The context of the study is specific to Saudi Arabia but has relevance for other Arab and Muslim countries. A mixed research method was used for the research. Quantitative research questionnaires complement the qualitative semi-structured interviews to study participants across the 50 targeted organisations from various sectors in Saudi Arabia.

The study sample was examined in 3 phases:

- **Phase One (1)** questionnaires were distributed to include 50 employers from the targeted organisations.
- **Phase Two (2)** 24 questionnaires were distributed to employees with disabilities from 16 different organisations that hire people with disabilities
- **Phase Three (3)** consisted of 6 interviews with people with disability/disabilities and with 2 employers.

The study suggests that workplace environments and societal attributes contribute significantly to inefficiency, underemployment, and unemployment among persons with

disability/disabilities. Additionally, employers in both private and public sector organisations lack concern for the needs of employees with disability/disabilities. The same time, lack of experience in dealing with such individuals also contributes significantly to the low employment and productivity levels of such persons. Employees with disability/disabilities also tend to be engaged in jobs they are not qualified for, meaning that they are underemployed and their abilities not recognised. People with disability/disabilities remain significantly alienated and disadvantaged in terms of the quality and quantity of work participation in both the public and the private sector. Consequently, there are lower employment expectations in relation to this; this perpetuates the perception of such workers as being inferior, high risk, and undesirable. Furthermore, if workplace environments in Saudi Arabia were adapted to better serve the needs of people with disability/disabilities, then the inclusion of such people in the labour force would increase. The study makes a contribution to knowledge about people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia as well as presenting methodological insights into social research undertaken by Saudi women researchers in the country.

Introduction:

The experience of disability is profoundly different in different parts of the world. Even when physical impairments are similar, the experience of individuals with impairments is very often worlds apart. People with disability/disabilities defined as "any person whose capacity to perform and maintain a suitable job has actually diminished as a result of a physical or mental infirmity" (p.59). Historically, the problems of persons with disability/disabilities have been associated with biological deficiency, moral failing, or karma and divine punishment.

The idea of social role valorisation and normalisation has been inspirational especially when it comes to persons with learning disabilities. In Saudi Arabia 3.7 percent of people live with disabilities (Walker, 2009). Significant numbers of people with disability/disabilities are unemployed (Alaikum, 2008). Most researchers who have carried out studies on people with disability/disabilities in the labour market show that people with disability/disabilities are capable of working productively and are accepted by employers in the particular society (Rispler-Chaim, 2007). However they fail to show why the majority of employers would not want to employ them (Lewis, 2004). People with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia deserve to be treated fairly in the labour market (Disabled Care System, 2000). This decree contains policies that aim to reduce negative attitudes and discrimination shown towards people with disability/disabilities in the labour market, especially when it comes to rehabilitation and the hiring processes (Kabbara, 2003).

It has been established by studies such as Coleridge's (2000) that people with disability/disabilities are rarely employed. To substantiate this statement the study will review and evaluate available barriers as to why there exist rare cases of employment of people with disability/disabilities even though there are many laws which cater for people with disability/disabilities. Despite this, employers are able to inform job applicants that they cannot be employed based on their disability/disabilities.

People with disability/disabilities are rarely employed, or may be employed as "phantom employees" which means they are legally employed but their employer prefers them to stay at home. The government through the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs has developed and implemented career development programmes for people with disability/disabilities. The Ministry of

Labour runs a career rehabilitation department that provides support for people with disability/disabilities. The Ministry of Labour in Saudi Arabia have harmonised its employment laws to ensure job requirements are achievable for people with disability/disabilities. The government also works with other stakeholders to ensure that the effects of negative attitudes witnessed in the labour market especially in the hiring process and of ineffective rehabilitation placement methods is minimised. Despite the development of various legislation, policies, and programmes to support the employment of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, studies have established that people still hold negative attitudes towards people with disability/disabilities which lead to discrimination in both the recruitment process and in placement methods (Walston, Al-Harbi & Al-Omar, 2008). The research explores gender, culture and religion in order to understand fundamentals regarding disability and persons with disability/disabilities. Saudi Arabian culture, in a way that is similar to most Islamic cultures, defines the roles and responsibilities of different members of the community.

Objectives:

The study seeks to investigate employment for people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

The research has the following objectives:

- To examine the impact of national disability anti-discrimination policy on employer practices in Saudi Arabia.
- To examine the extent to which the policy have been implemented within 50 organisations.
- To assess the amount of support given to people with disability/disabilities in order to facilitate their working within organisations.

- To explore the attitudes of managers within the organisations toward disability and disable persons.
- To evaluate the level of existing attitudinal barriers towards people with disability/disabilities in the labour market.
- To examine the policy from the perspective of employees with disability/disabilities.

To achieve these objectives following questions are answered:

- What is the impact of national disability anti-discrimination policy on employer practices in Saudi Arabia?
- To what extent have the policies been implemented?
- Are people with disability/disabilities adequately supported to work within the organisations?
- What are the attitudes of managers within the organisations to disability?
- What is the level of existing attitudinal barriers towards people with disability/disabilities in the labour market?
- What is the perspective of employees with disability/disabilities towards the policy?

Current state of policy practices relating to disability:

Policies and practices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are based on Islamic Sharia law, which places the emphasis on the respect of human rights. It also advocates against discrimination. Sharia law promotes the right of individuals with disabilities to live with dignity without being discriminated against (Al-Jadid, 2013). 1987 the Legislation of Disability (LD) was enacted, becoming the first-ever legislation for individuals with disabilities in the country. 2000, the Saudi government depict Disability Code to offer the assurance that individuals with

disabilities would have access to free and suitable medical, educational, social, psychological, and rehabilitation services via the country's public agencies.

In 2013, the Saudi government announced it planned to provide private employers with incentives to recruit more than 100,000 people with disabilities (Trenwith, 2013). In 2014, the Saudi Ministry of Labour announced it had come up with regulations that ensured employees with disability/disabilities received equal benefits to those received by able-bodied workers within the private sector.

Rationale for the research

The concept of 'disability' applies in the context of an interaction between an individual's decreased functionality and the environmental conditions and demands. People with disability/disabilities are perceived to be sick by medical and social point of view, which actually restricts their functionality or abilities. Studies have focused on the concept that individuals with disabilities are a minority group which has been discriminated against. Taking this into perspective, disability studies have provided the methodological and intellectual inspiration required to create disability policy. Current estimates indicate that some 3.73% of the Saudi population experiences functional disabilities which challenge their independence or potential to seek profitable employment. Understanding the challenges and integrating range policies may improve the basis for supporting persons with disability/disabilities in achieving their respective goals and expectations. This research study will reveal the factors that produce hindrance in establishing the people with disability/disability by using their skills. And what steps should be taken to achieve this goal.

Literature Review

The literature review for this topic covered material on disability and employment from Saudi Arabia as well as from the West. To provide a clear understanding of the topic under discussion, the review of the literature has been divided into three main sections: laws and regulations in Saudi Arabia, current statutes in Saudi Arabia regarding services, Western literature regarding disability.

Islamic views of disability:

Since Islam is the main religion in Saudi Arabia that affects the policy, since it is adapted from Sharia Islamic law. The Quran states that it is the responsibility and duty of everyone to take care of others and serve their needs (The Holy book of the Quran). , Al-Gain and Abdulwahab (2002) while researching on "Issues and obstacles in disability research in Saudi Arabia" recognise that the biggest challenge that affects the employability of people with disabilities is the lack of what they term "appropriate epidemiological research" (p.2). Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) through their study identified a different issue for discussion when they researched "Disabled Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) capture a social model of disability and management of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

In "Disabled Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" the scholars state that the issue of future employability of people with disabilities is obscure owing to the fact that the attributes ascribed to individuals with disabilities fails to accommodate their needs, and as such makes potential employers refrain from giving them due consideration (Elshiek, 2013). "Being Different: Intersexuality, Blindness, Deafness and Madness in Ottoman Syria", the cornerstone of the argument conceptualises what Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) argue in the sense that

the label or physical and mental characteristics attributed to people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia make potential employers refrain from considering them regardless of policies set to guide their employability. Elamin and Omair (2010) are examples of scholars who have offered various insights regarding the employment of people with disabilities and how men contribute towards the segregation of women in employment.

While researching "Males' attitudes towards working females in Saudi Arabia" they found that one of the challenges female potential employees face is what Elamin and Omair (2010) term the "patriarchal nature of most organisations" (p.3).

Literature on disability services and policies in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has many policies for people with disability. However, there are few studies or little written material actually available about the people with disabilities from which they can actually benefit. Al-Maghlooth (2000) in his study on the welfare and rehabilitation of those with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, states that the government has made a classical classification of disability organisations as per the governing agencies and has divided the same into three types or categories :

1) the organisations governed by government.
2) the organisations which are privately governed.
3) those which are supported mainly by charitable donations.

Al-Maghlooth (2008), Al-Turaki (1996) in his work 'Daleel al moaawaq ela al Khadamat al mulaha laho bilmamlaka al Arabia al Saudi' (A disabled person's guide to the services available to him in Saudi Arabia) has also and categorised organisations that serve people with disabilities into three different categories according to role played. In addition, these organisations also provided vocational training to unemployed people with disabilities so as to assist them in re-entering the workforce in a faster and easier way.

Research on disability in Saudi Arabia:

This section focuses on the nature of disability research in Saudi Arabia. Gain and Abdulwahab (1998) in their study "Issues and Obstacles in Disability Research in Saudi Arabia" discussed the importance of the medical model in disability research in Saudi Arabia and the lack of research applying the social model of disability. They argued that the main factors such as employment equality, income equity and attitude in general of people in the community towards people with disabilities has not been addressed in a comprehensive manner in disability research in Saudi Arabia (Gain & Abdulwahab, 1998).

Al-Hazmi (2000) recently conducted a disability study in Saudi Arabia "National Research Studying Disability in Children in Saudi Arabia" which is regarded as one of the most heavily funded pieces of research ever conducted in the Kingdom of SaudiArabia. The basic purpose of this research was to establish a database concerning the number of children with any disability in various age groups and geographical locations of the country. Al-Hazmi (2000) argued that scholars and academics in Saudi Arabia should look towards conducting more research in topics related to disability, including research on prevalence and characteristics of disabilities in Saudi Arabia and further research on disability policies that exist in Saudi Arabia.

Western literature on disability and employment in the East:

This section of the literature review will focus on the body of literature in its relationship to the study conducted in

west. Scalengh (2006) in her study "Being Different: Intersexuality, Blindness, Deafness and Madness in Ottoman Syria" clearly noted the absence of discussion about disability or people with disability in the history of the Middle-East. Since such discussion of people with disabilities was missing she focused on examining the various manifestations of the embodied differences in a particular Arab-Islamic context to find out the ways in which such manifestations of differences were actually enacted, discussed or interpreted and accommodated.

Her study was aimed towards two different goals:

- Identification of how embodied differences were experienced in the early modern Arab East which was examined by concentrating on how disability was actually perceived in Eastern society and the general community.
- Provide a new insight into disability and people with disability for North American and European scholars in the field of disability-related areas.

The results of her study indicated that the historical texts which were examined by her did not mention the terms "disability" or "people with disability."

Another prominent scholar Coleridge (1999), in his study "Development, Cultural Values and Disability, He stressed that disability needed to be seen in its social and cultural contexts. Coleridge argued that in Afghanistan and other countries which are dominated by the Islamic religion particularly in the Middle Eastern countries, day-to-day decisions and actions are highly directed to provide the people of Islam an understanding and awareness about the afterlife. Helping deprived and poor people, which includes helping people with disabilities, is a charitable and religious duty through which the giver accrues his credit for the afterlife.

Methodology:

Methodology used in assessing the extent to which people with disabilities access employment, and examines the use of the policies from the Saudi Arabian labour law that benefit people with disability/disabilities in organisations that actually and potentially employ them. The instruments used were: pre-test data (pilot study), questionnaires, and interviews, while limited additional data were collected through observation. Also the analysis process will be explained in addition to the ethical considerations that have been made.

Research design:

Research design is defined as a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance (Kerlinger, 1964) The participants of the research will be employers of people with disability/disabilities, and employees with disability/disabilities, both groups of which are important in exploring the perspectives of those whom the policy is serving and those who are supposed to apply the policy.

The sample size of the study depends on factors such as the number of variables in the study, the type of research design, the method of data analysis and the size of the accessible population. According to Gay's guidelines, 50 of the largest organisations in the western part of Saudi Arabia were used and accordingly sampling will be applied based on the result of each phase of the research.

I chose to collect the data for the sample in a particular region (Hejaz); Hejaz has always seen itself as separate from the rest of Saudi Arabia. 35% of Saudis live in Hejaz which makes it the most populated region.

Mix method research design:

In this research, a mixed method approach was adopted using both a

qualitative and a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach uses different statistical tools to collect and quantify the data so that results and conclusive evidence can be found based on it. Within this research, small-scale data were studied. These included the number of organisations that employ people with disability/disabilities in Hejaz region, the number of employees with disabilities, and gender, age, and job position of the study subjects.

The qualitative approach on the other hand is used where quantitative approach is also considered to be feasible Qualitative data therefore includes evidence that throw light on human behaviour, and understanding and interpreting human behaviour is a complex activity because of the range of rational and irrational behaviour demonstrated by different people (Patton, 1990). This approach therefore focuses on various aspect of human behaviours and experiences.

Justification for selecting mixed method approach:

By using the mixed research method, the research is provided with the capacity to draw attention to the challenges faced in implementing policies for persons with disabilities as a basis from which to reflect on some of the intrinsic challenges the researcher. Issues with the employment of individuals with disabilities and the associated work policies that have been used to guide such employment required the researcher to collect data from different institutions and sectors the study used questionnaires, observations, and interviews to survey the participants employed in the 50 large targeted organisations.

Research instruments:

The term 'research instruments' refers to the tool that a researcher chooses to use to collect data, It is related not only to instrument design, selection, construction, and assessment, but also to the conditions under which the designated instruments are administered. In this research the instruments that were used for data collection were questionnaires and interviews and limited observation. Each was essential for answering the research question from the perspective of both employers and employees with disability/disabilities.

Data collection:

Data is collected by different methods:

- **Data collection using questionnaire:**

The data collection method primarily uses research questionnaires which basically have survey-style question-and-answer formats. Questionnaires were preferred due to their suitability for this type of study. Each item in the questionnaire was developed to address a specific objective, research question, or aim of the study such as the policy in the Labour Law, the recruitment procedure, adjustments, awareness levels, and attitudes.

The questionnaires consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions provided data that is easy to compute and analyse, while the open-ended questions permit a greater depth of response, thus adding quality to the data collected.

Each set of questions addresses a different category in the questionnaire study in order to explore different perspectives. Each of the questionnaires has two versions, Arabic and English, depending on the choice of the participants.

The questionnaires were given out in paper form and not as electronic copies. The first set of questionnaire were distributed during Phase One (questionnaires to employers) and were given out to 50 employers from different organisations. This phase included Question 13: 'In your view, that is using your own understanding of 'disability', are

there currently any employees with disability/disabilities in your workplace?' The number of 'yes' replies to that question developed the sample of Phase Two when the second set of questionnaire was distributed to employees with disability/disabilities.

It is important to note that the second set of questionnaires was also paper-based but the form was adjustable depending on the type of disability the participant had; for example if the disability was visual, either a braille copy or an auditory assistant was provided.

1. **Phase one:**

In Phase One , 50 questionnaires were distributed to human resources or A line managers from the 50 organisations. The process in the case of participants needed answers to any inquiries regarding the questionnaires; this phase of the data collection took 5 weeks.

The questionnaires to the employers and employees with disabilities covered the following issues:

- The percentage of organisations that actually hired individuals with disabilities
- Reasons for hiring people with disabilities (Graffam et al., 2002), disability categories for the people with disability/disabilities employed in each organisation (such as developmental, physical and others)
- Legal frameworks employed in regard to people with disability (such as disability policies, standards, strategies, and absence management (Al-Turaiki, 2000)
- Training support offered to them (such as job coaching); employers' best practice in each company (such as the capacity and the willingness to employ people with disabilities)
- Access to employment (job finding or retention support, counselling and career guidance support (Satcher, 1992); existing consultancy services to people

with disabilities (Rosenberg & Brady 2002)).

The responses to the questionnaires distributed in Phase one revealed 16 organisations that have hired employees with disabilities.

2. **Phase Two :**

The questionnaires distributed in Phase Two were addressed to employees with disability/disabilities within these 16 organisations. The questionnaires to the employees covered topics such as how people with disabilities were employed, whether they experienced any difficulties at work, if any adjustments had been made to make their job easier, if they had received any specific training, if the environment and the infrastructure was conducive, and if there were any recommendations which the interviewees would give to make things easier for people with disabilities. The researcher at this stage had already arranged access to each of the 16 organisations and distributed and collected the Phase Two questionnaire to employees with disabilities in person.

3. **Phase Three :**

Phase Three was based on the results of the last question of the questionnaires for employees with disability/disabilities, which was, '**Are you willing to be interviewed?'** Six out of twenty-four respondents who had filled out the questionnaire agreed to be interviewed, and the researcher arranged interviews based on their convenience and work schedules. In addition to the 6 employees with disabilities who were interviewed, the researcher also interviewed the head of the Ebsar Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired, an organisation serving individuals with visual disabilities.

The researcher included an interview in this phase so that personal insights could be collected and more detailed information obtained than had

been from the questionnaire. This helped to provide more conclusive evidence and details relevant to the research which would throw light on the manner in which different decisions were made; this phase of the data collection took two weeks.

- **Pilot study:**

When carrying out a pilot study, the aim is usually to establish the likely behaviour of respondents in the field when the exercise commences. In most cases the main aim of the pilot study is to establish the viability of the study: whether or not it is possible to carry out the study within the adopted research methodology (Offredy & Vickers, 2010).

The pilot study was carried out with two types of questionnaires, one for the employer and the other for the employee. Two participants took part in the pilot study, both coming from the same organisation. The researcher purposely selected the categories of the respondents, where in this case, one was supposed to be a HR specialist from the company or any other line manager, and the other was supposed to be an employee with disability. Respondents were supposed to answer 25 questions in total. The questions were semi-structured in nature.

The observation drawn from the pilot study is that respondents were able to address the questions quite well. Also, only one question (22) that was addressed to the employer of individuals with disabilities was not comprehended by the study subject. This was due to the inability of the respondent to understand the question. Therefore, it was proposed that the question be modified and be formulated in simple and understandable language. This required the wording of the question to be modified. Overall, other questions invited no particular difficulty and hence remain unchanged.

Interview:

Interviews are appropriate in finding out the story behind the experiences of a participant. Using this method, the researcher sought to obtain in-depth information on employment and policy issues in relation to persons with disability/disabilities. This research was not gender based and interviews conducted as many as possible of both sexes with disability/ disabilities. Six interviews were carried out; in total, three of the interviews that took place included female participants and 3 were with male interviewees. First, the setting was informal; furthermore the advisor is used to answering questions from various sectors of society, from educators, business organisations, and with social workers who deal with people with disability/disabilities issues and their social care in their daily lives in relation to education and work arrangements, as well as their social care in general. Women are more at ease and chat more freely with other woman compared to men; furthermore, because of the previous relationship with the advisor of the minister, the interview was informal and took place in her office during her break time.

We started by catching up and having coffee together. Secondly, the setting in the interviewee's private office made the conversation an intimate affair since it had been a long since we had last met. Thirdly, her position as the advisor to the Minister of Labour along with her previous background which was in the field of the education of people with disability/disabilities which was the area in which she has a PhD, made it particularly likely that she will accept the opportunity to talk to a sympathetic listener.

The other 2 female interviewees were employees with disability/ disabilities. Being of the same gender made it easier because the social norm in Saudi Arabia is gender segregation. However, as mentioned previously, women talk freely to each other, and

furthermore are more communicative than men are

The other two interviews were with males, one of them was with the head of the Ebsar Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired, an organisation specifically serving individuals with visual impairment, and the other 2 were with employees with disability/disabilities one of whom had a visual disability and the other a physical disability. The interviewer took into consideration the cultural barriers of gender; she was dressed in an "abayaa" which is the black cape woman wear in Saudi Arabia, she addressed the men as 'brother" which is the proper was to address men in Saudi culture, she further took into consideration details such as avoiding physical contact, limiting eye contact, as well as keeping her voice low in respect of the cultural norm in Saudi Arabia .

Data analysis:

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data; since the data of this research was mainly qualitative with some quantitative data, only limited statistical and logical techniques were needed to describe and evaluate the data. All transcripts were studied carefully to highlight the areas crucial for the analysis. Sensitive and ethical grouping of views on all-important points were recorded and I re-evaluated the validity and accuracy of my findings. I used the 5-step method of data analysis developed by McCracken for long interviews (McCracken, 1988); this method was used for both interviews and questionnaires. The data in this context was analysed by creating coding categories, identifying and describing themes, and developing categories by examining their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first step in the 5-step method of data analysis involved reading the transcripts generated from respondents carefully, making notations in the margins.

a) First step: a computer software programme was used to analyse the data.

b) The second step: involved observing and developing data into preliminary descriptive and interpretive categories based on evidence presented in the transcripts.

c) The third step: is where thorough examination of preliminary codes was carried out to identify connections and develop patterns of codes.

d) The fourth step: involved determining basic themes by examining clusters of comments made by respondents and memos made by researchers.

e) The last step: involved examining themes to delineate predominant themes contained in the data.

The initial grouping of themes was as follow: nformation about participants and organisations, information about policy, information about recruitment, information about adjustments, and finally awareness.

Analysis were then completed and double-checked with the list of initial grouping as a method of verification. In terms of the analysis of the quantitative data, a spreadsheet will be used to come up with results in a statistical manner.

Study limitations:

There are some limitations to this research study:

1) Research on the employment of persons with disability/disabilities in KSA remains a virtually virgin area. Such a perceived paucity of research literature is likely to affect the depth of documents which can be reviewed in the data collection process.

2) An additional critical limitation is that, since the study concentrates on Saudi Arabia, the generalisability of the findings may be limited in relation to organisations outside the country.

3) The sample population was also small hence further limiting the research's generalisability.

Results:

This section critically reviews the results from different phases of research.

Results from Phase One (1) (employers within 50 organisations):

Study mainly targeted human resource managers or line managers with responsibility for five or more staff members in an organisation.

Of the 50 respondents, 29 were human resource managers, 16 were line managers with responsibility for 5 five or more managers, and two respondents were neither HR managers nor line managers. In terms of ownership, 44 of the organisations involved were private while six were public organisations owned by the government, ten organisations employed less than 15 people, 15 organisations employed 15 to 100 workers and 24 organisations employed more than 100 employees.

Two of the three government organisations employed more than 100 people while the remaining one employed between 15 and 100 people. The majority of the private organisations that participated in the study employed more than 100 people.

In terms of the main business sectors, six were mining and quarrying organisations, two were manufacturing firms; six of the firms were wholesalers or retailers, while two of the firms dealt in electricity, gas or water supplies.

Policies on disability seem to not be taken seriously, with only twelve organisations admitting to having a formal policy regarding the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. The remaining organisations (34) did not have any formal policy regarding the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities while four firms failed to answer this question. Only one of the three government organisations did not have any policy regarding the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities.

The results show that four organisations that had agreed to have policies regarding disabilities had these policies written down, whilst seven of them did not have any written policies and two of the correspondents were not aware of any. The majority of these firms with disability policies formally monitored these policies.

Recruitment, training and development, promotion, sickness or absence management, and redundancy or terminations are the dominant policies in most of the organisations. Five of the human resource managers were fully aware of the opinions of the employees of their organisations on the employment of people with disabilities; eight of the managers were partially aware of them, whereas only one manager was not aware of the opinions of the employees of the organisation on the employment of people with disabilities.

It is interesting to note that most of the organisations that did not consider employing people with disabilities did not actually have any policies on disabilities. Most of the organisations preferred to contact job centres and employment agencies who could recommend candidates with disability/disabilities during recruitment drives. At the time the questionnaires were completed, 16 of the 50 organisations employed people with disabilities, while 34 did not.

The highest number of employees with disability/disabilities in a single organisation was 250 and the least number of employees with disability/disabilities was one. The total number of employees with disability/disabilities according to the study who were actually employed was 367 within the 16 organisation that have employees with disabilities.

Nine of the organisations that employ people with disabilities do the following for their employees: provide special equipment, modify their workplace, provide flexible working patterns, and alter jobs to suit employees with disabilities. Most of the organisations did not have in place job sharing because they employed very competent but physically challenged individuals. Four of the organisations provided training, counselling and additional incentives on the job. 11 of the human resource managers admitted that it was easy to make changes in favour of people with disability/disabilities in the organisations.

Most of the organisations with no disability policies did not employ people with disabilities. 16 managers stated that they did not employ people with disabilities because no-one with a disability had applied for employment in the organisation. However, six of the managers agreed that some have applied but had not been recruited on grounds other than their disability. 15 managers agreed that making adjustments for an employee who becomes disabled often costs less than recruiting a new employee. At the same time, most of these same managers disagreed with the statement that an employee with disabilities creates an additional workload for HR staff management and needs more supervisory time.

When asked about the recommendation from the government, society, and organisations to promote the employment of people with disabilities, 29 people responded and 21 did not. Out of the 29 responses 12 agreed that people with disabilities should be provided with proper training in order for them to join the work force. 8 eight of the responses emphasises that all organisations should be forced to hire people with disability/disabilities. 6 of the responses stated that, in order to promote employment of individuals with disabilities, awareness must be spread throughout the business environment of the potential of this sector of the community. Only 3 responses thought the built environment plays a role in the promotion of the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Results from Phase Two (2) (employees with disabilities):

Study focuses on the experience of employees with disability/disabilities and targeted people who are employed with disability/disabilities in the 16 organisations that have employees with disability/disabilities according to the results from Phase One (1).

In Phase Two 20 of the 24 employees given the questionnaire were in the private sector while four were employed in the public sector that is by the government.

12 were characterised as having physical disabilities; three of these specified their physical disability, with two being hemiplegic and one quadriplegic. Six of the people interviewed were characterised as being visually impairment, and four as deaf or hard of hearing. Two of the respondent did not disclose their status in terms of their disability. When asked about their age, 11 employees were between 25 and 34 years old, nine were between 35 and 44, two were between 18 and 24, and two were between 45 and 54, while none was more than 54 years old.

Four of the respondent were employed in customer services, one of respondent was a specialist acting as a controller, one was a warehouse operative, one a data entry specialist, one a salary clerk, two were receptionists, one a designer, one worked in a call centre, one was an equipment operator, one was a co-secretary, one an administrative coordinator, one a project manager, one a reporter, one a braille teacher, four

employment programme coordinators, one an employment programme supervisor, and one respondents refused to disclose his or her position.

In terms of the years that they had been working, nine had been working between 0 and 5 years, seven between 5 and 10 years, two between 10 and 15 years, while six employees had been working for 20 years or more.

The result recorded from the questionnaires for employees with disabilities reveal that most employees with disabilities had volunteered for quite some period of time previously (between 5 and 10 years). Some got their jobs as a result of school placements. It is also very interesting to note that many (eight out of the total of 24) employees got jobs through their relatives or friends who helped them with recommendations.

When asked whether there had been support from the management of the organisation, 15 employees answered there had been, four said not enough support, one said none, and 4 did not answer.

Eight employees with disability/disabilities emphasised the need to have the proper environment for their workplace, 2 said that help with transportation would make their job easier, 4 said they needed more training, 2 thought that they were not in the right position in terms of the job, and 8 had no comments.

From the questionnaires it is clear that the private sector has absorbed the highest number of people with disabilities as a total number of 20 respondents were employed in the private sector.

People with disabilities can work across almost all sectors ranging from the customer service sector, data entry, and human resource management to machine operators. The means and methods for recruitment of people with disabilities are lacking since most of the respondents (68%) got their jobs through other people.

The respondents agreed that they had not needed any kind of special training to take up their current employment or to carry out their assigned tasks.

It is also important to note that most people employed are characterised as having a physical as opposed to a mental disability, as almost 100% of the respondents were physically challenged with visual impairments, were deaf, had hearing problem, or were quadriplegic.

Results from Phase Three (3) interview:

Results of the interviews carried out with employers and employees with disabilities. The first interview was carried out with a visually impaired male. After describing the research topic, the researcher asked the respondent to explain more about his employment journey. The participant explained that he had been working as a braille teacher for over10 years in his current organisation and had started as a private (home-based) tutor; the mother of a student of his had recommended the respondent to the Ebsar Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired and he was then employed by them. This process was in keeping with the results from Phase Two (2) where the findings showed that relatives or friends had recommended most of the respondents.

The respondent believes that the employment situation in Saudi Arabia needs improvement; opportunities should be open to people with disability. It is because of this need that the Ministry of Labour has been implementing a number of plans to improve the employability of people with disabilities.

In the interview with the braille teacher, the respondent gave the example of a few students who he is teaching who are highly qualified with higher education qualifications in various fields, almost all of whom had been given work as receptionists or in call centres just because of their disabilities. He believes that they

have been wrongly placed and that the concept of hiring people with disabilities is being applied but definitely needs amendment, as there is discrimination when it comes to people with disabilities.

In addition to this an interviewee with physical disability who works in the Ministry of Labour also added;

To be honest I worked hard to reach this position I am at right now, and I think I am lucky because during my years of experience in both jobs I met many people with disabilities who had been seeking employment for years and never got employed, especially people with disfigurements, congenital deformities, I don't know what to call it and not sound rude.

The respondent noted that there is the need to modify the environment, building, fit elevators with braille or voice controls, and, on the top of this, more is needed in relation to job training which can help the employees to perform much better, rather than just placing them in some position to fulfil the Labour Act.

In the interview with a visually impaired female respondent who had worked in a private organisation as the coordinator of a recruitment programme for people with visual impairment for a few months the interviewee commented on the employment methodology used to recruit her. She stated that at first, she had been a phantom employee in the organisation; then she and other phantom employees all spoke to the head of the organisation and presented their ideas to change this. The organisation interacted positively and immediately put a programme in motion, and that is how they started working for the organisation properly.

The respondent concurred with the first respondent (the braille teacher) that there is a lack of awareness among employers, hence measures should be introduced to increase awareness in business organisations about the abilities of individuals with disabilities so that organisations will become more aware that disability is not inability and that such employees can perform as well as any people without disabilities.

One of the major challenges realised here is that work places are not prepared for people with disabilities in terms of the built environment. For example colour contrast in the workplace is important to for people who are visually impaired. The colour of the door should be different from the colour of the wall so that these can be easily distinguished from each other. It is noted that the employment of people with disabilities acts as inspiration for other people who are characterised as having a disability and are not working. This simply tells them that for them also everything is possible.

Some of the barriers noted during the research interview process include negative attitudes among visually impaired individuals with 20% of people with visual impairments preferring to live on social assistance rather than working. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Labour always certifies programmes for people with disabilities before allowing a given firm or company to employ such individuals. The advisor said

There are problems with poor public services and poor public transportation, urban and residential environments which are not properly adapted which make it difficult for visually impaired people to go from their place of residence to their place of work, hindering the performance of visually impaired people in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

From the interview, it is also noted that the ministry sends trained auditors to check on the working environment in the organisation; once the auditor approves this, the ministry certifies

that the organisation is equipped for employees with disabilities.

Results from quantitative study
Employers of people with disability/disabilities:

The findings from the questionnaires show that 24% of the organisations surveyed have a formal policy concerned with the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. On the other hand, 68% of the organisations had no formal policy for recruitment, while 8% did not answer the question. This implies that Saudi Arabia has been slow in implementing formal policies concerned with the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. This shows that there is still cause for concern for the policymakers. The public sector institutions have also been slow in implementing these policies as is indicated by only one of the three government institutions surveyed having such a policy in place.

Table 1: Availability of formal policy

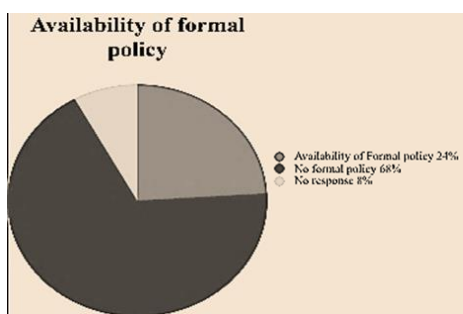| Formal policy	Participants (%)
Availability of formal policy	24%
No formal policy	68%
No response	8%

Figure 1: Availability of formal policy

A majority of the firms that had disability policies in place did not monitor the policies formally. Recruitment, training and development, promotion, sickness or absence management, and redundancy or employment termination are the dominant policies in most of the organisations. Despite this, there are few monitoring practices in relation to employees with disability/disabilities, equipment/personal support for employees with disability/disabilities, adapting working hours as necessary, adapting working environments and consulting with employees with disabilities on their needs also featured in many firms' formal policies relating to employees with disabilities. This shows that, despite awareness of the formal policy concerned with the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities, these policies are ineffective, as monitoring them is a problem.

A majority of the organisations that had not considered employing persons with disability/disabilities did not have any policies relating to persons with disabilities. 32% of the organisations surveyed had employed people with disabilities while a majority of the organisations (68%), did not employ persons with disability/disabilities. This indicates that a majority of the organisations may have negative attitudes regarding employing individuals with disabilities, hence the low rate of recruitment.

Table 2: Employment of employees with disability/disabilities

Employees with disability/disabilities	Organisations (%)
Employed persons with disability/disabilities	32%
No persons with disability/disabilities employed	68%

Employment of disabled employees

Employed disabled persons 32%
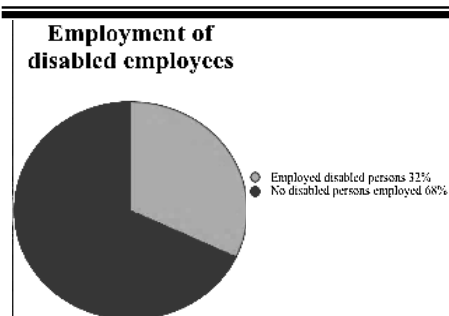No disabled persons employed 68%

Figure 2: Employment of persons with disability/disabilities

A small number of the organisations agree that implementing changes to favour people with disability/disabilities in the organisations is easy. 12% of the organisations had not recruited them based on competence rather than disability.

Among the main reasons given for not employing people with disabilities was that they have not submitted any job applications for positions in the firm. 32% of the organisations did not employ people with disabilities because no-one with a disability had applied for employment in the organisation. 30% of the organisations had failed to employ them because they feared the additional costs entailed in making adjustments to absorb employees with disabilities and that an employee with disability creates additional workload for HR staff management and requires increased supervisory time.
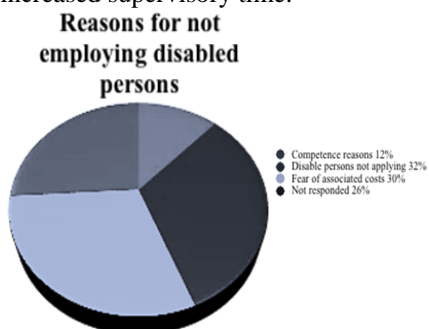
Reasons for not employing disabled persons

Competence reasons 12%
Disable persons not applying 32%
Fear of associated costs 30%
Not responded 26%

Figure 3: Reasons given for not employing people with disability/disabilities

This shows that while the majority of the employees with disability/disabilities shy away from applying for top positions in the organisation, many organisations also shy away from employing them due to the fear of costs related to recruiting them and providing them with assistive technology. This also indicates that most employers are ill-prepared, and have not created an appropriate environment for individuals with disabilities.

Only 8% of the organisations considered adjusting their workplace environments to fit the needs of persons with disability/disabilities. This shows that most organisations that eventually recruit persons with disability/disabilities are not structuring the work environment to address their needs. This leads to situations where individuals with disabilities are less productive than able-bodied workers. This implies that supported employment is vital, as it improves the competence and performance of the persons with disability/disabilities.

A majority of the participants agree that people with disabilities should be provided with proper training to enable them to join the work force. However few participants recommended that organisations should be forced with legislation and policies to have a certain percentage of employees with disability/disabilities.

A small number of participants also recommended that awareness regarding individuals with disabilities must be spread to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities as well as the awareness that providing a suitable environment that meets their needs will also make them better able to work.

The majority of the employers believed in the potential of the employees. Indeed, most participants also agreed that lack of experience in dealing with

individuals with disabilities may contribute significantly to their low employment levels. Most of the participants also mentioned that their organisations were reluctant to hire employees with disabilities because their work environment does not support them.

Employees with disabilities:

Of the employees with disability/disabilities surveyed, 50% revealed that they are satisfied with the recruitment process, whilst only 12% were dissatisfied. 12% of the employees with disability/disabilities also expressed concern that people generally held negative views regarding their capabilities. 46% of the employees said that their managers are neither aware of their needs nor do they provide proper adjustments to enable them to fit into their organisation.

18% of the employees with disability/disabilities feel that placing them in a suitable job based on their abilities solves recruitment concerns while 12% wanted greater public awareness of their needs. 6% want environment preparation programmes and the provision of assistive aids. Another 6% advocate for proper learning and training in society and organisations. Nevertheless 67% of the participants agreed they had been provided with job-related training (rather than training based on their disabilities) while 33% said they did not need training. This implies that there is little concern in this area among employees with disability/disabilities, as feel they are provided with sufficient job-related training which meets their needs.

It seems that the workplace environment contributes significantly to inefficiency, underemployment, and unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities. This indicates the need for 'supported employment.' The majority of employees with disability/disabilities from the public sector explained that the government has no clear policy regarding the employment of people with disabilities.

Results from qualitative approach:

The majority of respondents agree on the need to structure the work environment in such a way as to meet their disability needs and to provide relevant job training that can help them perform much better. Indeed, this suggestion has been earlier discussed in a study of employment and disability in the United States by Gottlieb et al. (2015).

Gottlieb et al. (2015) argued that training and supervising individuals with disabilities is essential and should be based on the sheltered employment model which assumes that individuals with disabilities tend to be less productive compared to able-bodied workers who are usually paid higher wages than those paid to people with disabilities.

Khalema and Shankar (2014) also provided evidence suggesting that workplace environments contribute significantly to the unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities and the aggravation of their conditions, especially among those with mental illness and disability.

In an earlier study, Abu-Habib (1997) found that people with disabilities are more organised than their counterparts. They also took a pro-active role in their workplaces when given due recognition. Abu-Habib (1997) concluded that the concept of people with disabilities seeking equal opportunities as is practiced in Lebanon, offers an ideal model for how people with disabilities should be treated in Saudi Arabia. People with disabilities have also specifically asked the government of Saudi Arabia for provision of more disability services in the country and to provide employment policies specifically directed to aid people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

At the same time, most of the participants stated that the employees with

disability/disabilities were engaged in jobs they were not qualified in. This idea is consistent with the results from a study by Basas (2009) which also observed that most workers with disability/disabilities find themselves in jobs for which they are over-qualified. Basas (2009) suggested that the employees with disability/disabilities are disregarded and underappreciated in competitive employments. He also showed that policymakers' views of talented employees with disability/disabilities are shaped by bias; they have lower employment expectations in relation to the employees with disability/disabilities which perpetuate perceptions of them as inferior, high-risk, and undesirable. Basas (2009) further points out that these low expectations are cemented by the disability and ineffective policies.

Both groups of respondents believe that it is very important for everyone to have positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. These perceptions are supported by Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) who made similar remarks when discussing the importance of increasing knowledge about disability, as awareness is to be considered an important factor in creating a positive attitude towards disability.

Most of the participants also mentioned that organisations feared the costs associated with employing employees with disability/disabilities so that organisations hesitate to employ them

Regarding the challenges people with disabilities face in employment, the participants identified various factors such as poor public services, poor public transportation, and hostile urban and residential environments. The issue of poor attitudes also came up among some workers as a factor inhibiting their successful recruitment. It is therefore difficult for policymakers to establish special employment programmes within

Saudi Arabia based on the arguments of Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003).

Conclusion:

Based on the data obtained from the interviews and questionnaires. It can be concluded from the questionnaire responses that there is a lack of internal policy with respect to the employment of people with disabilities; in some organisations this may be a contributing factor to the difficulties that they are experiencing in meeting their equity targets as per the regulations of the Ministry of Labour. It is encouraging to see from the data that some organisations utilise their internal policy to formulate guidelines to assist in overcoming the very same difficulties.

The supervisors and/or managers worked together in this area, with some organisations reporting that, although they were aware of the internal policy, they had not seen any positive effects from its implementation in that the organisation had not met its equity targets. Thus, it can be concluded that although policies and guidelines are in place, it appears that they are not always implemented effectively.

Looking at the statistics as illustrated in the data analysis, monitoring practices aimed at supporting employees such as disability equipment/personal support for employees with disabilities, adapting working hours as necessary, adapting the working environment, and consulting with employees with disabilities on their needs, have featured in a number of firms especially regarding formal policies directed towards employees with disabilities. Highest number of citizens throughout the country who registered as unemployed are aged 45 years and above. In other regions which are closer to the seat of government, the highest shares are within the age bracket of 24 to 50. When this is broken down by type or degree of disability in regions such as Asir, there is the indication that the

unemployed are mostly those with intellectual or mental disability.

References:

1) Al-Abdulwahab, S. & Al-Gain, S. (2003). Attitudes of Saudi Arabian health care professionals towards people with physical disabilities. Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal 14, pp. 63-70.

2) Abdulwahab, S, (2001). Issues and obstacles in disability research in Saudi Arabia.

3) Abu-Habib, L. (1997). Gender and Disability: Women's Experiences in the Middle East. Oxford, England: Oxfam.

4) Alaikum, A.O. (2008).The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Muslim Culture of Saudi Arabia.

5) Al-Gain, S. I. & Al-Abdulwahab, S. S. (2002). Issues and obstacles in disability research in Saudi Arabia.

6) Al-Hazmi, M. (2000a). National research for studying handicaps in children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Health.

7) Al-Jadid, M. (2013). Disability in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Medical Journal 34(5), pp.423-460.

8) Al-Maghlooth, F.H. (2000). Welfare and Rehabilitation of the Handicapped in Saudi Arabia. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Prince Salman Center for Disability Research.

9) Al-Turaiki M. (2000). National Survey of disability and rehabilitation in Saudi Society. The Joint Centre for Research in Prosthetics Orthotics. Riyadh.

10) Basas, C. (2009). Indulgent Employment? Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities. Rutgers Law Journal 40(1), pp. 613-637.

11) Coleridge, P. (1999). Development, Cultural Values and Disability: The Example of Afghanistan. In E. Stone (ed.), Disability and Development (1st ed.). Leeds, England: Disability Press.

12) Coleridge, P. (2000). Disability and Culture: CBR in Transition. In: Selected Reading in Based Rehabilitation: Series 2 (pp.21-38). Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal. Bangalore.

13) Disabled care system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2000). Retrieved from the Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research

14) Elamin, A. & Omair, K. (2010). Males' attitudes towards working females in Saudi Arabia. Business Faculty, Higher Colleges of Technology, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Training Resource Network.

15) Elsheikh, A. S. & Alqurashi A.M (2013). Disabled Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science 16(1), pp.68-71.

16) Gain, S., & Abdulwahab, S. (1998). Issues and Obstacles in Disability Research in Saudi Arabia

17) Gottlieb, A., Myhill, W., & Blanck, P. (2015). Employment of People with Disabilities. International Encyclopedia of Rehabilitation .

18) Graffam, J., Shinkfield, A., Smith, K., & Polzin, U. (2002).

19) Guvercin, H. (2008). People with disabilities from an Islamic perspective: Special education and the Islamic principle of inclusion.

20) Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department (2002). Country Profile on Disability. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

21) Kabbara, N. (2003). Arab Conference on Disability held

October 2002 in Beirut, Identifies Violence as a Major Cause of Disability.

22) Kerlinger, F. N. (1964). Education: for an Africa without AIDS. Paulines Publications Africa.

23) Khalema, N. & Shankar, J. (2014). Perspectives on Employment Integration, Mental Illness and Disability, and Workplace Health. Advances in Public Health, Article ID 258614, pp.1-7.

24) Lewis, T. (2004). How to use the questionnaire procedure in cases of discrimination in employment.

25) McCracken, G. (1988). The Long Interview. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

26) Mugenda, A & Mugenda, O. (1999). Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Nairobi: African Centres of Technology Studies.

27) Offredy, M., & Vickers, P. (2010). Developing a Healthcare Research Proposal: An Interactive Student Guide. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

28) Rispler-Chaim, V. (2007). Disability in Islamic Law (1st. ed.). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

29) Rosenberg, H. & Brady, M. P., (2002). Modifying and managing employment practices: An inclusive model for job placement and support (pp.119-135).

30) Satcher, J. 1992. Responding to Employer Concerns about the ADA and Job Applicants with Saudi Arabia: Social Services Networks.

31) Scalengh, S. (2006). Being Different: Inter Sexuality, Blindness, Deafness, and Madness in Ottoman Syria. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

32) Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). The Basics of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

33) Trenwith, C. (2013). Saudi Looks to Put 100,000 Disabled People in Jobs.

34) Turmusani, M. (1999). Disability Policy and Provision in Jordan: A Critical Perspective (pp.193-209). In E. Stone (Ed.), Disability and Development (1st ed). Leeds, England: Disability Press.

35) Walker, L. (2009). The right to health in Saudi Arabia 'Right to health in the Middle East' project. Law School, University of Aberdeen,.

36) Walston, S., Al-Harbi, Y., & Al-Omar, B. (2008). The changing face of healthcare in Saudi Arabia. Annals of Saudi Medicine 28(6), pp.243–250.