

Labor Discrimination and Bullshit Jobs in Equatorial Guinea: Analyzing Challenges and Strategies for Enhancing Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This article addresses two critical issues in Equatorial Guinea's labor market: the proliferation of "Bullshit Jobs" (BS Jobs) and labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The significance of these challenges lies in their detrimental impact on labor equity, social justice, and economic productivity. While previous research has explored various aspects of labor discrimination globally, there is a notable gap in understanding these phenomena within the specific context of Equatorial Guinea.

The purpose of this study is to examine the prevalence and impact of BS Jobs and labor discrimination against people with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea, as well as to identify potential solutions to enhance labor equity and inclusivity in the country.

Materials and Methods: The study employed a mixed-methods approach, including interviews with Equatoguinean students, particularly those studying in the Russian Federation, and surveys conducted among the student community. Additionally, a thorough document analysis of key government reports, such as the Equatorial Guinea 2035 National Development Plan, was conducted. Previous research reports were also reviewed to provide a historical and contextual understanding of the labor issues.

Results: The findings reveal a high prevalence of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea, with 78% of surveyed students acknowledging their existence, particularly in the public sector. Additionally, 85% of participants reported significant obstacles to employment for people with disabilities, citing both societal discrimination and a lack of supportive policies. Moreover, 92% of respondents expressed strong support for the implementation of inclusive policies and programs to address these challenges.

Conclusion: The study underscores the urgent need to address the issues of BS Jobs and labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea. It calls for a coordinated effort among government, private sector, and civil society to implement effective policies and programs that promote labor equity, inclusivity, and the full participation of all citizens in the workforce.

For citation:

Micha Ncogo Jose, A. M. (2024). Labor Discrimination and Bullshit Jobs in Equatorial Guinea: Analyzing Challenges and Strategies for Enhancing Inclusion. *Journal of Employment and Career*, 3(1), 21–33. <https://doi.org/10.56414/jeac.2024.1.69>

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Data Availability Statement:

Current study data is available upon request from the corresponding author.

Received: 24.01.2024

Revised: 13.03.2024

Accepted: 19.03.2024

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Declaration of Competing Interest:

none declared.

KEYWORDS

bullshit Jobs; labor discrimination; disabilities; Equatorial Guinea; labor equity; social justice; inclusive policies



Бесполезные рабочие места и трудовая дискриминация людей с инвалидностью в Экваториальной Гвинее

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Введение: В данной статье рассматриваются две ключевые проблемы на рынке труда Экваториальной Гвинеи: распространение «бессмысленных работ» (Bullshit Jobs) и дискриминация людей с инвалидностью. Значимость этих проблем заключается в их негативном влиянии на справедливость труда, социальную справедливость и экономическую продуктивность. Хотя предыдущие исследования изучали различные аспекты трудовой дискриминации в глобальном масштабе, существует значительный пробел в понимании этих явлений в контексте Экваториальной Гвинеи.

Цель: Изучить распространенность и влияние бессмысленных рабочих позиций и дискриминации людей с инвалидностью на рынке труда Экваториальной Гвинеи, а также выявить возможные решения для повышения справедливости и инклюзивности в трудовой сфере страны.

Материалы и методы: Исследование проводилось с использованием смешанного подхода, включающего интервью с экваториальскими студентами, особенно обучающимися в Российской Федерации, а также опросы, проведенные среди студенческого сообщества. Кроме того, был проведен тщательный анализ ключевых правительственных отчетов, таких как Национальный план развития Экваториальной Гвинеи 2035. Также были рассмотрены предыдущие исследовательские отчеты, чтобы представить исторический и контекстуальный анализ проблем на рынке труда.

Результаты: Результаты показывают высокую распространенность бессмысленных работ в Экваториальной Гвинее, при этом 78% опрошенных студентов признают их существование, особенно в государственном секторе. Кроме того, 85% участников отметили значительные препятствия на пути трудоустройства людей с инвалидностью, включая дискриминацию со стороны общества и недостаток поддерживающих политик. Более того, 92% респондентов выразили сильную поддержку внедрения инклюзивных политик и программ для решения этих проблем.

Выводы: Исследование подчеркивает необходимость срочного решения проблем бессмысленных работ и дискриминации людей с инвалидностью в Экваториальной Гвинее. Оно призывает к скоординированным усилиям со стороны правительства, частного сектора и гражданского общества для реализации эффективных политик и программ, способствующих справедливости труда, инклюзивности и полной интеграции всех граждан в рабочую силу.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

бессмысленная работа; трудовая дискриминация; инвалидность; Экваториальная Гвинея; справедливость труда; социальная справедливость; инклюзивные политики

Для цитирования:

Миша Нкого Хосе, А. М. (2024). Бесполезные рабочие места и трудовая дискриминация людей с инвалидностью в Экваториальной Гвинее. *Журнал работа и карьера*, 3(1), 21–33. <https://doi.org/10.56414/jeac.2024.1.69>

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Заявление о доступности

данных: данные текущего исследования доступны по запросу у корреспондирующего автора.

Поступила: 24.01.2024

Поступила после
рецензирования: 13.03.2024

Принята к публикации:
19.03.2024

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Конфликт интересов:

авторы сообщают об отсутствии конфликта интересов.



INTRODUCTION

Equatorial Guinea, a small nation of fewer than 3 million people located in the heart of the Gulf of Guinea, is rich in natural resources such as oil, gas, and minerals. Despite this wealth, the country faces significant challenges that impede its socioeconomic development and impact the quality of life for its citizens. Among these challenges, labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities and the proliferation of so-called “Bullshit Jobs” (BS Jobs) have emerged as critical issues that require urgent attention (Graeber, 2018).

The integration of disabled individuals into the labor market is one of the most pressing social issues in Equatorial Guinea. Despite the existence of organizations like the National Association of the Disabled¹ and the National Association of Disabled Women², which offer substantial support to disabled individuals, the majority of people with disabilities in the country continue to face significant barriers to employment (Morwane, 2021). The harsh living conditions, coupled with social stigma and a lack of inclusive policies, make it difficult for many disabled individuals to pursue meaningful careers, despite their skills and qualifications.

This issue was highlighted during the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in Malabo, where various challenges faced by disabled individuals were discussed, including discrimination, social stigmatization, and limited access to employment, healthcare, and education. The National Economic and Social Development Plan of Equatorial Guinea 2035 underscores the severity of the situation, revealing that the unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities is 30% higher than the national average³. Some disabled people, despite having the necessary skills and training, become caught in a vicious cycle of unemployment that undermines not just their financial security but also their feeling of self-worth and social inclusion⁴. This stark disparity not only reflects the damaging effects of discrimination on the lives of disabled individuals but also hampers the inclusive development of the country.

In addition to the issue of labor discrimination, Equatorial Guinea is grappling with the growing phenomenon of BS Jobs. These positions, often characterized by redundant administrative duties, unnecessary bureaucratic roles, and low-paying jobs with no prospects for advancement, contribute little to the overall productivity of society. The pro-

liferation of such jobs represents a significant misallocation of resources and human potential, undermining worker motivation and morale, particularly among the youth.

These intertwined challenges of labor discrimination against disabled individuals and the expansion of BS Jobs illustrate the urgent need for comprehensive reforms in Equatorial Guinea’s labor market. This study aims to explore the root causes of these issues and propose viable solutions to promote fairness, inclusivity, and meaningful employment in the country. By addressing these challenges, Equatorial Guinea can take significant steps toward creating a more equitable and productive workforce, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can contribute to and benefit from the nation’s economic growth.

This problem is not unique to Equatorial Guinea. Research conducted in different countries has shown that workplace discrimination against individuals with disabilities is not only an issue of social justice but also a significant obstacle to social stability and economic development (Vornholt et al., 2017). For example, studies in several European countries have revealed that excluding individuals with disabilities from the workforce leads to a yearly loss of resources and productivity worth billions of dollars (Marques, 2021).

This study is essential to address the pressing issues at hand. The primary aim is to understand the root causes of labor discrimination against disabled individuals in Equatorial Guinea and to propose practical solutions that promote fairness and inclusion within the workforce.

Research Questions:

- (1) What are the underlying causes of labor discrimination against disabled individuals in Equatorial Guinea?
- (2) How does the proliferation of “Bullshit Jobs” impact the workforce and economic development in Equatorial Guinea?
- (3) What effective strategies can be implemented to enhance labor inclusion and promote meaningful employment opportunities for all citizens, including those with disabilities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bullshit Jobs in Equatorial Guinea

Definition

In his influential book, anthropologist Graeber (2018) coined the term “Bullshit Jobs,” or BS Jobs, to describe types of employment that appear to lack any meaningful purpose or fail to provide tangible benefits to society. According to Graeber, these jobs can be categorized into four primary types:

¹ National Association of the Disabled. <https://www.nadr.org>

² National Association of Disabled Women. <https://nfwwd.com/>

³ National Institute of Statistics of Equatorial Guinea. (2023). National Employment Survey. <https://ghdx.healthdata.org/organizations/national-institute-statistics-guinea>

⁴ The state of human development in THE Pacific: A report on vulnerability and exclusion in a time of rapid change. <https://u.to/c77VIA>

(1) Administrative or Bureaucratic Roles: These involve tasks that contribute little to overall productivity and often exist to uphold unnecessary processes or systems.

(2) Service Sector Jobs: Positions in this category often involve roles where the purpose is unclear, or the job exists merely to fulfill societal expectations rather than to provide real value.

(3) Jobs Created to Address Hypothetical Problems: These are roles designed to solve issues that either do not exist or are overly exaggerated, making the work redundant.

(4) Jobs Harmful to Society: These are occupations that are not only unproductive but also contribute negatively, potentially causing harm to society or the environment.

In the literature that builds upon Graeber's (2018) theory, several related terms are commonly used. Dur & van Lent (2019) use the term 'socially useless jobs' when examining his theory. Additionally, Soffia et al. (2022) link Graeber's ideas to the broader discourse on 'meaningful work.'

A key aspect of Graeber's theory is the notion that some jobs are inherently devoid of value to society. First, Graeber identifies bullshit jobs as a "form of paid employment," explicitly excluding self-employment and other economic activities that don't fall under paid employment. Second, he characterizes bullshit jobs as "pointless, unnecessary, or pernicious," encompassing roles that either fail to contribute to society or are actively detrimental. Third, the definition implies that individuals in these roles feel "obliged to pretend that this is not the case." Graeber suggests this obligation arises because employees fear job loss if they acknowledge their job's lack of value and because societal norms discourage openly admitting such feelings. This approach raises the question of how to determine whether a job positively, negatively, or neutrally impacts society. Graeber avoids prescribing a specific theory of social value, arguing that attempts to measure it objectively involve subjective choices between competing theories. He suggests evaluating the social value of jobs by asking workers themselves, incorporating their subjective views by stating that "the employee cannot justify its existence," and generally trusts workers' assessments (Walo, 2023).

Researchers apply Graeber's theory by asking workers if they believe their jobs contribute to society (Dahlgreen, 2015; Soffia et al., 2022). While this captures the core of Graeber's concept, it overlooks the pressure workers might feel to hide their jobs' uselessness and includes self-employed individuals. Thus, "socially useless jobs" might be more precise, as Dur & van Lent (2019) suggest. Since factors beyond objective uselessness might lead workers to view their jobs as socially useless, this article uses "jobs perceived as socially useless" to explore Graeber's claims within the context of subjective experiences.

For simplicity, the term "socially useless jobs" may be used interchangeably.

Finally, in the broader literature on meaningful work, meaningfulness is the positive significance work holds for an individual, rooted in subjective experiences (Rosso et al., 2010). Social usefulness is often a key source of meaningfulness (Allan, 2017), along with autonomy, competence, and self-expression (Martela & Pessi, 2018). Studies show that perceiving work as meaningful is crucial for motivation and well-being, while a lack of meaning can lead to reduced motivation and even psychological issues (Fairlie, 2011; Hu & Hirsh, 2017). Understanding socially useless jobs in this context underscores their impact on both the economy and worker well-being.

Graeber's concept challenges the traditional view that work is inherently valuable and necessary for societal progress. Instead, it raises critical questions about the true purpose and utility of certain jobs within modern economies.

The importance of understanding BS Jobs lies in their broader implications for the job market. These roles not only affect individual workers by potentially leading to frustration and a lack of fulfillment, but they also impact the overall productivity and efficiency of the economy. When resources, both human and financial, are allocated to jobs that do not contribute meaningfully to society, it diverts attention and investment from more critical and deserving areas. This misallocation can hinder labor equity and slow down socioeconomic development, ultimately affecting the well-being of entire communities and nations. Understanding and addressing the proliferation of BS Jobs is essential for creating a more equitable and productive workforce.

BS Jobs in the National Context

The increasing concern about the proliferation of pointless jobs, often referred to as "Bullshit Jobs," is becoming a significant issue not only in Equatorial Guinea but also in many other parts of the world. These jobs, which vary widely in form, pose serious threats to the material and mental well-being of the population, as well as to the overall economy and productivity of a nation.

One of the most prominent examples of these unproductive roles in Equatorial Guinea is found in the music industry, particularly in the widespread popularity of what can be termed "trash music." This genre of music often propagates harmful or superficial messages that negatively influence the cultural and societal fabric of the nation. The content of such music typically glamorizes destructive behaviors, such as promiscuity, baseless rebellion, and substance abuse. These messages not only undermine societal values but also contribute to the normalization of detrimental activities and professions, including hitmen, thieves, and operators of

illicit establishments like brothels. The spread of this type of music represents a significant cultural challenge, as it perpetuates a cycle where unproductive and even harmful jobs are seen as acceptable or desirable.

Another critical factor contributing to the rise of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea is the pervasive practice of nepotism⁵. Often, individuals are hired not based on their skills or experience but rather because of their familial connections or personal relationships with influential figures. This lack of meritocracy in the job market leads to the placement of underqualified individuals in roles for which they are ill-suited, resulting in inefficiency and wasted resources. The misallocation of talent and resources not only hampers productivity but also erodes the quality of the workforce, as positions that could be filled by more competent individuals are instead occupied by those lacking the necessary qualifications.

Moreover, there are numerous other types of BS Jobs prevalent in Equatorial Guinea and beyond that further exacerbate the problem (Campos Serrano & Mico, 2006). These include odd jobs that serve no real purpose, yet consume valuable time and resources, often putting workers' health and well-being at risk. Jobs such as "duct-tapers" or "fix-it-alls," who are employed to provide temporary fixes to ongoing problems, and "box tickers," who engage in unnecessary bureaucratic tasks, are examples of such roles⁶. These positions are typically low-paying and offer little to no opportunities for professional growth, leaving workers stuck in stagnant careers with limited prospects.

The impact of BS Jobs extends beyond traditional employment roles and into the digital realm (Zhang & Venkatesh, 2013), particularly within social networks and online communication platforms. In Equatorial Guinea, as in many other countries, a significant portion of the population spends considerable time engaging in trivial or superficial discussions on social media⁷. While these activities may seem harmless, they contribute little to meaningful public discourse or the exchange of constructive ideas. This trend fosters an environment where the quantity of social media followers or likes is valued more than the quality or substance of the content being shared. As a result, the economy can become skewed towards valuing superficial engagement over meaningful contributions, further entrenching the presence of BS Jobs in society.

In some urban areas, it is common to see an overabundance of security guards stationed at buildings or facilities where the actual risk of crime or threat is minimal (Cheng & Chen,

2021). These positions often exist not because of a real need for security but due to bureaucratic requirements or as a result of nepotism. For instance, a small, low-risk office building might employ several security guards around the clock, despite the fact that the building is rarely visited or that crime rates in the area are very low. The guards are often underutilized, spending their shifts doing little to nothing productive, which makes these positions examples of BS Jobs.

In the political and governmental sectors, there are often positions for advisors or consultants (Ylönen & Kuusela, 2019) who have little to no influence on policy or decision-making processes. For example, a ministry might employ a large number of "advisors" who are appointed more for their personal connections than for their expertise. These individuals might attend meetings and write reports that are seldom read or implemented. Their roles do not contribute to the improvement of governance or the effective running of the state, making these jobs largely ceremonial and without substantial purpose.

In large companies or government agencies, there might be an excessive number of middle management positions (Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020), where individuals are tasked with overseeing operations or projects that could easily be managed by a smaller team. For example, in a state-owned enterprise, there might be layers of management where each layer is responsible for approving the same tasks, leading to delays and inefficiencies. The presence of these redundant management roles not only complicates the workflow but also adds unnecessary costs to the organization without enhancing productivity or outcomes.

In some businesses, particularly in sectors such as telecommunications or banking, there may be an overstaffing of customer service representatives who perform repetitive tasks that could be automated (Zirar, 2023). For instance, in a local branch of a telecommunications company, there might be numerous employees whose primary function is to answer basic questions that could easily be addressed by an automated system or a simple FAQ on the company's website. This overstaffing leads to underutilized human resources, with employees engaged in work that does not require their skills or potential.

Remedies for BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea

Addressing the issue of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea necessitates a multifaceted strategy that tackles both the root causes and the specific instances of this phenomenon within the labor market. To effectively combat the prevalence of such jobs, it is essential to implement policies that prioritize efficiency, productivity, and the sustainable growth of the labor market. Several key strategies can be adopted to mitigate the spread of BS Jobs (Fallah et al., 2022; OECD, 2020; Bass, 2013):

⁵ Riano, J. F. (2021). Family first, state last: Bureaucratic nepotism in a modern state. clck.ru/3Ci98H

⁶ Bullshit Jobs and the Calculation Problem. <https://clck.ru/3CjHU9>

⁷ Digital 2024: Equatorial Guinea. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-equatorial-guinea>

(1) Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship: By promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, new economic opportunities can be created that contribute meaningfully to society. This can be achieved by establishing networks of entrepreneurs that foster collaboration and creativity, ultimately leading to the development of businesses that generate valuable and purposeful employment.

(2) Strengthening Labor Laws and Enforcement: Enhancing labor laws and oversight is crucial to ensuring that labor standards are met and workers' rights are protected. This includes implementing regulations that prevent labor exploitation and nepotism, particularly in public enterprises, and reinforcing inspection and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with existing labor legislation.

(3) Raising Public Awareness: Initiating awareness campaigns, especially targeting the youth, is vital to instilling a sense of responsibility and purpose. Educating the younger generation about their role in the nation's future can help curb the spread of harmful and unproductive ideas, encouraging them to contribute to the country's progress and the development of constructive initiatives.

(4) Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Companies must embrace their social responsibility and actively contribute to the sustainable development of society. This can be achieved by adopting fair and equitable labor practices, implementing CSR programs that support community development, and enhancing the well-being of workers and their families.

(5) Encouraging a Merit-Based Work Culture: Promoting a workplace culture that rewards merit and excellence is essential for reducing nepotism and improving overall productivity. This involves establishing transparent and objective systems for evaluating employee performance and fostering a collaborative environment that encourages teamwork and mutual support among colleagues.

Labor Discrimination Against Individuals with Disabilities

Labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities is a pervasive issue that affects millions globally (Østerud, 2023), including those in Equatorial Guinea. Numerous studies and analyses have consistently demonstrated the prevalence of stereotypes and barriers that hinder the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce. Despite possessing diverse skills and abilities, individuals with disabilities face higher rates of unemployment compared to the general population, largely due to systemic discrimination and the lack of appropriate workplace accommodations.

Discrimination manifests in various forms, from direct exclusion during recruitment processes (often driven by

deep-seated prejudices and misconceptions) to the absence of necessary adjustments that would allow disabled individuals to perform their jobs effectively (Kroll et al., 2021). Addressing this discrimination is not only a matter of promoting equal opportunities but also of fostering social inclusion. By removing these barriers and creating inclusive work environments, the full potential of individuals with disabilities can be harnessed, thereby enhancing workforce diversity and resilience.

Labor Discrimination Against People with Disabilities in Equatorial Guinea: Causes and Consequences

In Equatorial Guinea, one of the primary challenges faced by people with disabilities is the lack of access to education⁸. Education is a critical foundation for personal and professional development; however, many individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea are deprived of this opportunity due to the absence of accessible infrastructure and inclusive educational programs. This educational deprivation significantly limits their skill development and knowledge (Villot, 2022), thereby impeding their ability to compete in a demanding job market.

Beyond educational barriers, individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea also confront societal discrimination and stigma (Ebuenyi, 2019). This stigma often leads to self-exclusion, where disabled individuals withdraw from the workforce due to feelings of marginalization and devaluation. The broader society's lack of support and solidarity perpetuates a cycle of exclusion and discrimination, further entrenching the disadvantages faced by this vulnerable group.

Within the workplace, numerous obstacles limit the employment prospects and career advancement of people with disabilities (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hal, 2014). They are often underrepresented in the job market, relegated to low-paying and limited roles. Companies may hesitate to hire individuals with disabilities due to ingrained prejudices and stereotypes, resulting in reduced workplace diversity and representation. In Equatorial Guinea, although some individuals with disabilities hold prominent positions, such as Senator Martín Ela Ondo, President of ASONAMI, or roles as teachers and administrators, the majority are confined to informal sectors, such as street vending. This is largely due to the stereotyping of their conditions and the lack of educational opportunities within these communities.

Addressing Labor Discrimination in Equatorial Guinea

Addressing labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea is a complex issue that demands a coordinated and comprehensive response from

⁸ Equatorial Guinea Inclusion. UNESCO. <https://education-profiles.org/sub-saharan-africa/equatorial-guinea/~inclusion>

the government, the private sector, and society at large. Implementing policies and programs that promote labor inclusion⁹ and dismantle the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities is essential to ensuring they have equal opportunities and can contribute fully to the country's development.

Associations Supporting the Disabled Population in Equatorial Guinea. Several national associations in Equatorial Guinea play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life and social inclusion of individuals with disabilities, despite the significant challenges they face. Key among these associations are the National Association of the Disabled (ASONAMI), the Association of Disabled Women of Equatorial Guinea (AMUDIGE), and the Association for National Solidarity of the Disabled (ASONAMI), among others.

Supported by the First Lady of Equatorial Guinea, Mrs. Constanca Mangué, ASONAMI has been instrumental in providing access to social housing and mobility aids for individuals with physical disabilities. Recently, the association partnered with a Turkish organization to acquire assistive devices that significantly improve the mobility and quality of life for people with physical disabilities.

AMUDIGE, another organization backed by the First Lady, focuses on empowering women with disabilities by offering them access to educational opportunities and jobs, such as teaching or selling phone credits. This support not only aids their financial stability but also enhances their participation in society and self-esteem. Similarly, the National Organization of the Blind in Equatorial Guinea (ONCIGE) provides critical services, including free consultations, discounted medical glasses, and surgeries for those with visual impairments, thanks to the support of the First Lady.

Despite these efforts, significant obstacles remain in hiring individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea. While some hold political or administrative roles, the majority face limited employment opportunities due to a lack of training. Those with minimal skills often depend on charitable donations, such as tricycles or social housing, as well as health-care assistance provided by various organizations.

Remedies for Labor Discrimination Against People with Disabilities. In response to these challenges, the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) 2035¹⁰ has adopted resolutions aimed at promoting the social inclusion of individuals with disabilities. These policies focus on improving access to professional training and education, as well as fostering the creation of jobs that match their skill levels. Additionally, initiatives to raise public aware-

ness about the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities are crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

To combat labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea, several key strategies must be implemented (Independent country programme evaluation, 2023):

(1) Awareness and Sensitization: It is vital to conduct awareness campaigns that highlight the abilities and rights of individuals with disabilities. These could include media campaigns, educational programs in schools, and training for employers and employees on the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

(2) Strengthening Laws and Inclusive Policies: The government must enforce laws and policies that protect the labor rights of people with disabilities and promote their inclusion in the labor market. This could involve establishing employment quotas in both the public and private sectors and providing support programs that facilitate access to employment.

(3) Training and Capacity Building: Expanding current training and capacity-building programs specifically tailored for individuals with disabilities is essential. Such programs can enhance their employability and skill sets, offering mentoring, skill development workshops, and vocational training courses to help them integrate into the workforce and advance in their careers.

(4) Partnerships and Collaborations: Collaboration between the government, private sector, associations for the disabled, and civil society is critical to addressing labor discrimination. These partnerships can develop innovative and sustainable solutions to promote inclusion and equality in the labor market.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section outlines the research methodology employed in this study to investigate the issues of Bullshit Jobs (BS Jobs) and labor discrimination against disabled individuals in Equatorial Guinea. The approach used to gather and analyze data is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of these complex issues.

Participants

The participants of this study were carefully selected to provide a diverse and representative sample of individuals who could offer valuable insights into the issues of BS Jobs and labor discrimination against disabled people in Equatorial Guinea. Below is a detailed description of the participants involved in this research:

⁹ Employee Rights in Equatorial Guinea. <https://www.rivermate.com/guides/equatorial-guinea/rights>

¹⁰ The National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) 2035. <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/22477>

Equatoguinean Students Studying in the Russian Federation

The primary group of participants consisted of Equatoguinean students currently pursuing higher education in various universities across the Russian Federation. These students were chosen because they represent a group with a unique perspective—being educated abroad, they possess both an understanding of their home country's labor market and exposure to different social, economic, and cultural environments.

The age range of the students varied from 18 to 30 years, capturing both undergraduate and postgraduate students. This range ensured that the study included voices from individuals at different stages of their educational and professional journeys.

Participants were enrolled in a wide variety of academic disciplines, including but not limited to economics, social sciences, engineering, medicine, and humanities. This diversity in academic background allowed for a broad range of opinions and experiences regarding the labor market and the phenomenon of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea.

Many of these students had firsthand or observed experiences with BS Jobs either through family members or personal internships and part-time work in Equatorial Guinea. Their exposure to the Russian labor market also provided a comparative perspective, enabling them to assess and critique the situation in their home country more effectively.

Members of the Equatoguinean Disabled Community

A subset of participants included individuals from the Equatoguinean disabled community. These participants varied in age, gender, and type of disability, providing a comprehensive understanding of how different forms of discrimination manifest in the workplace.

Participants from this group included those who were currently employed, unemployed, or underemployed. Their employment status provided insights into the barriers and challenges faced by disabled individuals in finding and retaining meaningful work.

Government Officials and Policy Makers

A smaller group of participants included government officials and policymakers who were interviewed or whose official documents and reports were analyzed as part of the research. These individuals were crucial in providing context and understanding of the official stance and efforts being made to address labor market issues in Equatorial Guinea.

Participants in this group held positions in various ministries, such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and

were involved in drafting and implementing policies related to employment, labor rights, and social inclusion. Their perspectives offered insights into the challenges of enforcing labor laws and the effectiveness of current policies.

Data Collection Techniques

To address the research objectives, a multi-method approach was adopted, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The following methods were employed:

Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with Equatoguinean students, particularly those studying in the Russian Federation. This demographic was chosen due to their unique position of being able to compare their home country's labor market with those of other nations. The interviews aimed to capture detailed personal experiences, perceptions, and opinions on BS Jobs and labor discrimination in Equatorial Guinea. A semi-structured interview format was used, allowing for flexibility in responses while ensuring that key topics were covered. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and insights.

Here are a set of interview questions tailored to gather insights on BS Jobs and labor discrimination against disabled people in Equatorial Guinea. These questions are designed to elicit detailed responses and cover various aspects of the study:

Interview Questions for Equatoguinean Students

1. Perceptions of BS Jobs:
 - How would you describe the job market in Equatorial Guinea, particularly in terms of meaningful employment opportunities?
 - Do you believe that BS Jobs are prevalent in Equatorial Guinea? If so, can you provide examples of such jobs?
 - In your opinion, what factors contribute to the existence of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea?
2. Experiences with BS Jobs:
 - Have you or anyone you know experienced working in a job that you would consider a BS Job? Can you describe the experience?
 - How do BS Jobs impact the motivation and career aspirations of young people in Equatorial Guinea?
3. Impact of Education:
 - How do you think your education abroad has influenced your perception of the job market in Equatorial Guinea?
 - Do you think there is a gap between the skills acquired through education and the job opportunities available in Equatorial Guinea?

4. Views on Labor Discrimination:
 - What are your observations regarding the treatment of disabled individuals in the Equatoguinean job market?
 - Have you witnessed or heard about specific instances of discrimination against disabled people in employment? Please elaborate.
5. Suggested Solutions:
 - What changes do you think are necessary to reduce the prevalence of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea?
 - How can the government and private sector improve job opportunities for disabled individuals in Equatorial Guinea?
 - What role do you think young people, particularly those educated abroad, can play in addressing these issues?
3. Effectiveness of Current Measures:
 - In your opinion, how effective have the existing policies been in addressing BS Jobs and labor discrimination?
 - Can you provide examples of successful initiatives or programs that have improved employment opportunities for disabled individuals?
4. Future Plans:
 - What future strategies or policies are being considered to address the issues of BS Jobs and labor discrimination more effectively?
 - How does the government plan to involve various stakeholders, including businesses and civil society, in these efforts?

Interview Questions for Members of the Disabled Community

1. Challenges in the Job Market:
 - Can you describe your experiences in searching for a job in Equatorial Guinea?
 - What specific barriers have you faced as a disabled person in the job market?
2. Experiences with Discrimination:
 - Have you personally encountered discrimination in the workplace or during the hiring process? If so, can you share the details?
 - How do you think societal attitudes towards disabled individuals affect their employment opportunities?
3. Support Systems:
 - What types of support have you received from family, government, or organizations in your job search?
 - How effective do you think the current support systems are in helping disabled individuals find meaningful employment?
4. Suggestions for Improvement:
 - What do you believe are the most important changes needed to improve job opportunities for disabled individuals in Equatorial Guinea?
 - How can employers be encouraged to hire more disabled individuals and provide them with meaningful work?

Interview Questions for Government Officials and Policymakers

1. Policy Overview:
 - What are the current government policies aimed at reducing the prevalence of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea?
 - How does the government address the issue of labor discrimination against disabled individuals?
2. Implementation Challenges:
 - What challenges does the government face in implementing labor laws and policies, particularly those related to equitable employment?

Document Analysis

An extensive document analysis was carried out, focusing on key government publications, particularly the Equatorial Guinea 2035 National Development Plan. This document provided valuable information on the government's strategies, policies, and programs aimed at addressing national development, including labor market dynamics. Additionally, other relevant government reports and policy documents were reviewed to gain insights into official approaches to labor market regulation and disability inclusion.

Surveys among the Student Community in the Russian Federation

A structured survey was administered to a broader group of Equatoguinean students residing in the Russian Federation. The survey was designed to complement the qualitative data from the interviews by quantifying students' perceptions of the labor market in Equatorial Guinea. Questions focused on their awareness and experience of BS Jobs, perceptions of labor discrimination, and their views on potential solutions. The survey data were analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and correlations.

Analysis of Previous Research Reports

Previous research reports, including the National Report of Equatorial Guinea and other academic and policy studies, were analyzed to provide a historical and contextual understanding of labor issues in the country. These reports offered additional data that helped contextualize current trends and challenges in the labor market, particularly concerning BS Jobs and the employment of disabled individuals. The analysis also included a review of international studies on similar issues in other countries to compare and contrast findings.

Data Analysis

The data collected from these various sources were triangulated to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. The qualitative data from interviews and document analysis were coded and analyzed thematically, identifying key patterns and themes related to BS Jobs and labor discrimination. Quantitative data from the surveys were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to support the qualitative findings and provide a broader understanding of the issues at hand.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained before conducting the research. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, ensuring that participants' identities were protected.

RESULTS

The results of this study provide a detailed analysis of the extent of BS Jobs and labor discrimination against disabled people in Equatorial Guinea, based on the data collected from various groups of participants, including Equatoguinean students, members of the disabled community, government officials, and academics. The findings are organized into three main sections: perception of BS Jobs, experiences of labor discrimination, and opinions on measures to address these issues.

Perception of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea

The perception of BS Jobs among the study participants reveals significant concerns regarding the prevalence and impact of these positions within the Equatoguinean labor market.

(1) Prevalence in the Public Sector: A large majority of the surveyed students (78%) reported a high prevalence of BS Jobs, particularly within the public sector. These jobs are often viewed as lacking meaningful purpose or contribution to society, leading to frustration among those who hold these positions and those who observe them.

(2) Societal Reward Disparities: 62% of respondents believe that the existence of BS Jobs is closely tied to societal structures that do not equally reward all individuals. They argue that such jobs are a consequence of a labor market that fails to adequately recognize and compensate merit, leading to the proliferation of roles that offer little real value.

(3) Impact of Trash Music: 45% of participants expressed concern that the promotion of trash music, characterized

by superficial or harmful themes, poses a danger to the youth of Equatorial Guinea. They see this as not only a cultural issue but also as a reflection of BS Jobs in the entertainment industry, where content that lacks depth or positive influence is created and promoted, contributing to the deterioration of cultural values and work ethics.

Experiences of Labor Discrimination Against People with Disabilities

The study also sheds light on the significant barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea's labor market.

(1) Substantial Obstacles: A striking 85% of the participants reported that people with disabilities face substantial obstacles in accessing job opportunities. These barriers include physical inaccessibility, lack of accommodations, and discriminatory attitudes from employers and coworkers.

(2) Direct Observations of Discrimination: 10% of respondents shared personal experiences or direct observations where individuals with disabilities were excluded from recruitment processes or faced undue challenges that hindered their employment prospects. These instances underscore the pervasive nature of discrimination and the urgent need for inclusive hiring practices.

Opinions on Measures to Address BS Jobs and Labor Discrimination

Participants in the study were also asked to provide their opinions on potential solutions to combat the issues of BS Jobs and labor discrimination against disabled individuals.

(1) Support for Inclusive Policies: A significant majority (92%) of respondents expressed strong support for the implementation of policies and programs aimed at promoting equity, inclusion, and respect for labor rights for all individuals in Equatorial Guinea. This support was particularly strong for measures that would benefit the most disadvantaged groups in the country, including people with disabilities.

(2) Changing Societal Attitudes: 80% of participants advocated for initiatives to foster a change in societal attitudes, emphasizing the need to recognize and value the diversity and potential of each individual. They believe that raising awareness and promoting understanding of the capabilities of disabled individuals are crucial steps toward reducing discrimination.

(3) Improvement of Labor Regulations: 75% of respondents highlighted the necessity of improving labor regulation and supervision. They believe that stricter enforcement of labor rights, coupled with measures to prevent discrimination and curb the proliferation of BS Jobs, is essential for creating a fairer and more productive labor market in Equatorial Guinea.

Participant Breakdown

Equatoguinean Students

Representing the majority of the study's participants, students provided valuable insights into the perception of BS Jobs and the challenges faced by their peers in the labor market.

Disabled Community Members

This group offered firsthand accounts of discrimination and the obstacles they encounter in seeking employment, highlighting the need for more inclusive policies and practices.

Government Officials and Policymakers

Their input provided context for the current state of labor laws and the challenges in enforcing policies that promote fairness and inclusion.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study align with and expand upon existing research on labor market challenges in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), particularly concerning BS Jobs and discrimination against people with disabilities. The results resonate with previous studies that have highlighted the pervasive nature of labor discrimination and the limited employment opportunities available to individuals with disabilities in LMICs, such as those observed by Ebuenyi et al. (2018) and Tripney et al. (2019). Similar to these earlier reviews, the present study found a significant lack of research and data on the economic participation of persons with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea, reflecting a broader trend seen across LMICs.

A consistent theme across the literature is the focus on barriers rather than facilitators to employment for persons with disabilities. This study supports this observation, with the majority of respondents highlighting obstacles rather than opportunities in the labor market. This finding is consistent with previous studies in both LMICs and high-income countries (HICs), where barriers such as negative employer attitudes, inadequate policies, and lack of access to education and healthcare services are frequently reported as major impediments to employment (Hästbacka et al., 2016; Khayat-zadeh-Mahani et al., 2019).

One of the most significant parallels with previous research is the emphasis on environmental factors as key barriers to employment. In this study, factors such as social stigma, limited access to adapted work environments, and inadequate labor laws were identified as major challenges, similar to findings by Bualar (2014) and Mitra &

Sambamoorthi (2014). The emphasis on the role of the environment in either facilitating or hindering employment opportunities is a recurring theme in the literature, further underscoring the need for systemic changes to promote inclusivity.

The study also touches on the concept of BS Jobs, which is less explored in the existing literature but has significant implications for labor market efficiency and worker satisfaction. The prevalence of BS Jobs in Equatorial Guinea, particularly in the public sector, mirrors concerns raised in other contexts about the proliferation of roles that lack substantive value or purpose, as discussed in broader critiques of modern labor markets (Graeber, 2018). The association of these jobs with nepotism and ineffective human resource management further highlights the structural inefficiencies that can arise in economies where meritocracy is not prioritized.

Moreover, the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in accessing meaningful employment are exacerbated by health-related issues, as highlighted in studies by Cramm et al. (2013) and Gudlavalleti et al. (2014). This study similarly found that poor health, often linked to inadequate healthcare and rehabilitative services, significantly limits the employment prospects of individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea. The intersection of health, disability, and employment is a critical area that requires further exploration and targeted interventions.

The findings of this study are consistent with and reinforce the conclusions of previous research on the employment challenges faced by persons with disabilities in LMICs. They also contribute new insights into the issue of BS Jobs, highlighting the need for comprehensive policy responses that address both labor discrimination and the inefficiencies caused by pointless employment. As such, this study not only confirms the relevance of existing findings but also expands the discourse to include the critical but underexplored issue of BS Jobs in the context of labor markets in developing economies.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the critical need to address the dual challenges of BS Jobs and labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea. The widespread presence of jobs that lack substantive value, alongside systemic discrimination against disabled persons, poses significant impediments to achieving equity and fairness within the nation's labor market.

Regarding BS Jobs, the research reveals a troubling trend towards the creation of roles that fail to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of Equatorial

Guinea. This issue is exacerbated by ineffective human resource management practices in both the public and private sectors, the promotion of low-quality music that propagates harmful ideas, and the allocation of positions based on nepotism rather than merit.

Labor discrimination against persons with disabilities represents a severe violation of human rights and undermines the dignity of this vulnerable social group. Barriers such as limited access to education, pervasive social stigma, and self-exclusion significantly hinder their employment prospects, restricting their capacity to contribute to the nation's development. The absence of robust policies and programs aimed at fostering inclusion and ensuring equal opportunities exacerbates this problem, leading to the continued marginalization of disabled individuals in the labor market.

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from the government, the business sector, civil society, and the international community. To promote progress, Equatorial Guinea must implement effective solutions that not only combat the prevalence of BS Jobs but also dismantle the structural barriers that perpetuate labor discrimination against disabled persons.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While this article provides important practical insights, a significant limitation should be acknowledged. The use of an interview-based design may not have been the most effective approach for investigating implicit attitudes, as it primarily captures conscious thoughts and actions, potentially missing unconscious biases. Additionally, the study faced a constraint due to the limited availability of specific data on BS Jobs and labor discrimination against individuals with disabilities in Equatorial Guinea. This lack of detailed information impeded a thorough assessment of the extent and underlying causes of these challenges.

Future research should consider longitudinal studies to track changes in the labor market over time. Conducting a broader range of interviews with key stakeholders, including those involved in labor insertion, employers from various sectors, and human resources professionals, would provide deeper insights into the issues at hand. Additionally, a thorough examination of existing labor policies and practices in the country is recommended, alongside an evaluation of the effectiveness of targeted interventions designed to combat labor discrimination and enhance the inclusion of disabled individuals in the workforce.

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