Factors Affecting Successful Recruitment Strategies for Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Jordanian Companies Listed on the Amman Stock Exchange

Mohammed Abed Hussein Altaee, Business Administration Department, Zarqa University, Jordan*
Naseem Mahmoud Abu Shaaira, Business Administration Department, Zarqa University, Jordan

ABSTRACT
This study aims at identifying the factors affecting successful recruitment strategies for individuals with autism spectrum disorder in the Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE). The analytical descriptive approach is followed in analyzing the study population, which included general managers of these companies as well as human resources managers in the companies in which this position exists. A total of 339 managers were selected in a comprehensive inclusion approach. The number of valid questionnaires is 300, with an estimated rate of 88.4%. The study concluded that there is a significant effect for both internal and external factors separately and collectively on the successful recruitment strategies and that the effect of internal factors on successful recruitment strategies is greater than the effect of external factors in the successful recruitment strategies of individuals on the autism spectrum. One of the most important recommendations of the study is to pay attention to both internal and external factors when adopting any recruitment strategies for individuals with autism spectrum. A national plan at the level of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (HKJ) should be adopted taking into account the treatment of social incompetency, post-secondary education, and dealing wisely with the cases of common morbidity. The HKJ government must intervene to enact the necessary legislation and encourage the private and mixed sector enterprises to play their role in providing job opportunities for these individuals. In addition, there is a need for more studies on this sensitive topic in different work environments.

KEYWORDS
External Factors, Individuals With Autism Spectrum, Internal Factors, Successful Recruitment Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION
The results of studies indicate that the number of individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum has increased dramatically in the past few decades, from rates ranging from (2) individuals out of (10,000)
individuals in (1970) to (1%) in general. 2006, the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder increased significantly, and this percentage increased to (1.8%) according to recent epidemiological studies.

For children in developed countries, the rate ranges between 8 and 23.6 per (1,000) people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that (1 in 68) children have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the United States of America (CDC 2014), where there has been a significant increase in the prevalence of cases of autism spectrum disorder (CDC). Autism spectrum disorder in the past decade and reports by the same center indicate that about one person out of 150 had this disorder in 2000 (CDC 2000). Studies also indicate that there are about (50,000) young people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who reach the age of eighteen every year in the United States, as it is estimated that the number of individuals diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder in the United States increases annually by a rate of 10-17%.

In the same direction, the UK’s Nat Cen National Center for Social Research reports that 1 out of 102 adults in the UK have autism spectrum disorder, and it is estimated that there are approximately 700,000 people with a spectrum disorder, living in the UK with autism. The cost to the UK government was estimated to be around 25 billion pounds in 2009, and this cost has likely increased to 34 billion in recent years. This number has also been identified and accepted by other European countries, such as Germany, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Ireland (CDC 2014). According to estimates from CDC’s Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) on Dec 02, 2021 · about 1 in 44 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

To date, the evidence does not indicate that there will be a decrease in the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder. Consequently, large numbers of adult individuals are now approaching the working-age, as studies indicate the existence of the need as well as the ambition, desire, and ability to work and build a meaningful life present in adult individuals with an autism spectrum disorder to become working individuals similar to their peers from individuals who do not suffer. However, competitive job opportunities are limited for them.

From the foregoing, and despite the lack of official statistics in the HKJ regarding this subject, the preliminary estimates of the concerned international organizations indicate that 11,222 individuals are suffering from the autism spectrum out of the total population of 5,611,202 people, i.e. about 0.2% of the total population (www.rightdiagnosis.com). Accordingly, if we take into account that applications for recruitment of adults with autism are often rejected, as it is believed that about 50-75% of adults with autism suffer from recruitment, which negatively affects the individual’s quality of life; by increasing social isolation, and thus a lack of cognitive and mental stimulation. Hence, the consequences of recruitment remain a very important issue. Therefore, there is an urgent need to adopt a successful strategy that guarantees the successful recruitment of these individuals, as this strategy has positive effects on the human side in the first place, as well as other aspects to improve their quality of life, self-reliance, enhance personal dignity, and reduce Relying on government payments, reducing the cost of community support, in addition to increasing cognitive performance.

2. STUDY PROBLEM

Theoretically, the researchers found, by reviewing specialized databases, in addition to reviewing periodicals, whether in their traditional or electronic form, as well as reviewing the work of conferences, seminars, and scientific workshops related to strategies for employing individuals with autism and the factors affecting the adoption of this strategy, that the current study Unprecedented not only in Arab administrative literature, but in administrative literature in general, and that the study problem is presented according to a new perspective, and is characterized by originality and realism.

On the practical side, the researchers found, through the results of the survey conducted on a sample of 30 managers in Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange, the lack of a clear strategy in these companies for the successful recruitment of individuals with autism spectrum,
in addition to a lack of clarity of perception among managers about the most important factors influencing the adoption of a successful recruitment strategy for individuals on the autism spectrum.

The researchers believe that the interest and seriousness in knowing these factors will contribute to formulating this strategy. Therefore, this study aims to find out the most important of these factors. Accordingly, the study problem can be determined through the following question:

What are the most important internal and external factors affecting the successful recruitment strategies of individuals with autism spectrum in Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange?

3. STUDY IMPORTANCE

The study dealt with one of the most important contemporary topics in the business administration literature in general and in human resource management in particular, which attracted the attention of researchers in various universities, research institutions, and the interests of humanitarian organizations, focusing on the factors affecting the adoption of a successful recruitment strategy for individuals with Autism spectrum in Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange, it is only among a handful of studies, which have empirically established the link between internal, external factors and successful recruitment strategies.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers used (Chen et al., 2015) opinions that identified four strategies (employment support, assistive technology, transportation services, and multidisciplinary cooperation), these strategies are purely theoretical and haven’t been previously applied by any researcher in an Arab organization environment or foreign, Western or Eastern. This study is the first to field-test the impact of the factors affecting these four strategies. Hence, it is expected that the current study will contribute to drawing the attention of the relevant authorities to the human, social, economic, and even political dimensions of this segment of society. Also, it examines the effect of internal and external factors on successful recruitment strategies of individuals with autism in the field. Moreover, since little research has been conducted in the Arab world in general, and Jordan in particular, on the relationship between these important constructs, it is believed that the findings of this study can bring some insights to the issue for a better understanding. As well as facilitating the task of Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange when adopting future strategies related to the recruitment of individuals with autism spectrum.

4. METHOD

4.1 Study Model and Hypotheses

In Figure 1 the conceptual model is shown. According to the model, there are two independent variables (internal and external factors) that affect separately and collectively the dependent variable (successful recruitment strategies of individuals with autism spectrum) (Chen et al., 2015).

In line with the above, it can be expected that internal and external factors affect separately and collectively the successful recruitment strategies of individuals with autism spectrum. Therefore, we assume that these factors have a positive influence on adapting these strategies. Thus, the following three hypotheses are set:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a statistically significant effect of internal factors on the successful recruitment strategies of individuals with autism spectrum in the Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange.
Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a statistically significant effect of external factors on the successful recruitment strategies of individuals with autism spectrum in the Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange. 

Hypothesis 3 (H3): There is a statistically significant effect of both internal and external factors together on the successful recruitment strategies of individuals with autism spectrum in the Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange.

4.2 Data Collections  
The number of Jordanian companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange that were included in a study was 264 companies (jorinfo.dos.gov.jo). Respondents in this study were top managers, as well as the human resource managers of the companies in which this position exists. A total of 339 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents using a google form. A total of 300 usable questionnaires were received, resulting in an overall response rate of (88.4%).

4.3 Instruments  
To measure study variables, the questionnaire is the main tool for collecting study data. The questionnaire includes (80) items was built according to the five Likert scales ranging from (1) very low, to (5) very high, in light of the following studies as shown in Table 1.

5. ANALYSES AND RESULTS  
In an attempt of testing the hypotheses, multiple regression methods were used. The normal distribution testing of the data was generated and presented in Table 2. The statistical significance of all values was observed to be greater than the significance level (0.05), which indicates that all the study variables undergo a normal distribution. Based on the results of Table 3, the variables were observed to be moderately correlated which indicates that each variable is distinct and makes a unique contribution to the overall model. The size of the coefficients did not exceed the value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).
and the variance inflation factors (VIF) were also below the score regarded as problematic, which is 10 (Galbreath & Galvin, 2008). So, multicollinearity was not likely to be a problem in this data set.

Table 1. The final form of the questionnaire

| Study Variables                        | Dimensions                                      |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| **Internal factors**                   |                                                 |
| Number of paragraphs                   | Social difficulties                             |
|                                       | Difficult behaviors                             |
|                                       | Comorbidity                                     |
|                                       | Level of education                              |
| (1-9) Chiang et al., 2013; Baldwin et al. 2014 | (10-15) Test et al. 2014; Wehman et al., 2013   |
| (16-22) Wehman et al., 2013; Chiang et al., 2013 | (23-28) Migliore et al., 2012a; Schall et al. 2012 |
| **External factors**                   |                                                 |
| Number of paragraphs                   | Characteristics of employers                    |
|                                       | Professional services                           |
|                                       | Receiving disability-related benefits           |
|                                       | Socio-economic status of the family             |
| (1-6) López & Keenan, 2014; Hendricks, 2010 | (7-12) Test et al. 2014; Lawer et al., 2009    |
| (13-18) Migliore et al., 2012          | (19-23) Taylor and Mailick 2013; Moore and Cunningham 2012 |
| **Successful Recruitment Strategies**  |                                                 |
| Number of paragraphs                   | Employee support                                |
|                                       | Assistive technology                            |
|                                       | Transition services                             |
|                                       | Multidisciplinary cooperation                   |
| (1-7) Howlin et al., 2005; Schaller & Yang’s, 2005, Chen et al., 2015 | (8-16) Westbrook et al., 2014; b, Chen et al., 2015 Bennett et al. 2013 |
| (17-21) Wehman et al., 2014; Cimera et al., 2013 | (22-29) Test et al. 2014; Hillier et al., 2007a |

Table 2. Results of the normal distribution test of the study variables

| # | Variables                                | Kolmogorov-Smirnov | Sig.   |
|---|------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| 1 | Social difficulties                       | 1.030              | 0.040  |
| 2 | Difficult behaviors                       | 1.325              | 0.060  |
| 3 | Comorbidity                               | 1.336              | 0.056  |
| 4 | Educational level                         | 1.276              | 0.077  |
| 5 | Characteristics of employers              | 1.335              | 0.075  |
| 6 | Professional services                     | 1.240              | 0.092  |
| 7 | Receive disability-related benefits       | 1.342              | 0.055  |
| 8 | The socio-economic status of the family   | 1.320              | 0.061  |
| 9 | Support for working individuals           | 1.308              | 0.065  |
| 10| Assistive technology                      | 1.339              | 0.055  |
| 11| Transition service                        | 1.347              | 0.053  |
| 12| Interdisciplinary cooperation             | 1.334              | 0.057  |
6. Hypotheses Testing

Regression results for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6, respectively.

According to the results, all four internal factors variable was significantly effect on successful recruitment strategies for individuals with an autism spectrum (Social difficulties, $\beta = 0.193$;
Difficult behaviors, $\beta = 0.100$; Comorbidity, $\beta = 0.357$; Educational level, $\beta = 0.429$, $p < 0.00$). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

In order to test hypothesis 2, the external factors variable was regressed on successful recruitment strategies. All four internal factors variables was found to be significant effect on successful recruitment strategies for individuals with an autism spectrum (Employers Characteristics, $\beta = 0.489$; Professional service, $\beta = 0.201$; Receive disability-related benefits, $\beta = 0.267$; the family socio-economic situation, $\beta = 0.144$, $p < 0.00$). Hence providing support to hypothesis 2.

With the intention of testing hypothesis 3, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, the regression coefficients indicate that internal and external factors variables combined effects successful recruitment strategies, with a value of $(F=565.02)$, and the value of $(R^2 =0.792)$. Noting that the internal factors have a higher effect compared to the external factors, as the value of the beta coefficient for the internal factors was (0.685), and the value of “T” was (11.94), while the value of the beta coefficient for the external factors was (0.255), and the value of “T” was (3.920), therefore hypothesis 3 was also supported.

### 7. DISCUSSION - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to explore the effect of the internal and external factors variables as significant drivers of successful recruitment strategies. The study findings have shown that social difficulties have effects on successful recruitment strategies. This is consistent with the assertion of (Hendricks 2010; Hurlbutt and Chalmers 2004) which implies that poor grooming and courtship skills, the inability to understand the feelings of others, and the inappropriately working with members of the opposite sex form some challenges facing autism-spectrum individuals in their workplace.

This is further affirmed by (Howlin et al., 2005) assertion that socially inappropriate behavior was one of the main difficulties for individuals with autism spectrum in the workplace. It is also consistent with (Chiang et al., 2013) stressing that the social deficit constitutes a major impediment to the successful recruitment of people with an autism spectrum disorder and that individuals with weak social skills were the least likely to be employed.

Moreover, it corresponds to what (Müller et al., 2003) was confirmed regarding the poor performance of individuals with autism spectrum when conducting interviews for the purposes of the recruitment, limits recruitment opportunities available to them, regardless of their ability to meet the requirements of this job, and that the majority of individuals with autism spectrum have been described as unable to complete their work because they have failed to understand work instructions, as many people with high or severe autism spectrum have faced termination problems due to social media deficits. The results, also support what (Cimera et al., 2013) found that even in the case of individuals who continue to work, these difficulties often lead to the termination of the services for these individuals.
Consistent with the (Taylor & Seltzer 2011; Wehman et al., 2013) stated that difficult behaviors can create barriers to the recruitment of young adults with autism spectrum. Those who exhibit more challenging behavior have fewer opportunities for recruitment and when compared to the problems associated with job assignments, the behavior problems were more unacceptable to employers and co-workers, which could immediately lead to termination. The results consistent are also with what (Smith, 1990) confirmed that such behaviors are difficult to tolerate in the workplace and can prevent recruitment completely, and lead to dismissal and termination of service.

Schaller & Yang (2005) suggested in their study that the presence of comorbidity significantly reduced the likelihood of recruitment them competitively. Individuals who did not suffer from an intellectual disability were more likely to achieve better outcomes in the field of recruitment (Howlin et al., 2005). Young adults with all those with intellectual disability and autism spectrum were less likely to have the opportunity to be employed compared to those with autism spectrum disorder only (Chiang et al., 2013). Taylor & Seltzer) 2011) study also found that young adults with autism spectrum disorder only and without an intellectual disability were three times less likely to be unemployed compared to their peers who suffer from both intellectual disability and a spectrum disorder, unite together.

When looking at the aim of the educational level, (Lawer et al., 2009) confirm that people with less education than a secondary education have more difficulty in finding a job opportunity than those with a higher educational level. Likewise, the (Migliore et al., 2012) study found that post-secondary education is not only associated with an increase in the recruitment rate but also contributes to an increase in working hours and is associated with higher wages. In the same direction (Lawer et al., 2009) concluded that individuals with less than a secondary education level may have an increased risk of rejection of recruitment in transition services. Higher educational levels, especially post-secondary education, give individuals opportunities to learn the skills necessary to deal with recruitment requirements and it makes an excellent addition to their CV (Schall et al. 2012).

Findings of the study also revealed a significant effect of external factors variable on successful recruitment strategies of individuals with an autism spectrum, supporting hypothesis 2. Employers’ characteristics ultimately determine whether or not adults with autism will get a job, and whether they keep the job (Vornholt et al. 2013; Wilczynski et al. 2013). The lack of adequate understanding of employers and co-workers is one of the greatest barriers to the successful recruitment of adult individuals with autism spectrum (López and Keenan, 2014). The supervisors and co-workers were important factors in recruitment success strategies, especially supervisors who were familiar with and knowledgeable about individuals with an autism spectrum, they were supportive and tolerant of them (Hendricks, 2010). Likewise, (Richards, 2012) indicated that employers’ reservations and resistance to necessary adjustments in the workplace related to employee disability, and their reluctance to engage a third party in providing support to these employees, will ultimately lead to termination of recruitment and the demobilization of individuals with an autism spectrum.

Fleming et al. (2013) believe that individuals with autism spectrum can benefit from professional services when providing appropriate services. So, many individuals with the autism spectrum are more likely to be rejected by the vocational rehabilitation system than by persons with other disabilities because they are considered unable to benefit from the services (Lawer et al., 2009). On the other hand, many studies have shown that young people with autism spectrum disorder, whose families’ economic incomes were low, were more likely to not obtain employment or access to public services after they left the school system(Shattuck et al. 2012; Taylor et al. 2012).

In fact, receiving disability-related concessions, allowances or medical and other benefits greatly reduces the likelihood of successful recruitment of individuals with autism spectrum (Migliore et al., 2012). In light of the discussion of the results of the study of this research paper, as well as in light of the increasing prevalence of autism, along with the unique social and behavioral characteristics of individuals suffering from it, there is an urgent need to adopt a successful recruitment strategy. Accordingly, this study recommends the adoption of a national plan at the level of the HKJ that takes
into account addressing the social deficits of individuals with the autism spectrum and enhancing their abilities to communicate in the workplace. This is especially for whom suffer from the weak ability to express and speak spontaneously, difficulties in social communication and expressing their special needs. This can be done through the establishment of institutes and centers and equipping them with facilities and the material and human resources necessary to achieve this goal.

In addition to paying attention to post-secondary education for individuals with autism spectrum and encouraging them to obtain higher degrees in a way, that enhances their recruitment opportunities, increases working hours and wages, and obtains more job benefits; this in one way or another will result in improving their performance at work and standard of living and, in turn, improving the quality of life. The major responsibility here falls upon the shoulders of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) and on the government universities, which must allocate completely free seats to complete university studies for this category. On the other side, private universities can also play an important role in this regard within the framework of achieving social responsibility.

The government should also intervene by issuing the necessary legislation to determine the proportion of individuals suffering from autism spectrum disorder in relation to the total number of individuals working in the companies and to ensure that these individuals obtain privileges by setting the minimum wages and rewards that correspond to the prevailing standard of living in society. As well as encouraging private and mixed sector institutions to provide job opportunities for these individuals in return for government guarantees and incentives, primarily tax exemptions, procedural facilities and other forms of indirect support.

8. ORIGINALITY

This study benefits both research and practice. It contributes to the literature by showing the influence of internal and external factors in adopting strategies for successful employment of individuals with autism, and revealed that two groups of factors have an important role in adopting this strategy by companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange - Jordan. In addition, it is one of the few studies in the business literature that addresses the combination of both internal and external factors influencing the adoption of successful recruitment strategies for individuals with autism, using a hypothetical model proposed by “Chen et al., 2015”, while previous studies dealt with the impact of Apply these factors piecemeal. Hence, this study fills a research gap in the literature related to human resource management strategy by contributing new ideas in employing this category of individuals. This study also provides managers with practical recommendations about the factors most influential in adopting this strategy. In addition, it is only among the few studies in the field that have shown the link between these factors and this strategy. After reviewing the academic literature, little research has been done on the relationship between these important constructs, and it is believed that the results of this study could provide some insights into the issue for a better understanding.

9. STUDY LIMITS

Although the results of this study proved the validity of the conceptual model, some limits should be taken into consideration. The use of self-report data and a self-evaluation instrument may create a common method bias. However, with an eye toward reducing the bias in common method variance, validated and reliable measures were used. More studies are needed to reach a true picture and accurate statistics about the condition of individuals with autism spectrum to determine the actual numbers of adults with autism spectrum in the HKJ in general, the results of recruitment for these individuals, the sectors and fields of recruitment, the percentages of the unemployed, and for those who have work the number of working hours and the wages amounts and bonuses. As well as determining the social and economic level of their families, with knowledge of their access to the required services and other detailed aspects. In addition, since many individuals on the autism spectrum cannot obtain
or maintain employment without proper help and supervision, and because studies have important and positive implications in this direction, there is also an urgent need for more detailed studies and empirical evidence in order to clearly identify effective strategies to increase professional success. Finally, although there are some differences in the work environments for individuals with autism, many professional support programs can be learned and benefit from the experiences of countries and organizations that have made significant gains in this area.

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NOTE

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Mohammed Abed Hussein Altaee is Professor of Business Administration at Zarqa University, Jordan. He was dean of the college and head of the of Business Administration Department and Management Information Systems Department, a lecturer for graduate students in more than one university, has fourteen books in management and management information systems, published 63 refereed research papers, supervised 79 students, discussed 134 theses, participated in 48 conferences, scientific arbitrator accredited in eight scientific journals.