Chapter 6

Supported Employment for People With Developmental Disabilities in an Emerging Economy 8

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Abstract

Considering millions of children with disabilities, who face educational obstacles, discrimination, and lack employment opportunities, the preliminary study aims to analyze supported employment opportunities for the people with disabilities by the help of job coaches with first-hand data. A total of 20 professionals working at Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Gaziemir Municipality, and one organization from food and beverage industry, who intend to be a job coach/mentor of people with disabilities are interviewed, along with a semi-structured interview technique. Findings reveal that job placement, willing and unbiased employers are essential regarding supported employment for individuals with disabilities. Shared resilience and family resilience will support the person with disabilities. Different management perspectives exist compared to traditional models to assess supported employment. The exploratory study illuminates the field of supported employment for individuals with disabilities for the researchers and practitioners.

1. Introduction

All over the world, 240 million children with disabilities live who encounter educational obstacles, face discrimination, and lack employment opportunities (Li et al., 2023; Unicef, 2021). Supported employment is a treatment in which persons with mental illness or other impairments

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receive aid in seeking for a job while also receiving mental health treatments (Frederick & VanderWeele, 2019). Iwanaga et al. (2023) and Inge et al. (2024) mention that supportive employment is also essential for young children with disabilities and it will help achieve competitive integrated employment outcomes.

In Turkey, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies announced an action plan regarding the participation of people in this type of disability group in the workforce. In this regard, it announced a two-year plan to support the supported employment model. It is seen that a plan has been made to carry out two-year informative studies for employers, non-governmental organizations, and unions to establish protected workplaces. In this regard, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality's work based on the supported employment approach can be considered as an important element for the expansion of disabled employment (Ministry of Family & Social Policies, 2023). For instance, the government-aided three-year supported employment in the communication technologies industry in Australia provides economic savings with the supported employment program that matches the abilities and skills of unemployed or underemployed people with autism spectrum disorder (Hedley et al., 2023). It is essential to have a job coach, who is well-trained to aid personal necessities and has one-to-one training of the individual at work, where the task is personally fit to the person (Vigna et al., 2024).

This unique study analyzes the compact perspectives of practitioners about supported employment for individuals with developmental disabilities and understand how they intend to make a positive influence on the occupational needs of these people, through a face-to-face and semi-structured interview in an emerging economy, Turkey.

2. Supported employment for people with developmental disabilities

Supported employment is a perspective that entails assisting people with significant disabilities in finding and keeping a job in the regular job market. The main aim of supported employment is to assist people with a significant impairment who would otherwise not work in a usual job context (Strümpel, 2018). For instance, people who are neurodiverse may struggle to adapt to group norms, operate as part of a team, and develop emotional intelligence. However, it has been observed that this circumstance can be avoided by assisted work. In research conducted in Canada between 2015 and 2018, if adequate conditions are provided, after two years, 84% of these persons are

still working at the same level in the same employment or in another firm (Rampton et al., 2023). Internships are an effective way to include young people with autism in the workforce. The Employ Autism network, a new project in the UK, conducted a semi-structured study with 19 people with autism and no intellectual disabilities, 22 employers, and 10 parents before, during, and after the internship. The data indicate that people with autism gained confidence and independence. There are certain unmet needs, such as the support they receive, the alignment of their talents with the work they do, and the results of the internship. Families are also afraid that providing too much support may lead to unrealistic expectations about people with autism's working lives (Ashworth et al., 2024).

Train-then-place approaches have generally dominated efforts to aid nonworking disabled individuals in gaining occupations, but there has been rising attention in place-then-train supported employment views (Baxter et al., 2024; Grigorovich et al., 2017). Engagement, vocational profiling, job search, employer involvement, in-work aid, and career progression are all components of supported employment (EUSE, 2010). The model is offered by a job coach who is trained to meet individual needs, which involves oneon-one training at work, with the job being uniquely matched to the person (Vigna et al., 2024). According to recent studies, this technique is more effective than the other methods in putting individuals to work because the task is learnt at work with one-on-one guidance. The paradigm works for people with developmental disabilities (Baxter et al., 2024), more specifically, intellectual disabilities (Beyer & Beyer, 2017), autism spectrum (Nicholas et al., 2015), sensory impairment (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1990), and mental problems (Bond et al., 2012).

2.1. Theoretical perspective

Resilience was examined mostly in the lives of children, specifically those who are regarded as being 'at risk' from 'psychopathology and obstacles in development' and has been defined as 'a phenomenon characterized by positive results despite risks to adaptation of development' (Masten, 2001). The necessity to build resilience amongst youngsters with disabilities is risingly recognized in workplace contexts (Whitelaw et al., 2024). The central theoretical touchstone for our study is about the shared resilience created by young people with disabilities, organizations, and their parents. According to Campbell et al. (2024), shared resilience is a dynamic process in which individuals and organizations collaborate to overcome deficits. How this resilience is perceived by the employers, families, and the people with disabilities is a worthwhile topic to discuss in this study. Along with

this perspective, family resilience is also key to understanding how the members of families manage challenges and adapt to situations, and help their children with disabilities to grow positively. Family resilience is the capability to grow from and adapt to problems, in addition to managing and recovering from them (Lahaije et al., 2024). For instance, considering the occupational losses of people with disabilities during the pandemic (Badri et al., 2024), family resilience plays a significant role.

Although, resilience is studied in several perspectives in the literature such as individual resilience of individuals with disabilities in employment (Campbell et al., 2024), a constructionist view to resilience (Ungar, 2007), cultural context and resilience (Ungar, 2004), resilience and risk factors (Masten, 2001), discrimination and violence in the community and disabled children facing these challenges (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2011), the main focus in this study is shared resilience and family resilience and how the job coaches react to creating jobs for people with disabilities, and how these people become more resilient through their families and organizations in an emerging economy, and extend the theoretical perspective of resilience from the eyes of professional job coaches, who are willing to change the lives of individuals with disabilities.

3. Method

Through a qualitative approach with first-hand data providers from practitioners in a non-western setting in the Aegean region of Turkey, a semi-structured face to face interview is conducted with 20 practitioners. The study was applied to practitioners working at Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Gaziemir Municipality, and one organization from food and beverage industry at the event "Supported Employment Program" held by Izmir Metropolitan Municipality between December 1 and December 3, 2023. One interview took aptly 20 minutes, for a total of 400 minutes. Although the accessibility of participants, in this case the practitioners, represented a methodological challenge in interviews (Amore & Hall, 2022), throughout the event, there were no obstacles to reaching them.

A total of eight open-ended questions and five demographic features such as age, gender, education, occupation, and work experience in years are asked during interviews. The appropriateness of the questions are evaluated by two Psychologists working at the Parent Information and Training Center of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Dept. of Social Services- Directorate of Disabled Services and one Occupational Therapist. The inspirational studies concerned supported employment for people with disabilities (Iwanaga

et al., 2023; Bond et al., 2023; Drake et al., 2023; Unicef, 2021), more specifically, receiving of supported employment training (Bond et al., 2023), regulations concerning the employment opportunities of people with disabilities (Unicef, 2021), individual-family-workplace coordination and social attitudes regarding supported employment (Vuong & Palmer, 2024), and the resilience level of disabled individuals, families and workplaces related to supported employment (Campbell et al., 2024), which led to the following questions and the interview questions ae analyzed via MAXQDA 2024 program and specifically for question number five, key cases have been discussed.

- 1. What are the most important elements for you regarding supported employment for people with disabilities? (Panda & Kaur, 2024; Iwanaga et al., 2023)
- 2. What do you think are the differences before and after receiving supported employment training? (Bond et al., 2023)
- 3. In your opinion, to what extent do the institutions in Turkey comply with the laws and regulations regarding the employment of people with disabilities? (Unicef, 2021)
- 4. What issues do you think businesses that implement supported employment pay particular attention to? (Li et al., 2023)
- 5. Briefly describe a case you have experienced or heard about regarding supported employment? What happened? How did it turn out?
- 6. In your opinion, how should the disabled individual-family-workplace coordination be in terms of supported employment, and by this way become resilient? (Vuong & Palmer, 2024; Bates et al., 2024)
- 7. How does the approach to assessment in supported employment differ from traditional models? (Drake et al., 2023)
- 8. In your opinion, what should be the resilience level of disabled individuals, families and workplaces regarding supported employment? (Campbell et al., 2024)

4. Findings and discussion

Table 1 displays the demographics in terms of gender, age, occupation, experience at work, and education level. The genders are almost equally distributed. The average age of respondents is 31.8 years old. Mainly they have occupations such as; Job coach, Social worker, Psychologist, Teacher, and Psychological counselor. The vast majority have an undergraduate degree with an average work experience of 8.1 years.

Table 1: Demographic features

Gender	%
Female	55
Male	45
Average age= 31.8	100
Average age of female= 29.2	55
Average age of male= 34.8	45
Occupation	100
Job coach	25
Social worker	20
Psychologist	20
Teacher	15
Psychological counselor	10
President of an association	5
Public administrator	5
Average work experience = 8.1 years	100
Education level	100
Undergraduate	70
Masters	30

Table 2 presents various perspectives of practitioners concerning seven questions for supported employment for disabled individuals. The questions concern 1) The key elements regarding supported employment for people with disabilities, 2) Differences before and after receiving supported employment training, 3) Whether the institutions in Turkey comply with the laws and regulations regarding employment of people with disabilities, 4) Issues the respondents think businesses that implement supported employment pay particular attention to, 5) Thoughts about how the disabled individual-family-workplace coordination should be in terms of supported employment, 6) Thoughts about how the approach to assessment in supported employment differ from traditional models, and 7) Opinions about the resilience level of disabled individuals, families and workplaces regarding supported employment.

Table 2: Perspectives of practitioners for supported employment for people with disabilities

1. Most important elements regarding supported employment (# of comments=29)	%
Job placement	17.2
Unwilling and biased employer	13.7
Follow-up with support	10.3
Compliance with the principle of equal chance - fair gain	10.3
Legal regulation	10.3
Having social benefits	10.3
Sustainability	6.8
Reducing prejudice	6.8
Necessity of awareness in the business world	6.8
Proper job analysis	3.4
On-the-job training	3.4
2. Differences before and after receiving supported employment training (# of comments=20)	100
First job placement then training	20
Awareness	15
Application of the theoretical knowledge	15
Finding examples from around the world	10
Both theoretical and academic support	10
The need for professional management of the process	10
Skill generalization	10
Cause-effect relationship and problem solving	5
Increased self-confidence	5
3. To what extent the institutions in Turkey comply with the laws and	100
regulations regarding employment of people with disabilities (# of comments=20)	100
Not complied with	35
Not enough	25
Obeyed, obligation to fill the quota	20
Little	15
No response	5
4. Issues the respondents think businesses that implement supported	100
employment pay particular attention to (# of comments=23)	
Equal job and equal pay	13
Providing job coaches	13
Referral to talent-appropriate job	13
Job health security	13
Providing employment only to certain types of disabilities (-)	13
Raising awareness of colleagues	8.6
Placement in a position based on the individual's interest	8.6
Inclusivity	4.3
Pay attention to emotional regulation	4.3

Providing safe work opportunities for disabled individual	4.3
Economic damage and loss of prestige caused by the disabled individual (-)	4.3
5. Thoughts about how the disabled individual-family-workplace	100
coordination should be in terms of supported employment and become	
resilient (# of comments=23) Strong and positive communication	26
Cooperation	17.3
Supporting the independence and individuality of the disabled person	13
Mutual information sharing	8.6
Putting the family in the background	8.6
Conscious behavior in educational processes	8.6
Cooperation with coaches and the companies	4.3
Coordination	4.3
	4.3
Sustainability Solidarity	4.3
Solidarity	
6. Thoughts about how the approach to assessment in supported employment differ from traditional models (# of comments=20)	100
Job placement after the evaluation of the person's existing skills	25
Integrative, more inclusive	25
A more individualized model	20
Job placement without learning a profession	15
There is expertise and a multidisciplinary approach.	5
Not adhering to general evaluation techniques	5
Supporting the individual for a period of time in supported employment	_
(finding a job, adapting to the job and requirements)	Э
7. Thoughts about the resilience level of disabled individuals, families and	100
workplaces regarding supported employment (# of comments=22)	
There should be high resilience.	27.2
The support of the job coach should be sustainable.	22.7
Individual-family-workplace cooperation	13.6
It has to be realized that this is a process.	9
Be patient, the process is long and arduous, but it should be reminded that the idea is win-win.	9
No response	9
People's self-determination should be prioritized.	4.5
In terms of the workplace, there should be no dismissal as a result of the fault of the disabled individual, and it should not result in this way.	4.5

Concerning the mentioned most important elements about supported employment for people with disabilities, the top two responses are job placement (17.2%) and the disadvantage of unwilling and biased employers to support this type of employment opportunity (13.7%). The third spot is taken by the equally weighted responses (10.3% each)- Follow-up with support; Compliance with the principle of equal opportunity- fair gain;

Legal regulations for the benefit of people with disabilities, and; Having social benefits for the disabled individual. Engelbrecht et al. (2023) mention the essentiality of promoting occupational justice in supported employment, and meaningful employment for people with disabilities (Lynch et al., 2023; Westoby & Shevellar, 2022). Contrarily, Ikutegbe et al. (2024) reveals that the type of disability, disability disclosure, motivation, employee behavior, job features, culture created at work, government aid, societal behaviors are key to enhancing occupational results for people with disabilities. For instance, people with autism spectrum disorder may have limitations in social interaction and adaptation, which may make employers skeptical about hiring, but they can be productive, reliable and cost-effective employees (Solomon, 2020).

The responses vary concerning the differences before and after receiving supported employment training. One-fifth of the respondents mentioned that first job placement of the individual occurs and then training happens. The respondents equally believe that the level of awareness of the situation increased after receiving the training program and the application of the theoretical knowledge to practice is possible with this training. Considering this perspective, the respondents expressed their opinions as:

"Awareness, planning after training, understanding how to evaluate social resources. I didn't have this clarity in my mind before."

"I believe that it should be integrated into all work areas rather than a separate workplace."

"I thought that they were placed in jobs after receiving training in supported employment, but it was not like that. Work was given first, then training."

According to the interviewees, the institutions in Turkey pay little attention to the laws and regulations regarding occupational needs of people with disabilities. However, 35% of respondents believe that they are not complying with the laws and regulations concerning employment of people with disabilities and 25% of respondents think that not enough effort is presented. 20% of respondents strongly believe that the rules are obeyed just to fill the quota and fulfill that mandatory activity. In parallel with this view, Strümpel (2018) stated that supported employment providers prefer people with less severe disabilities as clients so as to more readily meet quantitative placement criteria. The respondents presented their opinions accordingly:

"They advertise that they provide employment by concentrating 3-4% of people in specific disability groups just to fill quotas. While people with orthopedic, auditory or visual disabilities are generally employed, the number of mentally and autistic individuals is very low."

"When employed by the private sector, it complies due to legal obligations." Public institutions employ only physically disabled people."

"It is almost never observed by mentally disabled and autistic people. It is also necessary to draw attention to other disability groups."

There are key issues the respondents think businesses that implement supported employment pay specific attention to. They equally mentioned equal jobs and equal pay, providing job coaches, referral to talent-appropriate jobs, job health security, and as a negative comment providing employment to people who have only certain types of disabilities. The respondents mentioned their opinions as follows:

"Acting with the awareness that an individual is unique and must be integrated into society."

"Qualified supervision and job coach training"

"Economic harm caused by a disabled individual and damage to workplace prestige"

Concerning the thoughts about how the disabled individual, family, and workplace coordination should be in terms of supported employment, strong and positive communication is at the top of the list with 26%. Cooperation (17.3%) and supporting the independence and individuality of the disabled person (13%) takes the second and third spot in the list respectively. Two key quotes are as follows:

"It should be done without negatively affecting the independence process of the disabled individual, that is, taking into account that the family should be in the background in matters such as making decisions and guiding the person."

"A form of relationship that supports the independence and individuality of the disabled person should be encouraged."

Regarding the respondent's thoughts about how the approach to assessment in supported employment differs from traditional models, the responses vary. Half of the respondents either mentioned job placement after the evaluation of the person's existing skills or the current approach to supported employment is integrative and more inclusive. 20% of respondents state that the new approach is a more individualized model, paying attention to the skillset of individuals. Three key quotes concerning the topic are below:

"Rather than selecting and placing a disabled individual in a suitable job through a scoring system, it is matching the person to a job by taking their existing skills and interests into consideration."

"In the traditional method, the level of the disabled individual is important and getting a job after training is a line of work where only the disabled person is employed in a separate place in that job. Supported employment suggests the opposite."

"Without acting with the prejudice that the disabled individual cannot do anything, they only need care, it aims to ensure the development, education, and maximum benefit of the individual at work and socially, with a personalized approach."

Concerning the thoughts about the resilience level of disabled individuals, families and workplaces regarding supported employment, close to onethird of the respondents believe high resilience should exist and a little more than one-fifth mentioned that the support of the job coach should be sustainable. In parallel with this, Martin et al. (2023) state that sustainable employment depends on quality relations between supervisors and staff. However, without the cooperation of the individual, family, and workplace, the resilience level will be in danger. As the study of Kim (2024) states that job coaches believe that rising autism awareness in the work environment and practical training for coaches would let them offer better assistance to staff with autism, which will increase the level of resilience as well. Two quotes are expressed as follows:

"People's self-determination should be supported to increase resilience."

"It is important to have strong resilience as a whole and it should be supported by the family members."

Table 3 describes 11 different cases regarding supported employment for people with disabilities, which a little more than 50% of the practitioners emphasized. Mainly, the cases reveal how the people with disabilities, employers, and families try to cope with the difficulties throughout the employment of the children with disabilities. Most of the time, employment support is given that helps them become resilient. They find a job, stick to it but sometimes, they can not establish good relationships with their coworkers, and parents try to support their children in several ways and look for sustainable projects. According to Baxter et al. (2024), the impacts beyond getting a job included a new attitude toward work, a different view, increased capabilities, and believing in themselves. Longer-term influences suggested by Baxter et al. (2024) included wellbeing and health, financial

freedom, independence, creation of value to community, and a feeling of belonging, along with a shared resilience network provided by the employers (Campbell et al., 2024).

Table 3: Cases concerning supported employment that the practitioners mention

Table 5: Cases concerning supported employment that the practitioners mention		
The case the practitioners have experienced or heard about regarding supported employment What happened?	How did it turn out?	Result
1. The disabled individual was contacted. There was an interview. Afterwards, certain evaluations were carried out and recruitment was made according to the results.	Recruitment was finally made based on the consideration of the results.	Recruitment made
2. The disabled individual could not find a job due to heart disease and therefore had to survive on aid. We directed the municipality to the employment unit to provide support.		
3. There were students who did internships at the teacher's house. Contrary to the model we learned, they first received training from public education and then worked at a teacher's house for 1-2 months as an intern. But at the end of the internship, not even one person was employed.	Even though the students worked as an intern, none of them were employed later.	No employment
4. There was a young person who got a job but could not find a job as soon as he graduated. The loud noises in his jobs made it difficult to communicate with people. For this reason, he changed jobs a lot. He settled into a job suitable for his profession, but now he cannot establish a relationship.	found a suitable job for her profession, she still could not establish a good relationship, which will influence her future job	Difficulty for the future job opportunities
5. There was a big and autistic man, who was violent towards women. It is a very good method to find a job in an environment where women do not work and where there are physically strong colleagues. That's what success comes with.	found a job in a place where other strong men work and he can not be violent	Recruitment made

6. Parents often worry about their children. There are employment programs for disabled people within the scope of international projects, but some of them are not sustainable.	sustainable projects, not short term, for their children	opportunity is
7. I directed a student with learning disability and attention deficit disorder to the grocery chain market. After a while, someone from the workplace said, "Sir, this kid is not crazy, he knows everything, he's even being cunning, pretending he doesn't understand the writings and numbers on the shelves and slacking off."	disability and attention deficit disorder works in a grocery chain market if he is	Recruitment made
8. I changed the Ministry of Education position (following environmental affairs) to a civil servant after noticing the abilities of an autistic young man who was working as a welcoming officer in the institution where I was managing, in terms of memory, focus, order and work follow-up. He was one of the best workers. Then I heard that he went to another institution with better pay.	in several jobs, and in his last	Recruitment made
9. A young man with autism was arguing at work because he had difficulty being exposed to certain stimuli such as sound and light, but the people in charge did not provide any convenience because they did not know that he had such a difficulty due to his disease, so he left work.	and the employers lack	Job changes all the time

10. An autistic young man, after working for a very short time in a job that did not suit his characteristics, uses the computer very well and is very successful both in this feature and in tracking work. He works very happily in a job that suits him	the autistic young man has a great difficulty in fulfilling	availability but
in these matters. However, since his anxiety level is very high, if his colleagues need to get out of their routine, they need to give him very good information about the hours, how to go and return, etc. Otherwise, he cannot concentrate on work due to anxiety.		
11. There was an autistic young man who came to the center. He understood phone repair very well. However, he was not greeted at the workplaces he entered, he was not wanted because he was shy, and he was the subject of ridicule.	repair shop for him in a small shop. His mother, father, and brother visit him regularly. He gained	found a job along

5. Conclusion

This unique study aimed to analyze supported employment opportunities for the people with developmental disabilities by the help of the compact perspectives of 20 professionals working at Izmir Metropolitan Municipality through a semi-structured face-to-face interview technique in a developing economy. Although the literature pays attention to supported employment for people with several disabilities in several ways, this study focused on the strategic views of potential job coaches by stressing the theoretical view of shared resilience and family resilience, while providing jobs to the people with disabilities.

The study revealed that as a first step job placement in supported employment is essential for people with disabilities and the employers should be willing to offer job opportunities for this segment. First job placement and then training will allow these people to lengthen their time in their jobs, according to the responses. The majority believed that the rules should not be obeyed just to fill the required quota of the organization. Talent- appropriate job perspective is necessary and providing employment to people who have only certain types of disabilities should not be done,

according to the interviewees. The majority stated that individual-familyworkplace coordination should be strong and there should be positive communication and cooperation throughout the supported employment process, which can help them become more resilient. The new approach to supported employment is more individualized, pays attention to skill sets, and is more inclusive and integrative, according to the majority of respondents. Regarding supported employment, through the support of job coaches, the resilience level of people with disabilities, families and workplaces should be high and the efforts should not be a one-time service activity and should be sustainable. At this point, shared resilience, which is created by people with disabilities, willing organizations, and their families and family resilience, which the members intend to manage and recover from obstacles and grow from and adapt to them, become the key factors in the process of supported employment.

This unique study comes with some limitations. 1) The study emphasizes the compact views of practitioners for people with disabilities concerning supported employment activities. 2) Regional boundaries relate to the Aegean region of Turkey, a non-western setting. 3) Limited responses are gathered in a limited time from practitioners in a regional event, which is held by the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality. Future research may focus on the approaches and strategies of job coaches towards the use of different methods on the development of people with disabilities and ways for creating job opportunities that fit to the needs of these people. Following up the level of progress of people with developmental disabilities who are actively working in the industry along with the top-level management perspective is necessary.

Declaration of competing interest

There is no competing financial interest of the authors in relation to the study.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Dear colleague,

This is a short questionnaire about supportive employment for people with disabilities in an emerging economy, which is attached below. The responses will be used for scientific and academic purposes only. Your identity information is not necessary. Please feel free to contact us about the results of the study. We appreciate your valuable time and effort for responding to the questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Questions regarding supported employment for people with disabilities

- 1. What are the most important elements for you regarding supportive employment for people with disabilities? Please explain.
- 2. What do you think are the differences before and after receiving supportive employment training? Explain briefly.
- 3. In your opinion, to what extent do the institutions in Turkey comply with the laws and regulations regarding the employment of people with disabilities?
- 4. What issues do you think businesses that implement supportive employment pay particular attention to?
- 5. Briefly describe a case you have experienced or heard about regarding supportive employment? What happened? How did it turn out?
- 6. In your opinion, how should the disabled individual-family-workplace coordination be in terms of supportive employment and become resilient?
- 7. How does the assessment approach in supported employment differ from traditional models?
- 8. In your opinion, what should be the resilience level of disabled individuals, families and workplaces regarding supportive employment?

Demographic questions

- 9. What is your gender?
- 10. What is your age?
- 11. What is your occupation?

12.	What is your work experience in the concerning field in years?
13.	Your education background?

High school

Undergraduate

Masters/Ph.D.

Others____