



Barriers and Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in the Province of Laguna: Heightened Implementation of Republic Act No. 10524

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Abstract

This study investigates the barriers and employment opportunities for PWDs in Laguna, a decade after the implementation of R.A. No. 10524, which mandates that government organizations reserve at least 1% of their total positions for PWDs. However, despite the legal framework, many challenges persist in the employment sector for PWDs. The aim is to understand the current situation and identify areas for improvement to promote a more inclusive work environment. The objectives include measuring the perceived level of barriers and the perceived level of employment opportunities across several job categories, with an emphasis on the public sector; examining the relationship between demographic factors and the barriers they encounter; and examining the relationship between barriers and employment opportunities for PWDs across various job categories, including promotion opportunities. This research employed a descriptive-correlational design and administered a survey to 84 respondents. The survey assessed the perceived physical, social, and attitudinal barriers, as well as employment opportunities, in managerial, professional, clerical, technical, service, sales, and elementary roles. Statistical treatment included Pearson correlations to assess relationships among demographics, perceived job opportunities, barriers, and employment opportunities. The study registered a strong positive correlation between perceived physical and social barriers and promotion opportunities. Furthermore, a significant moderate positive correlation was also found between attitudinal barriers and opportunities for promotion. It is therefore concluded that demographic factors do not significantly affect employment opportunities for PWDs; by contrast, physical, social, and attitudinal barriers significantly influence their perceptions of promotion opportunities.

Keywords: *Employment Opportunities for PWDs, Reasonable Accommodation, Promotion Opportunities for Employees with Disabilities*

INTRODUCTION

This study is guided by the Social Model of Disability, which posits that disability is not about a person's limitations but rather a result of the interaction between individuals with impairments and an environment filled with social, institutional, and physical barriers (Corbière et al., 2017; Sellovoll, 2016). The research shifts the focus from the individual's limitations to societal obstacles that hinder full participation in the labor market by viewing disability through this lens. This study examines the influence of demographic profiles and perceived physical, social, and attitudinal barriers on the diverse employment and promotion opportunities available to persons with disabilities in Laguna.

According to the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2020), the disability prevalence in the Philippines is 12%, and Filipinos aged 15 years and older have a severe disability. Data shows that females are more likely to experience disabilities than males, older adults, and those with lower levels of education (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). The results show that

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12% of people with extensive disabilities have previously been employed, and 10% have not been employed before. The study found that 48% of individuals with moderate disabilities have ever worked, significantly higher than those with severe disabilities, but 40% have never worked.

In the Philippine context, the drive for retention is consistent across sectors. [Molina et al. \(2025\)](#) found that career advancement is a primary driver of retention in the private IT industry, a finding echoed in the public sector by [Errua et al. \(2025\)](#), who found that government employees' decision to stay is strongly correlated with opportunities for promotion. For PWDs in Laguna, this suggests that the lack of career growth is a critical risk factor for attrition. While recent local studies have examined job satisfaction and retention among various professionals, such as workers in the IT industry ([Molina et al., 2025](#)), there remains a scarcity of research specifically focusing on the structural and physical friction points faced by persons with disabilities in provincial industrial hubs like Laguna.

According to [de Luna \(2023\)](#), assessing internal communication rules is vital to ensuring that all members of an organization clearly understand guidelines. In the context of PWD employment, the lack of clear communication about reasonable accommodation policies often constitutes a systemic attitudinal barrier. To create a truly accessible society, we must move beyond our current understanding of disability. Working together with people with disabilities is critical to breaking down the walls that hinder them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Barriers to employment are not limited to physical infrastructure. [Gamboa et al. \(2024\)](#) identified psychological and attitudinal barriers, such as personal bias and anxiety, as significant hurdles to effective interaction in government workplaces. These findings parallel the experiences of PWDs, in which negative perceptions among colleagues and social isolation often serve as invisible barriers that hinder professional advancement.

[Triana et al. \(2021\)](#) offer a straightforward definition of discrimination: denying individuals equal treatment solely because of their group affiliation. This discrimination can manifest in two ways: statistical and taste-based. Statistical discrimination occurs when incomplete information leads employers to make assumptions about a person's productivity based on their group membership, potentially hindering their employment prospects ([Dibben et al., 2022](#)). Taste-based discrimination, as referenced in [Dibben et al. \(2022\)](#), arises from employer bias or prejudice, regardless of an individual's actual productivity.

Economists have developed various models to analyze how individuals are positioned relative to opportunities to achieve different outcomes. These models also explore the concept of compensation for individuals who face limited opportunities ([Roemer & Trannoy, 2016](#)). [Wade \(2002\)](#) highlights that despite facing discrimination on various levels, many people with significant disabilities encounter persistent obstacles related to sexuality across different environments. Even though some individuals have built and maintained intimate relationships, social isolation remains a challenge for many within their communities.

Research by [Mina \(2013\)](#) reveals a difference in occupations between people with impairments in rural and urban areas. In rural Batangas, a notable portion of the population works as laborers, farmers, or service workers. Conversely, technicians and associate professionals are the most common occupations for people with functional limitations in Metro Manila, followed by laborers. Self-employment is also prevalent among individuals with disabling conditions in both regions ([Mina, 2013](#); [De Luna-Narido & Tacadao, 2016](#)).

While R.A. 10524 provides a critical legal framework, its effectiveness is consistently undermined by a complex interplay of non-legal systemic barriers. These obstacles, which are both attitudinal and structural, pose a greater challenge than a simple lack of policy. Research indicates

that social stigma and prejudice against PWDs remain prevalent in the workplace (Ameri & Kurtzberg, 2024; Cruz et al., 2024).

A study on Filipino employers' attitudes toward hiring PWDs found that a key factor in the low employment rate is employers' reluctance and unwillingness to hire PWDs (Gatchalian et al., 2014). The perception that disability might impede job performance is a common fear among managers (Lindsay et al., 2018). This bias leads to discrimination during the hiring process. It can result in the relegation of PWDs to "menial tasks" or positions in the informal economy, even those with advanced degrees (Cruz et al., 2024).

A further study by TESDA (2020), citing Kono, highlights that many wheelchair users find work in sheltered workshops. On the other hand, these workshops often employ people with various disabilities. Some hard-of-hearing individuals may find work in fast food kitchens, while those with a visual disability might be limited to careers in massage or music therapy. The required skill sets vary depending on the disability (De Luna-Narido & Tacadao, 2016). For instance, deaf or hard-of-hearing fast-food workers might need cooking or baking skills. Additionally, those with a psychosocial or orthopedic disability could benefit from training in customer service, entrepreneurship, social media marketing, or digital arts. Agricultural careers could also be a viable option.

Medalla and Medalla (2018) present a compelling case study published in the International Forum. The paper examines the effectiveness of targeted training programs in improving employment opportunities and professional success for individuals with disabilities. The authors discussed how structured training arms participants with important skills and also promotes greater workplace inclusion and acceptance. The findings highlight the role of this kind of program in transforming the workplace landscape and bridging the employment gap for individuals with disabilities.

Laguna et al. (2020) found that despite persistent stigma and employer reluctance, largely driven by misconceptions about performance, hiring persons with disabilities leads to positive outcomes for managers, customers, and organizations by enhancing productivity, loyalty, workplace safety, and an inclusive company image. Another study on the employment inclusion of individuals with impairments was conducted by Imbong and Pielago (2021). Decent work coupled with productive employment, when provided with the necessary support and opportunities, is essential to ensuring that individuals with disabilities can participate fully and equitably in society, as noted by Imbong and Pielago (2021). Therefore, it emphasizes the international commitment to disability rights and inclusion.

The CRPD, specifically Article 27, emphasizes equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities (O'Reilly, 2007). The findings are consistent with previous research on the job inclusion of individuals with functional challenges. For instance, the study's finding that individuals with disabilities need social support in the workplace is consistent with Nevala et al. (2015), who found that social support is a key facilitator of employment among individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the study's finding that people affected by disabilities need to take control of their jobs is supported by Ameri et al. (2018), who found that individuals with impairments are more likely to be employed when they can access capacity development activities.

A qualitative study by Sellevoll (2016) suggests that applicants with disabilities other than apparent are hesitant to share their disability with hiring managers. The research indicates that, within the social approach, individuals seek employment in environments with little room for disability (Sellevoll, 2016). Chan et al. (2010) highlight that employer concerns regarding productivity and accommodation costs are significant predictors of hiring decisions. The emotional dimension of exclusion further complicates this; Copeland et al. (2010) found that employers' cognitive and affective reactions can override policy mandates, creating an invisible attitudinal wall

that prevents PWDs from entering the workplace.

The findings of [Anand and Sevak \(2017\)](#) revealed that the availability of reasonable accommodation provides a crucial link in the employment of people with various conditions. Additionally, the researchers suggest that providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace, including transportation assistance, a personal care attendant, and adaptable work arrangements, is associated with a greater likelihood of employment. Lastly, [Anand and Sevak \(2017\)](#) stated that persons with poor health conditions and those with orthopedic impairments have a greater inclination to perceive an inaccessible work environment as a barrier, but have a lesser inclination to perceive that they are provided with reasonable accommodations in their present or recent job.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Model of Disability, which distinguishes between impairment (the functional limitation) and disability (the loss or limitation of opportunities caused by social and environmental hurdles). This model aligns with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), emphasizing that equal employment and provision of reasonable accommodation are matters of rights rather than charity ([O'Reily, 2007](#)).

In this research, the model is used to analyze how external factors, such as inaccessible transport or employer prejudice, act as the primary determinants of career progression. By applying this lens, we examine whether the 1% employment quota mandated by R.A. No. 10524 is being undermined by systemic barriers that prevent PWDs from moving beyond entry-level roles into managerial positions.

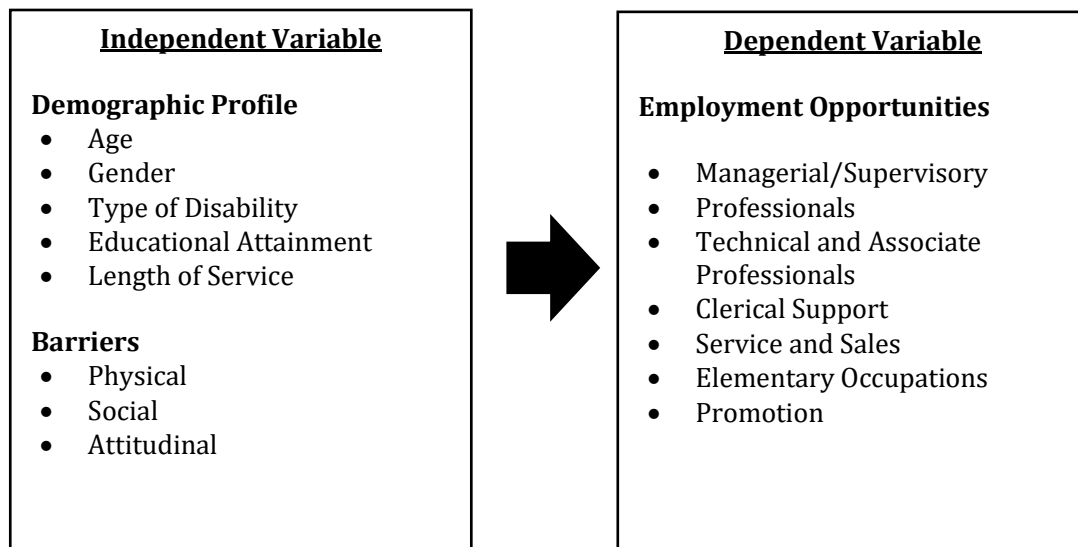


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher developed a self-designed questionnaire tailored to the local industrial context of Laguna; existing instruments did not adequately capture the nuances of R.A. 10524's implementation. To ensure content validity, the draft underwent rigorous pilot testing with a small group of employed PWDs, enabling refinements to clarity and quality. The study employed a combination of random and snowball sampling to reach a diverse sample of respondents across the public and private sectors. While the approach facilitated access to a historically underrepresented population, the researcher acknowledges that the use of these sampling methods introduces selection bias. This may result in a sample that over-represents individuals within certain social or professional networks, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings to the broader PWD

population in Laguna.

This study employed quantitative methods to describe the employment landscape for people with disabilities and to identify available job opportunities. The researcher used a descriptive method to analyze the collected data, assess the potential impact of different legal instruments on enhancing the job inclusion of qualified individuals with functional limitations, and examine the relationships among the variables selected for this important endeavor. The researcher used SPSS to conduct a correlational analysis to determine the degree of association between the independent and dependent variables. SPSS is a widely used statistical tool in analyzing correlations between variables, according to [Rahman and Muktadir \(2021\)](#).

The research locale was limited to workers with disabilities in the province of Laguna who acquired their disabilities or impairments before or during their employment within their respective units, divisions, or departments. The study included 84 respondents from various cities and municipalities in the province of Laguna, with a greater focus on the public sector. The researcher employed random and snowball sampling to address delays in the approval of the study's conduct across several local government units. The researcher also applied appropriate statistical methods throughout the research. The descriptive analyses provide insights into the demographic profile, perceived obstacles, and perceived job options among the respondents.

The researchers used a self-made questionnaire due to the unavailability of appropriate questionnaires from previous studies and a 4-point Likert Scale to avoid a neutral option ([Jebb et al, 2021](#)). After developing the questionnaire, the researcher tested it with several employed individuals with disabilities to ensure it was clear and easy to understand. Once necessary revisions were made, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the final sample of participants.

A questionnaire designed by the researcher facilitated data collection for this research. In the first part of the questionnaire, the subjects answered questions about their information and background. The second part consists of self-made questions about the barriers encountered by applicants and employees with disabilities, as well as other relevant queries. The last part consists of questions about employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The research utilized a Likert scale, a common tool for gauging opinions or attitudes ([Benzon, 2022](#); [De Rezende & De Medeiros, 2022](#)). The following scale presents respondents with statements and asks them to indicate their level of agreement.

Table 1. Likert Scale

Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.25 - 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very Large Extent Very High
3	2.50 - 3.24	Agree	Large Extent High
2	1.75 - 2.49	Disagree	Little Extent Low
1	1.00 - 1.74	Strongly Disagree	Very Little Extent Very Low

The validity of the self-made questionnaire was addressed by testing it on a small group before the main study began. The pilot testing allowed the researcher to get feedback on the clarity and ease of understanding of the questions. The 4-point Likert scale was used to avoid a neutral option. This forces the respondent to lean toward either agreement or disagreement, which can improve data consistency and reduce ambiguity in responses.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that while there is diversity in the demographic characteristics and types of disabilities among the respondents, they face moderate levels of barriers across physical, social, and attitudinal domains. The results revealed limited to weak relationships between most

demographic factors and perceived job options for individuals with significant disabilities. However, a moderate negative correlation between length of service and perceived opportunity in service and sales warrants further investigation.

Physical, social, and attitudinal barriers are significantly associated with managerial/supervisory roles and promotion opportunities. These findings highlight the need to address obstacles and challenges encountered by people with functional limitations in the workplace to enhance their access to higher-level positions. The data suggest that perceived physical barriers are most strongly associated with fewer perceived opportunities in managerial/supervisory, service and sales, and elementary occupations. Further study is needed to understand the hindrances encountered by workers with disabilities in different job categories.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Study Respondents

Indicator	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	20–30	12	14.3%
	31–40	22	26.2%
	41–50	35	41.6%
	51–60	14	16.7%
	61 and above	1	1.2%
Gender	Female	46	54.8%
	Male	38	45.2%
Disability	Physical	43	51.1%
	Visual	10	11.9%
	Psychosocial	8	9.5%
	Cancer	7	8.3%
	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	5	6.0%
	Speech and Language	5	6.0%
	Intellectual	3	3.6%
	Mental	2	2.4%
	Rare Disease	1	1.2%
	Educational Attainment	College Degree	46
High School Graduate		17	20.2%
Vocational		8	9.5%
College Level		6	7.1%
Elementary Graduate		3	3.6%
College Student		1	1.2%
Doctorate Degree		1	1.2%
Master's Degree		1	1.2%
N/A		1	1.2%
Length of Service	1–3 years	34	40.5%
	4–7 years	21	25.0%
	8–11 years	13	15.5%
	16 years and above	12	14.3%
	12–15 years	4	4.8%

The data indicate that the workforce is primarily composed of middle-aged adults (41-50 age bracket), which suggests a population with significant life experience but perhaps a later entry into formal employment. The high concentration of college graduates (54.8%) among the respondents

demonstrates that unemployment is not necessarily due to a lack of qualifications, but rather to structural barriers identified later in the study.

Table 3 shows the level of hindrances affecting people with functional limitations. The overall mean of 1.94 concludes that respondents encounter low physical barriers. While the data suggest that the respondents' workplaces may have addressed some physical barriers, there is still room for improvement, especially in the accessibility of transportation systems to and from work, particularly for workers using wheelchairs and similar devices.

Sellevoll (2016) stated in his study that respondents had limited physical needs, and that a study of people with more complex physical disabilities that also require more extensive adaptations would provide more valuable, in-depth knowledge. Interestingly, the result of the study by Anand and Zebak (2017) implies that 1/3 of unemployed individuals affected by impairments report job obstacles, to wit: inaccessible workplaces and transportation systems.

Table 3. Level of Physical Barriers Encountered by the Respondents

Physical Barriers as a PWD I/I was not...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. Have difficulty getting to and from my work	2.05	0.94	Low
2. Have difficulty getting around in my workplace	2.07	1.01	Low
3. Have difficulty using the equipment or tools needed for my job	1.90	0.94	Low
4. Not provided with a reasonable accommodation during the hiring process	1.89	0.94	Low
5. Not provided with a reasonable accommodation to effectively perform my tasks	1.79	0.91	Low
Overall Mean	1.94		Low

Table 4 presents figures on the level of social obstacles encountered by individuals with limitations in the work environment. The table summarizes respondents' experiences across five specific social barriers, providing mean scores, standard deviations, and verbal interpretations based on a predefined range.

The overall mean score of 1.88 concludes that the respondents do not perceive a high level of social barrier in their workplace. The low verbal interpretation further indicates a general disagreement with significant social barriers. It highlights that many employees with disabilities report receiving adequate workplace accommodations, which can significantly reduce perceived social barriers and enhance their integration and satisfaction at work (Anand & Zebak, 2017).

Table 4. Level of Social Barriers Encountered by the Respondents

Social Barriers As a PWD, I/I am...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. Have experienced discrimination or harassment during my job application	1.90	1.09	Low
2. Have experienced discrimination or harassment at work	1.89	1.02	Low
3. Do not feel that my colleagues are supportive of me	1.81	0.91	Low

4. Do not feel that I have the same opportunity for advancement as my colleagues w/o disabilities	2.00	1.02	Low
5. Socially isolated and excluded at work	1.77	0.95	Low
Overall Mean	1.88		Low

Table 5 presents data on respondents' perceived degree of attitudinal barriers, measured using the mean and standard deviation. The overall mean score is 1.87, indicating that the respondents perceived a low level of barriers encountered in the attitudinal domain. It only denotes that most of the respondents did not experience discrimination, negative attitudes, and prejudice at work because of disability. The majority of the respondents perceived that their work environment does not harbor attitudes that are detrimental to their well-being as employees with various disabilities.

Table 5. Level of Attitudinal Barriers Encountered by the Respondents

Attitudinal Barriers as a PWD my/I...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. Colleagues/supervisors lack awareness and understanding of disability	1.78	1.04	Low
2. Colleagues/supervisors have low expectations of employees w/ disabilities	1.83	1.04	Low
3. Feel that I was not treated fairly or equally at work	1.80	0.94	Low
4. Was not given the same opportunities at work as my colleagues w/o disabilities	1.87	1.01	Low
5. Feel that most of the people I encountered have negative impressions of PWDs	2.08	0.99	Low
Overall Mean	1.87		Low

Table 6 illustrates the employment options available to individuals with functional limitations in managerial/supervisory roles. The respondents agree that there are opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities in managerial or supervisory positions ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.10$). The respondents also agree ($M=2.71$, $SD=1.06$) that companies and government agencies in the counties actively seek applicants with impairments for leadership roles.

However, the respondents disagree that their disability prevented them from obtaining a leadership position in their respective agencies. Furthermore, the respondents are confident ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.07$) that their ability is enough to succeed in a managerial/supervisory position. Additionally, there is a slightly low level of agreement ($M=2.45$, $SD=1.08$), suggesting that the majority of respondents do not perceive widespread discrimination against people with disabilities in the recruitment of managerial/supervisory roles.

The average mean score of 2.71 infers a positive outlook for qualified individuals with disabilities seeking managerial or supervisory positions in Laguna. The high mean scores indicate a general agreement that companies and government agencies are actively seeking qualified people with disabilities for leadership roles. Studies have shown that companies and government agencies are recognizing the value of hiring persons with disabilities for leadership roles, as in the case of Genashtim, its online learning solutions, and online support service's Hiring Manager, IT-Technical Supervisor, Customer Relations Executive, and Production Supervisor are all persons with disabilities (TESDA, 2020).

Table 6. Level of Employment Opportunities for the Respondents in terms of Managerial/Supervisory Posts

Managerial/Supervisory	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. There are opportunities for qualified PWDs to hold managerial/supervisory positions	2.94	1.10	High
2. Companies/government agencies in Laguna actively seek qualified PWDs for leadership roles	2.71	1.06	High
3. Disability has hindered me from obtaining a managerial or supervisory position	2.25	1.11	Low
4. I feel confident in my ability to succeed in a managerial or supervisory position	3.22	1.07	High
5. Discrimination against PWDs in managerial/supervisory Recruitment is prevalent in Laguna	2.45	1.08	Low
Overall Mean	2.71		High

Table 7 indicates the degree of agreement among professionals on employment options for individuals with functional limitations. There is a high agreement ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.06$) showing the availability of professional career paths for people with disabilities. The respondent's answer indicates a general agreement that access to professional training and development programs is readily available for persons with disabilities ($M=2.64$, $SD=0.99$).

There is also general agreement that the salaries and benefits offered to professionals with disabilities are the same as those offered to professionals without disabilities ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.07$). However, the respondents disagree that prejudice toward professionals with disabilities exists in the workplace ($M=2.43$, $SD=1.00$). Lastly, respondents with disabilities disagree ($M=1.93$, $SD=1.06$) that disability would limit their career progression as professionals.

The mean score of 2.55 indicates that opportunities for people with disabilities to be professionals are high. According to [Medalla and Medalla \(2018\)](#), the availability of professional role options for persons with impairments is increasing due to the positive impact of educational and vocational training on marginalized groups, thereby advocating for the broader implementation of proven strategies to promote equal employment access for individuals with disabilities.

Table 7. Level of Employment Opportunities for the Respondents in terms of Professional Jobs

Professionals as a PWD/I...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. There are a variety of professional careers available to qualified PWDs	3.01	1.06	High
2. Access to professional training & development. The program is readily available for PWDs	2.64	0.99	High
3. Salaries & benefits offered to professionals w/ disabilities are comparable to those of non-disabled professionals	2.71	1.07	High
4. Prejudice against professionals with	2.43	1.00	Low

disabilities exists in the workplace			
5. Believe my disability would limit my career advancement as a professional	1.93	1.06	Low
Overall Mean	2.55		High

The data in Table 8 present the perceived availability of job options for people with functional difficulties in clerical support. The respondents agree that there are available opportunities for clerical support roles for people with disabilities (M=2.73, SD=1.01). The respondents also agree that employers actively consider individuals with disabilities for this position (M = 2.60, SD = 0.97).

On the other hand, respondents disagree that their disability hindered them from getting clerical work (M=1.95, SD=0.99). Moreover, respondent felt confident in their ability to succeed in clerical support (M=2.96, SD=1.10). Furthermore, lastly, there is a positive outlook on career advancement opportunities in clerical support (M=2.99, SD=1.08).

The mean score of 2.64 indicates strong overall agreement on the perceived level of opportunities for persons with disabilities in clerical support jobs. There are many clerical support roles available to people with disabilities in contact centers and other PWD-friendly businesses across the country, according to [TESDA \(2020\)](#).

Table 8. Level of Employment Opportunities for the Respondents in terms of Clerical Support

Clerical Support as a PWD, I believe/I...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. There is a sufficient clerical support job opening available for PWDs in Laguna	2.73	1.01	High
2. Employers actively consider qualified PWDs for clerical support positions	2.60	0.97	High
3. Disability has hindered me from obtaining clerical work	1.95	0.99	Low
4. Feel confident in my ability to succeed and excel in a clerical support role	2.96	1.10	High
5. Believe there are opportunities for career advancement in clerical support for PWDs	2.99	1.08	High
Overall Mean	2.64		High

The data in Table 9 show the perceived level of employment opportunities among respondents in the technical and associate professional categories. The respondents agree (M=2.82, SD=0.97) that a variety of technical and associate professional careers are available for qualified PWDs. There is a high level of agreement among the respondents (M=2.77, SD=0.96) that companies in Laguna provide reasonable accommodations for technicians and associate professionals with disabilities. The respondents also feel relatively comfortable disclosing their disability to potential employers without fear of rejection or discrimination (M=3.21, SD=0.91).

There is also a high perception (M=2.81, SD=1.10) that the skills and qualifications of applicants with disabilities are valued equally to those of applicants without disabilities. On the other hand, the respondents agree (M=2.70, SD=1.13) that limited consciousness and knowledge of disability needs are present among employers. This disconnect is noteworthy: this job requires employers to provide appropriate arrangements for employees affected by impairments, to initiate them themselves, and to be more aware of the needs of workers with disabilities.

The finding indicates that the respondents have a moderately high positive outlook on

employment opportunities as technical and associate professionals, with a mean score of 2.86. [TESDA \(2020\)](#) highlights that technical roles and lower-level professionals accounted for the largest share of employees with disabilities in Metro Manila's urban area (33.6%).

Table 9. Level of Employment Opportunities for the Respondents in terms of Technical and Associate Professionals

Technical & Associate Professionals as a PWD, I believe/I...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. There are a variety of technical and associate professional careers available to qualified PWDs	2.82	0.97	High
2. Companies in Laguna provide reasonable accommodations for technicians and associate professionals with/ disabilities	2.77	0.96	High
3. Feel comfortable disclosing my disability to potential employers	3.21	0.91	High
4. Skills and qualifications of applicants w/ disabilities are valued equally to those of applicants w/o disabilities	2.81	1.10	High
5. There is a lack of awareness and understanding of disability needs among employers	2.70	1.13	High
Overall Mean	2.86		High

Table 10 presents the perceived availability of employment opportunities in service and sales positions for persons with disabilities. There was strong agreement ($M=2.76$, $SD=1.04$) that many service and sales positions are available to people with disabilities. Many respondents believe that employers in Laguna are receptive to hiring them for service and sales roles ($M=2.90$, $SD=0.93$).

There is also a positive outlook on the accessibility and inclusivity of the working environment in service and sales for people with disabilities ($M=2.83$, $SD=1.06$). The data suggest that customers in Laguna are generally accepting and respectful of employees with disabilities in service and sales roles ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.90$). An interesting point is that there is a low perception that a disability has been a barrier to obtaining employment in service and sales positions ($M=2.23$, $SD=1.10$).

Overall, the respondents agree that there is a generally positive outlook for people with disabilities seeking service and sales jobs, with an average mean score of 2.74. [Mina \(2013\)](#) noted that service workers and market sales workers comprise a little more than 20% of the rural area.

Table 10. Level of Employment Opportunities for the Respondents in terms of Service and Sales

Service & Sales as a PWD, I believe...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. There are numerous service sales positions available for PWDs	2.76	1.04	High
2. Employers in Laguna are open to hiring PWDs in service and sales roles	2.90	0.93	High
3. Working environment in service and sales in Laguna is accessible and inclusive for PWDs	2.83	1.06	High

4. Customers in Laguna are generally accepting and respectful of employees with/ disabilities in service and sales roles	2.94	0.90	High
5. Disability has been a barrier to obtaining employment in the service and sales positions	2.23	1.10	Low
Overall Mean	2.74		High

Table 11 illustrates the extent of employment opportunities in terms of elementary occupations as perceived by respondents with various disabilities. The respondents agree that there are enough entry-level jobs available for people with disabilities ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.89$). The respondents, however, disagree that the minimum wage is sufficient to support the necessities of workers with impairments ($M=2.26$, $SD=1.09$).

There was a moderately high level of agreement among the respondents ($M=2.70$, $SD=0.96$) that clear career development pathways are available for employees with disabilities in the province of Laguna. The respondents agreed they feel supported in their elementary occupation roles ($M=2.93$, $SD=0.95$). Lastly, the data reveal a disagreement ($M=2.13$, $SD=1.01$) regarding the presence of stigma against employees with disabilities in elementary occupations.

The overall mean score of 2.60 suggests a generally high perception of opportunity for persons with disabilities in elementary occupations. However, there is variability across aspects of opportunity in this study, such as perceptions of insufficient earnings and a slight perception of stigma among workers in this field, which may warrant a future study. Nevertheless, the positive side of the results and findings is supported by the work of [De Luna-Narido & Tacadao \(2016\)](#), as noted in [TESDA \(2020\)](#), which found that 23% of employed persons with disabilities are in elementary occupations such as hand packers and packing machine operators.

Table 11. Level of Employment Opportunities for the Respondents in terms of Elementary Occupation

Elementary Occupation as a PWD, I believe/I...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. There are enough entry-level job opportunities for PWDs	2.93	0.89	High
2. The minimum wage in Laguna is sufficient to meet the needs of PWDs working in elementary occupations	2.26	1.09	Low
3. There are clear career development pathways available for PWDs in elementary occupations	2.70	0.96	High
4. Feel supported and empowered in my elementary occupation role	2.93	0.95	High
5. There is a stigma against PWDs working in elementary occupations	2.13	1.01	Low
Overall Mean	2.60		High

The data in Table 12 depict individuals' perceived occupational options regarding promotion, given functional limitations. The respondents agreed ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 0.97$) that employers offer equal chances for promotion regardless of disability. They also agree that job performance is the primary factor considered for promotions ($M=3.00$, $SD=0.93$). The highest score ($M=3.23$, $SD=0.91$) indicates that respondents have strong confidence in their ability to be promoted based on merit.

On the other hand, the low score ($M=2.21$, $SD=1.03$) for the last statement indicates a low perception of experiencing workplace discrimination during the promotion process.

The findings infer a generally positive outlook on promotional opportunities as perceived by the respondents ($M=2.77$). The result strengthens the findings of the [TESDA \(2020\)](#) that employees with disabilities experienced firsthand the hardship in landing and maintaining employment. Respondents demonstrated loyalty to their current employment, and this attachment reduces replacement costs and can eventually lead to improved efficiency and a chance for promotion to a leadership role.

Table 12. Level of Employment Opportunities for the Respondents in terms of Promotion

Promotion as a PWD, I believe/I...	Mean	S.D.	Verbal Interpretation
1. Employers in Laguna offer equal opportunities for promotion to employees with/ disabilities	2.77	0.97	High
2. Performance is the main factor considered for promotion, regardless of my disability	3.00	0.93	High
3. Feel confident that I can be promoted to a higher position based on my skills and experience	3.23	0.91	High
4. There is a lack of transparency in the promotion process for persons w/ disabilities	2.62	0.97	High
5. Have experienced discrimination in the promotion process due to my disability	2.21	1.03	Low
Overall Mean	2.77		High

Table 13. Relationship Between the Demographic Profiles and the Employment Opportunities for the Respondents

	Managerial/ Supervisory	Professionals	Clerical Support	Technical & Associate Professionals	Service & Sales	Elem. Occupation	Promotions
Age	r=0.162 p=0.141	r=0.168 p=0.125	r=0.010 p=0.929	r=0.045 p=0.688	r=-0.031 p=0.780	r=0.020 p=0.858	r=0.130 p=0.239
Sex	r=0.083 p=0.452	r=-0.046 p=0.678	r=-0.100 p=0.367	r=-0.057 p=0.608	r=-0.048 p=0.664	r=-0.082 p=0.457	r=-0.128 p=0.245
Disability	r=-0.046 p=0.678	r=-0.082 p=0.460	r=-0.108 p=0.327	r=-0.062 p=0.572	r=0.077 p=0.487	r=0.169 p=0.125	r=-0.141 p=0.202
Educ. Attainment	r=-0.027 p=0.810	r=0.126 p=0.252	r=-0.094 p=0.396	r=0.173 p=0.116	r=0.136 p=0.217	r=0.132 p=0.231	r=0.163 p=0.139
Length of Service	r=-0.008 p=0.942	r=-0.091 p=0.413	r=-0.102 p=0.354	r=-0.149 p=0.175	r=- 0.247* p=0.023	r=-0.103 p=0.352	r=-0.033 p=0.769

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

There is a moderate negative relationship ($r=-0.247$, $p=0.023$), indicating a statistically significant correlation (p -value <0.05), suggesting a possible decrease in perceived opportunity with longer service time in service and sales roles. It suggests that longer service may be associated with fewer opportunities in these roles, potentially due to job fatigue or other systemic issues that affect long-term employment in service and sales positions.

Table 14 presents the correlations between the perceived physical, social, and attitudinal barriers and the perceived employment opportunities of the respondents. A moderate positive relationship with a significant correlation ($r=0.253$, $p=0.020$) exists between perceived physical barriers and opportunities for managerial/supervisory positions. This means those who perceived more physical barriers also perceived fewer opportunities in these leadership roles. The findings infer that individuals with disabilities who perceive more physical barriers in the workplace are somehow more likely to be seen as candidates for managerial/supervisory positions. This is counterintuitive and raises concerns about potential bias or limitations in the system.

The findings show a statistically significant, moderate positive correlation ($r=0.240$, $p=0.028$), with p -value <0.05 , between physical barriers and service and sales opportunities, indicating a relationship similar to that for managerial/supervisory roles. The finding shows a potential need to address bias in the selection process for service and sales positions. Ensuring focus on skills and abilities, regardless of perceived limitations, and exploring the availability of accommodations are crucial steps towards creating a more equitable workplace for all. There is a weak positive correlation ($r=0.021$, $p=0.046$) between perceived physical barriers and perceived elementary occupation roles, but it should be interpreted with caution given the marginal significance level.

Future studies could benefit from employing more robust methodologies to explore this relationship more definitively. The results yield a strong, positive relationship ($r=0.359$, $p=0.001$) and statistically significant link between physical barriers and promotional opportunities (p -value <0.05), suggesting that those who perceive fewer physical barriers may also perceive greater opportunities for promotion. The result highlights the need for improved accessibility and support to enhance career advancement prospects for persons with disabilities.

Table 14. Relationship Between Barriers and Employment Opportunities for the Respondents

	Managerial/ Supervisory	Professionals	Clerical Support	Technical & Associate Professionals	Service & Sales	Elementary Occupation	Promotions
Physical Barriers	$r=0.253^*$ $p=0.020$	$r=0.124$ $p=0.259$	$r=-0.015$ $p=0.893$	$r=0.176$ $p=0.109$	$r=0.240^*$ $p=0.028$	$r=0.0219^*$ $p=0.046$	$r=0.359^{**}$ $p=0.001$
Social Barriers	$r=0.174$ $p=0.114$	$r=0.172$ $p=0.117$	$r=-0.103$ $p=0.351$	$r=0.126$ $p=0.253$	$r=0.155$ $p=0.160$	$r=0.161$ $p=0.145$	$r=0.427^{**}$ $p=0.000$
Attitudinal Barriers	$r=0.260^*$ $p=0.017$	$r=0.200$ $p=0.069$	$r=0.018$ $p=0.874$	$r=0.056$ $p=0.614$	$r=0.135$ $p=0.221$	$r=0.021$ $p=0.848$	$r=0.320^{**}$ $p=0.003$

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

No statistically significant relationship was found between social barriers and perceived employment opportunities in any category, except for promotion (all p -values > 0.05). Nevertheless, a strong positive relationship ($r=0.427$, $p=0.000$) was found between perceived social barriers and promotion opportunities with statistical significance (p -value <0.05). It implies that

people with disabilities who perceive fewer social barriers in the workplace also perceive greater opportunities for promotion, underscoring the critical need to address attitudes and practices that hinder career advancement for people with disabilities, as noted by [Angermeyer et al. \(2004\)](#).

A moderate positive relationship ($r=0.260$, $p=0.017$) was found between perceived attitudinal barriers and opportunities for managerial/supervisory roles, with statistical significance (p -value < 0.05). Similar to physical barriers, this refers to a connection between perceived barriers and greater opportunities. A weak, positive relationship ($r=0.200$, $p=0.069$) between attitudinal barriers and opportunities for professionals, but the relationship is not statistically significant (p -value >0.05).

The results are not statistically significant (all p -values > 0.05) in all other categories. Eventually, a significant moderate positive correlation was observed ($r=0.320$, $p=0.003$) linking attitudinal barriers and opportunities for promotion, indicating that those who perceived fewer attitudinal barriers also perceived greater opportunities. The result also highlights the need to address and mitigate negative attitudes and biases within the workplace to improve career advancement opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities.

[Corbière et al. \(2017\)](#) argue that obstacles are not merely external but interact with an individual's confidence in their ability to overcome them. For PWDs in Laguna, persistent physical and social barriers may gradually erode their self-confidence, leading to the lower perceived opportunities noted in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study investigated the employment participation of individuals with functional limitations in Laguna. The findings offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities they face. The diverse group of 84 participants reported moderate barriers across physical, social, and attitudinal domains. While educational attainment varied, a significant number possessed college degrees. Interestingly, there was no direct correlation between demographics and employment opportunities. However, a positive correlation emerged between age and certain roles, indicating a potential experience-based advantage ([O'Driscoll & Roche, 2017](#)).

The study revealed a crucial link between perceived barriers and access to managerial/supervisory positions and promotions. Individuals with disabilities who encountered these barriers were less likely to feel these opportunities were readily available ([Anand & Sevak, 2017](#)). This underscores the requirement for a multifaceted strategy with various elements.

[Corbière et al. \(2017\)](#) point out that having a reliable support system and well-defined vocational goals greatly increases the likelihood of securing employment. This means that for PWDs to progress beyond entry-level roles and advance to managerial positions, existing approaches must shift from one-time placements to long-term professional support.

0.5

However, this research indicated otherwise, creating a discrepancy and a recommendation to conduct further research to explore this finding and better understand the specific factors at play in Laguna. To improve the implementation of R.A. 10524 in Laguna, the Provincial Government must transition from a quantitative model, although hitting the 1% target, to a qualitative model; are PWDs being promoted? Do the managers support this view? By focusing on these areas, Laguna can address the systemic barriers that the study identifies as the primary hurdle to full inclusion.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

A representative sample of employed Lagunenses with disabilities is quite difficult to obtain because they are often underrepresented in studies. To address this limitation, the researcher employs various sampling methods, including snowball and purposive sampling. The researcher

acknowledges selection bias as a limitation. Another limitation of this research is that it may be difficult to measure the obstacles employees with disabilities encounter in the workplace, as these barriers can be complex and subjective.

To address this limitation, future researchers may use a variety of data-gathering methods, such as surveys, KIIs, and possibly FGDs. Finally, this is a cross-sectional study, meaning it will provide only a snapshot of job availability for Lagunenses with disabilities at a specific point in time. The researcher recommends conducting a longitudinal study to track changes in the perceived barriers, employment opportunities, and promotion opportunities to inform the development of more effective policies and interventions.

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