

EMPLOYABILITY OF DISABLED GRADUATES: FROM PROTECTION TO DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

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What and why

- NU Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) ratified by EU in 2010 recognize that:

disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others

differently able → care and assistance

persons with disabilities → rights and participation

What and why

States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.

The ratio of students with disabilities and the overall number of students in Italian universities is growing steadily (Mangiatordi e Scenini, 2016).

Polimi

Students with Disability and SpLDs:

- From 2003 to June 2016 (from 96 to 476)
- Motoric: from 44 to 39
- Visual: from 4 to 14
- Hearing: from 15 to 11
- Psychiatric: from 1 to 20
- Organic: from 30 to 94
- SpLD: from 2 to 298

Unimib

Students with severe Disability

1999-2000 0,31%

2014-2015 0,93%

What and why

- relatively little is known about the first employment experiences and skill development of youth with disabilities, (Lindsay et al. 2012).
- Research shows that having a disability is a barrier to securing and maintaining employment (Lindsay, 2011) but little is known about the specific factors that contribute to these poor outcomes, and even less is known about factors and processes that might improve them.

Why

- relatively little is known about skill development of youth with disabilities, (Lindsay et al. 2012).
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Aims

- to improve our understanding of how graduate youth with disabilities face entry in labor market
 - ✓ Impact of disability
 - ✓ Expectation and attitude toward work
 - ✓ Perceived employability
 - ✓ Resources
- to compare on the same dimensions normal and disabled graduate students
- to investigate the role of resilience resources and employability resources both in preventing negative expectation about the impact of disability on the employment opportunities and promoting the perception of employability.

240 participants

**50 graduate students
with disabilities**



52% males



48% females



66% Disability



34% SpLDs

**190 graduate
students
without disabilities**



45% males



55% females

Inclusion criteria

Age from 19 to 35 anni

Graduate students

Method

Self-report questionnaire

- ✓ Demographics
- ✓ University experience
- ✓ Expectations and attitudes toward work
- ✓ Impact of disability/SpLDs
- ✓ Perceived employability (De Vos e Soens, 2008)
- ✓ Resources

**on-line
administration**



Section	Scale	α
RESILIENCE RESOURCES		
Cognitive Flexibility (Martin & Rubin, 1995)	<i>Career Flexibility Scale</i>	.77
Goal pursuit	<i>Tenacious Goal Pursuit e la Flexible Goal Adjustment</i>	.81
Self-empowerment (Ghenot, 2006)	<i>Self-Empowerment Scale</i>	.87
EMPLOYABILITY RESOURCES		
Ambition (Rothwell et al. ,2008)	<i>Ambition Scale</i>	.70
Soft skills (Harvey, 2001; Pool, 2007)	6 item <i>ad hoc</i>	.77
IMPACT OF DISABILITY	2 item <i>ad hoc</i>	.80
PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY	3 item <i>ad hoc</i>	.85

RESULTS

IMPACT OF DISABILITY

IMPACT	Min	Max	M scale	M	DS
Impact of disability on the chances of finding work	1	10	5.5	4.9	2.3
Impact of disability on achieving one's goals and aspirations	1	10	5.5	4.6	2.2

impact level is average both on the perceived chances of finding work and on the perceived chance of achieving one's goals and aspirations

Expectations and attitudes toward work

Job search effective channels	%
Job placement	43%
Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, ...)	39%
Recruiting web sites	36%
Indipendently/active research	34%
Public competition	32%
Family/Social Network	32%
Employment agencies	25%
Targeted placement	18%
Start autonomous activity	9%

Expectations and attitudes toward work

most important working aspects	DISABLED	NORMAL
Personal growth	60%	52%
Selfrealization	56%	46%
Stability and security	42%	26%
Indipendence	40%	
Appropriateness to one's disability	26%	
High income	16%	

PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Item	Group	Min	Max	M scale	M	DS	Sig.
I think I can easily find a job	Disability	1	5	3	2.6	1	n.s.
	Normal	1	5	3	2.7	.95	
I think I can easily find a job that suits my level of training and experience	Disability	1	5	3	2.7	.84	n.s.
	Normal	1	5	3	2.6	.96	
I think I can easily find a job of great satisfaction	Disability	1	5	3	2.6	.93	p<.05
	Normal	1	5	3	3.4	.88	
Total perceived employability	Disability	1	5	3	2.7	.82	n.s.
	Normal	1	5	3	2.9	.72	

Perceived employability levels are MEDIUM-LOW, both for disabled and for normal participants, except for the extrem level of the scale where the difference is significant

RESOURCES

LEVELS OF RESOURCES

SCALE	Group	Min	Max	M scale	M	DS	Sign
SELF-EMPOWERMENT	Disability	1	7	4	4,1	.85	p<.05
	Normal	1	7	4	4,5	1	
AMBITION	Disability	1	5	3	3,5	.58	p<.05
	Normal	1	5	3	3,8	.55	
SOFT SKILLS	Disability	1	5	3	3,2	.60	p<.05
	Normal	1	5	3	3.5	.54	

normal participants show higher levels of self-empwerment, ambition and soft skills

LEVELS OF RESOURCES

RESOURCES	Group	Min	Max	M scale	M	DS	Sign
Cognitive flexibility	Disability	1	5	3	3.4	.49	n.s.
	Normal	1	5	3	3.6	.57	
Goal pursuit	Disability	1	5	3	3.3	.54	n.s
	Normal	1	7	4	4.5	1	

No differences was found in levels of cognitive flexibility and goal pursuit

IMPACT OF DISABILITY AND RESOURCES

	COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY	GOAL PURSUIT	SELF- EMPOWERMENT	SOFT SKILLS	AMBITION
Impact of disability on achieving one's goals and aspirations	-.496**	-.355*	-.324*	-.491**	-.217
Impact of disability on the chances of finding work	-.124	.066	-.230	-.019	-.027

*p<.05; **p<.01

All the resources considered have an influence on the impact of disability on the achievement of goals and aspirations, except for ambition, but none on the chance of finding work

RESOURCES AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

	GROUP	COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY	GOAL PURSUIT	SELF-EMPOWERMENT	SOFT SKILLS	AMBITION
Perceived employability	NORMAL	.194**	.114	.563**	.164*	.301**
	DISABLED	.207	.281	.503**	.203	-.064

*p<.05; **p<.01

Self-empowerment is a key transversal resources. But normal populations seems to be more protected than disabled population by the considered resources

CONCLUSION

how graduate youth with disabilities face entry in labor market

how graduate youth without disabilities face entry in labor market

- ✓ **Medium/high impact of disability**
- ✓ **High expectation of proactive job search and low expectation of taking advantage of the legitimate benefits**
- ✓ **Prevalence of self-fulfilling motivation toward work together with search of security and independence**
- ❖ **Prevalence of self-fulfilling motivation**
- ✓ **Medium/low level of perceived employability**
- ❖ **Higher expectation of easily finding a job of great satisfaction**
- ✓ **Medium/high level of resilience and employability resources**
- ❖ **Higher levels of employability resources and self-empowerment**

PREVENTION AND PROMOTION

Resilience resources and soft skills negative correlate with the impact of disability on achieving one's goals and aspirations but don't correlate with the impact of disability on the chances of finding work

?

Only Self-empowerment positive correlates with perceived employability but level of self-empowerment is lower than that of normal population

?

Graduate students with disabilities show a proactive orientation toward work in line with normal population.

There is a lot to do to sustain this attitude and to:

- promote and enrich personal resources that may reduce the negative psychological impact of disability as well as foster a higher confidence in finding a job
- Promote an inclusive culture within organizations, broadening the perspective related to worker with disabilities, moving from the perspective of 'placement' to that of management.

The diversity management could be a proper and suitable way to give persons with disabilities the opportunity to fully and effectively participate in and contribute to society