

# Cultural Variation in Barriers to Hiring People with Disabilities

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## AFFILIATIONS

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*Persons with disabilities (PWD) are one of the last groups to have their equal rights recognized. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been ratified by 185 countries (as of May 2022). However, PWD continue to experience barriers in their attempt to gain and maintain employment.*



## 01. Introduction

About 15% of the world's population (around 1 billion) live with disabilities. Data with regard to the employment rate of PWD is hard to come by. However, people with disabilities (PWD) are universally underemployed as compared to the base employment rate, and there seems to be a wide variety in the employment rates of PWD around the world. Through our studies we know that expressed views toward hiring PWD does not translate into actual hiring. Managers base their hiring decisions of PWD largely on the perception of the organizations diversity climate (Kersten-Bergman, 2016). In this study, we explore the extent to which societal culture influences the disability inclusion climate (Iwanaga et al., 2021) of organizations, hoping to find ways that companies across the globe can leverage the skills and talent these individuals have to offer the workforce.

## 02. Objective

How does societal context (culture) influence the hiring of people with disabilities (PWD)?

### References

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## 03. Basic Theory

The key component influencing the hiring of PWD is the climate of the organization (which we call the disability inclusion climate) (Arten-Bergman, 2016).

The societal (cultural) context influences the disability inclusion climate through realms of societal pressure (culturally legitimate legislation) and managerial attitudes which reflects the overall categorization of people with disabilities in society.

*For simplicity, there are three factors that affect the treatment of disabled individuals (Stone & Colella, 1996):*

- **Person characteristics (attributes of the person with a disability, attributes of the observer)**
- **Environmental factors (legislation, policy, practice)**
- **Organizational characteristics (norms, values, policies, the nature of jobs, reward system)**

## 05. Methodology

Cross-sectional comparative study of managers in four theoretically derived societal cultures: Canada, China, Norway, France. These countries represent four points of the continuum of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism (Singelis et al., 1995; Thomas et al., 2010).

- Written (online) survey of managers
- Possible follow up interviews
- Possible content analysis of disability legislation

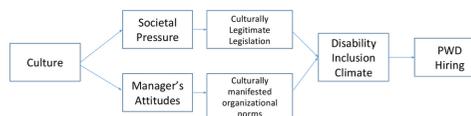
### Sample

Managers who have some responsibility for hiring. Typically mid-level and up, but may vary by country. We have not yet suggested a specific industry, but that is something we may wish to discuss in future. Also, we are thinking private sector, but may consider public sector as well. N = 50-100 each country.

### Survey Measures

- Culture
  - HVIC 32 items (Singelis, et al. 1995)
  - Tightness/Looseess 6 items (Galland, et al. 2011)
- Legitimacy of legislation about PWD 9 items (Alexiou & Wiggins, 2019)
- Managers attitudes toward PWD 14 items (Myong, et al. 2021)
- Disability Inclusion Climate 27 items (Iwanaga, et al. 2021)
- PWD hiring 3 self report items\*

## 04. Basic Model



### 1. Societal culture influences the institutions of society through:

- Goals of the institutions of society
- How institutions operate
- Rationale for their policies
- How members behave (norms)

### 2. Societal culture influences the attitudes of managers toward people with disabilities through:

- Values
- Attitudes
- Beliefs

### 3. Both the socio-political context (institutions) and managerial attitudes influence the diversity inclusion climate of organizations.

### 4. Diversity inclusion climate mediates the effect of culture on hiring people with disabilities.

While the vast majority of countries have legislation regarding treatment of PWD, we suggest that cultural variation exists with regard to the legitimacy of that legislation in influencing the perception of the organizations policies and practices with regard to PWD. That is, the disability inclusion climate of the organization is less the product of conscious adherence to legislation than what is considered legitimate is society. The second mechanism of cultural influence suggests that the disability inclusion climate is a symptom or manifestation of the culturally based values and attitudes of managers. This could include both explicit organizational policies and procedures regarding PWD, but even more strongly, the way these arrangements are put into practice.

# Disability in the Workplace



## 06. Discussion/Conclusion

Beginning in the fall we hope to proceed with survey administration, which will contribute to our fundamental objective to gain a good theoretical lens from which we can develop the relationship between societal context and the disability inclusion climate. Ultimately, the goal is to expand on existing literature within this field, while providing material methods of action that can be taken by legislative bodies, public or private institutions, and through individual measures.

