



ACCESSIBILITY & DISCRIMINATION

Does a lack of accessibility for people with a disability equals institution discrimination?

ABSTRACT

Diversity and inclusion receive increased attention, and more and more businesses denounce discrimination. This paper adds a new dimension to this discussion as we try to find an answer to the question if a lack of accessibility is a form of discrimination excluding the disability community from participation. In spirit of 'not about us without us' this research includes the outcomes of a survey held within the international disability community.

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Introduction

An increasing volume of organizations denounces discrimination in all forms, these statements can be found on companies websites and widely shared by C-suite management. Denouncing discrimination has become a pledge by “Wallstreet and Silicon Valley giants...” (The Washington Post, Jan, McGregor, Merle, & Tiku, 2020) and many European corporates followed their US counterparts. Companies can denounce all forms of discrimination. This paper questions these statements as many businesses do not include people with a disability by reasons of not being digital and/or physical accessible for people with a disability, by testing the hypothesis that: ***Does a lack of accessibility for people with a disability equals institution discrimination?*** The topic is might not be in the spotlights currently taken by The Black Lives Matter Movement, discrimination of people with a disability is still a huge topic for according to the 2011 WHO research which showed that 15% of the world wide population experience a disability. Let alone the 1.8 billion people of the disability community worldwide (ROD-Group, 2020) found in more recent research by the Canadian Return on Disability Group. The same year the US disability community celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on the 26th of July 2020, the disability remains to be the largest under represented minority worldwide. 30 years ADA was celebrated by the New York Times in a series of articles about the impact of the ADA (The New York Times & Wall, 2020) showed that accessibility challenges remain till present day.

Discrimination is a complex topic for many of us, as people aren't always aware about their contribution to discrimination in society, employment, and even personal relationships. It's easy to fall into blame, it's more important to find a solution in addressing discrimination in a diversifying society we all share. This paper is inspired on the Black Lives Matter demonstrations all over the world, this paper is not about people of color and accompanying world history of slavery resulting in many forms of institutional discrimination. This paper is about people with a disability and the institutional form of discrimination they face in daily life. The institutional discrimination people do not think of when designing a physical or digital environment, designing a digital or physical product, the impact of a lack of accessibility for people with a disability.

Definitions

For your understanding of this paper, sharing a few definitions will be beneficial. The definitions will include the Cambridge definition as well as an interpretation by the writer of this paper.

The first definition people with a disability; defined by the official UK definition by the Cambridge Dictionary: “an illness, injury, or condition that makes it difficult for someone to do the things that other people do” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-a). With this Cambridge definition at hand, we can broaden the definition disability to people with temporary disabilities too. As a cast for a broken arm limits a person's ability to do things like others too. For the scope of this paper we use the term disabled for all people experiencing barriers due to an long term and/or short term disability. Disability remains a complex group to define, as the definitions differ even in the different research papers addressing the topic. For the purpose of this paper the wide definition of disability applies, including people who experience barriers in employment, education and society due to physical, mental or sensory limitations experienced. (Schur, Kruse, & Blanck, 2005, p. 5)

The second definition accessibility; defined by the official UK definition by the Cambridge Dictionary: “the fact of being able to be reached or obtained easily” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-b). In

context of accessibility in this paper, the US definition in the Cambridge Dictionary offers a better definition: “the quality or characteristic of something that makes it possible to approach, enter, or use it” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-b) as accessibility for people with a disability is about the ability to use something in disregard of a person’s disability. Accessibility in terms of access for people with a disability is best defined by Wikipedia, even if this is not an usual source for researchers in this casus of a fast developing field with limited resources the Wiki definition does express the role of accessibility in the field of business, education and social participation of people with a disability by: “Accessibility can be viewed as the "ability to access" and benefit from some system or entity.” (Wikipedia, n.d.) For the benefit of this paper any reference to accessibility will be *the ability to access* unless defined differently.

The third definition; equality; defined by the Cambridge Dictionary UK definition is: “the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-c). Equality is about the social experience to be treated the same as other people who come from different social positions. These social positions can be impacted by age, ability, ethnicity, sexuality, and others., and these differences can lead to different treatment by society.

The fourth definition equity; defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as noun (fairness) as: “the situation in which everyone is treated fairly and equally” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-d). The definition refers to being “treated fairly and equally” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-d) and to receive the same treatment as other people from other social groups. Equity goes beyond equal treatment because equality includes the additional need and this means that people can be treated not the same due to the additional needs to receive equal opportunities. This is best translated by research insight by (Social Change UK, 2019), where the reference is clearly made that equal opportunities can only be reached by including the needs of people who might need more to accomplish equal opportunities in respect to Human Rights Commissions.

The fifth definition discrimination; defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as: “treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people, because of their skin colour, sex, sexuality, etc.” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-e). When people talk about discrimination the connection to skin colour, sex and ethnicity is often made, disability is not the obvious topic when it comes to discussions about discrimination. Still, when looking into the context of the definition people with a disability are treated different based on their mental or physical ability. This happens quite often, as people of colour in the south of the US got referred to the back door or even got refused to enter a building, until the 60’s of the twentieth century, people using wheelchairs still experience this treatment by the simple fact a ramp is missing and they cannot access the building through the front door.

The sixth definition inclusion; defined by the Cambridge Dictionary is: “the act of including someone or something as part of a group, list, etc., or a person or thing that is included” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.-f). In this paper the word inclusions refers to include people with a disability into organisations, education, society, etc. The term inclusion holds a wider definition beyond the scope of this paper, and is the extension to diversity; the variety of groups in society to feel included as part of society, your organisation, etc.

With the definitions above guidance for this paper is offered, as this paper uses the definitions in the context of the position of the worldwide disability community.

Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down” President George W.H. Bush (1990)

Businesses denouncing discrimination

An increasing volume of businesses is sharing anti-discrimination proclamations since the Black Lives Matters (BLM) Movement in the US initiated a new wave of demonstrations after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. As the article by (Blankenship, 2020) clearly describes, George death by police violence was another in a long line with Black Americans victimized by systemic discrimination. In follow up of the death of George Floyd the BLM Movement grew fast, demonstrations like after the Rosa Parks incident initiated the Civil Rights Movement in December '55 when she refused to move to the back of the bus where people of colour where supposed to be seated (Biography.com Editors, 2020). The current BLM movement became a worldwide phenomenon and demonstrations taken place in almost all major cities in the US, Western Europe and other countries. Leading to a wide shared business response against discrimination. The statement by Ben & Jerry's last June was extreme compared to statements by other CEO's (Hanna Ziady, CNN Business, 2020), still we live in a society where supremacy cannot be denied as it exists in many forms.

Stories of people of colour standing up against systemic discrimination are quite well known. As are the stories about the LHBTQ community striving for equal rights on marriage, adoption, parenthood, etc., or woman's rights activist in countries like Iran where woman have limited freedoms compared to Western Countries. What about the call for equal opportunities of people with a disability? Does the disability community stand up for equality? What are the structural and systematic barriers governments, businesses and society unconsciously build withholding people with a disability the chance for equal opportunities? Because, if businesses are denouncing all forms of discrimination (The Washington Post, Jan, McGregor, Merle, & Tiku, 2020), what about people with a disability and how can we make sure that people with a disability experience equal opportunities? The importance is not about the statement itself, it's about the follow up of the statement and how this is visible in organisations and governmental institutions.

What is Discrimination in the Disability Context?

Discrimination does have a variety of forms, as the UK Equality and Human Rights Committee defines on the UK Equality Act advice and guidance website (Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK), 2010), the four forms defined here are:

1. Direct discrimination – all forms of different treatment towards another person because a protected characteristic (ability, age, gender, etc.)
2. Indirect discrimination – all forms of “different treatment by rule or policy doing things” (Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK), 2010), resulting in worse treatment of people with a protected characteristic, this is also known as unintended discrimination as the worse treatment by the rule or policy was not designed to do so
3. Harassment – violating a person's dignity based on worse treatment by a “hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” (Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK), 2010),
4. Victimization – unfair treatment for opposing action to defend yourself or others against discrimination

Placing these forms of discrimination into the perception of accessibility or the ability to access, a immense variety in forms of discrimination comes into mind. This can be directly by denial of access to a store for a person with a service dog; indirectly by moving an obligated (governmental) service

to a digital platform which is not accessible for assistive tech (assistive software for people with a disability) users; harassing by referring a person with a wheelchair to use the freight elevator as the other entrance only offers stairs; victimizing by excluding activists from participating a hearing about the situation their group experiences. All the previous are cases of discrimination, where in some countries well protected by laws and policies, in other countries especially the rights of people with a disability aren't as protected as they should be.

Discrimination is often seen as cultural issue, as exclusion of people of a certain group is related to the view on social groups and the position they have in society. Culture impacts the position of groups in society hugely, including people with a disability. A good example is the effect visible in the 30 years the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is effective in the USA, where people with a disability are a protected group by the Civil Rights Act since 1965 (McGreevy, 2020) and the ADA providing the governance to make sure people with a disability get equal opportunities in life. The difference to, for example The Netherlands is huge, as the Dutch Article 1 of the Constitution does not include the word disability as protected group (De Nederlandse Grondwet, 1983). The Netherlands do not even have an accessibility act, the only difference is: The Netherlands signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations Enable, 2006) in 2015 and the United States (US) didn't sign until the date of this publication.

The position of people with a disability differs immensely between these two countries. Where the Dutch focus on protection by social welfare, the US approach aims at participation by making sure the environment is accessible for people with a disability. The Dutch government is moving towards more participation of people with a disability, still this is not easy when the environment is not accessible for people with a disability. For example public transport, until 2018 only 1 out of 4 train stations was accessible for people with a disability. This limits the ability of people with a disability to travel independently. Within the ADA this wouldn't seem likely as this is not within governance and people would be able to start a lawsuit for discrimination by lack of accessibility, as they are not able to use the train in an equal manner as people without a disability.

Discrimination of people with a disability comes in a high variety of disciplines and thus a wider approach than the general discussion about culture and systems with discrimination elements in them. Discrimination of people with a disability can be based on the direct personal exclusion by refusing to hire a person with a disability because of the disability, as well as the fact that the hiring channel is not accessible for the person with a visual disability because it's not working when you use assistive technology to surf the internet when you're blind.

Access for all in the world of D&I

The question about disability inclusion is often 'dropped' at the D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) agenda owner. The head of D&I is mainly responsible for the cultural changes, bias trainings and employee resource teams. Still for disability this is not enough, because these topics do not breach the real barriers for equal opportunities, as the D&I focus misses out on the need for equity to pursue the performance in the first place.....

Let's start with the position of disability in D&I, and the position of disability inclusion in the D&I research field. When searching for this paper, the conclusion was that many papers are written about the role of culture in D&I programs, even more these articles are mainly focused on people of color/ethnicity and sexuality, disability is less visible in these studies. This Harvard Business Review Article offers a good overview of the 'standard D&I responsibilities.' When the a business head of D&I or DE&I (Diversity, Equality & Inclusion) adds disability to their list of people who deserve equal opportunities. These opportunities depend on more than the essentials such as "authority to change

both formal and informal systems, instituting changes that typically will help...” (Williams & White, 2020) presented in Harvard Business Review in relation to race and sexuality. As readers with a background in disability might notice, the description misses out on an important topic to provide equal opportunities for people with a disability in this context. As formal and informal organisational systems in the context of the article aim at application, promotion, etc. procedures instead of the barriers in the physical and digital environment to make equal opportunities possible for members of the disability community.

This conclusion is also supported by research published in 2005. An American study into 100 out of the US Fortune 500 Magazine in 2003, showed that only 42% of the businesses diversity policies included disability, 47% expressly mentioned or not excluded disability in workplace diversity, and only 15% included disability in supplier diversity (Ball, Monaco, Schmeling, Schartz, & Blanck, 2005, p. 98). Another US study out of 2005 expressly refers to the influence of corporate culture as facilitator or hindering object towards disability inclusion in organizations (Schur, Kruse, & Blanck, 2005). The interesting part about the studies in this period is that they overlap in the impact of culture to address “attitudinal, behavioural, and physical barriers for workers and job applicants with disabilities” (Schur, Kruse, & Blanck, 2005, p. 3) in the cultural perspective and accessibility where not in the 2005 scope yet. An exception can be found in the Microsoft studies include in the paper of Behavioural Science and Law, Volume 23, issue 1 published in 2005. The Microsoft study “Emerging technologies and corporate culture at Microsoft: a methodological note” by (Klein, Schmeling, & Blanck, 2005) expressly includes the role of “product development and implementation of accessibility features” (Klein, Schmeling, & Blanck, 2005, p. 74) in relation to the cultural change, the importance of accessibility is addressed by the ‘evangelists’ (Klein, Schmeling, & Blanck, 2005, p. 74).

The Microsoft study as part of the Behavioural Science and Law, Volume 23, issue 1 published in 2005 offers an important note to the discussion about discrimination and accessibility for people with disability. Because the “product development and implementation of accessibility features” (Klein, Schmeling, & Blanck, 2005, p. 74) has become essential to the success of the Microsoft disability inclusion program. A quick search on internet into Microsoft Accessibility shows the opportunities Microsoft created for employees with disabilities by accessibility features and tooling (Microsoft corp., n.d.). The knowledge build, the cultural change, the customer knowledge developed, the use of skills of people with a disability servicing customers with a disability, is extensive. The focus on disability inclusion became a marketing tool as well as trademark because the deliveries and marketing communication seem balanced carefully. An interesting note, the Microsoft accessibility program is not a D&I program, it’s a Sustainable Business Program under the CEO of Microsoft. The evolution lead to the latest approach taken by Microsoft and shows the extensive role of accessibility tooling, peer roles in providing dedicated support (Aquino, 2020). This approach taken by Microsoft is supported by the success of D&I programs, as they need CEO support and authority to make changes in organisations (Williams & White, 2020).

Microsoft is not the only business who chose to market disability, other examples are Apple with Siri, Barclays and Lloyds Bank in the UK with bank cards with a notch, and of course Google with all the accessibility tools developed in the Android systems. These programs could never have been run from just the cultural D&I perspective, these programs are about taking out barriers for people with a disability to prevent discrimination based on equal treatment, without having to use the backdoor.

The professional definition of accessibility

When we wish to address discrimination of people with a disability, the D&I representative added disability to their strategy and advocates for disability inclusive hiring. It's the turn for the organization itself, as we need to make sure people with a disability have equal opportunities and can pursue these in an environment where equity is offered from the base such as:

- A digital infrastructure within the WCAG standard as approved by the W3C, this infrastructure offers accessibility requirements and will work with the (equity offering) assistive technology to perform the job in an equal manner as any other colleague without a disability and the same skillsets
- A physical infrastructure within the requirement to work as a person with ADHD, this area must be a low-stimulus working environment to perform equally as the colleague without ADHD

These are just 2 examples out of many “accommodations” which can support an accessible work environment, also applying on schools, universities, not leaving out services provided by governments and businesses to their customers. As found in the discrimination context, discrimination of people with disabilities includes a wide scale of barriers to participate equally to people without a disability. **Can the big question to diminish systemic discrimination of people with a disability, be answered by equity through accessibility?**

Searching for the professional definition of accessibility for all users, including people with a disability, brings many business reviews and independent authors visions at the table. The academic world offers an increasing volume of articles on accessibility, still these often miss the important dimension of being written by people with a disability themselves. As the key message in accessibility and disability inclusion is “not about us, without us” to make sure people with a disability are included in the development of policies, governance, products and services themselves, as they are the experts on accessibility and the barriers to reach disability inclusion in social, work and educational environments.

When discussing access for all, it's important to start with equality versus equity. As equality offers equal (for example job) opportunities, the question lies deeper when it comes to disability because a business can offer equal job opportunities to people with a disability, if the job website is not accessible for people with a disability there is no equity in these equal opportunities and the equal opportunities are just a nice message on a website because the person with a disability cannot even apply in an equal manner at the organization in question.

Is 'Not having access' equal to systemic discrimination?

When researching forms of discrimination the cases include accessibility of, or the ability to access an environment and these do not distinguish digital or physical environments. An interesting source for this research is the ADA Title Three (digital accessibility) News and Insights website (Seyfarth Shaw, 2020b). This paper aims at the experience of discrimination, the outcome of the lawsuits do not count as the experience counts here. The intent to initiate a lawsuit against the feeling of discrimination because a person cannot enter the digital environment, is the case this paper is looking into.

In 2013 just 2.700 Federal lawsuits were filed in the USA, just 6 years later the volume of federal lawsuits are up to 11.000 Federal cases. These are not just the experiences, these are the cases where civil rights lawyers believe people have a good case to proof the lack of accessibility leads to a

situation of discrimination, because people with a disability don't have equal access to a digital channel in comparison to people without a disability.

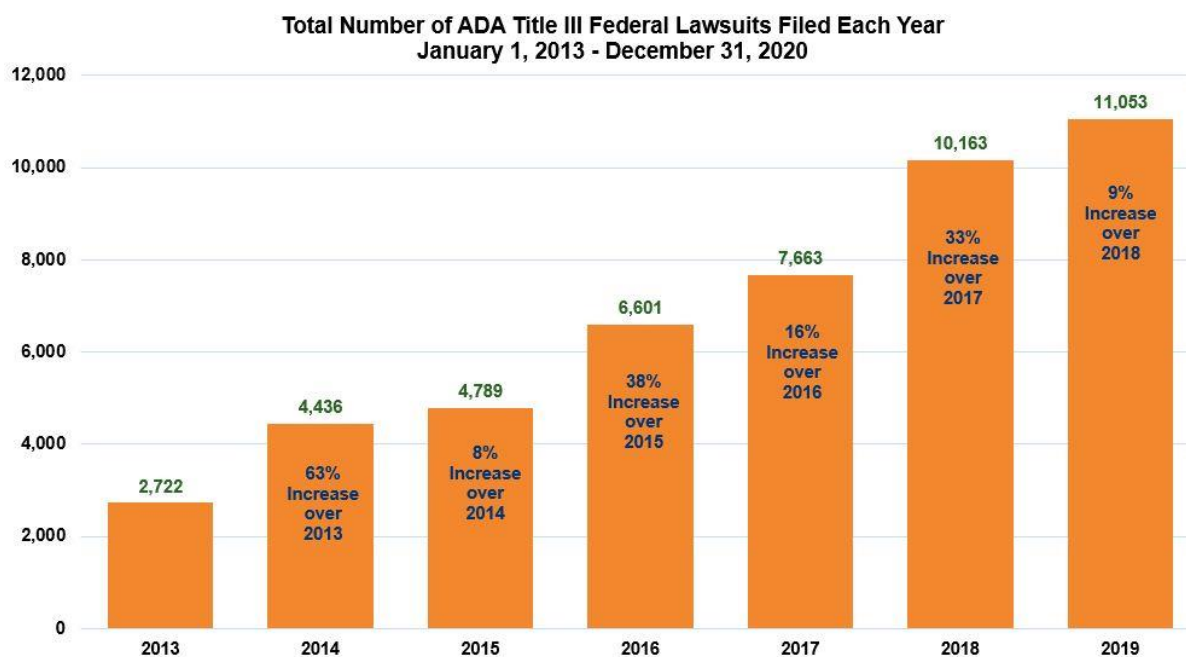


Chart: The number of ADA Title Three lawsuits from 2013 until 2019 (Seyfarth Shaw, 2020)

When a person with a disability does not have the ability to access a resource equally to people without a disability, this person experiences a form of discrimination by being excluded from the use of this resource.

When people with a disability are not able to participate because of the expectation they will be serviced by others to participate, this is not equal as others can participate independently.

The experience of people with a disability, not about us without us

Learning about the impact of accessibility a questionnaire was set via Social Media. The questions aim at digital experiences and the last question refers to comparison with physical locations:

1. Do you have a disability?
2. Do you experience barriers when you use digital channels?
3. Do you experience barriers when you are obliged to use a digital channels (banking, taxes, etc.)?
4. Do you feel discriminated when you cannot use a digital channel due to your disability?
5. Do you feel discriminated when you cannot use an obligated digital channel due to your disability?
6. Do you feel discriminated when you cannot enter a building due to your disability?
7. Do you feel discriminated when you cannot enter a building where you are obligated to enter (for any reason) due to your disability?
8. Do you think a lack of accessibility is a form of discrimination of people with a disability?

With the questions above, the search for the experience of discrimination in an inaccessible environment started. Before asking about the experience of discrimination, the questions zoom in on barriers, as it's interesting to see if people experience inaccessibility or not and secondly moving

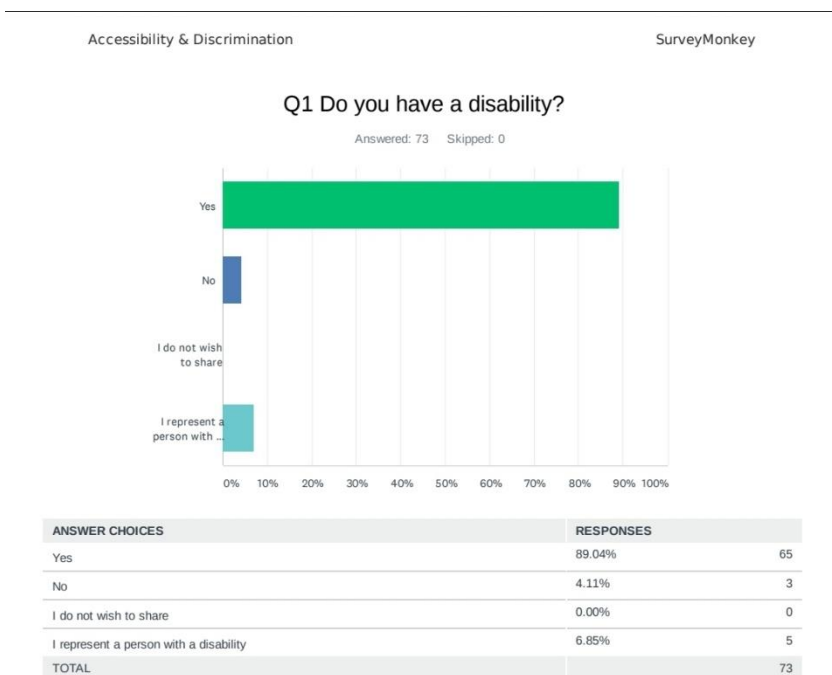
to the experience of discrimination. Are these connected, or can the feeling of discrimination exist without experiencing barriers?

The survey purposely includes 2 sets of double questions with a slight difference, as the question about experiencing discrimination is asked both in the sense people have the option to use an alternative and the options without an alternative. Next to the double questions about use or obligated use, the questions include both the use of digital as well as physical locations. Do people experience obligated use of an inaccessible channel/location differently than the use of a channel/location of choice?

Finally closing with the question to gather the input of people with a disability, and their experience with accessibility as form of discrimination. This is a direct question, where it's an interesting learning from the people who experience disabilities in daily life.

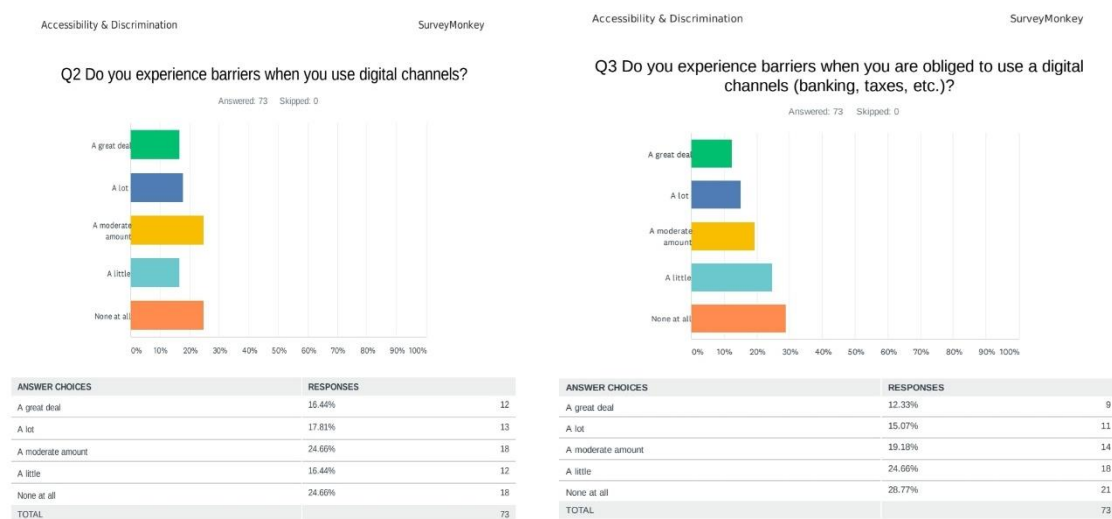
The questionnaire

The survey opened on July 29th 2020 and closed on September 30th in 2020. We used Survey Monkey as they provide a reasonable accessible experience, questions were asked in English to attract a wide public. The survey was published via social media channels such as LinkedIn and Twitter and shared via Business Disability Forum to their members. We had 73 respondents, of those 89% identified themselves as person with a disability. We did not ask for information about age, gender and race, we do recommend to extend future research to include these variants. As these are likely to impact experiences, as we learned from individual responses on survey publications.



The first outcome inquires about barriers experienced in daily use of digital channels, for 'free to use' about 58% and 'obligated use' about 48% of our respondents share they experience low to moderate amount till a great deal of barriers. Unfortunate we did not ask this question in consideration of the physical environment. We do see a difference in severity of barriers

experienced, as obligated channels are more likely to show more barriers because these are less likely to be chosen, the interesting outcome of this questionnaire shows the opposite.



The outcomes of the survey inquiring about experiencing discrimination offer an interesting different insight when we address discrimination. Especially when we compare ‘free to use’ where just over 31% of the respondents answer it’s very likely they feel discriminated versus almost 54% answer it’s very likely they feel discriminated in a case of ‘obligated use’ of digital channels. So, even when people seem to experience less barriers in obligated channels, the impact in case of a barrier is very likely to be experienced as discrimination if the channel is not accessible, and even more when it is an obligated channel such as banking or government service.

When we compare the options experiencing discrimination in case the digital channel is:

| Answer q4 & q5 | Free to use | Obligated use |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Very likely | 31.43% | 53.52% |
| Likely | 34.29% | 21.13% |
| Total | 65.72% | 74.82% |
| Neither likely/not likely | 20% | 14.08% |
| Not likely | 8.57% | 7.04% |
| Absolutely not | 5.71% | 4.23% |

The outcomes clearly show a change in experience when the channel is obligated. With almost 10% difference in all cases people experience inaccessibility as discrimination, the differences between very likely grows by 22% when the channel is obligated, likely declines by 13% and neither likely/not likely declines by 6% and finally shows the almost 3% in the totals previously did not feel discriminated in case of a free to use channel.

Digital versus physical

Next to the difference in ‘free to use’ and ‘obligated use’ we found a difference when we compare both options within the digital and physical space.

In the digital environment almost 66% of the ‘free to use’ answers showed our respondents felt inaccessibility as discrimination, in the physical environment this is almost 71%. Compared to

'obligated use' the difference increases by 8% from almost 75% (digital) almost 83% (physical) of the respondents experiencing inaccessibility as discrimination.

Finally we asked the direct question, 'Do you think a lack of accessibility is a form of discrimination? Because we were curious to find if the direct question would differ from the previous answers.

We learned that almost 64% strongly agree, just over 22% agreed and almost 7% didn't agree or disagree and 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed with our statement.

Conclusion

When digesting the outcomes of both the empirical outcomes found in the survey and review of existing research, supported by articles discussing the topic of discrimination. We found overwhelming support for the hypothesis "***Does a lack of accessibility for people with a disability equals institution discrimination?***"

The theoretical part of the research circled around the question: "What are the structural and systematic barriers governments, businesses and society unconsciously build withholding people with a disability the chance for equal opportunities?"

We identified the following :

- Businesses denounce all forms of discrimination
- Discrimination of people with a disability can be direct (e.g. denying access), indirect (e.g. moving a service to an inaccessible location), harassment (e.g. diverting a wheelchair user to a freight elevator), victimizing (e.g. by excluding advocates advocating for equal rights)
- Discrimination can be cultural by direct denying access because a person with a disability e.g. looks, acts different, as well as system related by e.g. an inaccessible job website for blind screen reader users
- Most countries seem to have anti discrimination legislation including disability
- There is an extensive difference in the social position of people with a disability, there are countries with and without accessibility legislation
- D&I programmes aim on culture, specifically the formal and informal organizational systems. This limits success for people with a disability to be successful in their jobs because the physical and digital barriers aren't included
- Accessibility is about standardizing accommodations providing equal access to a digital, physical platform and social interactions, limiting the impact of the disability (e.g. a prosthesis, WCAG guidelines, a ramp, sign interpreter, etc.).
- Equal opportunities without equity is not disability inclusive. Equal access without accessibility does not provide the same opportunities because you miss out on essential accommodations, equity includes the need for accommodations and thus accessibility to create the same playing field for all involved
- The increase in Title Three Lawsuits in the United States, show an increase of cases where there is proof that a lack of accessibility is discriminating the rights of people with a disability

When reviewing these outcomes we can conclude that discrimination is surely in scope, the D&I programmes businesses initiate and facilitate aim on formal and informal systems and thus the culture of the organization. Where discrimination of people with a disability is way more than a cultural issue, because lack of access to a physical location or digital channel is equally excluding and thus discrimination of people with a disability. Equal opportunities is about the chance you get, equity about the starting point fitting your distance to the finish in relation to the barriers you face.

Accessibility supports equity, the accommodations needed are included as standard where possible. When these standards are not provided in digital channels, this is a legal proven form of discrimination of people with a disability.

The empirical research via the survey clearly showed that people with a disability are more likely to experience inaccessibility as discrimination in case of an obligated channel versus a free to choose channel. When we ask about the experience of barriers, about 48% of the people experience low to moderate till a great deal of barriers, compared to 58% for the 'free to use' channels.

Based on these outcomes:

- Almost 1 out of 2 users (47%) of an obligated digital channels like banking or governmental services experience a moderate till a great deal of barriers for people with a disability
- 3 out of 4 people (75%) experience obligated inaccessible digital channels as discrimination
- 4 out of 5 people experience an obligated inaccessible physical location as discrimination
- 86% of our respondents directly connected inaccessibility to discrimination

Provides a clear outcome the respondents see a lack of accessibility as discrimination and obligated channels and physical locations you can not avoid even increase this feeling. **Connecting these outcomes to discrimination as defined for the purpose of this paper 'treating people different especially in a worse way due to their disability'** it's clear the barriers lead to exclusion and not providing equal access as others without a disability. The free to use and obligated channels, institutions people interact with, are experienced as a barrier by users with a disability. This is a form of discrimination by inaccessibility, because a group of people is treated differently by a lack of accessibility in channels provided by institutions resulting in the inability to use these channels the same way as people without a disability can. In combination with the volume of 1 out of 2 channels are experienced as barrier, the connection to institutional discrimination a lack of accessibility is clearly shown to be a structural barrier for people with a disability.

Both the theoretical as empirical research show that a lack of accessibility surely classifies as discrimination, when accessibility is not part of the standard in organisations it's fair to state and answer the hypothesis with a yes, **'a lack of accessibility is institutional discrimination'**

Recommendations

With this outcome in mind it's highly suggested to validate this research paper. This is, as far as we're aware, the first type of research into this specific topic. Where we found that this is a topic which surely requires attention of both the academic world, governments and businesses to address accessibility accordingly in support of ending institutional discrimination by exclusion of the disability community through inaccessibility.

Would you like to contribute to this research or do you have any input, suggestions, please contact:

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References

All references have been used in the period July 2020 till December 2021. We took all measures to assure correct references to all authors, in case any of these references aren't correct please contact the author of this paper directly:

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