

## **PERCEPTION OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT BY TURKISH MANAGERS AND EMPLOYERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research offers and insight to the subject that whether manager/employers in Turkey are volunteer to employ disabled people or not. Employment of disabled people can be considered as a subtitle within the activities of social responsibility. Husted and De Jesus Salazar (2006) express that companies allow activities of social responsibility because of 3 different trends. While some of them totally care activities of social responsibility voluntarily, some deal with it since it is a legal obligation. Companies, other than these two, evaluate social responsibility projects in point of strategic view and claim that such an evaluation is the healthiest one both for companies and the society.

Besides, employment of disabled people, being an area of social responsibility, is mostly regarded as a cost element and it is known that companies are not willing to employ disabled people also because of some concerns other than cost. According to the research made in 1999 over 1400 companies, it is ascertained that 22% of the superiors/chiefs of staff working in the companies have bias on employment of disabled people and adopt negative attitude. Again in another research made 15% of the people without disabilities told that they think they may not feel comfortable if they work together with disabled people (McInnes, 2001).

Purpose of this study is to show what the employers/managers think about employment of disabled people. Although there are so many studies made in different countries about what the employers/managers think about employment of disabled, any research has been made about Turkey in special. It will be determined with this study that if Turkish company managers and employers see employment of disabled people, as being an area of social responsibility or deal with this subject since it is a legal obligation taking employment of disabled people as a cost element.

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### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

We tried to determine the views of employers/managers with regard to employing disabled people in Turkey with our study in 2009. Even though there have been multiple studies concerning what managers/employers think of the employment of disabled people, there had been no studies that specifically focus on Turkey. This study was used to determine whether they voluntarily employ the disabled as a field of social responsibility or they employ them due to legal obligations since they see them as cost factors.

The study aims to find answers for the following study questions in order to accomplish this objective:

1. What are the common tendencies of Turkish managers/employers with regard to employing disabled people?
2. Do managers and employers have any concerns regarding the employment of disabled people?

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3. Do managers and employers see the employment of disabled people as something within the scope of social responsibility?
4. Do managers and employers see the employment of disabled people as a problem that needs to be solved by the state?
5. Do managers and employers think that the employment of disabled people will increase with the cooperation of the state and the private industry?

#### STUDY METHOD, DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

This study is heuristic. A survey scale was developed within this framework in order to determine the perspectives of managers and employers with regard to the employment of disabled people. Several sources were used for the creation of the survey form to be used in order to collect data concerning the study. The survey forms that consist of open and closed end questions were prepared with the support of Sakarya University Social Politics department experts who conduct studies on disability, and with the references of disabilities mentioned in the literature. The pilot implementation for the scale was initiated with 20 company managers who were active in the Sakarya Organized Industrial Region. Open end questions were excluded from the survey form after the feedbacks, and several closed end questions were rearranged, so the survey had its final structure.

The study universe consisted of the companies, which were registered to the Chambers of Industrial Trade in Istanbul, Kocaeli, Sakarya and Ankara. The purpose of the sampling was to provide the investigator with the information that can be used for generalizations (induction) about the universe without requiring to investigate the whole universe (Altunışık et al. 2005; 72). The sampling is the process of selecting a group of sub-elements which consists of a certain number of elements (subjects) among the group. The electronic mail addresses of the companies, which were registered to the Chambers of Industry and Trade in each city were tried to be reached, and the companies were sent a common logo of Sakarya University and KOSGEB (Small and Medium Scale Industry Development Office) as well as an survey form with the letterhead of both organizations along with a cover letter via the official e-mail address of KOSGEB. 413 of the companies which were sent an e-mail have filled out the survey form and sent it back. But only 390 thereof have been taken into consideration due to incomplete forms.

The survey in question consists of two sections. The first section contains demographic information of the company and managers. Second section contains the questions that aim to measure the perceptions of managers and employers with regard to the employment of disabled people. It has been tried to measure with Likert type statements whether they see the employment of disabled people as social responsibility project or they regard them as a cost factor that are unwanted, but kept due to legal obligations.

The analysis used the SPSS statistics program, and the data were interpreted by using averages, standard deviations, frequency and percentage distributions. During the interpretation of the arithmetical averages, it was considered that the average values between 1.00-1.80 correspond to "Completely disagree", values between 1.81-2.60 correspond to "Disagree", values between 2.61-3.40 correspond to "Uncertain", values between 3.41-4.20 correspond to "Agree", and values between 4.21-5.00 correspond to "Completely agree".

Cronbach alpha reliability parameter was controlled in order to measure the reliability of the scale. This value was determined as 0.809. Alpha inner consistency test was also applied in order to determine how reliable the tool is when it comes to determining the levels of importance in a review of participation levels of employers and managers to the items in the survey information form. The alpha inner consistency coefficient was 0.600 for the aspect of the notion that the employment of disabled people is a cost factor, 0.583 for the aspect of the notion that the disabled will contribute to the competitive advantage, 0.524 for the aspect of the notion that the disability employment is an issue that need needs to be addressed by state, and 0.631 for the aspect of the notion that a cooperation of the state and the private industry will increase the employment of disabled people.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE FINDINGS

The demographical details of 390 participant companies and their managers/employers are presented in the table below. A review of the provincial sources of our survey reveals that most feedbacks originated from Istanbul and Kocaeli. Considering that the number of companies registered to the Chambers of Industry and Trade is higher in these provinces as compared to Ankara and Sakarya, it is revealed that this result is natural.

The classification of foundation years for the companies was based on the economic development course in Turkey. Until 1980 Turkey had been a country that adopted a closed economic growth model based on import substitution. As of 1980 the economy was opened to international players and an export-based growth model was implemented. Turkey became a member of the European Customs Union in 1996. After this membership, it was observed that Turkish Companies have started to interact more with EU country markets (Gökdemir and Karaman, 2008). Therefore 1996 was a milestone for our classification. 9.2% of the companies that have participated in our study were founded in 1980 or earlier, 30.7 were founded between 1981-1996, and 60.1% were founded after the customs union.

International Trade Classification (SITC) and International Industrial Classification (ISIC) codes were used in order to determine the industries of the participant countries, and the industries in which the companies are active the most were reflected on the table on the basis of the responses, and rarely selected industries were listed under the other category. Consequently disabled people are mostly employed in IT and service sectors in addition to 8 industrial sectors given in the table.

KOSGEB's classification was used for the determination of the participant company sizes. According to the classification, the proportion of the companies that have 1 to 9 employees (micro scaled enterprises) is 12.3%, while the proportion of the companies that have 10 to 49 employees is 54%, the proportion of the companies that have 50 to 149 employees is 23.3%, and the proportion of the companies that have 150 and more employees is 10%. A review of the educational levels of company managers and employers who have responded to the survey reveals that 62% thereof have at least an associate's degree or more.

A review of the rates of disabled employment reveals that only 28% of the participant companies employed disabled employees. While it is possible to interpret this situation with the notion that they have no intention of employing disabled people, it will be possible to have a better idea in the analysis given below with regard to whether or not there is a relationship between the company size and the employment of disabled people. Because according to our analysis, small, medium and large scaled companies have a legal obligation to employ disabled people. The total proportion of medium and large scaled participant companies is 33.3%, which leads us to the result that medium and large scaled companies employ more disabled people in proportion, as verified by the cross examination with regard to whether or not disability employment differs depending on the company size. The results indicate that 6% of the micro scaled companies, 16% of the small scaled companies, 45% of the medium scaled, and 84% of the large scaled companies employ disabled people. These results should obviously be assessed along with the fact that the employment of disabled people is compulsory for the companies that have 50 or more employees. On the other hand it will be analyzed below whether or not there is a significant difference between the company sizes in terms of the aspects of perception with regard to the employment of disabled people.

We observe that disabled people are mostly used in production departments. Within the department they mostly undertake the tasks such machine operating, installation and packaging, all of which require skills. It was also found that a proportion (16.4%), which can not be underestimated, of disabled employees work in office affairs (such as document sorting and photocopying). On the other hand the majority of the companies (73.2%) stated that they do not use any contractor companies for employment.

The proportion of the companies, which have been informed by an institution with regard to advantages and disadvantages of the disabled employees, is only 18%, which is significantly low proportion. 52.9% of the participants provided the answer "Yes" to the question of whether or not they have any disabled members in their family. This is somehow in conflict with the disability employment rates. The proportion of the companies that employ disabled people is 28%, as mentioned above. But

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those who have disabled people in their family or environment are expected to be more sensitive with regard to the positions of disabled people in social life. The following are the demographical details of companies and managers/employers.

*TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE COMPANIES AND MANAGERS/EMPLOYERS*

<b>Province of activity for the company</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Year of company foundation</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Istanbul	176	45.1	1980 or before	36	9.2
Ankara	62	15.9	1981-1996	120	30.7
Sakarya	50	12.8	1997 or later	234	60.1
Kocaeli	102	26.2			
<b>Number of company employees</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Do you have any disabled employees?</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
9 or less	48	12.3	Yes	112	28.7
10-49	212	54.4	No	278	71.3
50-149	91	23.3			
150 or more	39	10.0			
<b>Field of activity for the company</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Occupation of disabled employees</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Food	37	9.5	Office works	18	16.4
Textile	73	18.7	Cleaning	19	17.3
Metal goods	19	4.9	Machine operatorship	13	11.8
Automotive	18	4.6	Accounting	4	3.6
Plastics	19	4.9	Computer operatorship	5	4.5
Forestry products	16	4.1	Packaging	9	8.2
Machinery	51	13.1	Manager	2	1.8
Electrics-Electronics	35	9.0	Installation	10	9.1
Information Technology	26	6.7	Other	30	27.3
Service	42	10.8			
Other	54	13.8			
<b>Department for which disabled employees work</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Do you work with a contractor company for employment?</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Production	52	60.5	Yes	101	26.8
Non-production functions	17	19.8	No	276	73.2
Administrative services	17	19.8			
Production	52	60.5			
<b>Educational status of the participant</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Have you been informed about the advantages and the disadvantages that you will have in the event that you hire a disabled employee?</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Primary school	38	9.7	Yes	67	18.0
High school	111	28.5	No	305	82.0
Associate's degree	47	12.1			
Bachelor's degree	152	39.0			
Master's degree	42	10.8			
<b>Have you ever communicated with a disabled person?</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Is there a disabled individual in your family or your environment?</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	310	85.9	Yes	193	52.9
No	51	14.1	No	172	47.1

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**ASPECTS AND FINDINGS OF PERCEPTION WITH REGARD TO THE EMPLOYMENT**  
**OF DISABLED PEOPLE BY MANAGERS/EMPLOYERS**

24 Likert statements were obtained for the determination of perspectives of the participants with regard to the employment of disabled people, and the agreement levels are presented in the table above. The least agreed statement among the statements given in the table with the reference of the average of levels of agreement to the Likert statements was the statement that disabled people damage the company image with their appearance, as indicated with an average of 1.90. In another words, the participants state that the physical appearance of disabled people cause absolutely no damage to the company image. The most supported statement was the statement that the creation of job opportunities for disabled people would strengthen the social responsibility image of the company, as evidence with an average of 3.65.

*TABLE 2. PERSPECTIVES OF MANAGERS/EMPLOYERS WITH REGARD TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE*

<b>Statements N=390</b>	<b>Ave.</b>	<b>Sta. Dev.</b>
1. I think disabled employees work inefficiently	3.71	1.071
2. I would increase the employment of the disabled, if the physical conditions of the workplace were (ramps, services, toilets, etc.) more suitable	3.33	0.901
3. Our field of activity does not allow us to increase the employment of disabled people	3.29	1.088
4. I would consider hiring a disabled person if the incentives in this regard would increase (regulations such as SSK premium deduction, and tax)	3.32	1.003
5. I think that disabled employees have a problem of harmony with the non-disabled employees	2.13	1.020
6. Lost days of work are more frequent for disabled workers (leaves such as snow break and treatment break)	2.88	1.022
7. If the employment of disabled people increases, then my health costs would increase accordingly	2.53	0.923
8. The experiences shared by the employers who have already employed disabled people have negative effects on me when it comes to employing disabled people	2.23	0.989
9. If the audits by the state would be more frequent, then the employment of disabled people would increase	3.59	1.049
10. Facilitative services with regard to the employment of disabled people provided by the local governments (such as workplace service with special vehicles) would have a positive influence on me with regard to the employment of disabled people.	3.56	0.915
11. I may increase the number of my staff with physical adjustments to be made to the workplace	2.98	0.926
12. I think that the levels of education and competence of disabled people are low	2.41	1.071
13. The only constraint for the employment of disabled people is the disabled people	2.20	1.071
14. Disabled people would damage the company image with their physical appearances	1.90	1.017
15. Creation of job opportunities for disabled people would strengthen the social responsibility image of our company	3.65	0.954
16. I would hire more disabled individuals if a loan is granted in order to create an architectural area for the disabled	3.24	0.900
17. I would like to sponsor an event, which is organized for disabled people	3.06	0.756
18. The news related to disabled people in published and visual media interest me	2.80	0.990
19. I do not find the fines that are imposed for not employing disabled people deterrent	3.06	0.950
20. I believe that disabled people should be rather hired by KIT and BIT	3.17	1.056

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21. I am affected negatively, since KIT and BIT do not implement the employment quota properly	3.49	0.951
<b>General Average</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>0.982</b>

The table above allows us to see the perspectives of managers and employers with regard to the employment of disabled people in a collective manner. The statements, however, which have allowed us to analyze the perspectives, underwent factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, these statements were classified into four categories. The following are the statistical results for each aspect.

**THE FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT  
OF BEING CONCERNED FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE**

As stated before, most important source of the constraints for the employment of disabled people in the literature is the fear of employers and manager. This fear is caused by reasons such as job continuity, health expenses, efficiency loss and workplace adjustment problem of disabled people. A review of the analysis for degree of agreement to the statements of fear and concern by the participants reveals that it is difficult to say that Turkish managers and employers have fear or concern with regard to the employment of disabled people. Even though many employers/managers think that their field of operation is not suitable for disabled workers, we see that they are not concerned about the lost days of work, harmony problems with co-workers, increase of health expenses or the incompetence of disabled workers. The following table includes the levels and averages of agreement by managers/employers to the statements with regard to being concerned for the employment of disabled people.

*TABLE 3. THE ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT OF BEING CONCERNED FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE (%)*

Statements	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Completely Agree	Average	S. Deviation
1. I think disabled employees work inefficiently	2.3	14.1	19.7	37.9	25.9	3.71	1.071
3. Our field of activity does not allow us to increase the employment of disabled people	4.4	24.6	19.7	40.3	11.0	3.29	1.088
5. I think that disabled employees have a problem of harmony with the non-disabled employees	29.5	42.6	14.9	11.3	1.8	2.13	1.020
6. Lost days of work are more frequent for disabled workers (leaves such as snow break and treatment break)	6.9	34.4	26.7	28.2	3.8	2.88	1.022
7. If the employment of disabled people increases, then my health costs would increase accordingly	10.0	46.2	25.9	16.9	1.0	2.53	0.923
8. The experiences shared by the employers who have already employed disabled people have negative effects on me when it comes to employing disabled people	24.6	41.5	22.1	10.0	1.8	2.23	0.989
12. I think that the levels of education and competence of disabled people are low	19.2	43.1	18.5	15.9	3.3	2.41	1.071
13. The only constraint for the employment of disabled people is the disabled people	29.7	37.4	19.0	11.0	2.8	2.20	1.071
<b>Averages of Concern for the Employment of Disabled People</b>						<b>2.67</b>	<b>1.031</b>

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**THE FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT  
OF BEING POSITIVE ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE**

It is known that several companies regard the employment of disabled people as a social responsibility activity, while the abovementioned constraints caused by the concerns exist. Some companies employ disabled people voluntarily as social responsibility and some companies attach a strategic importance to social responsibility activities and see it as a method of strengthening the company image. The following table includes the finds with regard to whether or not managers and employers see the employment of disabled people as a requirement of social responsibilities. A review of these results indicates that managers and employers do not have a negative approach towards the employment of disabled people as a part of social responsibility. Assessment of the data with the aspect of concern, which was outlined in the previous table, allows us to say that the social responsibility awareness is on the rise.

*TABLE 4. THE ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT OF BEING POSITIVE ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE (%)*

Statements	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Completely Agree	Average	S. Deviation
14. Disabled people would not damage the company image with their physical appearances	0.8	10.0	12.6	32.1	44.6	4.10	1.017
15. Creation of job opportunities for disabled people would strengthen the social responsibility image of our company	2.3	8.5	29.5	41.0	18.7	3.65	0.954
17. I would like to sponsor an event, which is organized for disabled people	2.1	15.6	60.3	18.2	3.8	3.06	0.756
18. The news related to disabled people in published and visual media interest me	7.7	34.1	32.8	21.5	3.8	2.80	0.990
<b>Averages of Positive Approach About the Employment of Disabled People</b>						<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.929</b>

**THE FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT THAT THE ISSUE  
OF DISABLED PEOPLE MUST BE ADDRESSED BY THE STATE**

The state has the obligation to provide a prosperous life for each citizen. The problems that are encountered by disabled people in their social lives, especially employment-related ones, and their respective solutions are also the responsibility of the state. But the responsibility of the state does not relieve the individuals and the organizations, which share this life as a whole, of their obligations against one another. In addition to the state, which is responsible for the resolution of problems with regard to the employment of disabled individuals, the organizations also have duties for the establishment of social peace. As explained above on the basis of the findings, Turkish enterprises have a positive approach towards the employment of disabled people within the framework of social responsibility. Moreover the employers state that the employment of disabled people is an issue which needs to be addressed by the state, and they should be employed by the State Economic Enterprises and Municipal Economic Enterprises.

*TABLE 5. THE ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT THAT THE DISABILITY PROBLEM MUST BE SOLVED BY THE STATE (%)*

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<b>Statements</b>	<b>Completely Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Completely Agree</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>S. Deviation</b>
9. If the audits by the state would be more frequent, then the employment of disabled people would increase	4.1	14.1	16.7	48.7	16.4	3.59	1.049
19. I do not find the fines that are imposed for not employing disabled people deterrent	3.8	25.6	36.7	28.7	5.1	3.06	0.950
20. I believe that disabled people should be rather hired by KIT and BIT	7.9	15.9	36.7	30.5	9.0	3.17	1.056
21. I am affected negatively, since KIT and BIT do not implement the employment quota properly	1.8	12.8	33.8	37.2	14.4	3.49	0.951
<b>Averages of the Notion That the Disability Employment Problem Must Be Solved by the State</b>						<b>3.32</b>	<b>1.00</b>

**THE FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT OF THE NOTION THAT THE COOPERATION OF THE STATE AND THE PRIVATE INDUSTRY WILL INCREASE THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE**

A consideration of the results and comments with regard to three aspects outlined above strengthens further our assumption that the constraints of the employment of disabled people can be eliminated with the cooperation of the state and public industry, which was another work of ours with regard to the employment of disabled people. The findings for this aspect support this notion. Employers and managers expect the state to issue more incentives, grant loans for the rearrangement of the physical conditions of the workplaces for disabled people, and the performance of the services by the local governments that will facilitate the employment. It can be said that their sensitivity towards the issue will improve, if these conditions are rearranged in favor of the companies.

*TABLE 6. THE ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE ASPECT OF THE NOTION THAT THE COOPERATION OF THE STATE AND THE PRIVATE INDUSTRY WILL INCREASE THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE (%)*

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Completely Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Completely Agree</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>S. Deviation</b>
2. I would increase the employment of the disabled, if the physical conditions of the workplace were (ramps, services, toilets, etc.) more suitable	2.3	15.1	37.4	37.7	7.4	3.33	0.901
4. I would consider hiring a disabled person if the incentives in this regard would increase (regulations such as SSK premium deduction, and tax)	4.1	18.2	27.7	41.3	8.7	3.32	1.003
10. Facilitative services with regard to the employment of disabled people provided by the local governments (such as workplace service with special vehicles) would have a positive influence on me with regard to the employment of disabled people.	1.0	13.8	25.4	47.2	12.6	3.56	0.915



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11. I may increase the number of my staff with physical adjustments to be made to the workplace	5.1	24.4	41.5	25.6	3.3	2.98	0.917
16. I would hire more disabled individuals if a loan is granted in order to create an architectural area for the disabled	2.1	18.2	40.5	32.3	6.9	3.24	0.900
<b>The Averages of the Notion That the Cooperation of the State and the Private Industry will Increase the Employment</b>						<b>3.28</b>	<b>0.927</b>

In the review of the table above the general response to the question with regard to whether or not managers/employers had any concerns for the employment of disabled people, which was the second of our in addition to not being concerned for the employment of disabled people, they also see the employment of disabled people as a social responsibility activity, and have a positive approach towards it. It is quite promising to see the raising awareness with regard to the employment of disabled people, which is one of the most important aspects of our social responsibility in the companies, which sponsor social responsibility projects of different areas (sports clubs, environmental problems, education, etc.). But we see that there are still expectations from the state in despite of this awareness. It is observed that the private industry can have advancements in this regard if provided with enough support and incentives in enterprises, where an a notion is dominant, which suggests that the disability employment must be practiced mostly by the public organizations as compared to private industry.

**CONCLUSION**

In this study, which was aimed to cover the perception of managers and employers with regard to the disability employment, the results reveal that only a small proportion such as 28% of 390 companies, which have responded to our survey, employed disabled people. While it is possible to interpret this situation with the lack of tendency for employing disabled people, the final analysis revealed that medium and small scaled companies employed more disabled people in proportion. The study results indicate that 6% of the micro scaled companies, 16% of the small scaled companies, 45% of the medium scaled, and 84% of the large scaled companies employ disabled people. These results should obviously be assessed along with the fact that the employment of disabled people is compulsory for the companies that have 50 or more employees.

It is possible to say that employers and managers have a positive approach towards the disability employment due to its perception as a social responsibility requirement, despite having concerns for the employment of disabled people. But we see that there are still expectations from the state in despite of this awareness. It is observed that the private industry can have advancements in this regard if provided with enough support and incentives in enterprises, where an a notion is dominant, which suggests that the disability employment must be practiced mostly by the public organizations as compared to private industry.

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