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From Vision to Reality: The Story of Atypical Advantage in Empowering Individuals with Disabilities

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Atypical Advantage is a pioneering social impact startup that empowers individuals with disabilities by offering them inclusive employment and earning opportunities. Founded on the belief that every individual, regardless of physical or cognitive ability, deserves the chance to pursue passions and earn a dignified living, it bridges the gap between talent and opportunity. This paper explores the inception, mission, and approach of Atypical Advantage, situating it within broader debates on disability inclusion, employment rights, and social entrepreneurship. Drawing on survey responses and secondary literature, the study analyses the challenges faced by disabled individuals in accessing employment, the barriers encountered by the startup, and the structural gaps in policy and corporate practice. Findings highlight the platform's role in sensitising employers, increasing awareness, and providing accessible solutions. The paper concludes by offering recommendations for strengthening inclusive employment models, enhancing scalability, and aligning with global frameworks like the UNCRPD and SDGs. Thus, Atypical Advantage illustrates how innovation can drive both economic and social change.

Keywords: *atypical advantage, disability inclusion, social impact, inclusive employment, social empowerment.*

INTRODUCTION

Atypical Advantage is on a mission to empower individuals with disabilities by providing an inclusive online platform that connects them with employment and earning opportunities.

They believe that every person, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities, deserves the chance to pursue their passions, showcase their talents, and earn a dignified income. At Atypical Advantage, our mission is clear: 'To Generate Dignified Livelihood Opportunities for Every Person with a Disability.' They believe that every individual, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities, deserves the chance to showcase their talents, pursue their passions, and earn a dignified living. Their journey began when their founder, Vineet, faced challenges in hiring a voice-over artist and a model with disabilities for a corporate project. This eye-opening experience revealed the systemic barriers and biases that often prevent individuals with disabilities from accessing employment opportunities, despite their immense talents and capabilities.¹

Driven by a vision to create a level playing field and bridge the gap between talent and opportunity, Atypical Advantage was born. This platform serves as a bridge between talented individuals with disabilities and leading brands, organisations, and individuals seeking their unique skills and perspectives. Their packages include – Disability Sensitisation, Post Placement Support, Job Mapping, Consultation, Interview Scheduling and Sign Language Support. Atypical Advantage is for profit, private limited company. This platform provides an inclusive space for individuals to showcase their abilities, connect with like-minded individuals, and explore opportunities that align with their aspirations. They have been a winner of the Prestigious National Startup Award under the social impact category by the Union Government. Atypical Advantage offers a seamless platform to connect with a pool of talented individuals with disabilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Participation of People with Disabilities in the Workplace Across the Employment Cycle: Employer Concerns and Research Evidence - Bonaccio, S., Connelly, C.E., Gellatly, I.R. et al. *J Bus Psychol* 35, 135–158 (2020). This research paper states that despite workplace diversity legislation, individuals with disabilities still face barriers to employment.

¹ Subramaniam Madheswaran and Paul Attewell, 'Caste Discrimination in the Indian Urban Labour Market: Evidence from the National Sample Survey' (2007) 42(41) *Economic and Political Weekly* <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40276549>> accessed 24 August 2025

Employers often hold unfounded views about their abilities, impacting hiring and retention.² This paper addresses 11 common concerns employers have about hiring individuals with disabilities, providing evidence-based responses. Recommendations for creating inclusive workplaces are offered, spanning pre-employment, integration, and retention phases. The review highlights research gaps and suggests areas for future exploration.³

Employment Outcomes Among Men and Women with Disabilities: How the Intersection of Gender and Disability Status Shapes Labor Market Inequality - Pettinicchio, David and Maroto, Michelle, *Employment Outcomes Among Men and Women with Disabilities: How the Intersection of Gender and Disability Status Shapes Labor Market Inequality* (September 11, 2017). David Pettinicchio, Michelle Maroto, 'Employment Outcomes Among Men and Women with Disabilities: How the Intersection of Gender and Disability Status Shapes Labour Market Inequality' In *Research in Social Science and Disability*, Volume 10. This study examines the relationship between gender and disability and how it impacts working-age persons' jobs and earnings in the US.⁴ The study examines job and earnings outcomes for men and women with different forms of disability using five years of data from the Current Population Survey, conducted between 2010 and 2015. The findings indicate notable differences in employment and income, with women who have multiple or cognitive disabilities experiencing the lowest rates. It's interesting to note that, while having a significant detrimental effect on men's outcomes, disability lowers the gender wage gap. The multiplicative impacts of gender and disability on labour market outcomes are quantitatively demonstrated by this research, which highlights how various disabilities contribute to inequality and yield varied results for men and women.

Accommodating Employees with Impairments and Health Problems: The Role of Flexible Employment Schemes in Europe Inequality – Giovanis, E.; Ozdamar, O. *Accommodating*

² Silvia Bonaccio et al., 'The Participation of People with Disabilities in the Workplace Across the Employment Cycle: Employer Concerns and Research Evidence' (2020) 35(2) *Journal of Business and Psychology* 135 <<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10869-018-9602-5>> accessed 24 July 2025

³ Meera Shenoy, 'PERSONS WITH DISABILITY & THE INDIA LABOUR MARKET: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES' (2011) ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_229259.pdf> accessed 24 July 2025

⁴ David Pettinicchio and Michelle Maroto, 'Employment Outcomes Among Men and Women with Disabilities: How the Intersection of Gender and Disability Status Shapes Labor Market Inequality: How the Picture Can Change' in Barbara Altman (ed), *Factors in Studying Employment for Persons with Disability* (Emerald Publishing Limited 2017)

Employees with Impairments and Health Problems: The Role of Flexible Employment Schemes in Europe. *Merits* 2023, 3, 51–76. This study investigates the impact of flexible employment schemes on job satisfaction, job quality, and absenteeism among individuals with disabilities and health issues, as well as the careers of people with impairments.⁵ Using data from the European Working Conditions Survey spanning from 2000 to 2015, the research finds that employees under flexible employment arrangements report higher job satisfaction and lower absenteeism rates compared to those under fixed employment. Additionally, carers experience improved job satisfaction and organisational loyalty under flexible employment schemes. The study suggests policy implications for the implementation of flexible employment systems at both the state and corporate levels to enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover intentions, and ultimately increase productivity.

Employment Opportunities for Persons with Different Types of Disability: An analysis of employment status among individuals with different disabilities was conducted, considering factors such as work ability and individual characteristics.⁶ Using data from Statistics Sweden's Labour Market Investigation, 4359 respondents were categorised into six disability groups. Logistic regression analyses revealed that individuals with hearing disabilities had the highest employment probability, while those with psychological disabilities had the lowest. Gender, age, education level, and work ability significantly influenced employment opportunities. Notably, higher education did not increase employment prospects for those with impaired workability. Overall, the type of disability significantly impacts employment opportunities, with other factors playing equally important roles across disability groups.

Employer-Recommended Strategies to Increase Opportunities for People with Disabilities: This study explored employers' perspectives on hiring individuals with disabilities, focusing on challenges, advantages, and recommendations for improvement.⁷ Four focus groups with 74 participants from Massachusetts were conducted. Employers

⁵ Eleftherios Giovanis and Onur Ozdamar, 'Accommodating Employees with Impairments and Health Problems: The Role of Flexible Employment Schemes in Europe' (2023) 3(1) *Merits* 51 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/merits3010004>> accessed 24 July 2025

⁶ Tomas Boman et al., 'Employment opportunities for persons with different types of disability' (2015) 9(2) *Alter* <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alter.2014.11.003>> accessed 24 July 2025

⁷ Alexis D Henry et al., 'Employer-Recommended Strategies to Increase Opportunities for People with Disabilities' (2014) 41(3) *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140716>> accessed 24 July 2025

identified stigma, uncertainty, and complexity in disability employment services as challenges. Advantages included diversity and talent expansion. Recommendations included establishing business networks and improving coordination in the employment service system. Overall, innovations in services and hiring practices could enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, benefiting both employers and companies.

Why Don't Employers Hire and Retain Workers with Disabilities? - Kaye, H.S., Jans, L.H. & Jones, E.C. Why Don't Employers Hire and Retain Workers with Disabilities? *J Occup Rehabil* 21, 526–536 (2011). This study aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of employer attitudes and practices regarding workers with disabilities, particularly in environments known for resistance to ADA compliance.⁸ Human resource professionals and supervisors attending ADA training sessions were surveyed, revealing key barriers to employing workers with disabilities, such as a lack of awareness, cost concerns, and legal fears. Respondents recommended increased training, centralised disability expertise, and policy changes like tax breaks and mediation to encourage hiring and retention. The findings suggest practical strategies for employers to facilitate inclusion and propose policy changes to enhance labour force participation among individuals with disabilities.

Labour market inclusion of people with disabilities by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This contribution by the ILO and OECD aims to promote a common approach to the employment of persons with disabilities, emphasising social justice, human rights, and decent work.⁹ It highlights the importance of inclusive economies and societies, with the employment of persons with disabilities now on the G20 agenda. The focus is on individuals with remaining work capacities who may have been born with disabilities or acquired them later in life. The document does not cover the analysis of people with disabilities without work capacities.

The Economic Argument for Hiring People with Disabilities - Aichner, T. The economic argument for hiring people with disabilities. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 8, 22 (2021). The question of whether to hire people with disabilities can be approached from moral, legal, and

⁸ H Stephen Kaye et al., 'Why Don't Employers Hire and Retain Workers with Disabilities?' (2011) 21 *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 526 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-011-9302-8>> accessed 24 July 2025

⁹ 'Labour market inclusion of people with disabilities' (*International Labour Organization*, 02 October 2018) <<https://www.ilo.org/publications/labour-market-inclusion-people-disabilities-0>> accessed 24 July 2025

economic perspectives. From a moral standpoint, it's considered a societal obligation to respect and include individuals with disabilities. Legal requirements vary by country, but generally mandate a quota system for employing disabled individuals. However, this article focuses on the economic aspect, highlighting how hiring disabled employees can positively impact a company's success.¹⁰ Through examples from research and practice, it demonstrates that disabled employees can perform equally well or even better than non-disabled colleagues, making valuable contributions to the business.

The Role of Workplace Accommodations in the Employment of People with Disabilities

- Anand, P., Sevak, P. The role of workplace accommodations in the employment of people with disabilities. IZA J Labour Policy 6, 12 (2017). This study investigates the role of workplace accommodations in improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities, using data from the 2015 Survey of Disability and Employment. Findings indicate that a significant portion of nonworking individuals with disabilities face barriers that could be mitigated by accommodations, such as transportation issues and inaccessible workplaces. Moreover, receiving certain accommodations, like assistance with transportation or flexible work schedules, is associated with higher employment rates.¹¹ Additionally, individuals in poor health or with physical disabilities are more likely to perceive workplace inaccessibility as a barrier, yet less likely to have received accommodations in their current or previous jobs. This suggests the need to target these individuals for greater access to accommodations to enhance their employment prospects.

Disability and Employment – Overview and Highlights - Vornholt, K., Villotti, P., Muschalla, B., Bauer, J., Colella, A., Zijlstra, F. Corbière, M. (2018). Disability and employment – overview and highlights. European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, 27(1), 40–55. The importance of disability and employment research is discussed in this study, with a specific emphasis on those with mental disorders.¹² Disability is defined

¹⁰ Thomas Aichner, 'The economic argument for hiring people with disabilities' (2021) 8 Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 22 <<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00707-y>> accessed 24 July 2025

¹¹ Paul Anand and Purvi Sevak, 'The Role of Workplace Accommodations in the Employment of People with Disabilities' (2017) 6 IZA Journal of Labor Policy <<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40173-017-0090-4>> accessed 24 July 2025

¹² Katharina Vornholt et al., 'Disability and employment-overview and highlights' (2018) 27(1) European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology 40 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2017.1387536>> accessed 24 July 2025

as an interaction between an individual and their environment using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework. Important subjects covered include the difficulties in defining disability, the state of the law in North America and Europe, and the obstacles and enablers in the workplace. The study highlights significant discoveries from the body of literature and points out areas that need more in-depth investigation. A suggested study agenda and useful suggestions for resolving disability and work concerns are included in the conclusion.

The Disability Employment Puzzle: A Field Experiment on Employer Hiring Behavior –

This study investigates employment discrimination against people with disabilities using a field experiment approach. Applicants with disabilities, specifically spinal cord injury and Asperger's Syndrome, received 26% fewer expressions of employer interest compared to those without disabilities. This disparity was observed across various job levels and types of disabilities. Interestingly, the disability gap was more pronounced among experienced applicants and in smaller private companies not covered by the ADA. The findings suggest that disability discrimination remains a significant barrier to employment for people with disabilities, emphasising the need for greater attention to employer behaviour and demand-side interventions in the labour market.

Disability Inclusion in the Workplace: The Evolving Landscape in India: The article highlights the importance of disability inclusion in Indian workplaces, emphasising the need for a shift from mere legal compliance to genuine commitment and action.¹³ Despite legal frameworks like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, there is still inadequate representation of people with disabilities in the workforce.¹⁴ The article discusses the legal considerations, including the requirement for employers to adopt an Equal Opportunity Policy and the appointment of a Liaison Officer.¹⁵ It also mentions affirmative actions taken by some companies, such as providing accessible infrastructure and conducting sensitisation

¹³ Preetha Soman and Aishwarya Manjooran, 'Disability inclusion in the workplace: the evolving landscape in India' (*International Bar Association*, 21 September 2023) <<https://www.ibanet.org/disability-inclusion-workplace-india>> accessed 24 July 2025

¹⁴ 'Half of the Disabled Population in India Employable: Report' *The Indian Express* (15 July 2021) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/jobs/half-of-the-disabled-population-in-india-employable-report-7405660/>> accessed 24 July 2025

¹⁵ Ranjita Dawn, 'Issues and Challenges in the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in India' (2012) 47(36) *Economic and Political Weekly* <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242651399_Issues_and_Challenges_in_the_Employment_of_Persons_with_Disabilities_in_India> accessed 24 July 2025

drives. The conclusion emphasises the benefits of diversity and inclusion in fostering a thriving work culture and enhancing competitiveness, innovation, and overall company engagement.

Employers: Influencing Disabled People's Employment through Responses to Reasonable Adjustments - Olsen, J. (2024). Employers: influencing disabled people's employment through responses to reasonable adjustments. *Disability & Society*, 39(3), 791–810. The article explores why some disabled individuals may be hesitant to disclose their impairments to employers, despite the legal requirement for reasonable adjustments (RAs).¹⁶ It highlights the impact of past experiences with employers on their willingness to disclose, noting that many fear discrimination or reluctance from employers to provide necessary accommodations. The study reveals that RAs are often crucial for disabled individuals to secure and maintain employment, but previous encounters have led to scepticism about employers' willingness to approve these adjustments.

The Effect of Disability on Employment Allowing for Work Incapacity - O'Donnell, Owen (1998): The Effect of Disability on Employment Allowing for Work Incapacity, Department of Economics Discussion Paper, No. 9813, University of Kent, Department of Economics, Canterbury. This study addresses limitations in previous models of disability and employment by introducing a model that considers both the capacity and desire for work as necessary conditions for employment.¹⁷ Using data from British disabled men, the study finds that recognising individuals' incapacity for work is crucial for accurately estimating employment outcomes. Failure to account for incapacity leads to overestimation of the wage elasticity of employment. Additionally, the study rejects the accuracy of self-reported capacity information, highlighting the need for improved measurement methods.

Employment and Disabilities - Jerome I. Elkind, Raymond S. Nickerson, Harold P. Van Cott and Robert C. Williges. This chapter highlights the challenges faced by people with disabilities in daily life, including limitations in independent living, travel, recreation, and

¹⁶ Jason Olsen, 'Employers: influencing disabled people's employment through responses to reasonable adjustments' (2024) 39(3) *Disability & Society* <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2022.2099251>> accessed 24 July 2025

¹⁷ Owen O'Donnell, 'The Effect of Disability on Employment Allowing for Work Incapacity' (1998) Department of Economics Discussion Paper No 9813 <<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/105519/1/9813.pdf>> accessed 24 July 2025

employment.¹⁸ Government initiatives have aimed to address these issues by prohibiting discrimination and promoting accessibility in various settings. The human factors community can play a crucial role in designing accessible equipment, facilities, and jobs, thereby enhancing the participation of disabled individuals. The chapter emphasises the importance of research to support these efforts and enable people with disabilities to reach their full potential.

Estimating the Impact of Disability Onset on Employment - Melanie K. Jones, Duncan McVicar. This paper investigates the impact of disability onset on employment probability using a longitudinal dataset from Britain.¹⁹ It compares estimates based on a control group drawn from those who experience disability onset one year later with estimates from a traditional control group not experiencing disability. The study finds that the employment probability drops by 11 percentage points in the year of disability onset. The impact is more significant for individuals with lower qualification levels, suggesting weaker attachment to the labour market.

Disability, Skills and Employment: A Review of Recent Statistics and Literature on Policy and Initiatives - Sheila Riddell, Sheila Edward, Elisabet Weedon and Linda Ahlgren. The report by the EHRC addresses the employment and skills gap between disabled and non-disabled individuals, citing legislative initiatives and policies aimed at improving opportunities for disabled people. Despite progress, employment rates for disabled individuals remain low. Key challenges include limited participation in skills development programs and vulnerability to economic recessions. The report calls for a cohesive approach to address diverse needs and emphasises the importance of supporting transitions throughout disabled individuals' working lives. Coordination between agencies is essential to maximise policy impact.

The Impact of Disability on Employment and Financial Security following the Outbreak of the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic in the UK - Emerson, E., Stancliffe, R. J., Hatton, C., Llewellyn, G., King, T., Totsika, V., Aitken, Z., & Kavanagh, A. (2021). The impact of disability on employment and financial security following the outbreak of the 2020 COVID-

¹⁸ Jerome I Elkind et al., 'Employment and Disabilities' in Raymond S Nickerson, *Emerging Needs and Opportunities for Human Factors Research* (National Academies Press 1995)

¹⁹ Melanie K Jones and Duncan McVicar, 'Estimating the impact of disability onset on employment' (2020) Social Science & Medicine <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32334287/>> accessed 24 July 2025

19 pandemic in the UK. *Journal of Public Health*, 43(3), 472–478. This study analysed data from the UK's 'Understanding Society' survey to compare the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown on employment and financial security for working-age adults with and without disabilities. It found that during the initial months of the lockdown, individuals with disabilities were more likely to experience reduced working hours and higher financial stress compared to their peers without disabilities.²⁰ Despite adjustments for pre-lockdown financial status, these differences persisted. The study highlights the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people with disabilities and suggests a need for more effective, disability-inclusive government responses.

The Impact of Hiring People with a Disability on Customers' Perspectives: The Moderating Effect of Disability Type - Awad, A. A., Abuhashesh, M., Khasawneh, M. H. A., & Masa'deh, R. (2023). *The Impact of Hiring People with a Disability on Customers' Perspectives: The Moderating Effect of Disability Type*. *Sustainability*, 15(6), 5101. This study in Jordan investigated how hiring people with disabilities in service staff roles affects customers' perspectives, with consideration of different types of disabilities. Using a quantitative approach with data collected from 765 social media users, the study found that hiring individuals with disabilities positively influenced perceptions of quality, brand image, and loyalty among customers. However, it did not significantly affect purchase intention or stereotyping. Notably, hiring people with disabilities had the strongest impact on perceived brand image. The study suggests that incorporating people with disabilities into the workforce can contribute to building socially responsible enterprises in Jordan.

The Disability Employment Paradox in Developing Countries - Boutros, P., & Fakih, A. (2023). *The disability employment paradox in developing countries: recent evidence from Lebanon*. *Development Studies Research*, 10(1). This paper investigates the relationship between disability and labour force participation in Lebanon, using data from the Lebanese Labour Force and Household Conditions Survey (2019). Employing a first-logit model, the study found that individuals with disabilities are significantly less likely to participate in the

²⁰ Eric Emerson et al., 'The impact of disability on employment and financial security following the outbreak of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic in the UK' (2021) 43(3) *Journal of Public Health* <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33429436/>> accessed 24 July 2025

labour force, even after controlling for factors like age, marital status, and education.²¹ The findings underscore the importance of policies aimed at improving the inclusion of disabled individuals in the labour market.

Disabled People in Employment: According to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey, the number of working-age disabled individuals in the UK increased in the final quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.²² During this time, there was an increase in the number of disabled people employed, a decrease in the number of unemployed disabled individuals, and a rise in the number of economically inactive disabled people. Although the employment rate for disabled people remained lower than for non-disabled individuals, the gap between the rates narrowed during this period. This briefing outlines the ONS's employment statistics for disabled individuals and the government's programs aimed at supporting them in the workplace.

What is the Impact of Inclusive Employment for Persons with Disabilities? In low-to middle-income countries (LMICs), over 80% of persons with disabilities are unemployed, highlighting a significant issue in inclusive employment. While inclusive employment is prioritised globally, there is limited information available on its impact specifically on persons with disabilities, with existing research often focusing on its impact on employers.²³ This brief aims to synthesise available evidence to understand the impact of inclusive employment on persons with disabilities and suggest strategies to overcome key challenges.

Employment Consequences of COVID-19 for People with Disabilities and Employers - Wong, J., Ezeife, N., Kudla, A. et al. Employment Consequences of COVID-19 for People with Disabilities and Employers. *J Occup Rehabil* 32, 464–472 (2022). People with disabilities (PWD) have been disproportionately impacted in terms of employment by the COVID-19 epidemic.²⁴ According to a cross-sectional online survey conducted in the Midwest of the

²¹ Pierre Boutros and Ali Fakih, 'The disability employment paradox in developing countries: recent evidence from Lebanon' (2023) 10(1) Development Studies Research

<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21665095.2023.2244173>> accessed 24 July 2025

²² Andy Powell, 'Disabled people in employment' (*The House of Commons Library*, 18 March 2024)

<<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7540/>> accessed 24 July 2025

²³ 'What is the impact of inclusive employment for persons with disabilities?' (*Disability Evidence Portal*)

<<https://www.disabilityevidence.org/questions-evidence/what-impact-inclusive-employment-persons-disabilities>> accessed 24 July 2025

²⁴ Jasin Wong et al., 'Employment Consequences of COVID-19 for People with Disabilities and Employers' (2022) 32 *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-021-10012-9>> accessed 24 July 2025

United States, people with disabilities faced more job obstacles during the epidemic than people without disabilities. Changes in employment and closures of businesses affected PWD as well as employers. PWD unemployment was ascribed to sickness or disability, furloughs or layoffs, company closures, and worries about workplace safety. Nevertheless, despite claiming unemployment, many jobless PWD did not obtain compensation or benefits. These results underline the necessity of legislative measures to alleviate the inequities that PWDs encounter in the workplace.

Company Characteristics, Disability Inclusion Practices, and Employment of People with Disabilities in the Post COVID-19 Job Economy: A Cross Sectional Survey Study - Chan, F., Tansey, T. N., Iwanaga, K., Bezyak, J., Wehman, P., Phillips, B. N., Strauser, D. R., & Anderson, C. (2020). Company Characteristics, Disability Inclusion Practices, and Employment of People with Disabilities in the Post COVID-19 Job Economy: A Cross Sectional Survey Study. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 31(3), 463–473. The study aimed to investigate company characteristics and effective disability inclusion practices related to the employment of people with disabilities in the post-COVID-19 recession economy.²⁵ Four hundred sixty-six employers participated and completed a demographic questionnaire and the Disability Inclusion Profiler. Results showed a positive relationship between company characteristics, disability practices, and employment of people with disabilities. The findings can guide transition specialists, rehabilitation counsellors, and disability service providers in engaging with employers to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the post-COVID-19 economy.

Inclusion, Work and Wellbeing: Shifting Perceptions of Disability and Employability Through the National Disability Insurance Scheme - Olney, S. (2021). Inclusion, Work and Wellbeing: Shifting perceptions of disability and employability through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. In Springer eBooks (pp. 285–304). This chapter examines the role of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in promoting workforce participation among people with disabilities in Australia and its practical implementation.²⁶

²⁵ Fong Chan et al., 'Company Characteristics, Disability Inclusion Practices, and Employment of People with Disabilities in the Post COVID-19 Job Economy: A Cross Sectional Survey Study' (2021) 31(3) *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33136220/>> accessed 24 July 2025

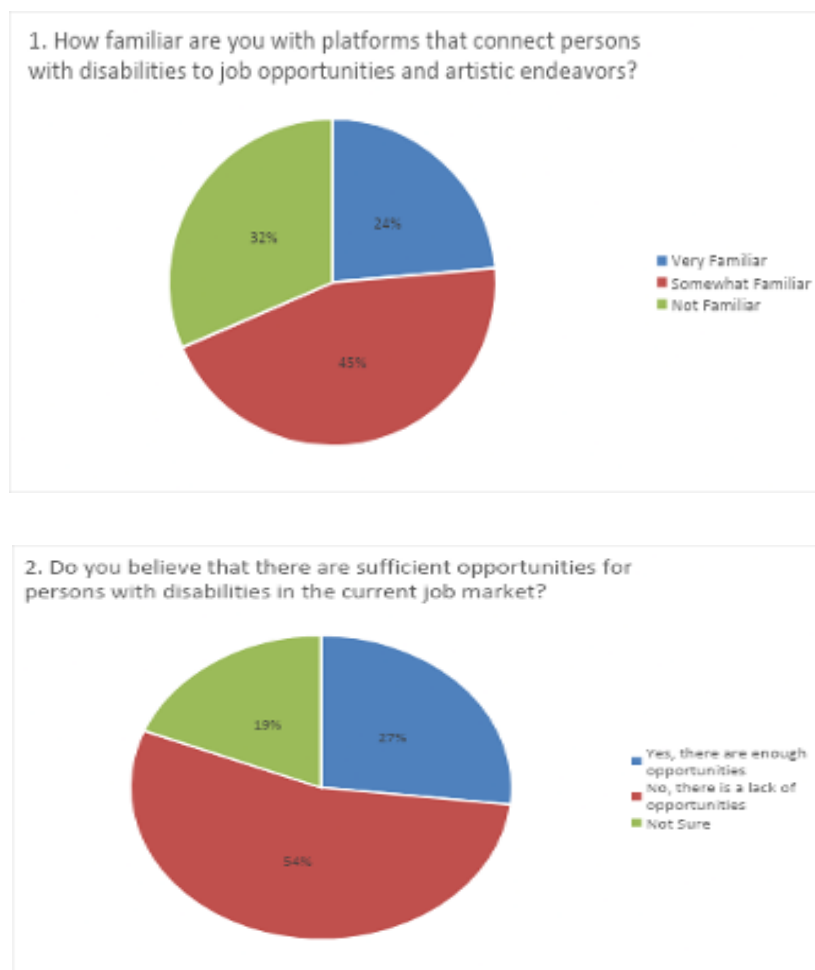
²⁶ Sue Olney, 'Inclusion, Work and Wellbeing: Shifting Perceptions of Disability and Employability through the National Disability Insurance Scheme' in Mhairi Cowden and Claire McCullagh (eds), *Disability and Social Change: Australia in the 21st Century* (Palgrave Macmillan 2021)

It discusses the benefits of employment for people with disabilities, employment trends, the economic case for the NDIS, challenges in supporting employment, and stakeholders involved. Despite the NDIS's crucial role in changing perceptions and promoting employment, challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic require coordinated efforts and strategies to ensure inclusion in the workforce.

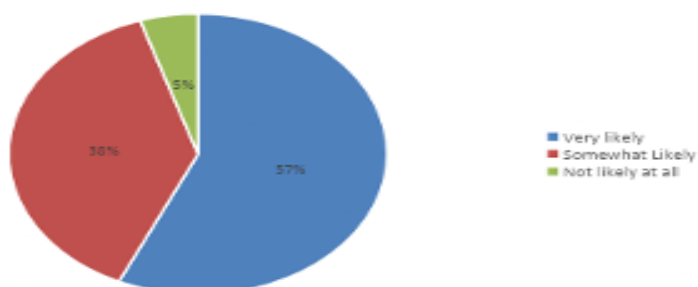
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study contains an empirical research approach, collecting and analysing primary data through surveys. Questionnaires were distributed to gather firsthand information from potential users on the perceived need, challenges, and priorities for an online platform connecting people with disabilities to employment opportunities. The empirical data were systematically analysed to derive insights that informed the development of Atypical Advantage's strategies and operations.

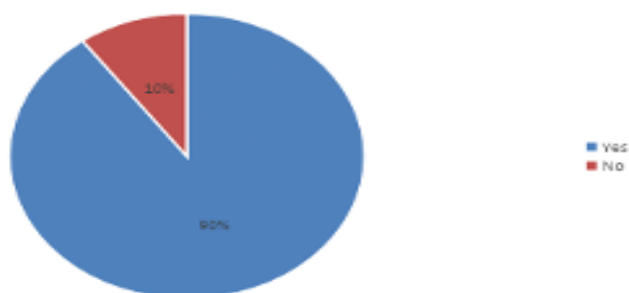
DATA ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESPONSES



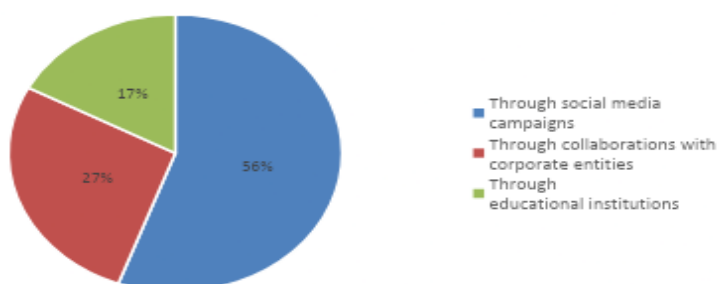
3. If you were a person with a disability, how likely would you be to use an online platform like 'Atypical Advantage' for job searches or showcasing artistic talents?



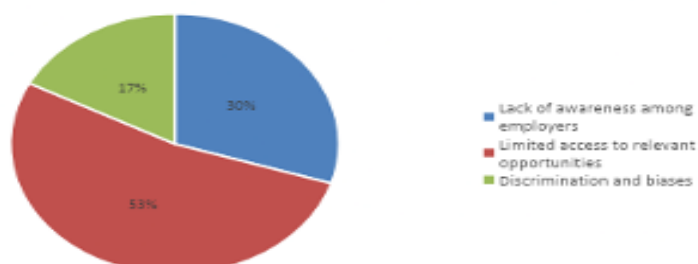
4. Would you consider your workplace or the company you own to actively participate in hiring individuals with disabilities through dedicated platforms?

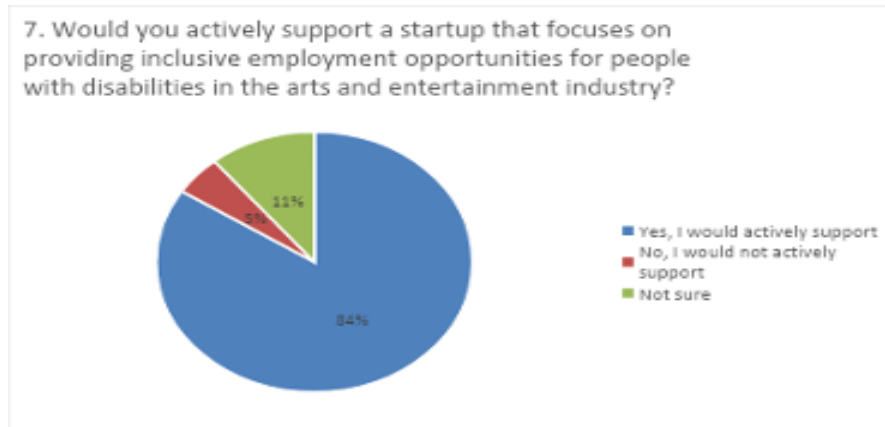


5. How do you think awareness about platforms like 'Atypical Advantage' can be increased?



6. What do you believe are the main challenges faced by persons with disabilities in securing employment or showcasing their talents?





In summary, the results indicate a strong perceived need and demand for an online inclusive hiring platform like Atypical Advantage. Respondents recognise gaps and challenges disabled job seekers face, and most would actively use and promote such a platform. The data highlights key priorities, such as building trust and partnerships, increasing awareness, and combating stigma, to drive success.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Familiarity and Perceived Opportunities: The finding that most respondents (63%) were somewhat or very familiar with platforms connecting disabled individuals to job and career opportunities suggests an existing awareness and interest in such initiatives. However, the 37% who reported no familiarity at all indicates that there is still a need to increase broader public awareness. Additionally, the overwhelming sentiment that there is a lack of sufficient opportunities for disabled persons (70%) underscores the persistent employment gap and the critical role that Atypical Advantage can play in bridging this divide.

User Demand and Likelihood of Use: The survey data points to a strong user demand for Atypical Advantage's services, with 65% of respondents stating they would be very likely to personally use the platform, and another 23% somewhat likely. This high level of user interest demonstrates the platform's potential to attract and engage a sizable user base of disabled job seekers. The finding also suggests that Atypical Advantage is well-aligned with the needs and aspirations of its target audience.

Workplace Inclusiveness and Awareness Strategies: While 62% of respondents reported that their workplaces actively participate in hiring disabled individuals, the remaining 38% who said no or were unsure highlight the need for continued efforts to promote disability

inclusion in the corporate sector. The preferred awareness strategies, such as collaborating with companies (41%) and leveraging social media (32%), provide valuable guidance for Atypical Advantage's outreach and marketing efforts to effectively reach both job seekers and employers.

Challenges and Barriers: The survey responses identify several key challenges faced by disabled individuals in the job market, including limited opportunities, insufficient employer awareness, and persistent discrimination and biases.²⁷ These findings align with the extant literature on disability employment, underscoring the persistent barriers that Atypical Advantage aims to address through its innovative platform. Additionally, the perceived barriers to the platform's success, such as a lack of trust and inadequate promotion/marketing, offer important considerations for the startup's strategies to build credibility and drive awareness.

Recommendation and Support Likelihood: The overwhelming majority of respondents (76%) indicated they would highly recommend Atypical Advantage to others, and 82% stated they would actively support a similar inclusive employment startup, suggesting a strong positive sentiment and endorsement for the platform's mission and potential impact. This level of support and advocacy could prove invaluable for Atypical Advantage in its efforts to grow its user base and garner broader recognition and backing.

The survey findings demonstrate a clear demand and need for the inclusive employment opportunities that Atypical Advantage aims to provide.²⁸ The insights into user perspectives, workplace inclusiveness, preferred strategies, and perceived challenges and barriers offer valuable guidance for the startup to tailor its approach, address key pain points, and maximise its impact in empowering individuals with disabilities in the job market.

²⁷ Bhavya Sharma, 'Disability discrimination in Indian workplaces: A sad reality' *Financial Express* (26 September 2022) <<https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/disability-discrimination-in-indian-workplaces-a-sad-reality/2691295/>> accessed 24 July 2025

²⁸ Orchie Bandyopadhyay, 'Disabled Workers in India: Lifting the Barriers' (*British Safety Council*, 05 August 2022) <<https://www.britsafe.in/safety-management-news/2022/disabled-workers-in-india-lifting-the-barriers>> accessed 24 July 2025

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The study confirms a significant demand for inclusive hiring platforms, with over 65% of respondents expressing strong intent to use Atypical Advantage. This finding supports earlier research emphasising the structural exclusion of persons with disabilities from mainstream labour markets. The analysis also reveals that while awareness of disability employment initiatives exists, nearly 37% of respondents remain unfamiliar, indicating a persistent information gap. Moreover, survey data align with prior studies that employers' misconceptions and biases continue to act as barriers despite the demonstrated capabilities of disabled workers. Another key finding is that flexible work arrangements and accommodations significantly influence employability and job satisfaction, echoing global research trends. Collectively, the evidence positions Atypical Advantage as a practical intervention capable of bridging systemic gaps, though its long-term impact will depend on sustained awareness campaigns, employer sensitisation, and institutional support.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The Disability Act of 1995's legislative framework and the employment of individuals with disabilities were groundbreaking for a number of reasons. The Act acknowledged the necessity of economic empowerment for individuals with disabilities and included multiple provisions to that effect. Among the important points were:

- Sections 32 and 40 deal with identifying positions that can be set aside for people with disabilities and positions to be reserved in programs aimed at reducing poverty, respectively.
- Section 41 provides employers with incentives to guarantee that five percent of their workforce is made up of individuals with disabilities.

The Act also makes provisions for nondiscrimination, relaxations, affirmative action, accessibility, etc., in a number of its clauses. The New Bill on Disability includes a provision that addresses the long-standing desire of the disability community to increase employment reservations for individuals with mental illness, autism, multiple impairments, and intellectual impairment.

The Indian government ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) in 2007. According to the Convention, member states must protect the inherent dignity of all disabled people and endeavour to ensure that they can all fully and equally exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This entails promoting employment opportunities for those with disabilities so they can advance in their careers without encountering discrimination.

According to Article 27 of the CRPD, States Parties must acknowledge that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else when it comes to working; this includes the right to the chance to earn a living through employment that is freely chosen or accepted in a job market and workplace that is accessible, inclusive, and open to people with disabilities. And that by taking the necessary actions, including passing legislation, States Parties shall protect and advance the realisation of the right to work, including for individuals who become disabled while holding down a job.

It is now required to evaluate all of our laws, policies, and programs in light of the word and spirit of the CRPD, once it was ratified.²⁹ All programs should incorporate equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. As we proceed, the emphasis needs to be on implementing the CRPD's mandates in both the public and private domains.

In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals were ratified by all UN members, including India, in September 2015. In these goals, world leaders committed to 'leave no one behind' in terms of development and decided to eradicate poverty and attain full employment by 2030. Among the 17 objectives are the following:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty for all people worldwide by 2030.

Goal 8: Obtain full and productive employment, decent work, and fair compensation for labour of equal worth for all men and women by 2030, including youth and anyone with disabilities.

²⁹ Michiko Miyamoto and Ulaç Demirag, 'India, disability inclusion and the power of 'by'' *The Hindu* (04 December 2023) <<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/india-disability-inclusion-and-the-power-of-by/article67601986.ece>> accessed 24 July 2025

The country cannot afford to leave behind a sizable proportion of individuals with disabilities if it is to attain full employment and the complete eradication of poverty by 2030. It is urgently necessary to implement structural change so that individuals with disabilities are included in the country's goals and initiatives.³⁰ There are several implementation gaps in different programs that call for immediate attention. It takes a coordinated effort to find these holes and close them. It is necessary to address the different job hurdles and launch targeted programs.

REASONS FOR SELECTING ATYPICAL ADVANTAGE AS A STARTUP

Identifies a Key Societal Concern: It is a common observation all around that job seekers with disabilities have unemployment rates much higher than the rest of the population. Atypical Benefit puts all its effort into facilitating the breaking of paradigm shifts that will reduce this variance and enhance the inclusion of the group of labour groups that are very frequently underutilised.

Transformation through Modern Technology: The approach of this platform model incorporates vital features like targeted networking, unique skills profiles, and personalised suggestions into the job market's barriers to make it more accessible, and brings in new contacts.

Universal Solution with Mass Acceptance: The startup implements a strategy that is economically sustainable and takes into consideration the incentives that are compatible with the market. Rather than going to the charity roulette or giving in to goodwill, it brings employers and employees equal negotiating value to the centre of the process. This empowerment, if actualised, grants it a room for sustainability and scalability, which is rare with the disability non-profits that lack this very thing.

Founders' Personal Experiential Perspectives: The founders of the startup faced difficulties themselves in the labour market and vision disability. This is their zeal for unleashing their own power when they gain proximity.

³⁰ Veena Gopalakrishnan et al., 'Disability Diversity in the Indian Workplace' (*International Bar Association*, 21 September 2023)

<<https://www.ibanet.org/disability-diversity-indian-workplace>> accessed 24 July 2025

Atypical Advantage as a Calling Case: The role and attributes of business schools and institutions are recently shifting to promoting social entrepreneurship and innovation for collective prosperity, and this tryout of enterprise education integrates these objectives by using cases. The company is a lucrative one that also acts as a catalyst for social and economic ability and development of disadvantaged groups.

DIFFICULTIES FACED LAUNCHING ATYPICAL ADVANTAGE

Raising Awareness and Overcoming Stigma: Significant societal stigma and misconceptions about disability may have made it difficult to attract buy-in from both job seekers and potential employer partners in the platform's early days. Considerable effort was likely needed for public outreach and awareness-building.

Demonstrating Value Proposition to Investors and Partners: As primarily a social impact startup aiming to empower a historically marginalised group in the labour market, Atypical Advantage had to clearly demonstrate and quantify the value proposition to earn support from funders, accelerator programs, etc. Convincing data or models were likely needed.

Finding and Vetting Disabled Candidates: The startup would have had to expend significant effort connecting with and vetting individual job seekers with different backgrounds, skills, and disabilities to build up a critical mass of talent to attract employers. This networking and community-building early on was likely grindingly slow and incremental.

Addressing Accessibility Challenges: As a platform aiming to serve people with diverse physical/mental disabilities, ensuring a fully accessible, user-friendly, understandable interface design from Day 1 was likely costly and difficult, yet critical. Extensive user testing was probably indispensable.

Earning Initial Employer Partners: Despite strong social motivation, the platform would still have had to overcome inertia and scepticism from employers used to traditional hiring approaches to demonstrate disabled candidates' competencies and the business benefits, requiring steadfast yet nuanced persuasion.

Achieving Scale and Liquidity: Building up both supply and demand sides simultaneously to achieve a self-sustaining job matching marketplace with adequate choice and transaction volumes was likely the overall monumental bootstrap challenge. Atypical Advantaged powered through in its early developing phases.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

Specifically, the target of the study report is the Atypical Advantage startup, which works in a particular territory. Exploration of its use outside of the current cultural and economic environment can be an important step towards obtaining greater knowledge.

It is possible that the data of the study's survey reflected only a certain demographic group or that it was based on a small sample. We can increase the sample size and ensure that participants cover a wider range of handicap types, age groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds to more positively affect the research results.

The report provides a concise summary of the platform's startup and the short use period, and a brief analysis of this data. Using longitudinal data to determine the sustainability, the goods and their users' reach, and the long-term performance of our platform can bring in very strong results.

Although the valuable responses of the respondents from the study have biases of self-reporting, and the limitations of the responses not being able to accurately represent the reality of ensuring the lives of people living with disabilities. Utilising 2nd-hand data with other objective methods or open interviews will enrich the results' reliability.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

1. Atypical Advantage and other disability employment platforms' scaling will be investigated at local and foreign levels to receive an insight into what models are scalable, what the best practices and what factors drive success.
2. Carrying out interviews or studies with atypical advantages adds a span of further level of accomplishment. On the other hand, it gives a view of different goals, encounters, and challenges of the employers with the platform. With that, the

transformation toward the creation of more comparable and successful relations with the employers could be done.

3. Final mathematical evaluation of Atypical Advantage platform's interventions through such as incomes, employment outcomes, job retention rates, and improvements of the living standards. For individuals with disabilities will add a favourable factor to the evidence-based data, and hence add credence to its effectiveness.
4. Researching how disabilities intersect with characteristics like gender, colour, or social status, investigating the ways these intersections influence or contribute to job prospects and outcomes of people already employed, can be a source of necessary data for developing common and fair practices.
5. The chance will be open to discover how Atypical Advantage functionalities perform and intersect with the existing disability employment context legalism. This may provide ideas on how to make the setting enabling and supportive.
6. Investigating the factors that strengthen or interfere with the application of Atypical Advantage (AA) in different environments would contribute to strategies for scalability and replication of the platform, which helps to extend the influence of the platform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen Employer Sensitisation: Conduct structured disability awareness training, drawing on best practices from ILO and OECD models.

Policy Integration: Collaborate with government bodies to align with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and secure incentives for inclusive hiring.

Expand Accessibility Features: Continue improving platform accessibility for varied disabilities, including cognitive and psychological impairments.

Promote Workplace Flexibility: Encourage remote work, flexible hours, and assistive technologies, shown to enhance productivity and satisfaction.

Scale Collaborations: Build strategic partnerships with corporates, industry associations, and international organisations for sustainable scaling.

Monitor and Evaluate: Establish longitudinal studies to measure employment outcomes, job retention, and economic independence for platform users.

CONCLUSION

Through its cutting-edge online platform, Atypical Advantage, a social impact firm, is empowering people with disabilities and establishing the norm for inclusive employment possibilities. The empirical study's results demonstrate a strong perceived need and demand for this kind of platform, underscoring the significance of Atypical Advantage's objective to bridge the gap between businesses and wonderfully challenged individuals. Despite the enormous challenges it experienced in the beginning, Atypical Advantage is a bright example of diversity and the transformational power of social entrepreneurship. Supported by theoretical and legal foundations, the startup's tech-enabled, market-driven strategy seeks to level the playing field by elevating skill and commitment above social prejudices. As Atypical Advantage expands, it provides a model for other social enterprises that aim to promote inclusion and significant change for individuals with disabilities. Its path has yielded insights and lessons that can guide and inspire similar programs globally, helping to create a more equal future where everyone can reach their full potential.