

A close-up photograph of a person's hand resting on the rim of a wheelchair wheel. The person is wearing a black leather jacket. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with wooden floors and walls. The image is partially covered by a semi-transparent brown rectangle on the left side, which contains the title and subtitle text.

# Challenges and realities of employment among persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Malaysia

PWDs' Perspective

# About the Project

## Consultancy Project

- Conducted in 2019
- For Institut Sosial Malaysia (ISM) an agency under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Malaysia (MWFCDD)
- A study on Job Opportunities for PWDs in Malaysia
  - PWDs
  - Their families
  - Employers
  - Benchmark against practices in other countries
- All states in Malaysia
- Data obtained from DSW, DOL, MOHE (among others)
- Primary data (surveys, FGD, and study visits) and secondary data (government documents, case studies, websites etc)

Focus on the **PWDs**



# PWD Study



Involves 2 sets  
of surveys:  
employed PWD  
and unemployed  
PWD



The sample  
was obtained  
up to 31<sup>st</sup>  
October 2019



Coverage:  
Demography, info on  
disability & employment,  
experience applying for  
work, experience at the  
workplace, marketability  
and suggestions

Data obtained  
from JKM, DOSM,  
etc greatly helped  
in our sample  
selection (stratified  
sampling)

# PWD respondents

**Total respondents – 756**

Employed – 51.6%

Urban – 61.5%

Male – 63.7%

Malay – 75%

Muslim – 80.2%

Single – 56.7%

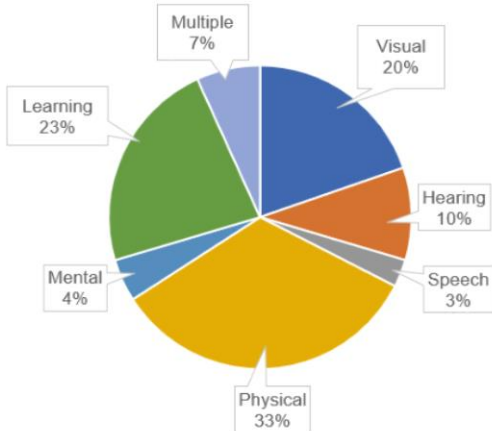
Highest academic (SPM) – 29.8%

Average monthly salary – RM 1,559.55

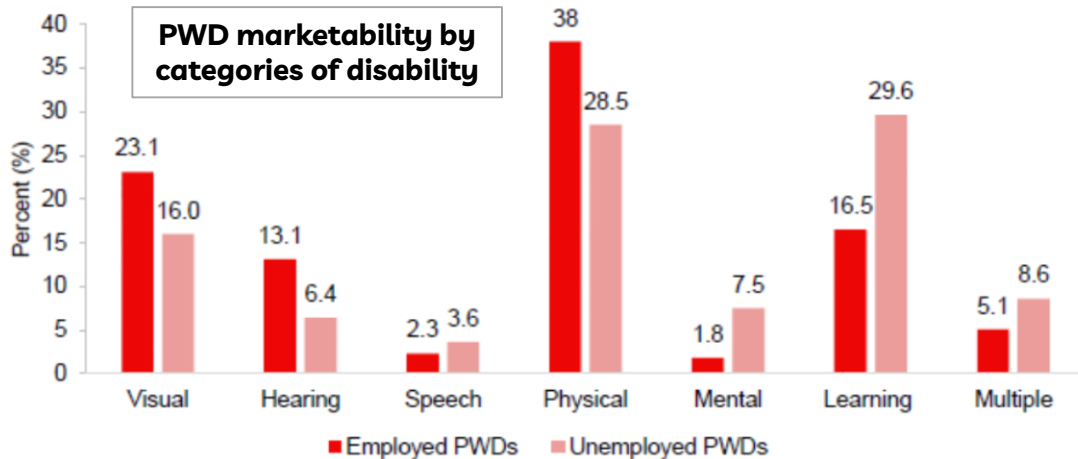
Average gross household income – RM 2,837.66



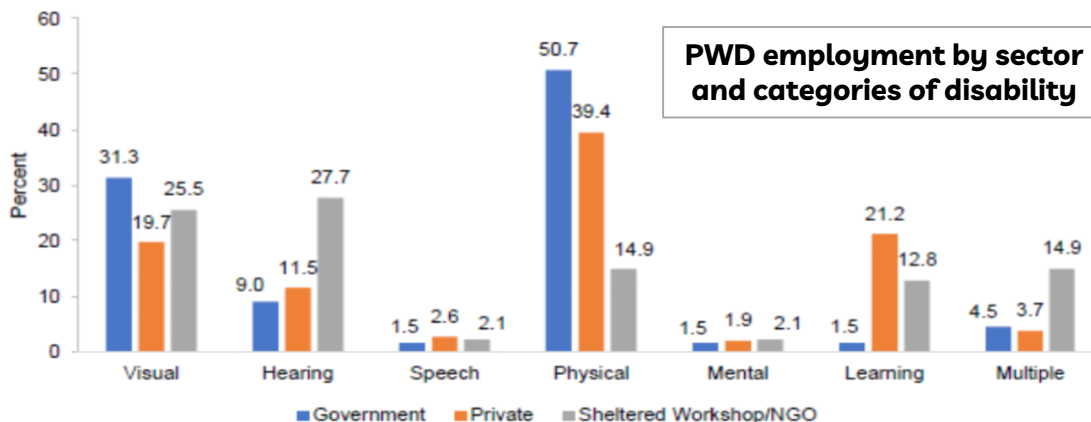
## Types of disability

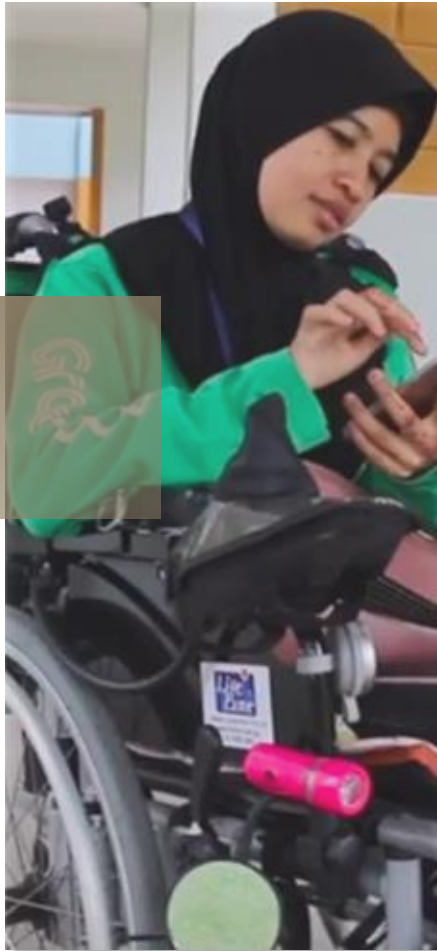


## PWD marketability by categories of disability

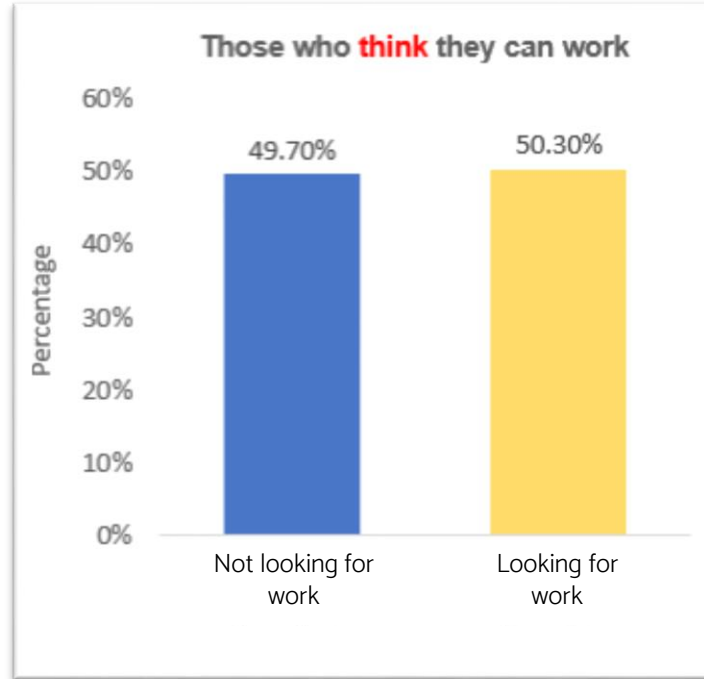


## PWD employment by sector and categories of disability





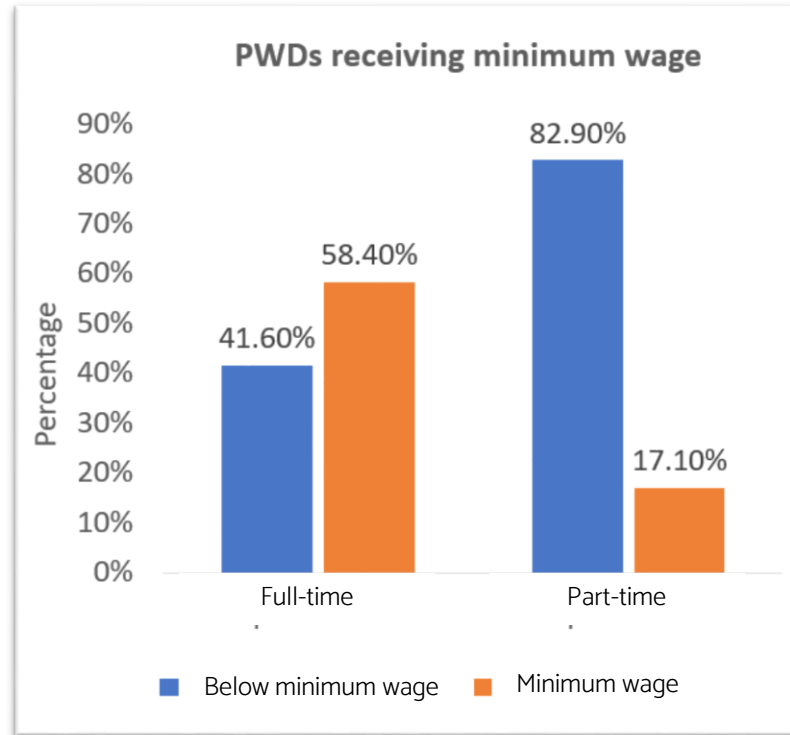
# How do unemployed PWDs perceive themselves?



- 44% of the unemployed PWDs believe they **could** work
- But only half were looking for work
- The rest **did not** want to find a job because they felt “less confident” with themselves (28%), and “have other commitments” (22%)



# PWD employment information



- Average gross income for PWD is very low (RM 1500)
- 95% are in B40 category
- 52% of them receive less than minimum wage
- 40% of them are poor and earn less than RM950/month
- Most poor PWDs have physical, learning and visual disabilities

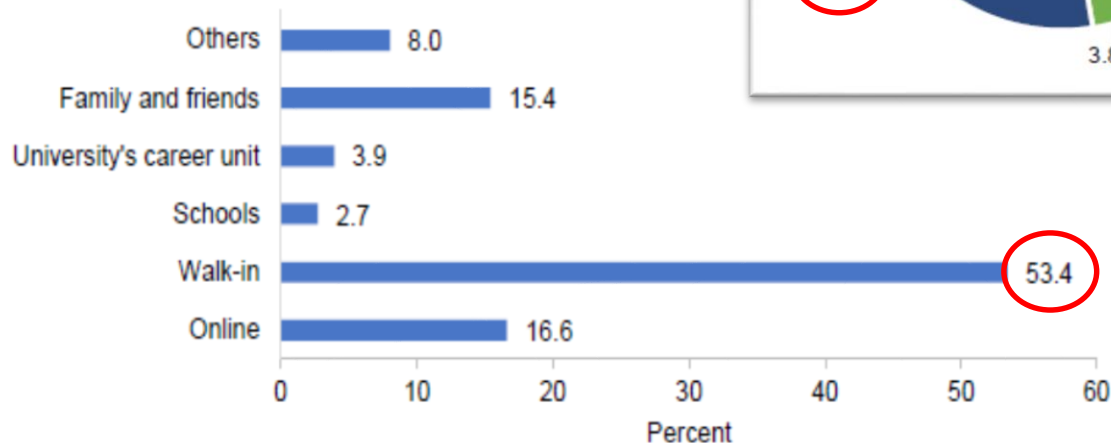
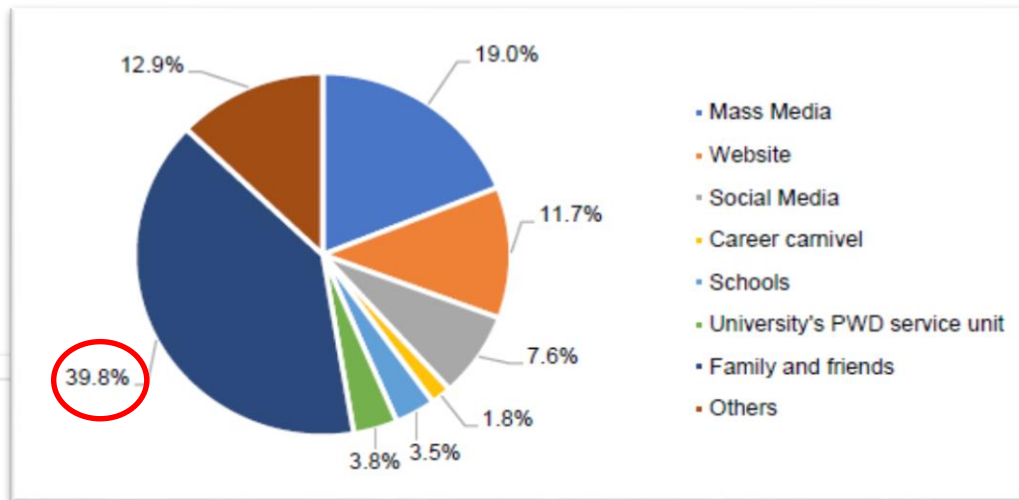
# Experience applying for a job

Main way to get job info:  
THROUGH FAMILY & FRIENDS



## 513,519

*Number of PWD as of  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2019*



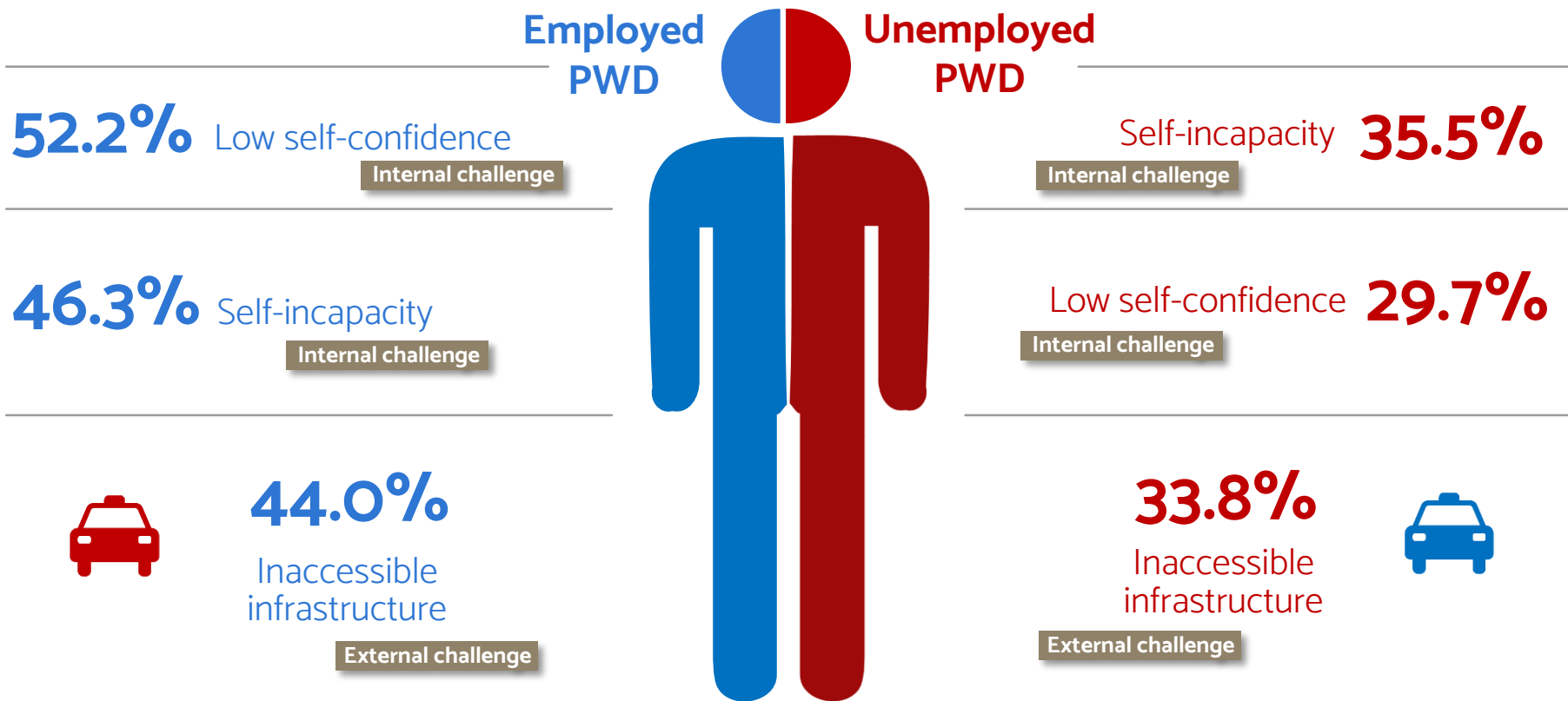
Main way to apply for a job:  
WALK-IN







# Main challenges when applying for a job







# Challenges during job interviews

## Main challenges (General)



**50.3%** Prejudicial attitude



**46.3%** Low self-esteem



**45.8%** Low self-confidence

## Different challenges by different PWD category

**Speech & Hearing disabilities**  
Highest communication problem



**Speech disability**  
Prejudice, lack of knowledge about  
PWDs



**Physical & Visual disabilities**  
Highest transportation problems

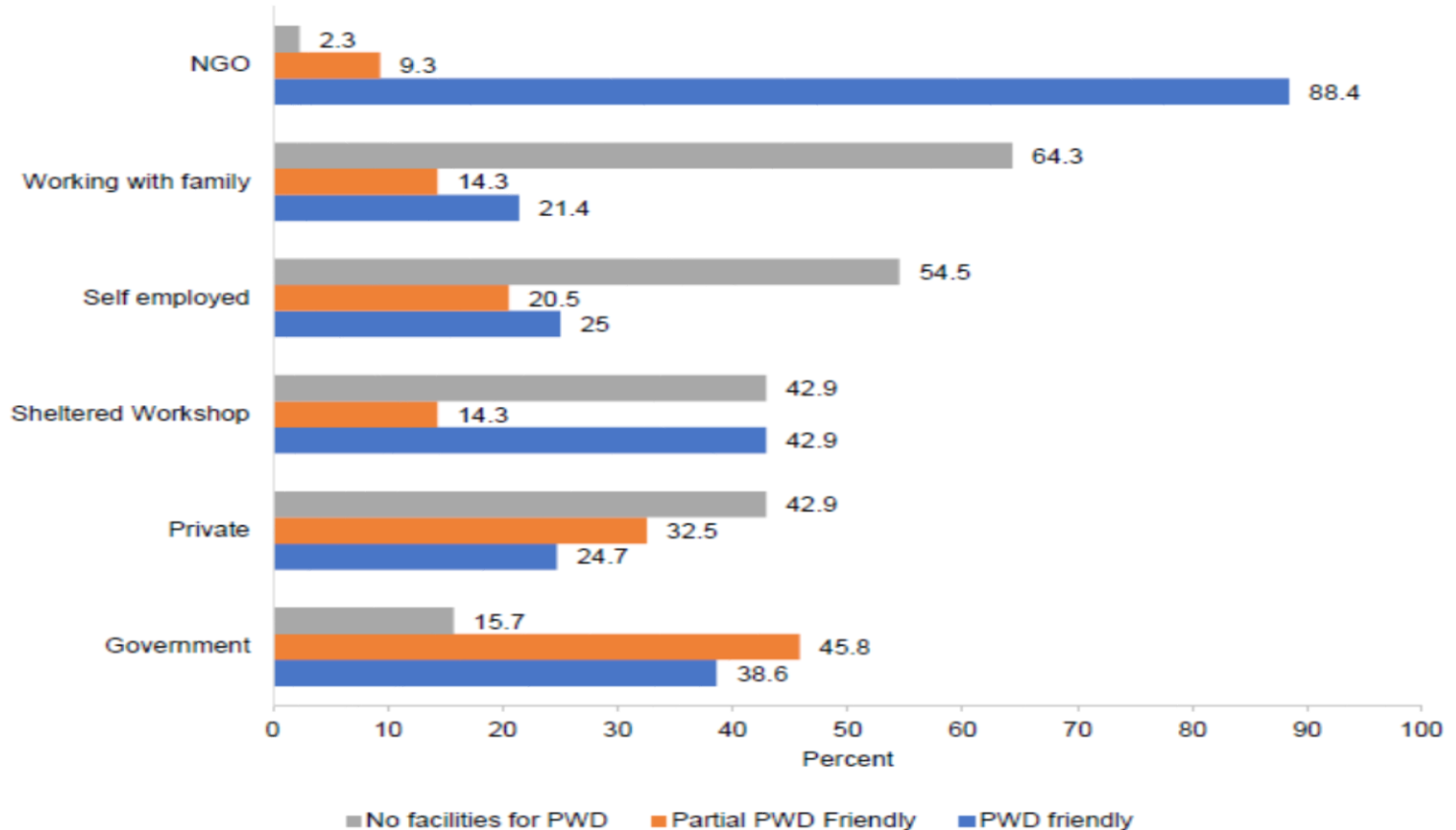


**Learning disability**  
Low self-confidence, low self-esteem,  
and lack of knowledge about PWDs





# Working conditions by job sector



## Main problems in PWD employment

**44.0%** Low self-confidence

Internal challenge

**38.3%** Low self-esteem or inferiority complex

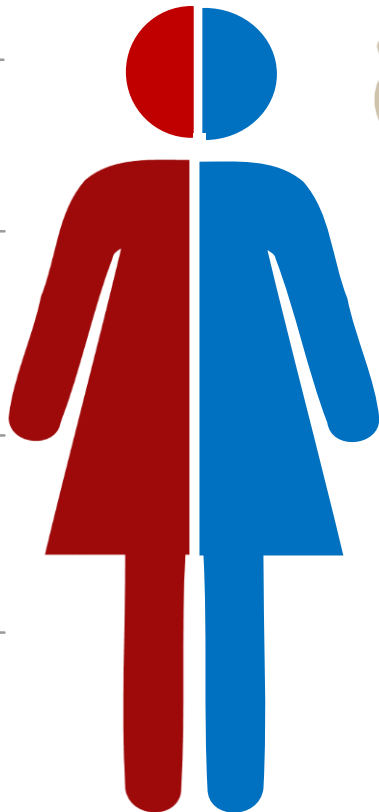
Internal challenge

**30.9%** Transportation problem to the workplace

External challenge

**29.3%** Lack of training received

External challenge



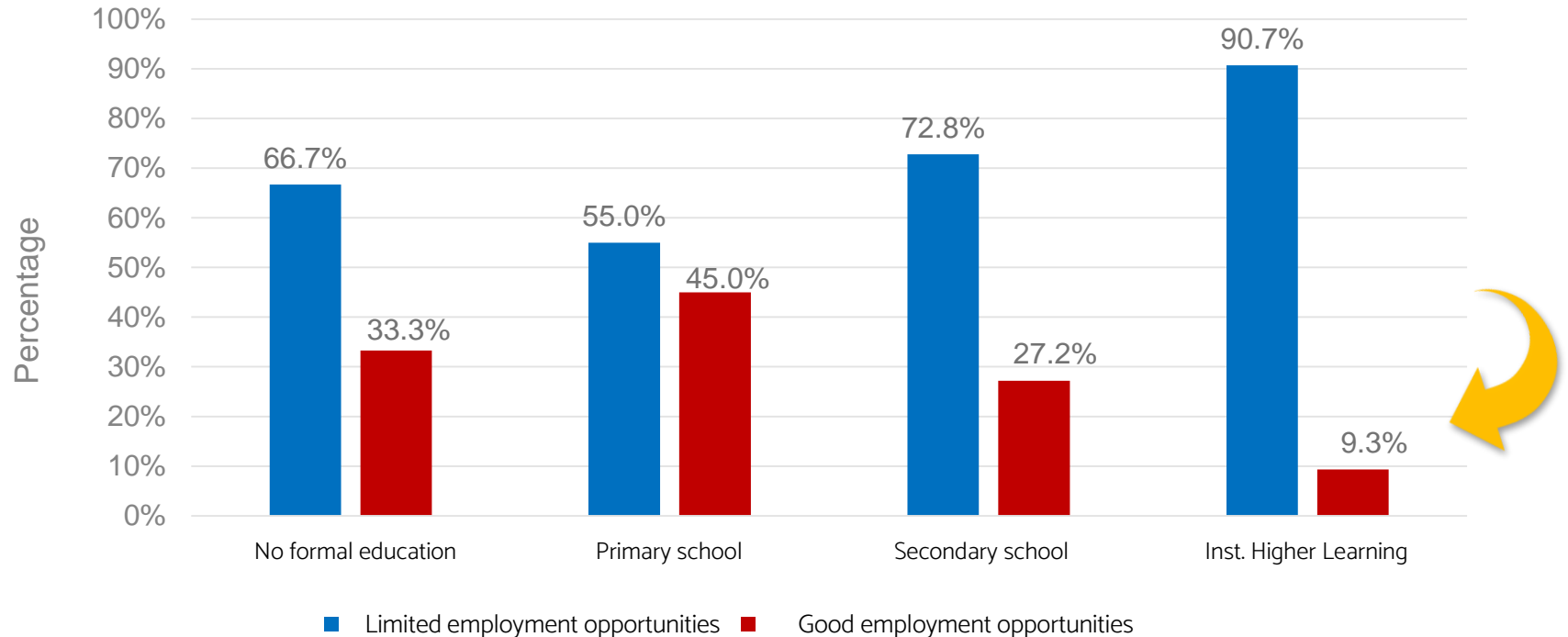
## Suggestions to improve PWD productivity

Provide a suitable physical environment for the PWDs **72%**

Provide specific customization or adjustment **63.2%**

Provide training incentives etc. **62.9%**

# Academic qualifications and employment opportunities for PWDs



# Top recommendations to increase employment opportunities for PWDs

**58%**

believes that  
employment  
opportunities are  
limited for PWDs

Create more  
job  
opportunities  
for PWDs



Provide  
more  
incentives  
or facilities  
to PWDs

Ensure that  
jobs are  
suitable or  
specific for  
PWDs

Give  
exposure to  
employers  
and public

# Challenges and realities of employment among persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Malaysia

- Employers' Perspective

## Employers

- **Private companies**
  - Formal sector (registered companies)
  - non-formal sector (non-registered)
- **Public sector**
  - Government departments, agencies, boards, councils

## Private companies – sample selection

- **DOSM** – List of randomly selected companies
  - Cluster: State – urban and non-urban
  - Stratification – sector and size
  - Proportional to the distribution of companies in Malaysia
  - Backup list – companies not able to be surveyed.
- **Department of Social Welfare**
  - Companies known to employ PWDs



## Face-to face survey

- Employer questionnaire – 3 versions
  - Employed PWDs at the time of the survey
  - Previously, but no longer employed PWDs
  - Never employed PWDs
- July – December, 2019
- 426 respondents

## Data collection - issues

- Enumerators provided with main list, and replacement list as backup.
- Priority – main list.
- Constraints and lack of cooperation from employers, enumerators resorted to convenience sampling in some instances.
- Findings pertain to the respondents in the sample – may reflect the views of other employers, need to exercise caution for any generalization.

## Sample description

agriculture, service and construction:  
 Small: <20 FT employees  
 Medium: 20-50  
 Large: >50  
 Manufacturing:  
 Small: <=50  
 Medium: 51-150  
 Large: >150

Sector	Size	Urban		Non-urban		ALL	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Manufacturing (46 – 11.1%)	Small	28	60.9	8	17.4	36	78.3
	Medium	4	8.7	0	0.0	4	8.7
	Large	5	10.9	1	2.2	6	13.0
Agriculture (13 – 3.1%)	Small	4	30.8	4	30.8	8	61.5
	Medium	0	0.0	1	7.7	1	7.7
	Large	1	7.7	3	23.1	4	30.8
Service (300 – 72.5%)	Small	179	59.7	49	16.3	228	76.0
	Medium	26	8.7	3	1.0	29	9.7
	Large	36	12.0	7	2.3	43	14.3
Construction (28 – 6.8%)	Small	8	28.6	3	10.7	11	39.3
	Medium	9	32.1	0	0.0	9	32.1
	Large	8	28.6	0	0.0	8	28.6
Government (27 – 6.5%)	Small	1	3.7			1	3.7
	Medium	2	7.4			2	7.4
	Large	24	88.9			24	88.9
ALL* (414)*	Small	220	53.1	64	15.5	284	68.6
	Medium	41	9.9	4	1.0	45	10.9
	Large	74	17.9	11	2.7	85	20.5
TOTAL		335	80.9	79	19.1	414*	100.0

Note: \*less than the total number as there are respondents who did not provide information on the number of their full-time workers.

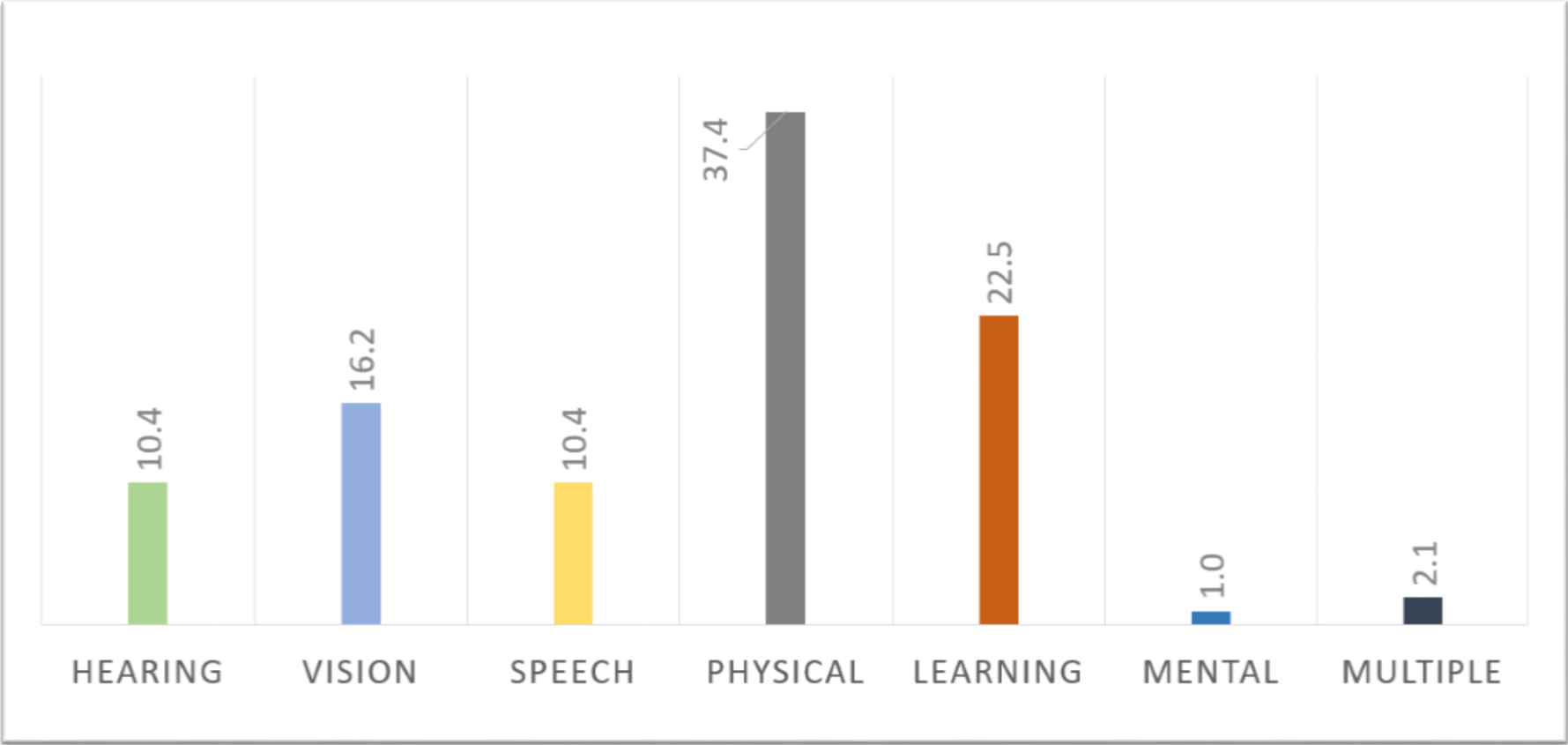
## Employers who employ or had employed PWDs

- # PWD employees is small.  
Out of total FT workers:
- 1.2% current employers.
  - 3.1% past employers.

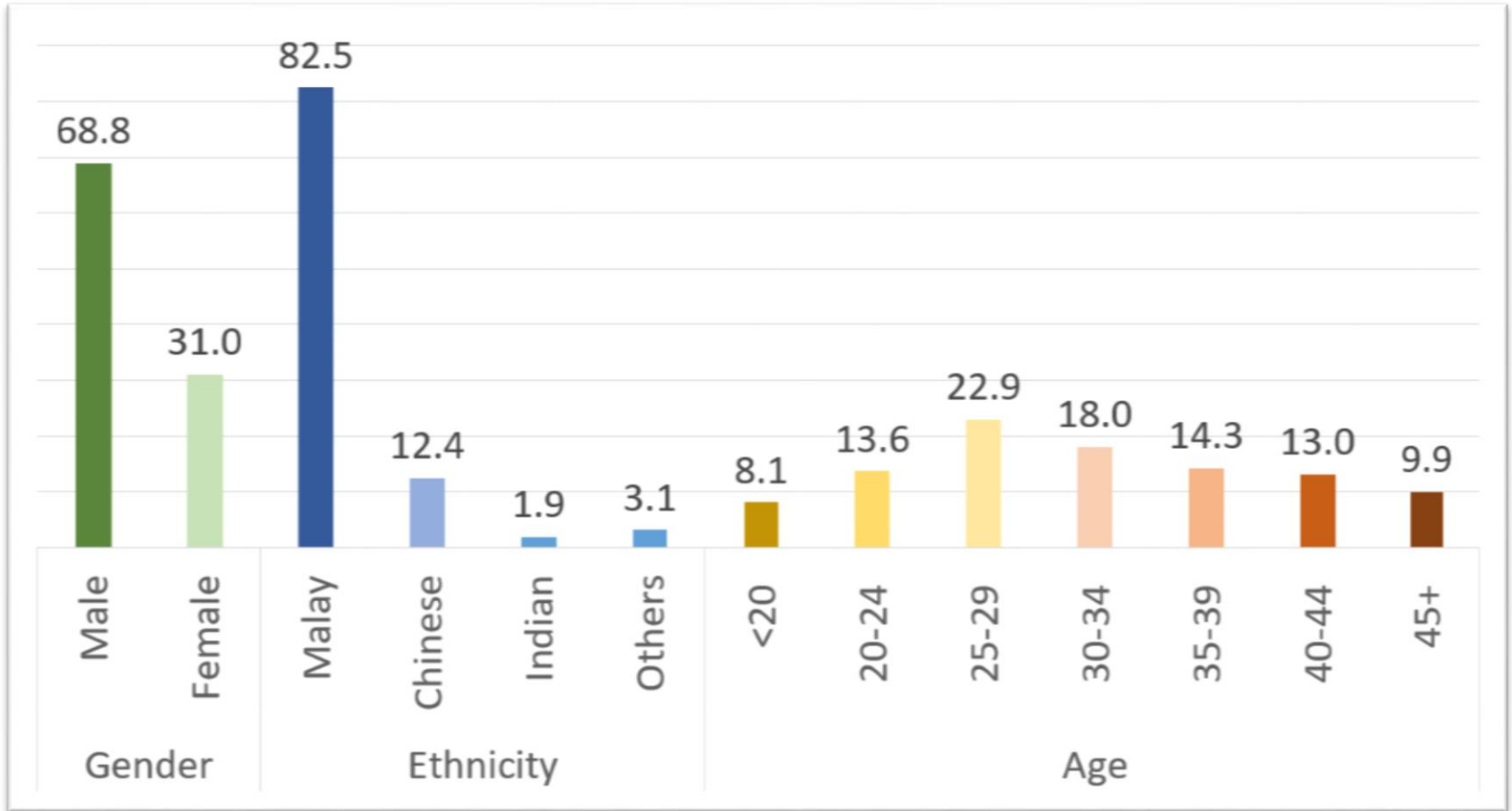
	Size	N (%)	% out of total full-time employees	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Employ PWD (20.2%)	Small	40* (14.1%)	30.1	1.8	1	11
	Medium	9* (20.0%)	4.7	1.9	1	5
	Large	32* (37.6%)	1.0	3.3	1	20
	All	86	1.2	2.6	1	20
Had employed PWD (8.9%)	Small	24* (8.5%)	27.3	1.1	1	2
	Medium	4* (8.9%)	8.8	2.5	1	4
	Large	7* (8.2%)	0.9	1.4	1	4
	All	38	3.1	1.3	1	4

Note: \*less than the total number as there are respondents who did not provide information on the number of full-time workers at their organization.

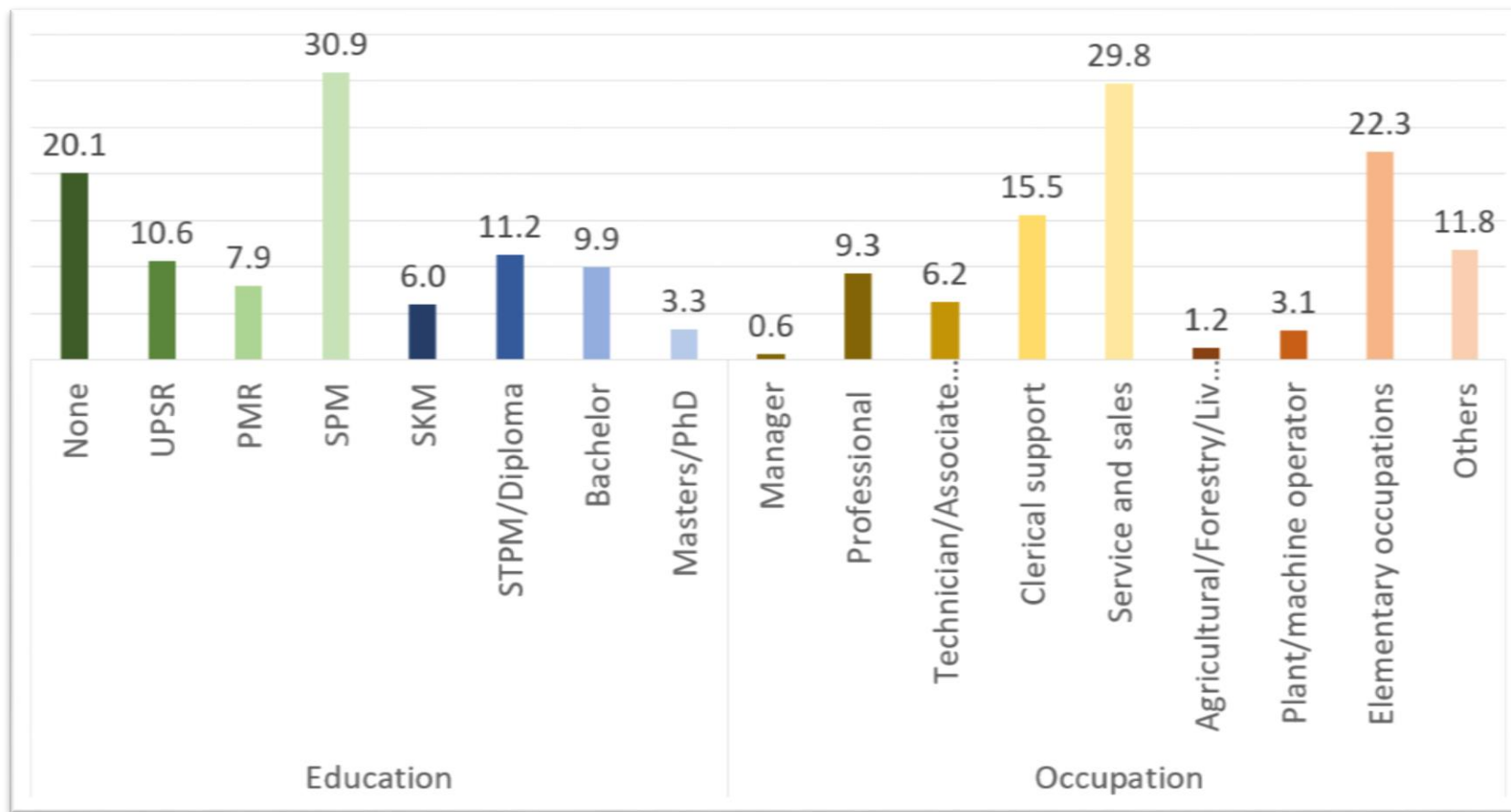
Distribution of PWD employees by disability category (%)



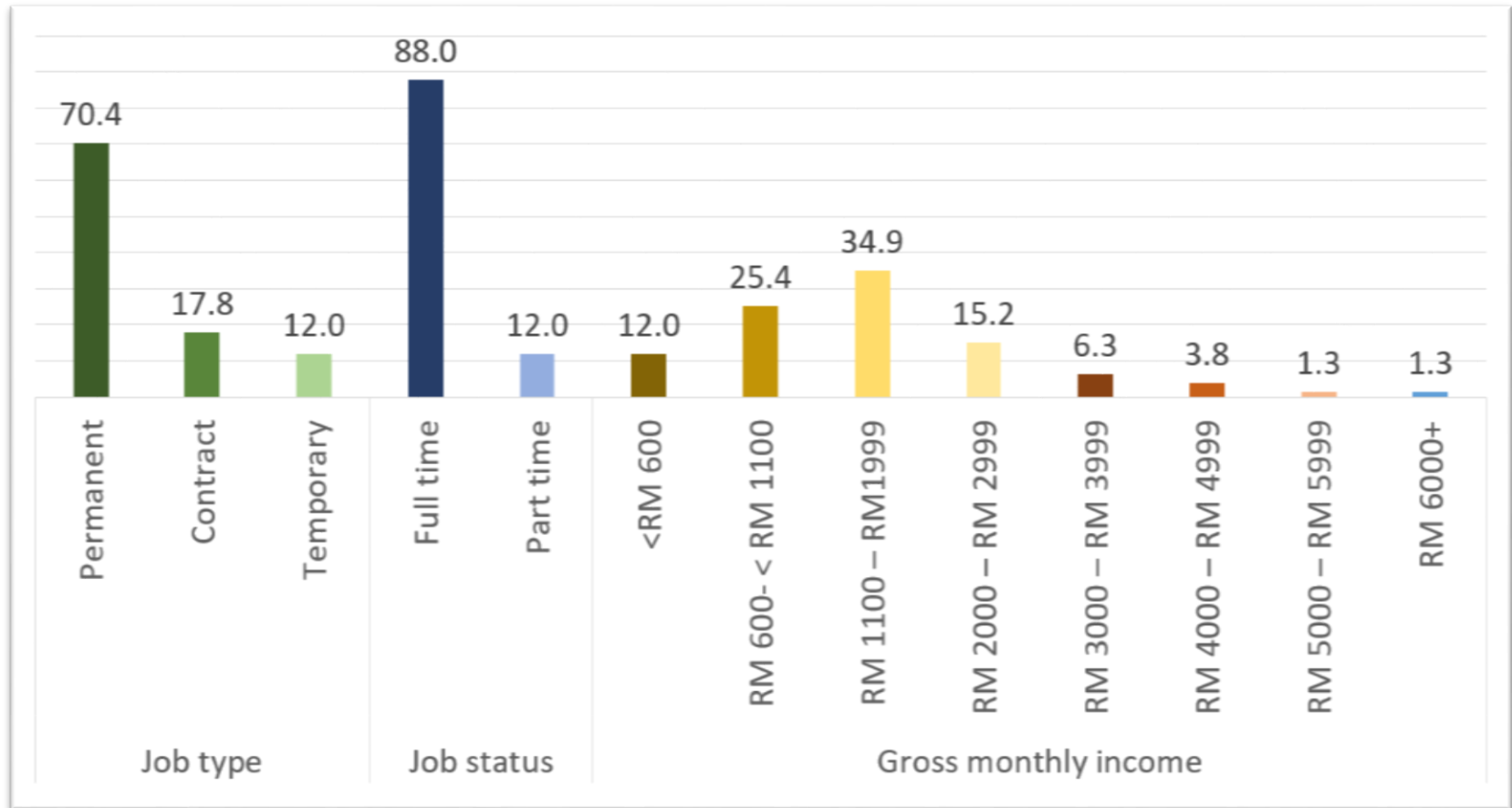
Distribution of PWD employees by gender, ethnicity and age (%)



## Distribution of PWD employees by education and occupation (%)

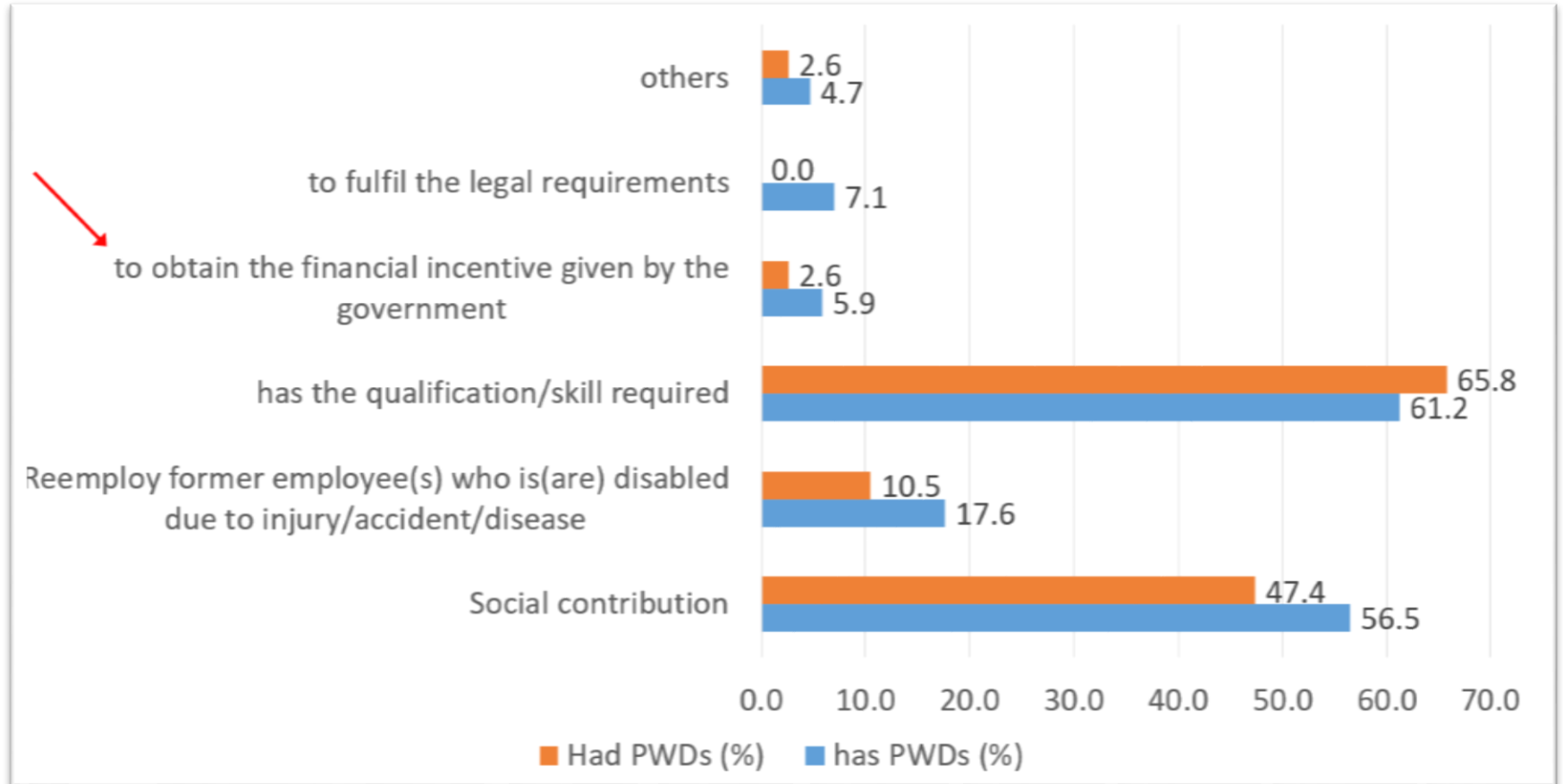


## Distribution of PWD employees by job type and status, and income (%)

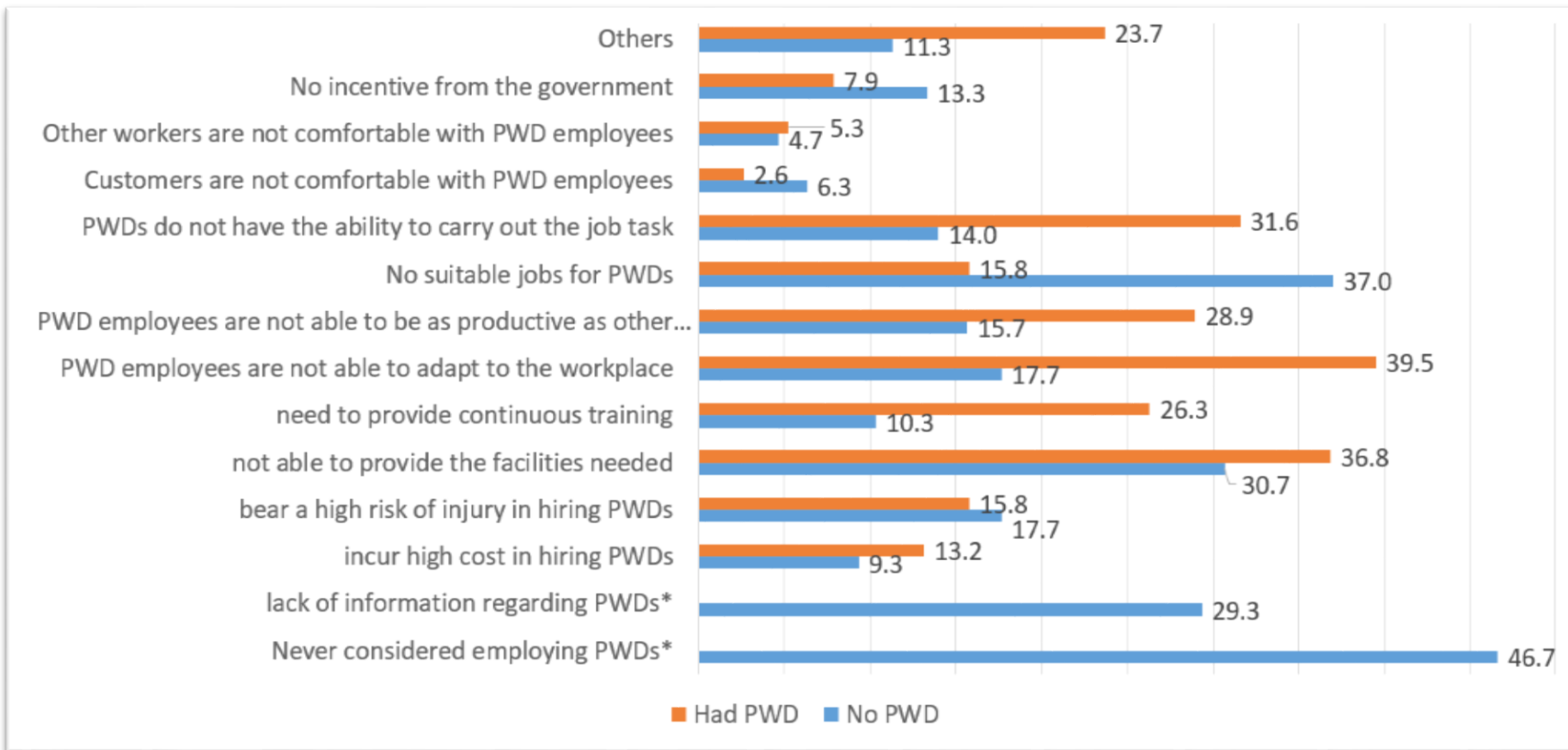




## Reasons for employing PWDs (%)

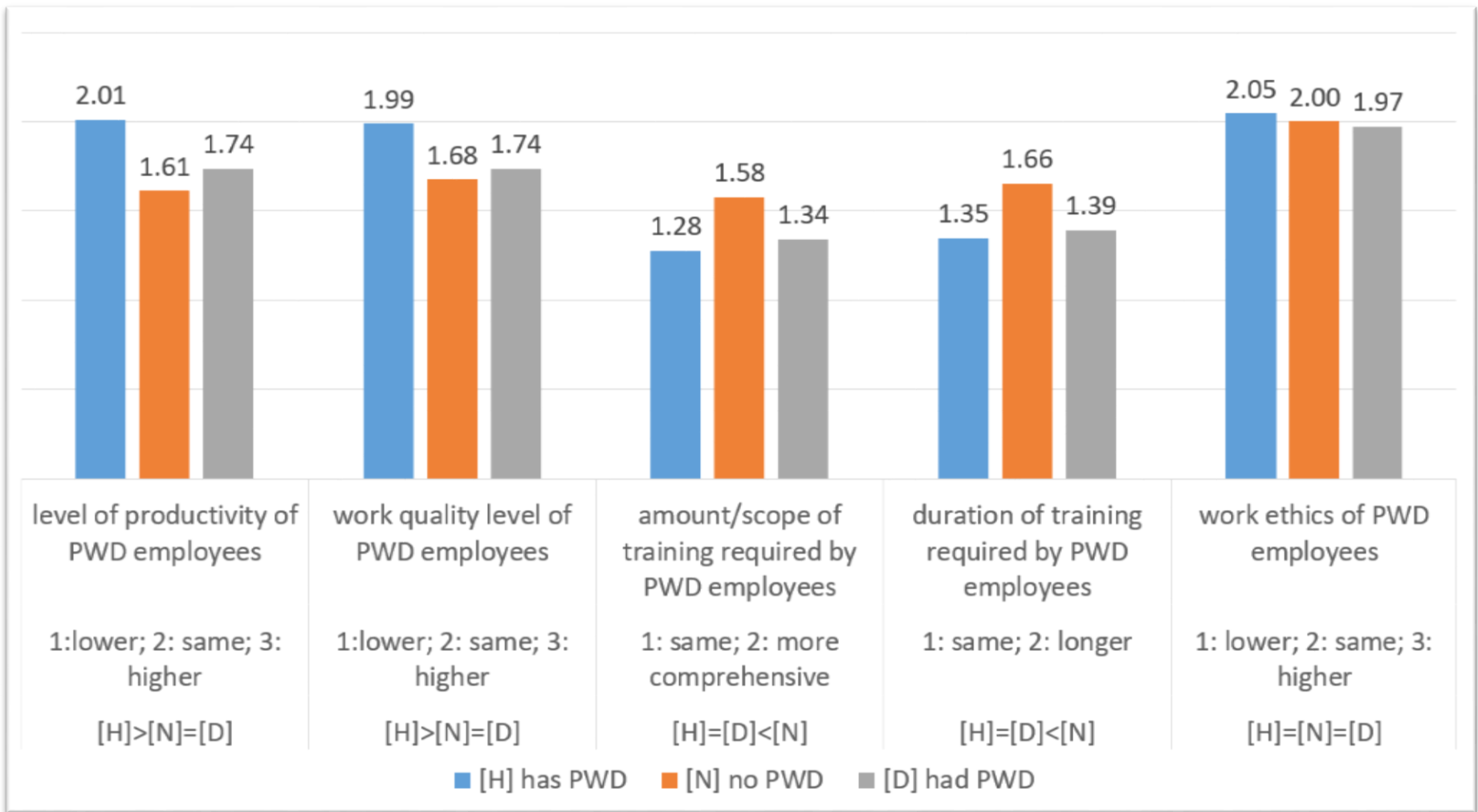


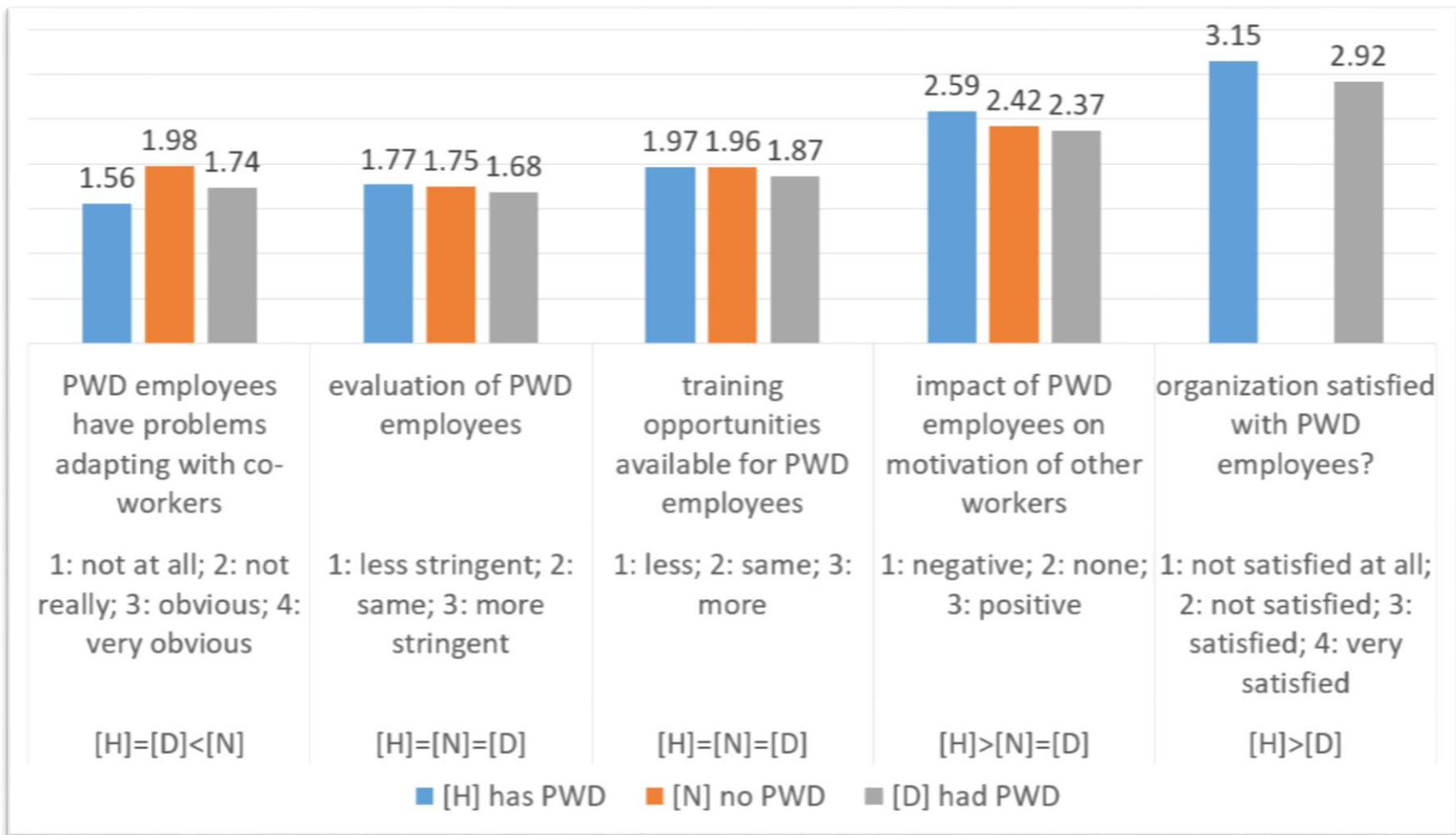
## Reasons for not employing PWDs (%)



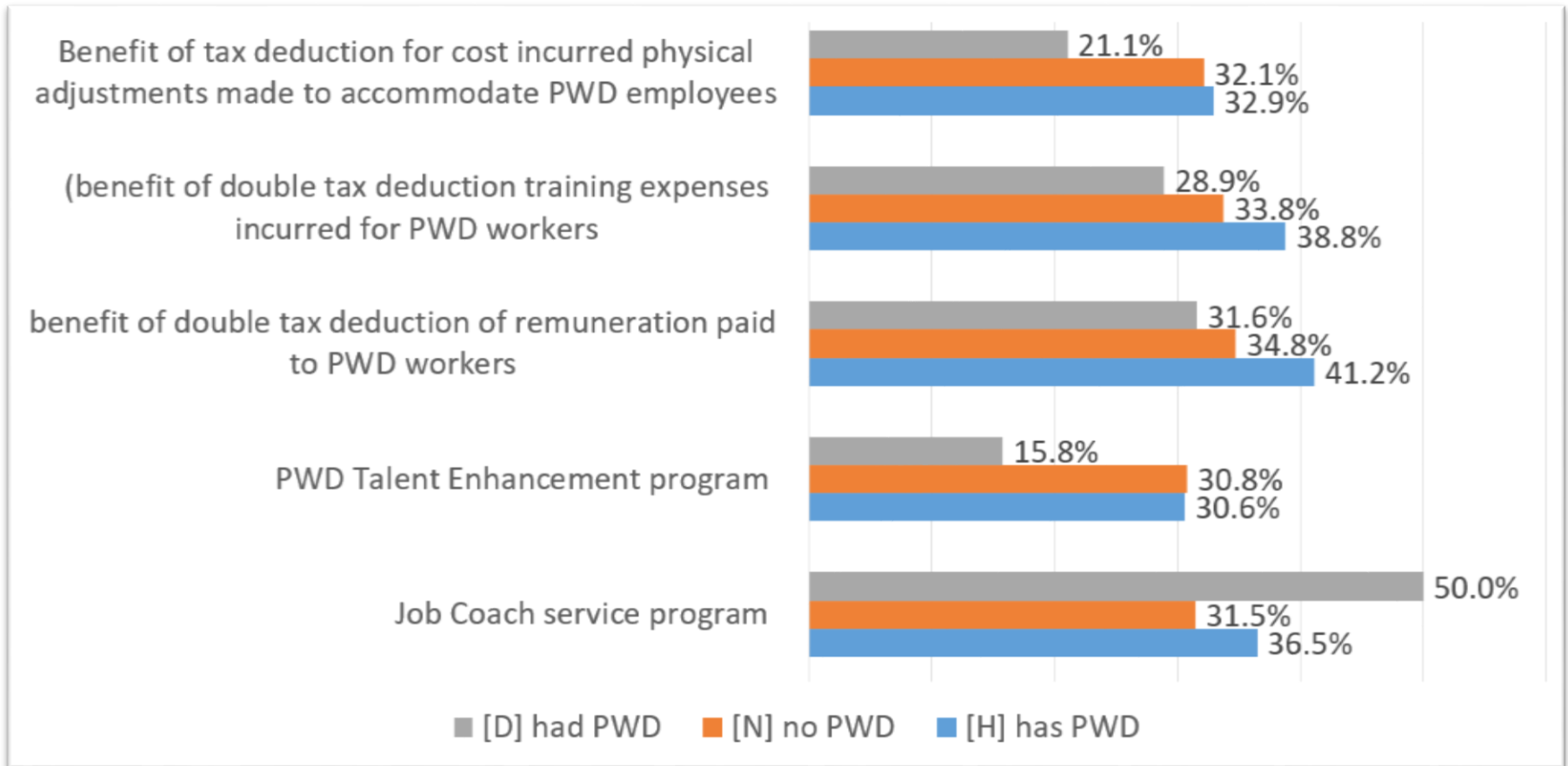
### PWDs' job performance compared to other employees:

- For those who have or had PWD employees, they are asked to evaluate their own employees.
- For respondents who had never employed PWD, they are asked to provide their opinions which reflect their perception of the matter.
- “t-tests” were performed to determine whether the differences in score are significant at the 5% level.





## Awareness about external assistance/incentives given to employers



Information that would encourage employers to employ PWDs:

- Costs to accommodate PWD workers.
- How employing PWDs can benefit their company or institution.
- Testimonies from companies that have employed PWDs.
- One-stop center to advise on PWD employment-related matters.



# Thank You

Prof. Dr. Selamah Abdullah Yusof [selamah@iium.edu.my](mailto:selamah@iium.edu.my)

Dr. Izyani Zulkifli [izyani@iium.edu.my](mailto:izyani@iium.edu.my)

Department of Economics  
Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences  
International Islamic University Malaysia

