



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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### **Abstract**

The economy of Greece and by extension the workplace has suffered deeply in the 21st century. The direct result of this is unemployment, especially of certain population groups like individuals with physical, mental, kinetic, communicative and psychiatric impairment. Having the above scientifically proven fact as a starting point, the Greek government has taken action to some extent to bridge this social inequality with measures in favor of these groups both in the public and the private working field. Despite this, there has not been some obvious or essential result since in the majority of cases each legislation is not adhered to. However, when applied they seem to be inefficient and at this point the matter has taken great proportions.

Thus, within this effort, the right to found Social Cooperative Enterprises has been legally established. Such businesses are included in the concept of “social economy” and are also based on very specific principles. They aim at the service of the needs of people who are marginalized by the economic and social structures of today. The type of social firms- on which this present research is based on- is the Social Cooperative Enterprises that emphasize social inclusion. These firms aspire the complete integration of those individuals who are not provided access due to obstacles set by society. In other words, their main pursuit is to eliminate the exclusion and the discrimination against minorities.

This research of quality hermeneutic approach has the purpose to record and enlighten the voices themselves of people with whatever disability, relating to the way they experience their role in the current market place. So, through this, not only is the emergence of necessity targeted but also the importance of inclusion of every single individual in the social and economic life of each community. For this reason, a semi-structured interview was chosen as the most suitable research tool. The sample consists of fourteen (14) diagnosed individuals of which twelve (12) have a disability and the other two (2) a psychiatric disorder. Additionally, the basic questions that institute the research are six (6) and these consist of thirteen (13) sub-questions. Regarding the analysis method of the results that came about, thematic content analysis was deemed necessary to be utilized.

The basic results found by this research study are summarized below. Not only the individuals with disabilities and mental disorders, but also other population groups like women and the middle-aged face unsurpassable obstacles concerning their access to the work field due to the economic recession, employer's lack of education along with the restrictions set by the already existing legislation. Because of the aforementioned reasons, the real alternative work choices of people do not in any case correspond to the choices they themselves believe to be provided with. Therefore, to find employment, very important factors first of all are knowing the right people and the wide networking of the individual along with the general knowledge one has acquired and the skills that has obtained from prior working experience. In more details, knowledge and skills related to the use of internet are deemed as very useful, too.

Furthermore, the personal impairment has a repercussion on the process of finding a job but, nevertheless, these people have not endured some experience of rejection by the workplace due to their specific characteristic. Pertaining to the current frame, research participants totally meet the work requirements and have formed harmonic relationships with all involved in this, meaning their colleagues, their employers and even their clients. The above mentioned are some of the basic reasons, that individuals draw satisfaction from their work. Moreover, the participants provide even proposals for aesthetic intervention- that could be put into effect for the improvement of their working environment- and proposals that are capable of transforming the space into a more functional place for everyone.

**Keywords:** Disabled people, people with mental disorders, working role, labor market, employment, discrimination, workplace