

CONTEXTUAL PERCEIVED NEEDS FOR INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

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Abstract

This international study investigates the employability of People with Intellectual Disability (PwID) from the perspective of professionals in Italy, Portugal, Sweden, and Türkiye. Surveying 43 professionals through an online questionnaire, the research examines educational needs, the importance of reasonable accommodations, and evaluation frameworks in employment settings for PwID. Key findings highlight the critical role of social skills and interpersonal communication, with variations in focus across countries – Türkiye emphasises social skills, Sweden prioritises problem-solving abilities, and Italy values adaptive and self-care skills. The results advocate for customised educational strategies and the necessity of personal learning plans, especially in Portugal, Italy, and Sweden. Challenges in workplace accommodations due to limited employer awareness are also noted, with a call for increased use of assistive technologies to foster inclusive work and learning environments. The study underscores the need for tailored training and education to enhance the employability of PwID.

Keywords: Employability; Intellectual Disability; Inclusive Practices; Assistive technologies; Reasonable Accommodations.

Relevance of the Chapter for People with Intellectual Disability (PwID)

The significance of this chapter for individuals with Intellectual Disability (PwID) lies in its thorough analysis of the obstacles and opportunities that influence their ability to find employment and participate in the workforce. This chapter emphasises the crucial significance of flexible and inclusive training methods, reasonable accommodations, and the use of assistive technologies. Therefore, it provides insight into the comprehensive approach required to empower PwID.

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Introduction

People with Intellectual and Developmental Disability (PwID) face significant challenges that include extensive limitations in both intellectual capabilities and adaptive behaviours, affecting essential daily life skills (Schalock, et al., 2021). This issue impacts millions globally, marking it as a worldwide concern. It is notably pressing in European countries, such as Portugal (PT), Italy (IT), Türkiye (TR), and Sweden (SE), where studies have indicated that these individuals encounter difficulties in obtaining employment due to their linguistic and digital literacy, lower educational achievements, and obstacles in accessing and utilising assistive technologies, especially within the context of a job market that increasingly values high skill levels and technological proficiency (APD, 2012; ISFOL, 2014). To address these challenges, there has been a push towards establishing a solid legal framework aimed at safeguarding the employment rights of PwID by introducing a proactive quota system, acknowledging the necessity

for reasonable accommodations, and providing specialised training programs to ease their transition into the workforce.

Despite these efforts, PwID continues to face significant barriers that severely limit their employment opportunities, primarily due to systemic issues (AlFozan, & AlKahtani, 2021; Hall et al., 2017). A critical issue is the labour market's general failure to recognize the potential and abilities of PwID (AlFozan, & AlKahtani, 2021), compounded by inadequate institutional policies and practices that fail to cater to their unique needs and capabilities (Baker et al., 2018). This negligence not only curtails their employment opportunities but also denies society the benefits of their diverse contributions.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive reform of the training and educational frameworks, with a focus on adapting them to better meet the needs of PwID as a crucial area for future research in employment for this demographic (AlFozan, & AlKahtani, 2021). The goal of such reforms should be to create an inclusive, flexible educational environment that welcomes the specific needs of PwID through the implementation of effective adjustments and the integration of assistive technologies (Boot et al., 2018; Chandola, & Rouxel, 2021; Sula, 2023). Such measures could significantly enhance the educational and developmental experiences of PwID, ultimately improving their employment prospects (AlFozan, & AlKahtani, 2021; Almaky, 2020).

Method

Participants

This research utilised a non-random convenience sampling of 43 professionals who are actively involved in the domain of inclusion. The cohort comprised 13 individuals from Türkiye (30.20%), 12 from Portugal (27.90%), 10 from Italy (23.30%), and 8 from Sweden (18.60%). The majority of the respondents were female ($N = 28$; 65.10%), with 12 males (27.90%) and three non-binary individuals (7.00%). The age range of these professionals varied from 31 to 66 years, with an average age of 40.67 years old ($SD = 10.34$).

The participants represented a wide array of professional roles,

with ‘trainers and/or educators’ making up the largest group ($n = 11$; 25.60%). Additionally, the study included 10 teachers (23.30%), 8 professionals in the intellectual disability sector (18.60%), 7 NGO staff members (16.30%), 6 health professionals and/or therapists (14.00%), and one individual who self-identified as having an intellectual disability (2.30%).

Procedure

This study utilised a quantitative methodology, employing a survey to collect data from participants. The survey, comprising 16 questions divided into six categories, was designed to gather comprehensive insights (Appendix A of this book; <https://doi.org/10.24140/nobarriers.v1.p02.07>). The initial section aimed to obtain informed consent from all respondents, followed by a section that collected demographic data. Subsequent sections delved into skills and teaching methods in vocational training, reasonable accommodations, the recruitment process, and the monitoring and evaluation process. Participants were requested to answer multiple-choice questions within each category, with the request to select up to three responses. The objective of these questions was to explore the work-life inclusion of PwID, focusing on their primary challenges and needs. The survey was conducted online via Google Forms from September 9th, 2023, to October 28th, 2023. Subsequently, the responses were transposed to Excel for further analysis.

Findings

Skills and teaching methods required in the vocational training of PwID

Upon reviewing the questionnaires, it was discovered that individuals perceive social skills and interpersonal communication as the most essential for the vocational training of people with intellectual disabilities (PwID), with these skills particularly highlighted in TR ($n = 12$; 92.31%) and SE ($n = 4$; 50.00%). Communication skills were also deemed important by a significant portion ($n = 22$; 51.16%) of the respondents. From the IT perspective, adaptive and self-care skills

are seen as paramount ($n = 9$; 90.00%), while in PT, the focus is more on technical and job-specific skills ($n = 9$; 75.00%). Respondents from SE also pointed out the importance of problem-solving skills ($n = 4$; 50%) in vocational training.

Conversely, time management and organisational skills were identified as the least crucial, particularly in TR (with no values reported) and PT ($n = 2$; 16.66%). In IT and SE, technical and job-specific skills were considered least important ($n = 1$ each; IT = 10.00%, SE = 12.50%). These results are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' perceptions regarding the skills required in the vocational training of PwID ($N = 43$)

What are the most important skills required in the vocational training of people with Intellectual Disability?										
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Communication skills	50.00	5	41.66	5	37.50	3	69.23	9	51.16	22
Problem-solving skills	40.00	4	50.00	6	50.00	4	53.85	7	48.83	21
Social skills and interpersonal communication	80.00	8	66.66	8	50.00	4	92.31	12	74.41	32
Technical and job-specific skills	10.00	1	75.00	9	12.50	1	38.46	5	37.20	16
Time management and organisation skills	20.00	2	16.66	2	37.50	3	0.00	0	16.27	7
Adaptive and self-care skills	90.00	9	25.00	3	25.00	2	30.77	4	41.86	18

The study revealed that adaptive and personalised learning plans are seen as the most effective pedagogical approach for vocational training of PwID from the self-perceptions of the participants, particularly noted in PT ($n = 11$; 91.67%), IT ($n = 8$; 80.00%), and SE

($n = 5$; 62.50%). Peer-assisted learning and collaboration are also valued highly, especially in IT ($n = 8$; 80.00%). Additionally, from IT's perspective, hands-on training and experiential learning are crucial ($n = 8$; 80.00%), whereas TR participants favour individualised instruction ($n = 10$; 76.92%).

On the other hand, task analysis and structured teaching were identified as the least suitable approaches ($n = 11$; 25.58%), with no significant implementation reported in IT and PT. SE participants indicated hands-on training and experiential learning as the least preferred method ($n = 1$; 12.50%). In contrast, TR respondents found visual and multimedia-based instruction to be least suitable ($n = 2$; 15.38%).

These findings are detailed in Table 2, reflecting the self-perceptions of the study's participants.

Table 2. Participants' perceptions regarding the adopted pedagogical approaches in the training of PwID ($N = 43$)

	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Individualised instruction	10.00	1	58.33	7	25.00	2	76.92	10	46.51	20
Hands-on training and experiential learning	80.00	8	41.67	5	12.50	1	38.46	5	44.19	19
Visual and multimedia-based instruction	20.00	2	41.67	5	37.50	3	15.38	2	27.91	12
Task analysis and structured teaching	0.00	0	0.00	0	25.00	2	69.23	9	25.58	11
Peer-assisted learning and collaboration	80.00	8	33.33	4	50.00	4	53.85	7	53.49	23
Adaptive and personalised learning plans	80.00	8	91.67	11	62.50	5	23.08	3	62.79	27

Our study identified the lack of trained instructors and support personnel ($n = 19$; 44.19%) and the challenges of social isolation and interaction ($n = 18$; 41.86%) as the primary obstacles to integrating PwID into training programs, with these issues being most prominent in IT ($n = 6$; 60.00% for both challenges). In other regions, the predominant challenges varied: unequal access to resources and support was highlighted in PT ($n = 7$; 58.33%) and SE ($n = 4$; 50.00%), while communication barriers were the main issue in TR (n

= 9; 69.23%).

The challenges deemed least significant across all countries were related to sensory sensitivities and overstimulation, with only a minimal number of responses ($n = 2$; 4.65%).

These insights are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Main challenges in the training inclusion of PwID, according to the participants ($N = 43$)

	In your perspective, what are the biggest challenges people with Intellectual Disability face in training processes?									
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Difficulties with attention span and focus	50.00	5	25.00	3	12.50	1	61.54	8	39.53	17
Difficulty with abstract concepts	50.00	5	16.67	2	25.00	2	23.08	3	27.91	12
Communication barriers	20.00	2	33.33	4	25.00	2	69.23	9	39.53	17
Social isolation and interaction challenges	60.00	6	33.33	4	37.50	3	38.46	5	41.86	18
Sensory sensitivities and overstimulation	0.00	0	8.33	1	12.50	1	0.00	0	4.65	2
Unequal access to resources and support	40.00	4	58.33	7	50.00	4	15.38	2	39.53	17
Stigma and discrimination from peers	20.00	2	33.33	4	12.50	1	30.77	4	25.58	11
Lack of trained instructors and support personnel	60.00	6	50.00	6	25.00	2	38.46	5	44.19	19
Transportation and accessibility issues	0.00	0	16.67	2	25.00	2	0.00	0	9.30	4
Limited access to quality training programs	20.00	2	41.67	5	37.50	3	15.38	2	27.91	12

Reasonable accommodations in the employment context of people with Intellectual Disability

In terms of measures to ensure access to reasonable adaptations in the workplace for PwID, regular training for employers and colleagues was the most valued measure ($n = 22$; 51.16%). The second most valued were individualised accommodation assessments and plans ($n = 18$; 41.86%) and employee assistance programs and support networks ($n = 18$; 41.86%). In SE these were the least valued, being the most important measures legal protections and anti-discrimination laws ($n = 5$; 62.50%) and accessible workplace facilities and assistive ($n = 4$; 50.00%). In IT, although these were taken highly in account, the most important measures identified were also workplace facilities

and assistive technologies ($n = 7$; 70.00%).

All countries except SE verified that collaboration with disability advocacy organisations ($n = 6$; 13.95%) was the least important measure identified. Regular training for employers and colleagues ($n = 1$; 7.69%) and flexible work arrangements and schedules ($n = 1$; 7.69%) were also identified as the least important measures to ensure access to reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

These findings are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Main measures to ensure access to reasonable adaptations in the workplace of PwID, according to the participants ($N = 43$)

In your perspective, what are the main measures to ensure all individuals with Intellectual Disability have access to reasonable adaptations in their employment context?										
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Legal protections and anti-discrimination laws	20.00	2	25.00	3	62.50	5	23.08	3	30.23	13
Individualised accommodation assessments and plans	50.00	5	41.67	5	12.50	1	53.85	7	41.86	18
Accessible workplace facilities and assistive technologies	70.00	7	25.00	3	50.00	4	23.08	3	39.53	17
Regular training for employers and colleagues	60.00	6	66.67	8	12.50	1	53.85	7	51.16	22
Inclusive hiring and promotion practices	20.00	2	33.33	4	37.50	3	53.85	7	37.21	16
Flexible work arrangements and schedules	30.00	3	50.00	6	25.00	2	15.38	2	30.23	13
Employee assistance programs and support networks	40.00	4	33.33	4	25.00	2	53.85	7	41.86	18
Collaboration with disability advocacy organisations	10.00	1	16.67	2	25.00	2	7.69	1	13.95	6

According to the participants, the two most significant challenges faced by PwID in accessing reasonable accommodation and assistive technology in the workplace were related to the lack of awareness and understanding among employers ($n = 23$; 53.49%). This finding was consistent across TR ($n = 9$; 69.23%), IT ($n = 6$; 60.00%), and PT ($n = 7$; 58.33%). Another main challenge identified was the insufficient training for employees and HR staff ($n = 8$; 18.60%). This was confirmed in PT ($n = 9$; 75.00%), IT ($n = 6$; 60.00%), and SE ($n = 4$; 50.00%). Additionally, TR faced two other significant challenges: inadequate legal protection and enforcement ($n = 9$; 69.23%) and stigmatisation and bias in the workplace ($n = 9$; 69.23%).

The least significant challenge identified was communication

barriers in requesting accommodations ($n = 8$; 18.60%). Although low scores were found in all countries regarding this challenge, the least important factor in PT was inadequate legal protections and enforcement ($n = 1$; 8.33%). In SE, the least significant challenge was financial constraints for providing assistive technologies (with no values). In TR, bureaucratic hurdles in the accommodation approval process were identified only once ($n = 1$; 7.69%). The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Main challenges in accessing reasonable accommodations and assistive technologies in the work context of people with PwID, according to the sample ($N = 43$)

	In your opinion, what are the main challenges that people with Intellectual Disability face in accessing reasonable accommodations and assistive technologies in the work context?									
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Lack of awareness and understanding among employers	60.00	6	58.33	7	12.50	1	69.23	9	53.49	23
Financial constraints for providing assistive technologies	50.00	5	25.00	3	0.00	0	23.08	3	25.58	11
Inadequate legal protections and enforcement	20.00	2	8.33	1	37.50	3	69.23	9	34.88	15
Stigmatisation and bias in the workplace	20.00	2	25.00	3	37.50	3	69.23	9	39.53	17
Limited availability of customised accommodations	40.00	4	33.33	4	25.00	2	23.08	3	30.23	13
Communication barriers in requesting accommodations	0.00	0	25.00	3	37.50	3	15.38	2	18.60	8
Insufficient training for employees and HR personnel	60.00	6	75.00	9	50.00	4	15.38	2	48.84	21
Bureaucratic hurdles in the accommodation approval process	30.00	3	25.00	3	37.50	3	7.69	1	23.26	10

Recruitment Process

The primary characteristics of an inclusive recruitment process for PwID, according to the sample, were clear and accessible job descriptions and requirements ($n = 22$; 51.16%) and flexible work arrangements and a supportive environment ($n = 19$; 44.19%). This was verified in TR and PT. In SE, inclusive language and communication ($n = 5$; 62.50%) and diverse interview panels and training for interviewers ($n = 3$; 37.50%) were found to be important. The main characteristics identified in IT were flexible work arrangements and supportive environment ($n = 5$; 50.00%) and ongoing support and training for

hired employees with intellectual disabilities ($n = 5$; 50.00%).

A minor characteristic, collaboration with disability advocacy organisations ($n = 7$; 16.28%), was verified in IT but not entirely in other countries. Although this type of collaboration received low scores, the characteristics that were not identified included customised application and interview accommodations (PT), clear and accessible job descriptions and requirements (SE), and diverse interview panels and training for interviewers (TR).

These findings are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Main characteristics of an inclusive recruitment process, according to the sample ($N = 43$)

In your opinion, what are the main characteristics of an inclusive recruitment process for people with Intellectual Disability?	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
	Clear and accessible job descriptions and requirements	40.00	4	58.33	7	0.00	0	84.62	11	51.16
Equal access to job postings and application procedures	10.00	1	25.00	3	25.00	2	15.38	2	18.60	8
Customised application and interview accommodations	30.00	3	0.00	0	25.00	2	38.46	5	23.26	10
Inclusive language and communication	40.00	4	33.33	4	62.50	5	38.46	5	41.86	18
Diverse interview panels and training for interviewers	40.00	4	25.00	3	37.50	3	0.00	0	23.26	10
Flexible work arrangements and supportive environment	50.00	5	50.00	6	25.00	2	46.15	6	44.19	19
Anti-discrimination policies and training	10.00	1	25.00	3	25.00	2	15.38	2	18.60	8
Collaboration with disability advocacy organisations	0.00	0	25.00	3	25.00	2	15.38	2	16.28	7
Regular feedback and evaluation of the recruitment process	30.00	3	16.67	2	12.50	1	15.38	2	18.60	8
Ongoing support and training for hired employees with intellectual disability	50.00	5	25.00	3	12.50	1	23.08	3	27.91	12

In terms of the main challenges faced by PwID during the recruitment process, the study found that the most commonly observed issues were stigmatisation and bias in the hiring process ($n = 24$; 55.81%) and insufficient support services for job seekers with intellectual disabilities ($n = 21$; 48.84%). The study also found that these challenges varied between countries. Limited access to job opportunities and networking were identified as major challenges in

IT ($n = 6$; 60.00%) and PT ($n = 7$; 58.33%). And lack of inclusive hiring practices and accommodations were identified in both SE ($n = 4$; 50.00%) and TR ($n = 10$; 76.92%).

Inadequate legal protections and enforcement against discrimination ($n = 4$; 9.30%) were identified as a minor challenge across all countries.

These findings are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Main challenges PwID face in recruitment processes, according to the sample ($N = 43$)

In your country, what are the main challenges that people with Intellectual Disability face in recruitment processes?										
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Limited awareness and understanding of intellectual disabilities among employers	40.00	4	50.00	6	25.00	2	38.46	5	39.53	17
Lack of inclusive hiring practices and accommodations	20.00	2	33.33	4	50.00	4	76.92	10	46.51	20
Stigmatisation and bias in the hiring process	40.00	4	58.33	7	50.00	4	69.23	9	55.81	24
Limited access to job opportunities and networking	60.00	6	58.33	7	25.00	2	38.46	5	46.51	20
Insufficient support services for job seekers with intellectual disability	70.00	7	41.67	5	25.00	2	53.85	7	48.84	21
Inadequate legal protections and enforcement against discrimination	0.00	0	0.00	0	12.50	1	23.08	3	9.30	4

When asked about the main training needs to create a more inclusive working environment for PwID within their organisation, the results showed that disability awareness training for all staff ($n = 20$; 46.51%) and job coaching and support for employees with intellectual disability ($n = 20$; 46.51%) were the top priorities. These findings were observed in both TR and IT. The most commonly identified training needs in PT were mental health and wellness support training ($n = 6$; 50.00%) and collaboration with disability advocacy organisations training ($n = 5$; 41.67%). In SE, the most commonly identified training needs were inclusive leadership and management training, and collaboration with disability advocacy organisations training ($n = 4$; 50.00%, in both). The least important training needs were anti-discrimination and inclusion policies training ($n = 8$; 18.60%). Although this was verified in IT, not so much in the remaining countries. In PT, the sample

mentioned training on reasonable accommodations and accessibility only once ($n = 1$; 8.33%). In SE, disability awareness training for all staff was never mentioned, and in collaboration with disability advocacy organisations training in TR. These findings are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Own organisation's main training needs to become more inclusive, according to the sample ($N = 43$)

	In your opinion, what are your organisation's main training needs in order to become a more inclusive working environment for people with Intellectual Disability?									
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Disability Awareness Training for All Staff	50.00	5	33.33	4	0.00	0	84.62	11	46.51	20
Training on Reasonable Accommodations and Accessibility	20.00	2	8.33	1	25.00	2	46.15	6	25.58	11
Effective Communication Strategies	30.00	3	33.33	4	25.00	2	7.69	1	23.26	10
Inclusive Leadership and Management Training	50.00	5	16.67	2	50.00	4	46.15	6	39.53	17
Mental Health and Wellness Support Training	20.00	2	50.00	6	25.00	2	7.69	1	25.58	11
Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion Policies Training	10.00	1	25.00	3	25.00	2	15.38	2	18.60	8
Collaboration with Disability Advocacy Organizations Training	30.00	3	41.67	5	50.00	4	0.00	0	27.91	12
Job Coaching and Support for Employees with Intellectual Disabilities	60.00	6	33.33	4	25.00	2	61.54	8	46.51	20

Monitoring and evaluation process

The most effective methods for evaluating an organisation's inclusion environment, according to the sample, are focus groups and inclusive workplace committees ($n = 25$; 58.14%). This was confirmed in SE ($n = 5$; 62.50%). Employee surveys and feedback ($n = 23$; 53.49%) were also found to be effective, which was confirmed in TR ($n = 11$; 84.62%), and also external audits and assessments by diversity and inclusion experts ($n = 23$; 53.49%) which was confirmed in IT ($n = 7$; 70.00%) and PT ($n = 8$; 66.67%). SE participants found inclusion metrics and KPI tracking to be important assessment strategies ($n = 5$; 62.50%).

Benchmarking against industry standards and best practices ($n = 6$; 13.95%) was considered the least important strategy. Verified across

all countries.

These findings are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Best strategies for the assessment of organisational inclusivity, according to the sample ($N = 43$)

	In your opinion, what is the best strategy for assessing how inclusive an organisation's environment is?									
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	$n = 10$	%	$n = 12$	%	$n = 8$	%	$n = 13$	%	$N = 43$
Employee Surveys and Feedback	60.00	6	41.67	5	12.50	1	84.62	11	53.49	23
External Audits and Assessments by Diversity and Inclusion Experts	70.00	7	66.67	8	50.00	4	30.77	4	53.49	23
Inclusion Metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Tracking	20.00	2	41.67	5	62.50	5	61.54	8	46.51	20
Focus Groups and Inclusive Workplace Committees	60.00	6	33.33	4	62.50	5	76.92	10	58.14	25
Benchmarking Against Industry Standards and Best Practices	10.00	1	33.33	4	12.50	1	0.00	0	13.95	6

Finally, it was found that the two most effective strategies for assessing the organisational inclusion of PwID are conducting inclusive focus groups and workshops with these employees ($n = 28$; 65.12%), identified as best in TR ($n = 76.92\%$), IT ($n = 6$; 60.00%) and SE ($n = 4$; 4.60%). Additionally, performance reviews and career tracking ($n = 20$; 46.51%) were also identified as the most effective strategies. For PT respondents, the most effective strategy is to conduct focus groups and feedback from employees with intellectual disabilities ($n = 9$; 75.00%). SE participants also identified working with disability organisations for assessment as one of the best strategies ($n = 4$; 50.00%).

The least important strategy identified by the sample was accessibility audits and accommodation assessment ($n = 12$; 27.91%). This was confirmed in PT ($n = 3$; 25.00%), but not in IT and TR. In these countries, surveys and feedback from employees with intellectual disabilities (IT $n = 2$; 20,00%; TR $n = 3$; 23,08%) were found to be the least important strategy for assessing the organisational inclusion of PwID.

Table 10 details these findings.

Table 10. Best strategies for the assessment of organisational inclusion of PwID, according to the sample (N = 43)

In your opinion, what is the best strategy for assessing the specific inclusion of employees with Intellectual Disability in an organisation's environment?										
	IT		PT		SE		TR		TOTAL	
	%	n = 10	%	n = 12	%	n = 8	%	n = 13	%	N = 43
Surveys and Feedback from Employees with Intellectual Disabilities	20.00	2	75.00	9	3.45	3	23.08	3	39.53	17
Collaboration with Disability Advocacy Organizations for Assessments	20.00	2	33.33	4	4.60	4	46.15	6	37.21	16
Inclusive Focus Groups and Workshops Involving These Employees	60.00	6	66.67	8	4.60	4	76.92	10	65.12	28
Performance Reviews and Career Progression Tracking	50.00	5	25.00	3	3.45	3	69.23	9	46.51	20
Accessibility Audits and Accommodation Assessments	40.00	4	25.00	3	0.00	0	38.46	5	27.91	12

Discussion

This global study, exploring professional insights on inclusion for PwID, offers significant findings across four key areas: educational needs, skills for vocational training, accommodations in the workplace, and frameworks for monitoring employment for individuals with PwID.

The research highlights the essential role of social skills and interpersonal communication in the vocational training of people with PwID, particularly focusing on the context in Türkiye. While Sweden and Italy adhere to the general trend, they introduce unique perspectives; Sweden emphasises the critical nature of problem-solving skills, and Italy points to the importance of adaptive and self-care skills. These variances underscore the diverse cultural and educational settings in which the professionals operate, paralleling Jansen-van Vuuren & Aldersey's (2020) work on the stigmatisation experiences of people with PwID and their families in different cultures.

A similar trend underscores the paramount importance of social skills and interpersonal communication in vocational training, with a particular spotlight on Türkiye. Sweden's professionals underscore problem-solving skills, whereas Italy's focus on adaptive and self-care skills echoes research on vocational training's impact on employment chances, health, and societal and economic benefits (Helbig et al.,

2023).

The study also illuminates favoured pedagogical methods in vocational training, where adaptive and personalised learning strategies are particularly valued in Portugal, Italy, and Sweden. This suggests a growing recognition of the need for tailored educational methods catering to the unique needs of learners with PwID (Casale-Giannola et al., 2023). Italy's preference for hands-on and experiential learning indicates a pragmatic approach to teaching.

The findings from our survey on inclusive recruitment processes for PwID underscore the importance of specific measures to enhance accessibility and support within the workplace. The most emphasised characteristics across the sample were the necessity for clear and accessible job descriptions and requirements, alongside flexible work arrangements and a supportive environment, particularly highlighted in Türkiye and Portugal. These elements, previously explored by Bray and Grad (2003) are critical in demystifying the job application process for PwID, ensuring that potential employees can understand what is expected of them and that they will be entering a workplace that values their well-being and accommodates their needs.

Regarding accommodations in the workplace, there's a clear consensus on the challenges posed by employers' lack of awareness and the urgent need for enhanced training for staff and HR professionals, especially in Türkiye, Italy, and Portugal. This points to a broad requirement for better understanding and skills among employers and HR to create more inclusive work environments. Participants underscored assistive technologies' potential in vocational training and employment for people with PwID, advocating for a unified approach to adopting these technologies across nations, focusing on training and awareness to ensure their effective use and to optimise their role in workforce inclusion for people with PwID.

When it comes to frameworks for monitoring the inclusion of people with PwID in the job market, the study prefers inclusive focus groups, workshops, performance evaluations, and career tracking. However, in Portugal, the focus is on direct feedback from employees with PwID, offering crucial perspectives on the success of inclusion strategies.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the broad scope of this study, it presents certain limitations. A significant constraint is its dependence on the viewpoints of professionals within the field, which may inadvertently neglect the direct experiences and needs of PwID.

Additionally, while the research spans several countries, the distinct socio-cultural and economic backgrounds across these regions could influence the generalizability of the findings. This is particularly relevant when considering the variation in policy environments and the degree of technology implementation among the countries studied. The exploration of specific types of assistive technologies was not exhaustive within this study, limiting the understanding of how these technologies might be best integrated into both vocational training and workplace accommodations for PwID.

To better contextualise the research culturally, future inquiries should endeavour to gather firsthand insights and experiences from PwID themselves. This approach would enrich the study with a comprehensive perspective on the efficacy and pertinence of the vocational training and employment methodologies being applied.

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