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## POLICY BRIEF

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# **TOWARDS HIRING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: EXAMINING EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES**

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## ■ Executive Summary

Persons with disabilities face challenges with accessing employment. A study of employers' attitudes with regard to hiring persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago revealed hesitant attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities. Employers at companies hiring persons with disabilities had more favourable attitudes than employers at companies with no such positions. Having a company disability policy had no significant influence on employers' attitudes. Given the lack of employment opportunities among persons with disabilities, recommendations include establishing positions at companies for persons with disabilities and developing a research agenda with regard to hiring persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago to inform national policies and plans.

## ■ Problem Statement

It is important for people to engage in work because it facilitates financial independence, satisfactory wellbeing, and social inclusion. This also applies to people with disabilities. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities consistently face challenges with accessing employment (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022; United Nations 2019). Their access to work is hindered by many factors and key among them is employers' attitudes. Notably, when persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago are employed, they have greater wellbeing outcomes and become independent of the disability grant (Parey, 2020) and moreover have the opportunity to contribute to the economy.

## ■ Research Overview

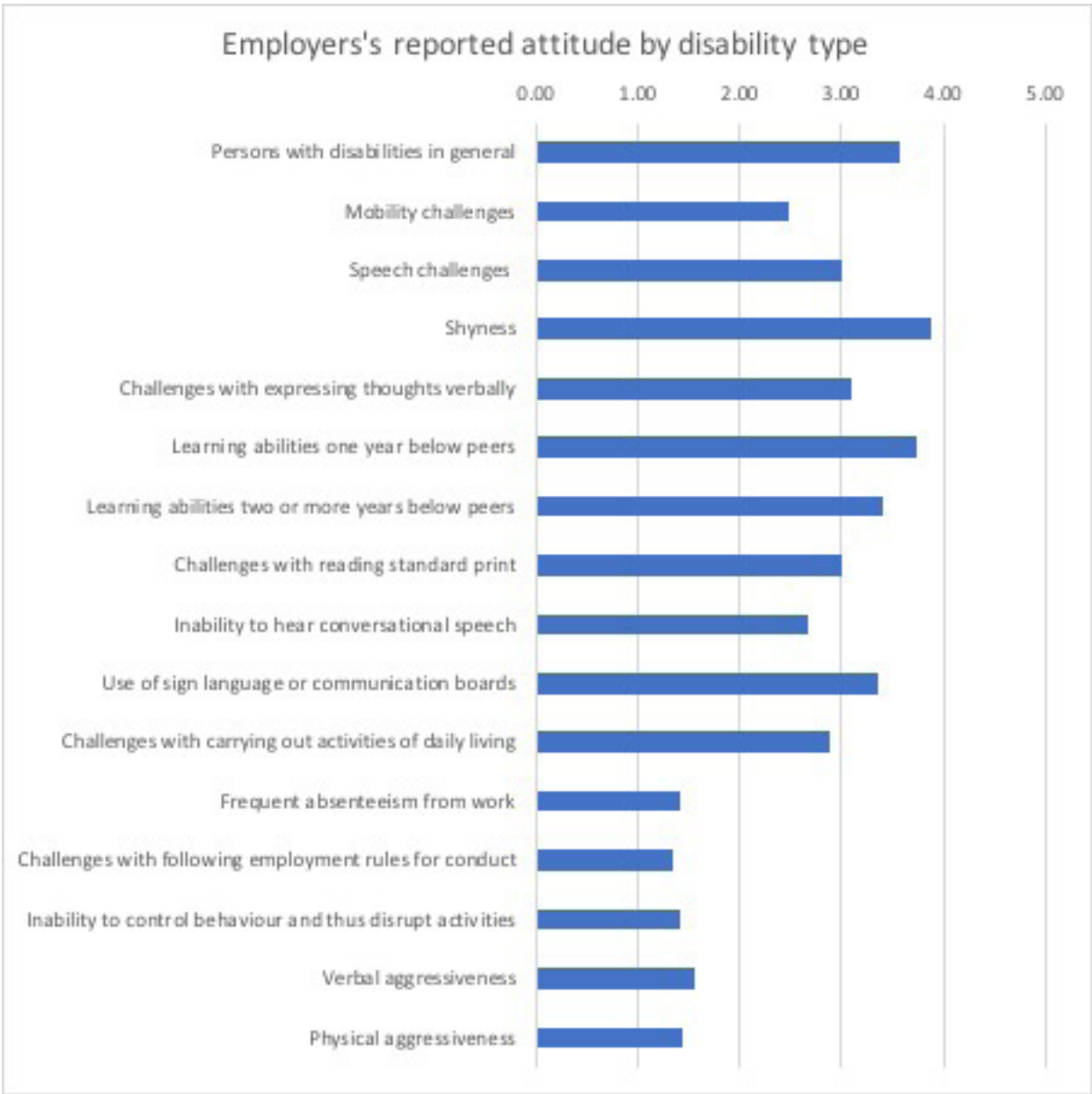
A study was conducted on employers' attitudes with regard to hiring persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago (Parey 2025). Data were collected from a nationally representative sample of 104 employers from various industries in Trinidad and Tobago. Data were collected via an online survey on employers' attitudes towards hiring sixteen disability types, employers' attitudes towards the hiring persons with disabilities in general, and reasons for employers' general attitudes. Employers' attitudes were measured on a scale with negative, hesitant and positive attitudes corresponding to the values of 0 – <2, 2 – <4, and 4 – 5, respectively.

## ■ Employers' Attitudes

Employers generally held hesitant attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities resulting from concerns about the ability of persons with disabilities to work in various jobs and environments. Their attitudes also varied by disability type (see Chart 1). Ratings for sixteen disability types reflected either negative or hesitant attitudes meaning no employers had a positive attitude towards any disability type.

Of the employers who completed the survey, about 27% of them had previous experiences with employees with disabilities, 85% of whom rated their experience as good or very good. Moreover, these positive experiences were favourably correlated with employers' hiring attitudes. Implementing measures to connect employers and persons with disabilities in positive ways could yield employment outcomes for the latter. Additionally, employers from companies with positions for persons with disabilities had more favourable attitudes than employers at companies without such positions. While 19% of companies had a disability policy, this had no significant association with employers' attitudes. Having a disability policy was correlated with employers' attitudes only when coupled with experiences with employees with disabilities. In this regard, efforts to actually hire persons with disabilities seem more important.

**Chart 1: Employers' reported attitudes for sixteen disability types**



**Note: Higher scores represent more favourable attitudes.**

## Policy Recommendations

Given the research findings, there are some key recommendations which the Ministry of Labour could consider to increase the hiring of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago.

1. Implement strategies to educate employers about various disability types in order to increase motivation to hire persons with disabilities. This recommendation could be informed by research (see recommendation 3).
2. Establish positions at companies for persons with disabilities. Specifically, introduce quota systems where companies and organisations are required to reserve a proportion of jobs for persons with disabilities (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022).
3. Develop a research agenda with regard to hiring persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago to inform national policies and plans.

Additionally, the private sector plays a role in shaping the social and economic development of the country. In this regard, they could contribute by creating work opportunities for persons with disabilities and funding further research and initiatives to increase employer education.

The full study is available at this link: <https://www.mona.uwi.edu/ses/node/269>.

To discuss any aspect of this work further or to arrange an intervention, please contact Dr. Bephyer Parey at [bephyer.parey@uwi.edu](mailto:bephyer.parey@uwi.edu).

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