

## Breaking down employment barriers for PWDs: Disability inclusion in the Philippine hospitality industry

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**Journal of Tourism, Culinary,  
and Entrepreneurship**

**e-ISSN:  
2776-0928**

**Publisher:**  
School of Tourism,  
Universitas Ciputra Surabaya,  
Indonesia

**Keywords:**  
*Discrimination*  
*Hiring Process*  
*PWD*  
*Hospitality*  
*Disability*

### ABSTRACT

Despite numerous local and international statutes on their acceptance in mainstream employment, persons with disabilities (PWDs) still experience various forms of discrimination. The actions that the PWDs get may result in the way how other people treat them, or the improper stereotypes that the employers perceive them to be. Hence, underemployment among PWDs is still one of the problems in the society, mainly because some are having difficulties in being employed due to their condition. Persons with Disabilities have been fighting for their rights in the workforce for a long time in the Philippines. Despite all the efforts of the government and advocacies of the private sector, employment among PWDs has been difficult and rigorous. There have been different multi-sectoral movements to lobby for change especially in the hospitality sector. Hence, focusing on the views of the key-players are the main objective of this investigation. The goal of this paper is to understand the view of government and private sectors in hiring PWDs in the hospitality establishments of the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines. Phenomenology, a qualitative type of technique, was employed in the study. The researchers collected the data through semi-structured face-to-face interviews and implemented a thematic analysis to create themes based on extracted codes. The findings of this study come from the views of public and private sectors, the government's involvement, the implementation of Republic Act 7277 or Magna Carta for PWDs, and the hiring process associated with hiring PWDs. The researchers concluded that the government and private sectors are gearing towards inclusive growth by hiring PWDs in the National Capital Region, Philippines, despite the social stigmas associated with hiring them.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite numerous local and international statutes on their acceptance in mainstream employment, persons with disabilities (PWDs) still experience various forms of discrimination.

The actions that the PWDs get may result in the way how other people treat them, or the improper stereotypes that the employers perceive them to be (Gatchalian et al., 2014). Underemployment among PWDs is still one of the problems in the society, mainly because some are having difficulties in being employed due to their condition. For this reason, the poverty rate among PWDs is getting higher (Markel & Barclay, 2006).

In the Philippines, there is little progress in accepting PWDs in the workforce of the different sectors in the hospitality industry. The International Disability Rights Monitor (IDRM) detailed that 57.12% of PWDs are hired in the country, however, more than the majority (30.94%) of this number work in the sectors of farming, forest management, or fisheries (International Disability Rights Monitor [IDRM], 2005; Gatchalian et al., 2004).

Chapter 1, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 7277 or otherwise known as the Magna Carta for PWDs states that, "Persons with disabilities are part of Philippine society; thus, the State shall give full support to the improvement of the total well-being of Persons with disabilities and their integration into the mainstream of society. Toward this end, the State shall adopt policies ensuring the rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance of PWDs. It shall develop their skills and potentials to enable them to compete favorably for available opportunities" (Congress of the Philippines, 1991).

According to Page and Connel as cited in Balta & Bengisu (2012), statistics presents that the hospitality industry is an important employer and the largest sector in lodging, and has a critical role in the said industry. A 2013 research by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies, as cited in Mina (2013) said, "Schelzig (2005) estimated that only less than ten percent of more than 100,000 employable PWDs registered with the DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment) were wage-employed. The International Disability Rights Monitor, however, reported that 57.1% of the PWDs in the Philippines are employed, 30.9% of which are engaged in agriculture, such as farmers, forestry workers, or fishermen; while 10.8% are laborers or unskilled workers." Among the findings of the study by Kalargyrou & Volis (2014) which focused on companies with strong initiatives to integrate PWDs in their workforce, proposed that forming diversity incorporation groups, practicalities, councils, or task groups is substantial to the active enlisting, employing, and assisting of employees with disabilities. Most companies provided training and education to employees without disabilities regarding the inclusion of working and associating with the employees who have disabilities. Additionally, elevated employee turnover ratios that are often encountered by hospitality establishments are given.

Moreover, the government came up with tax incentives, in which the private employers were advised by the government to recruit additional PWDs in exchange for tax privileges and other incentives. According to Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz, a removal of 25% from the

gross income of the total amount that is paid as earnings to differently-abled persons is just one of the benefits that the private sectors can receive from hiring PWD (Chiu, 2012).

The skills and capabilities that ought to persuade employers to contemplate disability inclusion as a medium to save income, progress work steadiness, decrease turnover, and finally progress the accomplishment of the company are as follows: trustworthy, dependable, driven, productive, and prompt in attendance (Kalargyrou & Volis, 2014).

Soriano & Hechanova (2007) lead a survey, which made them determine that there is development in employing PWDs in the Philippines. In line with this, a study was also conducted by Gatchalian et al. (2014) whose abundant number of respondent expressed consent in hiring PWDs to their company. In addition, the research concluded that it will be beneficial to PWDs, the company, and the country if PWDs would be integrated in the mainstream employment.

Furthermore, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) provides employment opportunities to trained and qualified PWDs. The Bureau of Local Development under DOLE has been tasked to come up with policies, standards, and processes to have a productive company and to come up with programs for employers, employees, and communities (Labor Code of the Philippines, 1974). However, despite of the various efforts carried out by the government in providing full and productive employment to PWDs, it appears that the employment opportunities for this segment of the population are still limited.

This study aims to: (i) analyze the view of the DOLE, National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), and private establishments in hiring PWDs; (ii) to find out and examine the role of DOLE and NCDA in hiring people with disabilities; (iii) to assess the implementation of Republic Act 7277 on integrating persons with disabilities (PWD) into hospitality workforce; and (iv) to explore the hiring processes of the employers for the people with disabilities in the Philippine hospitality setting.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

According to Morse & Field (1996), qualitative research allows researchers to create illustrative propositions. In this study, phenomenology design was used, as it focuses and explores the experiences of people about the world (Adams, 2010). The main purpose of a qualitative research is that it is best even for small samples (Langos, 2014). Since the researchers had six (6) subjects for the study, the qualitative research was employed.

### Design

The researchers conducted a semi-structured face-to-face interview with various hospitality industry employers, NCDA, and DOLE. Semi-structured interviews allow the researchers to encourage or prompt the interviewee to elaborate and to follow new line of

inquiries introduced by what the interviewee has discussed. This method enables the researchers to ask follow-up questions, to have more information and to gain a better understanding about the study (Steber, 2017). An audio recording was used while doing the interview to ensure the descriptive validity of the data that allowed the researchers to refer back and check the accuracy of the interview. The interviews occurred in the following dates: Farron Café (March 12, 2019); Vibes Massage (March 25, 2019); NCDA and Novotel (March 27, 2019); DOLE and Puzzle Café (March 28, 2019).

### Subjects and Subject Site

The interview was conducted to these respective establishments: The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), The National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), Farron Cafe, Puzzle Cafe, Novotel, and Vibes Massage. The NCDA is a nationwide government agency authorized to create different policies concerning the rights of the PWDs especially in becoming part of the workforce and to ensure that Article 7277 is being implemented. The DOLE is the primary policy-maker, programmer, coordinator, and managerial entity of the Executive Branch of the government in the sector of labor and employment. Lastly, Farron Cafe, Puzzle Cafe, Novotel, and Vibes Spa are some of the private hospitality businesses that give opportunities to PWDs in the labor force. The researchers gathered data regarding the views of employers in hiring PWDS in the workforce and the implementation of Article 7277 in their company. In addition to this, the researchers gathered data in National Government Units such as DOLE and NCDA regarding the implementation of Article 7277 and on their role in hiring PWDs in the hospitality setting of NCR, Philippines.

**Table 1. Type of PWDs that Hospitality Establishments Are Accepting into Their Workforce**

ESTABLISHMENT	TYPE OF PWD
Novotel Manila	Visually Impaired
Vibes Massage	Visually Impaired
Farron Café	Little Person, Mental health Condition
Puzzle and Gourmet Cafe	Intellectual Disability

### Data Measure

The NCDA, Farron Café, Puzzle Café, Novotel, and Vibes Massage are located in Quezon City, Manila and DOLE located in Intramuros Manila were the subjects of the research study. The respondents for the study were both well-informed and credible representatives of the respective organizations. Moreover, for precise data gathering and documentation, the interview was recorded.

For DOLE and NCDA, the PWD Vocal Person of DOLE-NCR and the Deputy Executive Director were interviewed. For the hospitality establishments, the persons responsible for hiring and the human resource manager were interviewed.

The research study is phenomenology where human experience is the utmost origin of all significance and values (Armstrong, 2005). Related studies and literature of the study were also collected to support the research.

### **Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Consideration**

The researchers generated interview questions based on the objectives of the study. Afterwards, face validation was presented to three research professionals. Letter of Intents were also made by the researchers and was sent to DOLE, NCDA, Farron Café, Puzzle Café, Novotel, and Vibes Massage. Follow-ups were made by the researchers to finalize their date and time of availability for the interview. Prior to the interview, consent forms were given to the interviewee. The researchers also recorded the minutes of the interview. During the interview, the researchers introduced themselves and started to ask the guide questions. The researchers take turns in asking questions and followed up some questions to further understand the response of the subjects. Lastly, the researchers concluded the interview with an expression of gratitude and appreciation.

### **Data Explication and Mode of Analysis**

To evaluate the data correctly and yield essential results, the researchers used a semi-structured face-to-face interview as the research instrument for the study where additional inquiries might be addressed for further comprehension of the data. Purposive sampling was also utilized as the sampling technique since the study is a qualitative research. According to Tongco (2007), purposive sampling is most effective when one has to study a domain with well-informed experts. Moreover, a person who is knowledgeable and credible on a topic shall be interviewed and this technique suits the research study for the decision making of the researchers. Two National Government Units namely, DOLE and NCDA were interviewed by the researchers. Four private establishments, Novotel (Hotel), Farron Café and Puzzle Café (Restaurant/Café), and Vibes Massage (Spa), were also involved in the interview process.

The researchers also implemented a thematic analysis for the study. Boyatzis, as cited in Braun and Clarke (2006), defined thematic analysis as an approach for identifying, examining, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It efficiently organizes and defines the data in rich detail. Moreover, it interprets different aspects of the study. The data gathered from the semi-structured face-to-face interviews of the two National Government Units and the four private establishments were permitted to be audio recorded and transcribed thoroughly.

The researchers allotted time to do the transcription of the recorded interviews and carefully comprehended the specific responses in order to find connecting ideas for the emergence of the themes. A theme catches a significant integer about the study and appoints

to a level of connecting response or definition within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Quotations from the interview data gathered were enclosed to the discussions for well-disposition of the findings. The researchers discovered five (5) themes with eleven (11) various coded data as presented in the thematic map below.

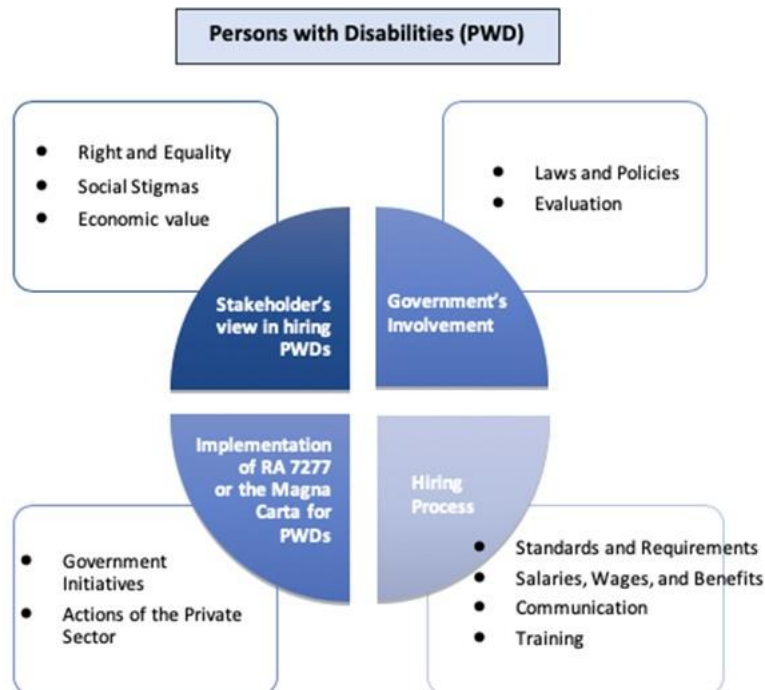


Figure 1. Thematic Map Involving PWDs

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Stakeholder's view in Hiring Persons with Disabilities

##### Right and Equality

The researchers discovered that the stakeholders viewed hiring PWDs as a right. Furthermore, NCDA stressed that hiring PWDs should not be a charity case, as it is everyone's right to be employed. In line with this, the stakeholders hire PWDs because they want to promote and set equal footing when it comes to employment. Also, for the belief that the people in the sector have capabilities and talents where Mr. Mateo Lee, Jr. the Deputy Executive Director of NCDA stated that, "PWDs are not disabled but are differently-abled." Likewise, hiring PWDs can help them gain experience and be competent for the opportunities.

"We need to have inclusive growth for everyone regardless of their skin color, ethnic and physical background. We need to, as it is a sign of maturity." – Mr. Ryan Delos Santos PWD Vocal Person of DOLE-NCR (2019, March 28). Personal interview.

According to the study conducted by Mitra (2008), access of socio-economic rights for PWDs are limited, such as education, health and welfare services and employment. For this reason, PWDs were marginalized and needs constant care. Moreover, it was stated in the study of Nyombi & Kibandama (2014) that according to UN standard rules on equalizing

opportunities Rule 7, the state must mandate favorable conditions for PWDs to have access in employment, as it is their right and must be exercised.

### **Social Stigmas**

The researchers found out the continuous presence of social stigmas associated with hiring PWDs. As stated by the Chief Operating Officer of Farron Café, “to be labelled as PWD is already different, once people figured out you are one in the sector, extra caution may immediately incur, for the reason of PWDs being too sensitive.” The stakeholders also emphasized the possible reasons on rejecting their applications, and it is mainly because of their physical appearance, sensitivity, attitude, and inability to perform the job or not being well equipped for the position. These social issues mainly highlighted the reasons why hiring PWDs could be difficult to some establishments.

“The number one issue in hiring PWDs is that they are being judged easily.”— Mr. Niño Algura, Chief Operating Officer of Farron Café (March 12, 2019) Personal Interview.

Several studies have shown that one issue explaining the low employment rate of PWDs is the reluctance and disposition of employers to require among employees from this sector (Chi & Qu, 2003; Honey, Meager, & Williams, 1993; Mansour, 2009; Rimmerman, 1998; Unger, 2002; Gatchalian et al. 2014). Moreover, existing study recommends that deficiencies of facts, predetermined biases, and an insight of amplified threat, are all related with employers' lack of interest in recruiting and hiring PWDs (Born & Dumm, 2011). Similarly, in the study conducted by Nyombi and Kibandama (2014), it was stated that PWDs' right to work must be recognized. Furthermore, grounds on disability must be prohibited, as it is a form of discrimination according to UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006.

### **Economic Value**

The stakeholders believed that hiring PWDs allow the people in the sector to contribute to the economy of the country. The NCDA stressed that hiring PWDs promotes independent living resulting to less expenditure of Government for the welfare projects of PWDs such as charity works. Nevertheless, they believed that the PWDs can also participate in nation building. If they can generate income, they can support themselves.

“They are the driving force of our business. Our business would not be here if it was not for them. Our main purpose is to open this opportunity for them.”— Mr. Niño Algura, Chief Operating Officer of Farron Café (March 12, 2019) Personal Interview.

According to Mitra and Sambamoorthi (2006), the link between poverty and disability among developing and developed countries is employment. Additionally, according to Mitra (2008), the participation of labor and employment force is vital to recognize and to deal with the economic difficulties among PWDs. Moreover, employment can be an avenue for PWDs'

empowerment. Thus, one way to empower PWDs is to ensure independence and self-reliance by creating job opportunities for them (Furuoka, Pazim, Lim, & Mahmud, 2011; Merdalla & Merdalla, 2018) such as knowledge of the employers, attitudes of the employers, and fear of cost by employers (Sellevoll, 2016; Merdalla & Merdalla, 2018) which were all manifested in the data gathered.

## **Government's Involvement in Hiring PWDs**

### **Laws and policies**

The researchers found out that the National Council on Disability Affairs is the one that formulates plans and policies for the PWDs using the data that they collect from the agencies to monitor the PWDs. Moreover, some of these developed policies were turned into laws, such as, Phil-health coverage for the PWDs, Filipino Sign Language for the Deaf, Mental Health law, and the exemption in the copyright from the Marrakesh treaty or the copyright law, where PWDs can reproduce a book without the permission from the author and as long as it is for education purposes, as mentioned by Mr. Mateo Lee Jr., The Deputy Executive Director of National Council on Disability Affairs.

"We are the one who is in-charge in plan, formulation, program development, evaluation and advocacy, and research and data."—Mr. Mateo Lee Jr Deputy Executive Director of NCDA (2019, March 27). Personal interview.

According to the study of Aragon (2017), the government and people's organizations responsibility is to care for the rights and support the well-being of PWDs in order to make them prolific and functional constituents of the community. Also, policies should be recognizable since it is important in organizations, because they serve as predetermined ways of deed, which are credited to contribute a lead toward justifiable system.

However, the Owner of Puzzle Cafe Ms. Isabelle Canoy, stressed that even though the government helps them, due to the fact that they are private stakeholders, they are not prioritized by the government. In addition, she also stressed that all of the projects organized by the government for the PWDs where all done on a "surface level" as it only runs for a year and the projects are discontinued.

"They should veer away from the one-time big-time laws. It has to be sustainable and it has to be something serving PWDs not just once." – Ms. Isabelle Canoy, Owner of Puzzle Café (2019, March 28). Personal Interview.

As stated in the study of Muego (2018), PWDs are only remembered when it is already the National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation week or in some few occasions. Likewise, it was stated that some founders of the organizations asked for the support of the government. One of the government agencies they asked for help is the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, or also known as NCDA at present. A book was handed to them about

community organizing and was told that, “your sector is very difficult to organize;” unfortunately, no further assistance or support was given.

## **Evaluation**

The DOLE is in charge of issuing the certification of employment for the establishments who hire PWDs. This allows the establishments to avail the tax incentives under Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). According to Mr. Ryan Delos Santos, the PWD Vocal person of DOLE-NCR, many establishments are already interested in availing the tax incentives. He also stressed that last year, three establishments applied for the certification, unlike before where only one or none at all would apply for the certification. Furthermore, he stated the process on issuing the certificate. First, a representative will inspect the establishment if they really hire PWDs. Afterwards, a report will be sent to their office. Lastly, DOLE will issue the certification.

“In the law DOLE is included in the loop, because before they can avail the incentives, they need the certification from DOLE that they are really employing PWD.” – Mr. Ryan Delos Santos PWD Vocal Person of DOLE-NCR (2019, March 28). Personal interview.

According to Talavera (2017) Private stakeholders who hire PWDs are put to acquire incentives from BIR, as it is under the Republic Act 10524 that states that the private companies that employ PWDs as regular employee, apprentice, or learner are entitled to a gross income deduction in which it is equivalent to 25% of the total amount paid of the salaries and wages of PWDs. However, these stakeholders must present a validation certified by DOLE that proves that they employ PWDs. Furthermore, PWDs must be accredited with DOLE and Department of Health (DOH) for their disability, skills, and qualifications.

## **Implementation of Republic Act no. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities**

### **Government Initiatives**

In line with the implementation of RA 7277 or the Magna Carta for PWDs, the researchers discovered a number of activities and projects mentioned by both public and private sectors which the former implemented or involved the county to gradually achieve the aims of the said law.

These programs are as follows: (a) Marrakesh Treaty which goal is to aid eradicate the book famine experience by people who are visually impaired or otherwise print disabled according to the World Blind Union; (b) Incheon Strategy, which provides the Asia Pacific region and the world with the initial set of regionally approved disability-inclusive development goals that will allow the Asian Pacific region to trail growth towards progressing the quality of life, and the fulfilment of rights of the region's 650 million PWDs, most of whom live in poverty

(Disability Information Resources, 2012); (c) Public Employment Service Office (PESO) of DOLE, which is a non-fee charging multi-employment service facility recognized pursuant to RA 8759 otherwise known as PESO Act 1999 which obligation is to implement equality of employment and full employment opportunities for all with the purpose to ensure the rapid, sensible and proficient delivery of employment service and provision of information on the other DOLE programs; (d) PWD ID, for availing their benefits and privileges (e.g. at least 20% off on TAX) that is stated in the Magna Carta for PWDs; (e) Tulong, Alalay sa Taong may Kapansanan (TULAY), a special program for PWDs which objective is to assist in their integration into the mainstream of society by providing them access to training and employment opportunities both in the formal and informal sectors on the authority of the DOLE; and (f) Expanded Z MORPH otherwise known as Expanded Z benefits rate for the Mobility, Orthosis, Rehabilitation, Prosthesis Help which is a special benefit for the fitting of upper limb prostheses, orthoses and orthoprostheses in accordance to Phil-Health (2016).

Wltavsky, Lebar, and Bitenc, as cited in D. Merdalla & Merdala (2018), emphasized that the best measurement for successful vocational rehabilitation of PWDs is their employment. Thus, the government is giving PWDs livelihood assistance and employment, medical missions, job fairs, and projects.

### **Actions of the Private Sectors**

The private sectors have their ways in providing the rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance of PWDs. Ms. Elaine Roanne Ruiz, Learning and Development Manager of Novotel Manila stated that their goal for the PWDs is for them to feel that there is no difference; they conduct the same training and seminars to every employee. For the Farron Café, Mr. Niño Algura, Chief Operating Officer specified that one of their area supervisors is a PWD and they ensure that each and all of their branches have at least one PWD employee. Consequently, they studied sign language to communicate with their PWD employees. They also provide bells and small menu in the counters for customers to conveniently point their orders since some of their employees are deaf and mute. Meanwhile, Mr. Paul Tiosan, Franchise Development Manager of Vibes Massage, disclosed that they helped their visually impaired employees to develop their social skills through training, and continuous seminars: managerial seminar, financial seminars, customer service training, and strategic training. Similarly, Ms. Kristine Alba, Talent and Culture Manager of Novotel Manila ensures that its PWD employee is safe and can properly function without any hindrance. Briefly, training and seminars are conducted and provided by each of the private sectors which aim to simply give PWDs equal footing in the hospitality work force.

“So, we want everyone to feel welcomed because that’s the signature of promise of Accor and of Novotel Manila – make everyone feel welcomed. So as mentioned, they go

through the same program hmm okay, I remembered with that uhm, with PWD undergoing the same 5-day orientation that we have together with the regular ones.” – Ms. Elaine Roanne Ruiz, Learning and Development Manager of Novotel Manila (2019, March 27). Personal Interview.

Waxman (2017) stated that an association that acknowledges the significance of PWDs can build a psychologically secure, tolerant, adaptable, all-encompassing setting that benefits all employees and is valued by clients. Moreover, Wilmoth and Skaret, as cited in Gatchalian, et al. (2014), concluded that employers’ approach is a possible obstacle to employment opportunities for PWDs; however, the private sectors that employ PWDs like cafes, spas, and hotels have different ways, approaches, and course of actions. This can be supported by the study of Waxman (2017) which stated that organizations can gain knowledge; management actions are conducts that can be altered proceeding in organizational cultural change.

## **Hiring Process on Persons with Disabilities**

### **Standards and Requirement**

According to the private stakeholders, PWDs undergo the same hiring process with PWDs. Therefore, there is no specific hiring process that these establishments implement, but rather, they have specific hiring qualifications such as the attitude and perseverance. Some stakeholders hire PWDs who already attended schools, training programs, seminars, and part of their advocacy or corporate social responsibility. Puzzle Café hires persons with learning disabilities to show that these people are also capable of working, and to help them be confident and believe in themselves. Having a PWD employee, according to Ms. Alba and Ms. Ruiz of Novotel Manila, is an inspiration and adds value to the company.

The stakeholders hire PWDs who are on their legal age as required by DOLE. Farron café focuses more on the attitude of the applicant. They prefer persevering and responsible applicants by testing how long they will last in the training. On the other hand, DOLE would ask the applicants on how ready they are and what are their skills and qualifications. As commented by DOLE, PWDs should be mentally prepared upon applying for a job. Persons with disabilities should also adjust with the demands and needs of the establishment.

“If you want to be employed in the formal economy then you have to be attuned with the demands of the companies, of the establishments, and the labor market in general.”— Mr. Ryan Delos Santos, PWD Vocal Person of DOLE-NCR (2019, March 28). Personal Interview

According to Grant Javier (Unilab Foundation project manager), as cited in Panares (2018), providing employment to PWDs is good since it gives them continuous growth. This also helps other employees to be aware of the PWDs’ situation. Most importantly, PWDs add values to the company since they excel in the job that was given to them.

## **Salaries, Wages, and Benefits**

For the salary, wages, and benefits, some stakeholders provide the same benefits to PWDs as well as to the persons without disabilities. The DOLE stated that they cannot mandate on how the establishment's hiring practices should be, but they should provide the prescribed minimum wage.

"We once asked for a review of their salary or the peace rate to review, if we give them the right amount of benefits. We actually give them a higher pay and expanded benefits than us." – Mr. Paul Tiosan, Franchise Development Manager of Vibes Massage (2019, March 25). Personal Interview

This can be supported by the statement of Bello III (2018) that qualified PWD employees should have all the rights and benefits that is given by the Labor Code of the Philippines and that the employer should not forbid them from giving the said these benefits.

## **Communication**

As mentioned by Mr. Niño Algura, the chief operating officer of Farron Café, hiring these people can be a bit tough. Persons with disabilities cannot properly contribute when it comes to meetings and to customers who do not know how to communicate through sign language. On the other hand, Novotel has someone doing sign language when hiring deaf and mute.

"There is a problem in communication, how will they communicate to the customers or how would they sell the products?" – Mr. Niño Algura, the Chief Operating Officer of Farron Café (2019, March 12). Personal interview

Hemsley, et al. (2019) stated that despite their disability, people should treat them the way one treats other people; build a conversation with them as a sign of respect. Moreover, using sign language, or writing or drawing as a means of communication can also help PWDs to fully express themselves.

## **Training**

The stakeholders continuously train PWDs until such time they feel that they are ready and that they can do the job independently. Furthermore, this is to enhance their skills and capabilities. Vibes Massage & Farron café believed that if the applicants are trainable then they are qualified. Furthermore, the stakeholders provide adjustment periods every time they hire a new PWD employee.

"We should conduct continuous training until such time that they feel that they're ready." – Ms. Isabelle Canoy, Owner of Puzzle & Gourmet Café

Moreover, this statement was supported by Jasper & Waldhart (2012) as cited in Waxman (2017) that indicates mentoring, which can be apprehended as a measure, was found to be the most reinforced control principle in effectively employing PWDs. Furthermore,

according to Monsour (2009) as cited by Gatchalian, et al. (2014), PWDs positive personal characteristics (loyalty and cooperativeness) and high work performance are valued by a company.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNED**

This study can be a bridge to narrowing the gap between the government sectors and private sectors regarding the PWDs unemployment concerns and to advocate inclusivity, not just in the tourism and hospitality industry, but hopefully as well as in other aspects of the society. The results of this study show that there is a positive development and is yet to flourish in hiring PWDs in NCR, Philippines hospitality setting.

Through the laws mandated by the government, advocacies proposed by the private sectors and the increase in numbers of certified establishments that hire PWDs, NCR, Philippines is shifting to a more inclusive workforce, giving a better future for the PWD sector. The researchers ascertained the sides of the two sectors, both works independently for achieving inclusive growth.

The researchers also found out that there are existing laws mandated for the rights of the PWDs that need to be employed. As the Deputy Executive Director of NCDA is visually impaired, it only shows that PWDs are capable of working, may it be in an entry level or higher position. It is just a matter of training and finding the right job that is suitable for them.

The researchers therefore learned that any disability is not an impediment for a person to be trained for work or be employed to work. Similarly, in the Vibes Massage and the Puzzle café, PWDs undergo training and will eventually be tested if the job is suitable for them. Moreover, the private sector works independently through their advocacies, as well as with the government sector in the promotions of hiring PWDs.

#### **Recommendations**

In addition to the findings of this study, future researchers can explore and expound more on the study of PWDs, not just in the hospitality setting, but also in the various workforce of other industry in the society. Studies focusing on the social issues that PWDs are facing can be made to widen the views of those employers who has the intent of hiring PWDs in their workforce. Moreover, studies focusing on a specific disability can be done to further understand each kind of disability that may exist and may help companies in understanding and in coping easily with the said disability.

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers wish to convey their deepest and sincere gratitude to those who took part in the completion of the study especially to their co-researchers, Marie Celine T. Millevo and Zach Bryant Sanchez. To the researchers' beloved family and friends, to the participants and respondents namely, Mr. Ryan Delos Santos (PWD Vocal Person of DOLE-NCR); Mr. Mateo Lee, Jr. (Deputy Executive Director of NCDA); Mr. Paul Tiosan (Franchise Development Manager of Vibes Massage); Ms. Isabelle Canoy (Owner of Puzzle Café); Mr. Niño Algura (Chief Operating Officer of Farron Café); Ms. Kristine Alba (Talent and Culture Manager of Novotel Manila) and Ms. Elaine Roanne Ruiz (Learning and Development Manager of Novotel Manila); and lastly, the researchers praise and thank the Almighty God for His guidance, blessings, and love which lead their minds and bodies be strengthen.

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