

# Language as Dual Capital: Linguistic Predictors of Inclusion in Pakistani Business Context

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## Abstract

*In Pakistan's business sector, the push for workplace diversity has yet to create many jobs for people with disabilities. Person-first disability terminology (PFDT) is increasingly recognized in corporate style guides as a marker of inclusive communication. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this study therefore examines the consistent use of person-first disability terminology (PFDT language) as a predictor of hiring intention. Survey data drawn from seventy-two middle and senior-level managers were analyzed through correlation and hierarchical multiple regression. Measures captured PFDT language, attitudes, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and hiring intention, while demographic and organizational characteristics served as controls. Analysis revealed that the controls contributed little to explain hiring intention. When PFDT language was added, the model accounted for more variance, and the inclusion of attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms further strengthened the predictive power of the model. In the final step, positive attitudes towards inclusive hiring and a sense of control over the recruitment process were the most influential factors, yet PFDT language still made an independent contribution, whereas normative pressures did not. Managers who habitually have respectful attitudes towards people with disability, therefore, appear more inclined to recruit people with disabilities, even after accounting for key psychological drivers. These findings highlight inclusive language as an attainable lever for improving disability-friendly recruitment and suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing managerial attitudes and efficacy beliefs could help close the gap between diversity rhetoric and real-world hiring practices.*

**Keywords:** *Corporate communication, Hiring Intention, people with disabilities, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Workplace Inclusion*

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## INTRODUCTION

Disability employment in Pakistan remains sharply below national parity. According to the 2022–23 Labour Force Survey, only one in three working-age persons with disabilities is paid, whereas two-thirds of the workforce holds jobs (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Analysts usually blame inaccessible premises, weak enforcement of provincial disability quotas and deeply rooted stereotypes that portray disabled workers as costly or unproductive (Khan & Batool, 2022). Yet an emerging stream of international research suggests that everyday language can also influence recruitment decisions. English is the lingua franca of corporate Pakistan, and the specific phrases managers choose, such as “person with a disability” rather than handicapped person, can cast disability as either a neutral human attribute or a deficit (Stone & Colella, 1996). Field experiments in North America and Europe show that inclusive wording in job advertisements boosts interview invitations for disabled applicants (Lindsay et al., 2019), but comparable evidence from South Asia is absent.

The present study treats the consistent use of person-first disability terminology (PFDT) as symbolic capital that may nudge managers towards more inclusive hiring. Anchored in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), the research tests whether PFDT enhances managers’ intention to recruit people with disabilities beyond the influence of demographic and organizational factors and the canonical motivational beliefs of attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms. The study provides region-specific evidence to guide human-resource interventions such as inclusive-language workshops that complement quota enforcement and accessibility improvements and help close the gap between legal mandates and actual employment for people with disabilities in Pakistan.

### ***Research questions***

This study is guided by four research questions implied in formal research language:

- 1 To what extent does a manager’s habitual verbal and non-verbal use of person-first disability terminology (PFDT) predict the intention to hire people with disabilities?
- 2 How are the core Theory-of-Planned-Behaviour constructs (attitude toward inclusive hiring, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms) each related to managers’ hiring intentions?
- 3 Does PFDT explain additional variance in hiring intention once attitude, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms are statistically controlled?
- 4 Which of the three TPB beliefs exerts the most pronounced influence on managers’ intention to recruit people with disabilities?

### ***Research Hypotheses***

**H1:** Managers’ habitual verbal and non-verbal use of person-first disability terminology (PFDT language) will positively predict their intention to hire people with disabilities.

**H2:** Each of the core Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) constructs—attitude toward inclusive hiring, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms—will exhibit a statistically significant relationship with managers’ hiring intentions.

**H3:** Person-first disability terminology (PFDT language) will account for additional vari-

ance in hiring intention beyond that explained by attitude, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms.

**H4:** Among the TPB constructs, perceived behavioural control will exert the strongest influence on managers' intention to recruit people with disabilities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Person -First Terminology as a Barrier – Removing Strategy*

Person-first disability terminology (PFDT) phrasing that foregrounds the individual before the impairment (e.g., “employee with a visual impairment”) has emerged as a practical lever for dismantling linguistic barriers to employment. Stone and Colella’s (1996) formative model argued that such cues filter stereotypes and normative expectations at every step of recruitment. Subsequent evidence substantiates their claim. In a meta-synthesis of 127 studies, Nagtegaal et al. (2023) identified derogatory labels such as unproductive or costly as persistent impediments to hiring, whereas respectful wording consistently improved perceived suitability. Controlled investigations reinforce the causal link: Lindsay, Cagliostro and Albarico (2019) reported that Canadian job adverts written in PFDT generated 35 % more interview invitations for candidates with mobility impairments, while a recent PLOS ONE experiment showed that PFDT reduces stigma most strongly among managers whose baseline attitudes toward disability are weak (Schumann & Zohny, 2024). European field evidence yields parallel findings: a Danish correspondence study recorded significantly lower callback rates for wheelchair users when vacancy notices contained deficit-laden language (Krogh & Bredgaard, 2022).

### *Institutional Endorsements and Practical Applications of PFDT*

Professional guidelines mirror these scholarly insights. The ADA National Network (2024) urges employers to replace terms such as handicapped with PFDT across all HR documents to nurture respectful workplace cultures. In the United Kingdom, the Business Disability Forum’s Inclusive Communication Toolkit positions PFDT as a “norm-setter” that should be audited annually (Business Disability Forum, 2025). Quantitative studies confirm the practical reach of these recommendations. Using a TPB framework, McDonnall and Lund (2019) found that favourable attitudes, supportive norms and strong control beliefs—cultivated in part by inclusive wording—explained over 60 % of U.S. hiring managers’ intent to recruit applicants who are blind or visually impaired. Qualitative work from Australia likewise indicates that PFDT-compliant adverts, disability narratives and accessible videos simultaneously shift all three TPB belief sets (Mahasneh, Randle, & Gordon, 2023).

### *Regional Gaps in Language Policy and Practice*

Regional evidence underscores both potential and shortfall. A landscape analysis of Pakistani corporations revealed that very few maintain formal disability-language guidelines; instead, ad-hoc Urdu–English code-switching often creeps into recruitment materials, inadvertently signalling exclusion (Centre for Employment Research & Connect Hear, 2023). Similar implementation gaps have been documented elsewhere in South Asia, prompting policy interventions: evaluations of India’s Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) attribute

widened applicant pipelines in technology firms to the mandated removal of ableist idioms (India Development Review, 2024), while World Bank guidance for Bangladesh identifies PFDT as a prerequisite for scaling inclusive hiring, especially for women and youth (World Bank, 2024).

### ***Theoretical Integration and Research Gap***

Collectively, this body of work depicts PFDT as a quick-to-implement, high-impact lever that can influence attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control- the three antecedents of hiring intentions specified by the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Yet no published study has quantified PFDT's incremental contribution within Pakistan. The present investigation addresses this empirical gap by testing whether managers' habitual use of PFDT predicts their hiring intentions after the canonical TPB beliefs and organizational controls are considered, thereby providing context-specific evidence to guide scalable, communication-centered interventions in the country's multilingual business sector.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

This investigation used a cross-sectional survey to test a language-extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model of disability hiring intention within Pakistan's business sector. A self-administered questionnaire was disseminated online from November 2024 to January 2025. Before launch, two human-resource scholars and three disability-rights advocates reviewed the draft instrument for content adequacy, after which eight practising managers completed a pilot version to confirm clarity and face validity.

### ***Participants***

A purposive sample of seventy-two middle- and senior-level managers drawn from finance, retail, education and service organizations participated. Roughly four-fifths of respondents were male, most held at least a bachelor's degree and one in four reported postgraduate qualifications. Human-resource specialists formed the largest subgroup, although chief executives, owners and line managers were also represented. Organizational size ranged from micro-enterprises with ten or fewer employees to corporations exceeding one hundred staff, providing heterogeneity across business contexts.

### ***Measures***

All study variables were assessed on five-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Inclusive disability terminology was measured with four items adapted from Hastings's Inclusive Language Climate Scale; although Cronbach's alpha fell below the conventional threshold, expert feedback indicated that the items captured everyday person-first phrasing adequately, so the scale was retained for exploratory analysis. Attitude toward inclusive hiring, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms were operationalized in line with Ajzen's TPB guidance and previous disability-hiring studies, each demonstrating marginal-to-adequate reliability. Hiring intention comprised three items with strong internal consistency, while hiring behaviour was assessed with four gate-keeping statements, one of

which was removed following reliability diagnostics.

### ***Procedure***

An invitation containing the survey link was circulated through national human-resource associations and professional LinkedIn groups. Participation was anonymous and voluntary; informed consent was recorded on the opening screen. To reduce the common-method bias, item order was randomized, and two attention-check items were embedded. The institutional review board approved all procedures before data collection commenced.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data were screened for missing values and outliers; distributions met parametric assumptions, with skewness and kurtosis well within  $\pm 1.0$ . Pearson correlations described bivariate associations. Reliability was evaluated via Cronbach's alpha, and problematic items were removed where necessary. Hierarchical multiple regression examined predictors of hiring intention. Demographic and organizational control entered first accounted for a small proportion of variance. Including person-first disability terminology (PFDT) alone significantly improved the model's explanatory power. Once attitudes, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms were added, the final equation accounted for just over half of the variance in hiring intention. Attitude was the strongest predictor, followed by perceived behavioural control; PFDT continued to show a smaller but distinct effect, whereas subjective norms remained non-significant. Bias-corrected bootstrapped mediation indicated that PFDT influenced hiring intention partly through its impact on attitudes, yet still retained a significant direct pathway.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

The study adhered to the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association. No personally identifying information was collected; demographic responses were coded in broad categories, and all data were stored on an encrypted server accessible only to the research team. A debrief page at survey completion provided contact details and links to disability-inclusion resources.

### ***Limitations***

Although the achieved sample size afforded adequate statistical power to detect medium effects, the cross-sectional design precludes firm causal inference, and the predominance of human-resource respondents may limit generalizability to other managerial cohorts. Longitudinal and multi-method investigations are recommended to corroborate these findings and to trace how language-focused interventions may influence hiring behaviour over time.

## **RESULTS**

Descriptive, reliability, correlation, and regression analyses were conducted to examine the role of Person-First Disability Terminology (PFDT) in predicting managers' hiring intentions toward people with disabilities (PWDs). PFDT refers to the routine use of phrases such as "employee with a disability," which foregrounds the individual before the impairment.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables**

Variable	Min	Max	M	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Person-First Disability Terminology (PFDT)	1.75	5.00	3.50	0.77	-0.43	-0.36
Attitude (ATT)	1.83	5.00	4.02	0.84	-0.73	-0.43
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	1.33	5.00	3.69	1.08	-0.61	-0.81
Subjective Norms (SN)	1.75	5.00	3.34	0.75	-0.02	-0.61
Hiring Intention (HI)	2.33	5.00	4.00	0.82	-0.58	-0.89
Hiring Behaviour (HB)	1.40	4.60	3.26	0.70	-0.24	-0.47

\*Note. \* PFDT = Person-First Disability Terminology

Across the six study variables, mean scores exceed the scale midpoint ( $M = 3.26$ – $4.02$ ), indicating broadly favourable views toward disability-inclusive language and hiring. Attitude ( $M = 4.02$ ) and Hiring Intention ( $M = 4.00$ ) are especially positive, while actual Hiring Behaviour is more modest ( $M = 3.26$ ), hinting at an intention–behaviour gap. Perceived Behavioural Control shows the widest dispersion ( $SD = 1.08$ ), suggesting mixed perceptions of ease in implementing inclusive practices. Skewness ( $-0.02$  to  $-0.73$ ) and kurtosis ( $-0.36$  to  $-0.89$ ) fall within acceptable  $\pm 1.00$  bounds, so the distributions approximate normality and suit parametric analysis.

**Table 2. Internal Consistency Reliability**

Construct	Cronbach's $\alpha$	No. Items	Items Deleted
Hiring Intention	.81	3	—
Hiring Behavior	.65	4	HB4
Attitude	.69	6	—
Perceived Behavioral Control	.69	3	—
Subjective Norms	.67	3	SN4
Person-First Disability Terminology (PFDT)	.57	4	—

\*Note. \* Values  $\geq .65$  are acceptable for exploratory research; PFDT is marginal but retained.

Internal-consistency analysis shows acceptable reliability for most scales: Hiring Intention achieved strong dependability ( $\alpha = .81$ ) with all three items retained, and Hiring Behaviour improved to a marginally adequate level ( $\alpha = .65$ ) after removing one problematic item (HB4). Attitude, Perceived Behavioural Control, and Subjective Norms each reached  $\alpha$  values of .69, .69, and .67, respectively—just below the conventional .70 benchmark yet still suitable for exploration work, with only Subjective Norms requiring the deletion of item SN4. Person-First Disability Terminology (PFDT) exhibited the lowest reliability ( $\alpha = .57$ ) across its four items, signalling a need for refinement or scale expansion before use in confirmatory analyses.

**Table 3. Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables**

	PFDT	ATT	PBC	SN	HI
PFDT	—	.37**	.32**	.20	.41**
ATT		—	.46***	.34**	.63***
PBC			—	.28*	.52***
SN				—	.30*
HI					—

\*Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

All bivariate relationships are positive and, with two exceptions, statistically significant (\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ). Person-First Disability Terminology (PFDT) shows modest but meaningful associations with Attitude ( $r = .37^{**}$ ) and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC;  $r = .32^{**}$ ), and a stronger link with Hiring Intention (HI;  $r = .41^{***}$ ), whereas its tie to Subjective Norms (SN;  $r = .20$ ) falls short of significance. Attitude emerges as the most potent correlation of HI ( $r = .63^{***}$ ) and is moderately related to both PBC ( $r = .46^{**}$ ) and SN ( $r = .34^{**}$ ). PBC also contributes significantly to SN ( $r = .28^*$ ) and to HI ( $r = .52^{***}$ ), suggesting that perceptions of control contribute both directly and indirectly to hiring intentions. Finally, SN is weakly to moderately correlated with HI ( $r = .30^*$ ). With all inter-correlations below .70, multicollinearity is unlikely to threaten subsequent multivariate analyses, while the pattern underscores Attitude and PBC as particularly influential drivers of inclusive hiring intentions.

**Table 4.** Hierarchical multiple regression predicting hiring intention ( $n = 72$ )

Predictor	$\beta$ Step 1	$\beta$ Step 2	$\beta$ Step 3
Gender	0.06	0.05	0.03
Job title	0.03	0.02	0.01
Sector	0.08	0.06	0.04
Organization size	0.11	0.10	0.09
Person-first disability terminology (PFDT)	—	0.27*	0.14*
Attitude (ATT)	—	—	0.43***
Perceived behavioral control (PBC)	—	—	0.27***
Subjective norms (SN)	—	—	0.11
Radj2	0.04	0.15	0.51
$\Delta$ Radj2	—	0.11**	0.36***

Note.  $\beta$  values are standardized coefficients.  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .01$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ .

Demographic and organizational controls (gender, job title, sector, organization size) explained just 4 per cent of the variance in hiring intention, and none of their coefficients reached significance. Adding inclusive disability terminology in Step 2 increased explained variance to 15 percent, a significant change ( $\Delta$ Radj2 = 0.11, \* $p < .01$ ), with PFDT emerging as a modest but significant predictor ( $\beta = 0.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ). When attitudes, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms were entered in Step 3, the model accounted for just over half of the variance (Radj2 = 0.51), with attitude the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.43$ , \*\* $p < .001$ ), followed by perceived behavioral control ( $\beta = 0.27$ , \*\* $p < .001$ ). PFDT retained an independent, albeit smaller, effect ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $p < .05$ ), while subjective norms remained non-significant. These results underscore that inclusive disability language contributes uniquely to managers' hiring intentions, above and beyond core psychological drivers.

**Table 5.** Hypotheses Summary

Hypothesis	Prediction	
H1	Higher PFDT use $\rightarrow$ higher HI	Accepted
H2	PFDT correlates with ATT & PBC	Accepted
H3	PFDT adds variance beyond demographics	Accepted
H4	PFDT remains significant after ATT, PBC, SN	Partially Accepted

Person-first terminology showed a moderate mean ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ) and exhibited acceptable distribution properties. Reliability analyses indicated adequate internal consistency for all scales except PFDT, which fell slightly below the conventional .65 threshold ( $\alpha = .57$ ) but was retained due to theoretical value. PFDT correlated positively with Attitude ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and PBC ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and demonstrated the strongest bivariate link with Hiring Intention ( $r = .41$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hierarchical regression revealed that demographics explained 4 % of variance in Hiring Intention; adding PFDT increased explanatory power by 11 % ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $p < .05$ ). When TPB beliefs entered, Attitude ( $\beta = .43$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and PBC ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) emerged as dominant predictors, though PFDT maintained a smaller yet significant effect ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The final model accounted for 51 % of the variance in managers' hiring intentions. These findings indicate that respectful, person-first language offers an incremental, low-cost lever for enhancing disability-inclusive hiring even after accounting for core TPB drivers.

## **Discussion**

This study sought to determine whether managers' routine use of person-first disability terminology (PFDT) augments the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model of hiring intention in Pakistan's business sector. The results show that PFDT makes a modest but statistically reliable contribution to hiring intention after demographic and organizational factors are ruled out and, crucially, after the canonical TPB beliefs attitude toward inclusive hiring (ATT), perceived behavioural control (PBC) and subjective norms (SN) are entered.

Consistent with TPB propositions (Ajzen, 1991), ATT and PBC emerged as the two strongest predictors of hiring intention, jointly accounting for most of the explained variance. This finding echoes McDonnall and Lund's (2019) survey of U.S. hiring managers and Mahasneh, Randle and Gordon's (2023) qualitative work in Australia, both of which identified favourable evaluations of disability and a sense of efficacy in providing accommodations as the decisive levers of inclusive recruitment. In the present data, the non-significant role of SN contrasts with those Western studies, but dovetails with evidence that in contexts where quota compliance is legally mandated, yet sparsely publicized, perceived peer pressure may be too weak or diffuse to influence hiring decisions (Nagtegaal et al., 2023).

The independent effect of PFDT corroborates experimental findings that inclusive vocabulary reduces stigma and elevates competence judgments (Schumann & Zohny, 2024). It also aligns with professional guidance that positions respectful language as a visible "norm-setter" capable of nudging line managers toward routine inclusion (Business Disability Forum, 2025; ADA National Network, 2024). Notably, PFDT retained significance even though its internal consistency fell just below the conventional .70 threshold, suggesting that the underlying construct exerts influence despite measurement noise. Stone and Colella's (1996) model predicted precisely such a mechanism: linguistic cues can filter perceptions at every employment stage, from résumé screening to interview scheduling. The present findings extend that proposition to a multilingual, South-Asian labour market, indicating that the respect signalled by PFDT resonates across cultural boundaries.

At the same time, the size of the PFDT coefficient was smaller than that for ATT and PBC. This pattern is unsurprising in light of prior evidence that language tends to act as a surface-level normative cue whose impact is magnified—or dampened—by deeper evaluative and control beliefs (Grech et al., 2024). That is, respectful terminology may open the door to

consideration of disabled candidates, but managers still weigh their personal attitudes and resource assessments before forming a firm intention to hire.

The results also help clarify a recurrent debate in South-Asian scholarship: whether inclusive language is merely “cosmetic” or whether it changes decision pathways. By demonstrating that PFDT contributes unique variance beyond ATT, PBC and SN, the study suggests that language is not a superficial add-on; rather, it offers a low-cost, immediately actionable lever for organizations striving to meet disability-quota targets under Pakistan’s provincial legislation.

Several limitations temper these conclusions. Cross-sectional design prevents causal claims, and the predominance of HR professionals may restrict generalizability to line managers or entrepreneurs. Moreover, although PFDT showed predictive power, its reliability was modest, underscoring the need for scale refinement or expansion in future work. Longitudinal field experiments manipulating job-advertisement wording could establish whether PFDT translates into more interviews and hires, thereby bridging the intention–behaviour gap suggested by the lower mean for hiring behaviour relative to hiring intention.

In practice, the findings recommend a two-pronged intervention strategy. First, inclusive-language workshops that coach managers to adopt PFDT can yield immediate gains in hiring intention—an approach in line with toolkits offered by international advisory bodies (Business Disability Forum, 2025). Second, programs that bolster attitudes (e.g., disability awareness sessions) and PBC (e.g., demonstrations of cost-effective accommodations) are likely to generate larger, sustained effects, mirroring the multidimensional interventions advocated by Mahasneh et al. (2023). Integrating linguistic audits into quota-compliance inspections would help ensure that language practices evolve in tandem with broader inclusion targets.

The study reinforces TPB’s explanatory utility while confirming the incremental value of respectful disability language in a setting where employment gaps remain stubbornly large. Implementing PFDT is quick, inexpensive and culturally adaptable—an attainable first step toward converting Pakistan’s diversity rhetoric into measurable job gains for people with disabilities.

## **Conclusion**

The present study is the first to empirically demonstrate that managers’ consistent use of person-first disability terminology (PFDT) strengthens the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model of hiring intention in Pakistan’s business sector. In line with TPB expectations, favourable attitudes towards inclusive hiring and a strong sense of behavioural control were the most powerful drivers of intention, whereas perceived subjective norms—perhaps weakened by low visibility of disability hiring across professional networks—did not emerge as a significant predictor. Importantly, PFDT contributed incremental explanatory power even after attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and a full suite of demographic and organizational controls were entered into the regression model. The finding confirms long-standing claims from disability linguistics and organizational psychology that respectful language can act as a symbolic cue, shaping decision-makers’ cognitions independently of deeper evaluative beliefs. In practical terms, systematically adopting PFDT offers Pakistani organizations a rapid, low-cost lever for narrowing the gulf between diversity rhetoric and actual employment outcomes for people with disabilities, thereby helping firms move closer to the provincial quota targets of three per cent in Punjab and five per cent in Sindh.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended, based on the present findings, that Pakistani employers begin by weaving person-first disability terminology into every stage of their employment communications. In a labour market where Urdu–English code-switching is common and English still signifies competence and status, consistently using expressions such as “person with a disability” rather than “disabled person” can send a powerful signal of respect to job seekers and existing staff. Because the present study shows that such wording exerts an independent, positive influence on managers’ hiring intentions, revising vacancy notices, interview scripts, HR policy manuals and routine e-mails represents a cost-effective first step toward meeting provincial quota targets currently three per cent in Punjab and five per cent in Sindh without having to wait for large capital budgets or structural renovations.

To embed this change sustainably, organizations should integrate brief language-check stages into their existing document-approval workflows and circulate concise, bilingual style guides that illustrate acceptable and unacceptable phrasing in both English and Urdu. Expertise is readily available: local NGOs such as Connect Hear, the National Business Disability Network and the Ministry of Human Rights’ Disability Information Resource Centre already offer templates and training materials adapted to Pakistani workplaces. Partnering with these bodies can ensure that terminology updates are culturally attuned and inclusive of emerging concepts such as Pakistan Sign Language.

It is further recommended that companies complement linguistic reforms with scenario-based workshops that address the deeper drivers identified by the Theory of Planned Behaviour—namely, attitudes and perceived behavioural control. Co-facilitated by HR trainers and disability-rights advocates, short sessions can define reasonable accommodation, showcase success stories from local firms employing people with disabilities, and provide hands-on practice in inclusive interviewing techniques. Such training not only reinforces respectful language but also tackles the resource and productivity misconceptions that persist in many Pakistani organizations.

Regulatory and professional bodies have a pivotal role to play. Provincial labour departments that already monitor disability-quota compliance should add a linguistic checkpoint to their inspection protocols, providing feedback and template revisions so that even micro- and small enterprises receive actionable guidance. The Pakistan Society for Human Resource Management, the Karachi and Lahore chambers of commerce and industry, and sector-specific associations can amplify these efforts by publicly recognizing firms demonstrating exemplary inclusive-language practice alongside quota fulfilment. Showcasing such exemplars at annual conferences and in trade magazines will strengthen the currently weak subjective-norm pathway by normalizing respectful language as a hallmark of professional HR management in Pakistan.

For longer-term impact, it is advisable that business schools and professional institutes integrate disability-inclusive language modules into their communication and HR curricula. Early exposure will ensure that the next generation of managers views person-first terminology as routine professional practice rather than an external compliance burden. Complementing this educational pipeline, a government-hosted resource hub—maintained in collaboration with NGOs and private employers—should offer freely downloadable bilingual style guides, template job descriptions, cost calculators for accommodations and short explainer videos

tailored to Pakistan's multilingual context. Such a portal would lower the barriers for smaller firms and help standardize best practices nationwide.

Future research in Pakistan should refine measurement tools that capture the nuances of Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and other regional languages as they intersect with English in workplace discourse. Longitudinal field experiments manipulating job-advertisement wording in real recruitment campaigns would verify whether the attitudinal gains documented here translate into higher interview and hiring rates, thereby closing the well-known intention–behaviour gap in disability employment. By implementing these recommendations, Pakistani organizations can move beyond rhetorical commitments and use respectful, culturally resonant language as a practical lever for expanding meaningful work opportunities for people with disabilities nationwide.

### ***Future Implications***

**Research directions.** Future studies should first refine the PFDT scale by adding items that capture the nuances of Urdu–English code-switching and region-specific idioms, thereby raising internal consistency and cross-cultural validity. Longitudinal designs and field experiments that manipulate PFDT in actual vacancy notices, interview scripts, and onboarding materials would enable scholars to track whether shifts in intention translate into higher interview call-backs and eventual hires, addressing the persistent intention–behaviour gap in disability employment research. Comparative work across public- and private-sector organizations, as well as across different provinces and industry clusters, will clarify the boundary conditions under which PFDT is most influential. Finally, integrating additional linguistic cues—such as identity-first phrasing or the presence of local sign-language icons—could yield a richer taxonomy of language practices that shape inclusive hiring.

**Organizational practice.** Employers should embed PFDT into every stage of the employment cycle, from job advertisements and career-site wording to interview protocols, performance-review templates, and internal newsletters. Coupling these linguistic reforms with scenario-based workshops that showcase affordable accommodations and local success stories can reinforce positive attitudes and heighten managers' confidence in supporting disabled staff, thereby amplifying the two strongest TPB belief sets identified here. Small and medium-sized enterprises, which often lack specialist HR staff, can leverage template style guides and checklists made freely available by disability-rights NGOs, chambers of commerce, and the Ministry of Human Rights' Disability Information Resource Centre.

**Policy and professional bodies.** Provincial labour departments that already audit statutory quota compliance could incorporate straightforward language checks into their inspection procedures, providing templated feedback to ensure that respectful wording becomes an industry norm rather than an afterthought. National HR associations and sectoral federations can further elevate standards by recognizing firms that exemplify best practice in disability-inclusive language, thereby strengthening normative pressures and gradually filling the subjective-norms gap revealed in this study.

**Education and capacity-building.** Business schools and professional training institutes should integrate modules on disability-inclusive language and recruitment into communication, HRM, and leadership curricula. Early exposure will normalize PFDT for the next generation of

managers, reducing the need for retrofit compliance training. Complementing formal curricula, a publicly funded online resource hub—jointly maintained by government agencies, NGOs, and leading employers—could house bilingual style guides, sample job descriptions, and short explainer videos, ensuring that high-quality guidance is accessible country-wide.

By pursuing this research, practice, and policy initiatives, stakeholders can translate Pakistan's growing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion into measurable employment gains for people with disabilities, demonstrating that language, arguably the most malleable organizational resource, can reshape labour-market realities.

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